ANALYZING THE DIMENSION OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTH SUDAN

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SUMMER 2017
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all the information in this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other institution other than the United States International University-Africa for academic credit.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration ........................................................................................................................................... i
Acknowledgement ................................................................................................................................ ii
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms ................................................................................................ vi
Abstract ............................................................................................................................................... ix

Chapter One: General Introduction .................................................................................................. 1
1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................................ 1
1.1 Background of the Study .............................................................................................................. 2
1.2 Statement of the Problem ............................................................................................................ 4
1.3 Objectives of the Study ................................................................................................................ 5
1.4 Research Questions ..................................................................................................................... 5
1.5 Hypothesis ................................................................................................................................... 6
1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study .................................................................................. 6
1.7 Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................................... 7
  1.7.1 Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) ........................................................................... 7
  1.7.2 The Social Exclusion Theory ................................................................................................ 8
1.8 Literature Review ........................................................................................................................ 9
  1.8.1 Conflict Resolution ................................................................................................................ 9
  1.8.2 Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution ...................................................................... 13
  1.8.3 Conflict Resolution in South Sudan ....................................................................................... 20
  1.8.4 Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution in South Sudan ............................................ 26
1.9 Research Methodology ................................................................................................................. 30
1.10 Organization of the Thesis ......................................................................................................... 31
Chapter Two: Contextualizing Conflict in South Sudan ............................................. 33
  2.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 33
  2.1 The Background of the Conflict in South Sudan ................................................. 33
  2.2 The Actors and Causes of the Conflict in South Sudan ...................................... 36
  2.3 The Impact of the Conflict in South Sudan ......................................................... 37
  2.4 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 41

Chapter Three: The Role and Impact of Conflict on Women in South Sudan .......... 42
  3.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 42
  3.1 The Impact of Conflict on Women in South Sudan .............................................. 42
  3.2 The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution ......................................................... 46
      3.2.1 The Role of Women in Conflict as Combatants/Perpetrators ...................... 46
      3.2.2 Women as Victims of the Conflict ............................................................... 48
  3.3 The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution in South Sudan ............................. 51
  3.4 Challenges of Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution .......................... 54
  3.5 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 58

Chapter Four: Analyzing the Dimension of Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution in South Sudan ............................................................ 60
  4.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 60
  4.1 The Political Dimension of Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution .......... 60
  4.2 The Social and Cultural Dimension of Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution .............. 67
  4.3 The Economic Dimension of Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution ........ 72
  4.4 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 76
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADR</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARCISS</td>
<td>Agreement of Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>United Nations Economic and Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FPCT</td>
<td>Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory</td>
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<td>GAPS</td>
<td>Gender Action for Peace and Security</td>
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<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender Based Violence</td>
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<td>GRSS</td>
<td>Government of the Republic of South Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
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<td>ICRP</td>
<td>International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGAD</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organization</td>
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<td>INGOs</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSF</td>
<td><em>Médecins Sans Frontières</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYDDRP</td>
<td>Multi-Year Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>National Congress Party</td>
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<td>NEA</td>
<td>National Elections Act</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>OSAGI</td>
<td>Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues</td>
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<td>PDF</td>
<td>Popular Defense Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<td>SAF</td>
<td>Sudan Armed Forces</td>
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<td>SCR</td>
<td>Security Council Resolution</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SG</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
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<td>SPLA</td>
<td>Sudan People’s Liberation Army</td>
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<td>SPLM</td>
<td>Sudan People’s Liberation Movement</td>
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<td>SSHURSA</td>
<td>South Sudan Human Rights Society for Advocacy</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Security Sector Reform</td>
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<td>SSWEN</td>
<td>South Sudan Women Empowerment Network</td>
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<td>SWEP</td>
<td>Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCRSS</td>
<td>Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNMISS</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNPK</td>
<td>United Nations Peace Keeping</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIP</td>
<td>United States Institute of Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAV</td>
<td>World Aid Vision</td>
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<td>WPS</td>
<td>Women, Peace and Security</td>
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<td>WPT</td>
<td>Women Peacekeeping Team</td>
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ABSTRACT

Based on the prevalent under-representation of women in peace processes, this study analyses why women’s participation in conflict resolution is crucial particularly in South Sudan. South Sudan as one of the youngest nations in the world, is experiencing a period of civil war where the level of women’s participation in conflict resolution has been very low in past years. The Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCISS) offers an opportunity for women’s participation in peace processes and peacebuilding efforts. As such, South Sudan offers a vivid picture of the necessity to include women in conflict resolution processes. This study examines the different ways in which women participate in conflict resolution processes by exploring the dimensions of their participation. It does this by analyzing three dimensions of participation which include; the political dimension, which explores the rights of women to participate in policy formulation and governance. This dimension examines women’s role in the political, civil and family life in relation to conflict resolution and the legal protection as a method of encouraging conflict resolution. The social dimension mainly focuses on women’s maternal role in peace negotiations particularly the role of women in mobilizing and organizing of women for peace activities as peace ambassadors, and their involvement in matters of health and civic education through projects that empower them. The final dimension is the economic dimension which looks at the inclusion of women’s economic rights and the availability of economic opportunities for women that aid in the rebuilding of South Sudan’s economy. The study also presents the challenges faced by women during conflict resolution processes especially in South Sudan and concludes by providing viable recommendations on how to empower, increase and encourage women’s participation in conflict resolution processes.
CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Women constitute half of every community and the impact of their existence is felt at all levels from the family unit, to the community and even at the national and international levels. Women’s experiences of war and conflict are unique to those of men. While they are often viewed as victims of rape and sexual violence during war and conflict, their level of participation goes beyond being victims. They are the central caregivers of families, they are also the advocates for peace, as peacekeepers, relief workers and mediators (Damilola, 2010). It is because of these experiences that women are placed at an advantageous position for the success of any conflict resolution processes. Women’s participation offers a comprehensive understanding of the causes of conflict and offers solutions that address varying needs hence encouraging sustainability of peace (UN Women, 2013).

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been on the forefront in encouraging women’s participation in peace processes. It has advocated for women participation through the adoption of Resolution 1325 of 2000, Resolution 1820 of 2008 and Resolution 2122 of 2013 that aim at enhancing women’s participation in conflict resolution processes. Resolution 1325 calls for the adoption of a gender perspective in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements (USIP, 2014). Resolution 1820 calls for the training and deployment of more women to peace operations so as to curb the use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of conflict (UNPK, 2008). Resolution 2122 addresses the gaps emerging in the implementation of the agenda for women, peace and security resulting from Resolution 1325 (USIP, 2014).
According to Shepherd (2015), Resolution 1325 has been used as a basis for women all over the world to lobby for their voices to be heard in peace processes. It has been the driving force behind peace initiatives by women in grassroot levels in countries such as South Sudan, Colombia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Republic of South Sudan is a landlocked country located in the northeastern part of Africa. South Sudan is bordered by Ethiopia to the east, Sudan to the north, Uganda to the south, Kenya to the southeast, the Central African Republic to the west, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the southwest. It sits on a geographical area of land of approximately 619,745 square kilometers (Sikainga, 2016).

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan on 9th July 2011 after the end of Africa's longest-running civil war in 2005. It comprises of ten states. Its capital city Juba is South Sudan’s largest city. South Sudan is one of the most diverse countries in Africa being a home to over 60 different ethnic groups (BBC, 2017). As of July 2016, South Sudan’s population is at 12,899,935, 50.4 percent of these are men while women comprise of the remaining 49.6 percent (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016).

South Sudan has a vast range of natural resources which include iron ore, petroleum, chromium ore, copper, zinc, mica, tungsten, silver, gold, limestone, diamonds, and hydropower. However, like many developing countries, South Sudan’s economy is heavily dependent on agriculture (Sudan, 2016).

South Sudan’s current president is Salva Kiir Mayardit, who is also the head of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) (BBC, 2017). Even after its independence, South Sudan
continues to suffer internal conflict, hence ranked fourth on the Fragile States Index (Fund for Peace, 2016).

After the independence of South Sudan in 2011, the country has been confronted by internal conflicts that continue to create a humanitarian crisis with the displacement of people and has been detrimental to the country’s development (UN Women, 2015). The recent conflict being the civil war that broke out in December 2013 due to a political power struggle between the government led by President Salva Kiir and opposition forces comprising of soldiers loyal to the country’s former Vice-President Riek Machar. President Salva Kiir accused Mr. Machar of a coup attempt, an allegation that Mr. Machar denied (BBC, 2014). Both President Kiir and Machar have supporters from across the nation’s ethnic divides, hence, subsequent fighting has been communal. The rebels target members of President Kiir’s Dinka ethnic group, while government soldiers attack the Nuers Machar’s ethnic group.

According to the Global Conflict Tracker (2016), the conflict resulted in over 50,000 deaths and the displacement of over 1.6 million people. It was characterized by extreme acts of human rights violations and not forgetting the great damage to infrastructure and subsequent economic decline. The Government and rebels agreed to attend peace talks in Ethiopia in 2014, and a deal was finally signed under the threat of United Nations (UN) sanctions for both sides in August 2015. Mr. Machar eventually returned from exile to be sworn in as first vice president of a new unity government under President Salva Kiir in April 2016 (Aljazeera, 2016). However, the country is still in a fragile state as the conflict reignited and the state of insecurity resumed (Global Conflict Tracker, 2016).

Of all affected by the insecurity, the women of South Sudan carry a major part of the suffering. This conflict disproportionately affects women and girls who suffer hideous
consequences of the violence, abuse, deprivation and loss of livelihoods. Since the war broke out, sexual and gender-based violence has reached unprecedented levels (Brende, 2015). Women, girls and children make up the majority of those displaced and in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. The responsibility for family well-being in these difficult circumstances places a phenomenal burden on women. For these reasons, South Sudanese women have expressed, a strong desire to find ways of ending hostilities and to focus national attention on social cohesion and nation building (UN Women, 2015).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The importance of women’s participation has been stressed severally at both the local and international levels. The United Nations Security Council for example through Resolution 1325 which was adopted in the year 2000 stressed the need for active participation of women in conflict resolution processes through peace negotiations, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction (OSAGI, 2005). Despite the emphasis being made at national and global levels to encourage women’s participation in peace processes, there seems to be a disconnect between advocating for the provisions of Resolution 1325 and the implementation of the same. Existing peace structures in different countries tend to ignore the part played by women in peace processes, yet, women contribute in a big way to peace processes particularly in conflict resolution. In South Sudan for example, women have often been excluded from politics and public decision making which are avenues for conflict resolution processes (United Nations Human Rights, 2016).

Despite the fact that women participate in different levels in peace processes at the family, community and national levels, such participation often goes unnoticed or unrecognized (Weber,
Women are often viewed as victims and their contributions are ignored. Therefore, there is need for scholarly investigation on the dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution in South Sudan. It is for this reason that this study analysed the different dimensions at which women’s participation drives peace processes so as to offer more insight as to why women’s involvement in conflict resolution should be encouraged as opposed to being disregarded.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to determine the dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution in South Sudan.

The study also sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To contextualize the conflict in South Sudan.
2. To examine the role of women in conflict and its impact on them in South Sudan.
3. To analyze the political, social and economic dimension of women’s participation in conflict resolution.

### 1.4 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the context of the conflict in South Sudan?
2. What role do women play in conflict and how does conflict impact them?
3. What are the political, social and economic dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution?
1.5 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis of this research is that the different dimensions of women’s involvement in conflict resolution in South Sudan plays a big role in influencing the peace processes.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has been undertaken at a time when the issue of women’s participation in conflict resolution is a dire issue globally with many civil society groups and international groups raising concerns on the level of such participation. By highlighting the dimensions of women’s involvement in conflict resolution and the extent to which such participation is essential to peace processes, this research assists policy makers within the realm of peace and conflict resolution to formulate policies that encourage women’s participation and involvement in peace processes.

The research is beneficial to women in conflict-stricken communities as it offers guidance and clarity on how they can be involved in peace processes and how their involvement is necessary considering the benefits they and their communities stand to gain from such participation.

The research also assists future researchers to understand the dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution as it builds on existing research and serve as an excellent reference material for researchers within the field of peace and conflict resolution especially focusing on South Sudan.
1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are many theories that are associated with peace and conflict, however the feminist peace and conflict theory and the social exclusion theory best explain this research.

1.7.1 FEMINIST PEACE AND CONFLICT THEORY (FPCT)

The Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) expresses the need to recognize women in conflicts and peace processes. This theory explains the relationship and connection of all forms of violence be they domestic, societal, intra-state or inter-state and their relation to gender. The theory critically discussed the issue of women in peace processes and has led to a broader understanding of peace and security issues. The theory brings to light the realities encountered by women in war by recognizing the plight of those affected by war (Weber, 2006).

The Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory also analyses the moral argument of men as makers of war and women as victims of war. For essentialist feminists, the aggressive nature of men is the main cause of war. Feminists, such as Mary Daly and activists in the Ecofeminist movements also agree with this line of reasoning. The common agreement between the feminists within this theory is that women are essential for peace processes because they make vital contributions to the maintenance of peace. Essentialist feminists also recognise the potential for change by stressing the non-violent potential; what they call ‘feminine virtues’ in order to create a peaceful world (Weber, 2006).

Sara Ruddick, a feminist coined the notion of maternal thinking by arguing that care is the main pre-condition for a more peaceful society. In an effort of acknowledging women’s experiences in war, both as active fighters as well as victims, the question of permanence of peace and maternal thinking, were brought to question (Weber, 2006). However, despite the different
opinions offered by different feminists, the one common argument that is favoured by all is that women participation plays an essential role in peace processes which is what this research sought to establish by examining the different dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution.

The Feminist Peace and Conflict theory helps illuminate the place of women in conflict resolution particularly in relation to South Sudan and also makes the challenges faced by women in conflict resolution processes relatable by explaining the different challenges women face and the importance of their inclusion in conflict resolution processes.

1.7.2 THE SOCIAL EXCLUSION THEORY

The theory of social exclusion is also relevant in this study. Social exclusion as a theory encompasses the inability to fully and effectively participate in political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life (Silver, 2007). Such exclusion may be based on an individual’s race, age, gender or class. Women often face exclusion based on their gender particularly in matters of peace and conflict resolution. Luchsinger (2010) explains the concept of the vicious cycle of exclusion as one where an individual or group specifically women, are excluded from conflict and post-conflict situations and activities. This means that there is minimal or no participation of women in processes such as the drafting of ceasefire and peace agreements, creation and implementation of security reforms and even disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. The Social Exclusion theory gives an understanding of why women are often ignored in peace processes and explains the cycle of exclusion as pertaining to women’s participation in South Sudan.

The feminist movement in the 1970s argued that there should be equal participation by both men and women in home matters, the labour market, governing of the country and security matters (Gichuru, 2014). Similarly, Mac Carthy (2011) argues that due to the sizeable number of
women in any population, they should be fully involved in efforts of achieving sustainable peace if such efforts are to be successful.

Both the Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory and the Social Exclusion Theory address the need to have equal participation by both men and women in not only peace processes but also other activities aimed at creating development in any country. Women’s views and experiences are different from those of men and often prove to be useful for conflict resolution in societies and countries where women’s role and participation in conflict resolution are recognized.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

Available literature on conflict resolution has been reviewed and emphasis is, however, made to women’s participation in conflict resolution and how such participation influences peace processes. This section also reviews literature on conflict resolution in South Sudan.

1.8.1 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Miall (2015) defines conflict resolution as a set of approaches and mechanisms for the resolution of the conflict which focus on preventing, stopping, or transforming violent conflict using peaceful methods. The notion of conflict resolution gained momentum after the Cold War era. It started in the 1950s and 1960s. According to Miall (2015) the peace, socialist and liberal internationalists failed to prevent the outbreak of the First World War motivating many people including scholars to create mechanisms that would provide a firmer basis for preventing future wars.
Conflict resolution is a form of peace process. Hence, scholars such as Suthanthiraraj (2010) adopted the definition of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1889 and the Women, Peace and Security study in relation to UNSC Resolution 1325 of 2000. These UNSC Resolutions stipulate that peace processes include conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy and peace-building activities such as, conflict resolution, peace negotiations, reconstruction of infrastructure and the provision of humanitarian aid (Porter, 2007).

Furthermore, Miall (2015) states that by the early 1970s, Conflict Resolution had defined its specific subject at three levels which are the interstate level, the international and the domestic levels. At the domestic level, the focus was on developing expertise in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and the 1970s and 1980s definition and analysis of deep-rooted conflicts, in which the distinction between international and domestic level causes was seen to be unclear. This period also saw the first attempts to apply the problem-solving approach to real conflicts. Miall (2015) also describes the 1990’s as a period that offered conflict resolution increasingly unexpected opportunities to make effective contributions to the resolution of violent conflicts. This created room for greater scrutiny resulting in conflict resolution ideas being tested both at the local and international levels with issues arising on matters of peace-building, power sharing, participation and transformation.

According to Stern and Druckman (2000), conflict resolution refers to efforts to prevent or mitigate violence and conflict between groups or states. They argue that conflict between social groups is a recurring fact of life that is inevitable and that the goal of conflict resolution is to direct conflicts towards a set of agreed rules that foster peaceful discussion of differences and eliminate violence as a means of settling disputes (Stern & Druckman, 2000).
Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2008), on the other hand, define conflict resolution as a comprehensive term that refers to the transformation of sources of conflict and the behaviours involved in the conflict. These authors base their definition on those involved in the process of conflict resolution and hence they cite the role of activists, researchers, mediators, advocates and enforcers (Schmucker, 2009). They also attempt to convey the idea of conflict resolution by laying out a groundwork of intervention principles. The groundwork includes the principles of impartiality, mutuality, sustainability, complementarity, reflexivity, consistency, accountability and universality (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 2008). All of which are essential because they define the guidelines for intervention in peace processes, specifically conflict resolution.

According to Lederach (1997) conflict resolution is a process necessary for societal transformation and change which involves more than just politics. Through his definition, Lederach tries to explain conflict resolution by emphasizing the aspect of reconciliation as a meeting place for conflicting parties. Hence, conflict resolution serves as neutral ground for meetings on ideas that solve the past and future causes of conflict (Lederach, 1997).

In adopting the definition of conflict resolution from the Committee on International Conflict Resolution, Rhodes (2008) defines the process of conflict resolution as one that is “Value-Free”. He argues that the process is undertaken so as to define limits for violent acts that are excused and to control violence by promoting dialogue. From the Committee’s definition, Rhodes (2008) derives two aspects namely; efforts to prevent or mitigate violence from inter-group or interstate conflict and efforts to reduce the underlying disagreements. Besides, Schmucker (2009), sums up Rhodes (2008) conflict resolution definition as nonviolent and cooperative intervention process used by a mutually acceptable third party to intentionally understand the causes of conflicts and create a mutually acceptable peaceful solution.
Laue and Floyer (1996) are of the view that conflict resolution indicates a more reconciliatory approach involving the participation of the conflicting parties in reaching a mutually acceptable outcome by addressing the roots of the conflict. They suggest that conflict resolution places emphasis on cooperation and timely resolutions, as well as mutually acceptable solutions established by the conflicting parties working together. This argument also stresses the importance of standards of non-violence and non-coercion as well as social justice and equality (Schmucker, 2009).

Additionally, Chukwuemeka (2012) says that there is a need for dialogue to identify the underlying needs and interests of the parties that are camouflaged behind their public positions and demands; they also elaborate a process of practical problem-solving, in which interested parties seek solutions that address their core interests and are acceptable to as many stakeholders as possible. Participants invited to the processes are chosen based on their stake in the decision, and often on their ability to block any agreement that does not favour peace (Chukwuemeka, 2012).

Others scholars like Burton (1990), outlines a wide spectrum of methods like mediation, negotiations, or arbitration in order to convert the respective conflict into a situation acceptable for both sides. This approach aims at improving communication between the conflicting parties and the development of mutual understanding for the interests of each side (Chukwuemeka, 2012). Despite the different definitions that scholars have offered for conflict resolution, what is common is that conflict resolution is the processes that is involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict.
1.8.2 WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Women’s participation, as defined by Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) refers to the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and their equal participation. It also refers to their full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

Women’s participation is closely related to gender mainstreaming. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. Al-Ali (2009) portrays it as a strategy for making known the concerns and experiences of women as well as those of men. It is a fundamental dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all areas so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is eradicated (Al-Ali, 2009).

Various international forums and transnational women’s movements have highlighted the importance of mainstreaming gender in post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building, in an effort to recognise the difference in the impact of war on women compared to the impact on men (Al-Ali, 2009). Ali (2007) notes that there have been many examples of women’s roles in conflict transformation processes in the past which provide evidence of women’s capabilities to participate in peace processes. Women have participated in the past through creation of strategies that promote reconciliation. She further argues that women continue to face significant obstacles to full participation due to a variety of reasons which include the lack of inclusive leadership, disparities between government policy and implementation, limited or lack of resources and educational opportunities, and time-consuming familial obligations. However, women are formulating and
sharing creative initiatives that can be used by other women worldwide seeking to overcome barriers to their participation.

Furthermore, Ali (2007) argues that despite the fact that conflict has portrayed women and girls as victims and actors, their role in conflict resolution is yet to be considered an essential part of peace building. This is because women have always been viewed as victims who cannot be at the forefront in peace processes. Therefore, challenges still lay ahead for women peace activists to campaign since without their full participation in conflict transformation and peace processes, the process remains incomplete. In addition, sustainable peace becomes an idea that is far from being achieved (Ali, 2011). Consequently, Ali (2007) further argues that the role of women in peaceful conflict transformation is an untapped resource which exists and could aid in the elimination of suffering that results from violent conflicts. For this reason, there is an urgent need for a shift from the victim perspective to peacebuilding perspective by involving women in every stage of the peace process (Ali, 2011).

Faria (2011) identifies three levels in which women can participate in both conflict and conflict resolution. These levels include the personal sphere, the private sphere and the public sphere. In the personal sphere, women experience conflict and participate in conflict resolution as individuals. Further, in the private sphere women’s involvement arises out of how they experience conflict as wives and mothers and they participate in conflict resolution as wives and mothers. Finally, women’s participation in conflict resolution in the public sphere arises when they are involved in peace building mechanisms and decision-making processes (Faria, 2011).

Suthanthiraraj (2010) notes that long-term conflict prevention requires investment in the culture of peace along with formal and informal institutions for non-violent conflict resolution. Women’s participation provides a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and alternative
solutions to conflict, that boosts the implementation of solutions that address varying needs and ensure sustaining peace over time. When conflict breaks out, both formal and informal negotiations and peace processes provide critical opportunities to not only reshape a country’s security but also its politics and economic bearings. Including women, increases the quality of peace talks by increasing the chances of a successful conflict resolution process. This helps to ensure that peace agreements are broad and that they encompass the needs of all the people and that they are supported and sustained by nations as a whole (Suthanthiraraj, 2010).

Amin (2009) states that women’s participation in peace processes is not optional, it is a requirement. Over the years, the importance of women’s engagement in peace processes has been recognised by numerous international institutions, resolutions and state commitments. In October 2000, the UN Security Council through SCR 1325 formally recognised the relationship between women, peace and security and the critical importance of women’s participation as reflected in leadership, empowerment and decision-making (Suthanthiraraj, 2010).

The Secretary-General’s report on women’s participation in conflict resolution focused specifically on the role of peace agreements as important tools for the promotion of gender equality and the participation of women in peace processes. It highlights that while the understanding and recognition of women’s contributions to peace processes have increased significantly in recent years, women continue to be largely excluded from peace processes, particularly at the formal level. It further emphasises that more efforts are needed to ensure that regular attention to gender issues as well as women’s full and effective participation is accorded in such processes (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2003).
In the same spirit of encouraging women participation, UN Women works towards women’s full and equal participation in formal and informal conflict resolution dialogues and peace processes to raise awareness, develop women’s negotiating and mediation abilities, and advocate for gender-sensitive policies and programmes (UN Women, 2013). Similarly, the recognition of the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war led the United Nations Security Council to adopt resolutions 1820 and 1888 which focuses on gender-based violence and emphasise the need for women’s participation in combating this type of violence. The Security Council further adopted Resolution 1889 in 2009, urging the international community to take further measures to improve women’s participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post-conflict planning and peacebuilding. This is to be done by enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at early stages of the recovery process, through promoting women’s leadership and capacity supporting women’s organisations and countering negative societal attitudes about women’s capacity to participate equally (UN Women, 2013).

However, Suthanthiraraj (2010) argues, that the lack of accountability structures for implementation of these international commitments continue to leave women with minimal support structures resulting in low numbers of women in leadership roles, violations of women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situations, and impunity which continues to be the response to crimes of sexual violence. Furthermore, Suthanthiraraj (2010) emphasizes that it is important to analyse women’s participation through the medium of peace processes. Women’s exclusion and marginalisation in peacemaking are often as a result of persistent exclusion from peace-building and reconstruction efforts. As a result, not only do women’s needs remain unmet, but the chances of successful and sustainable peacebuilding are vastly reduced.
The UN Women (2013) highlights that the evident failure to give due priority to women’s recovery needs is intensified by the continuing marginalisation of women from peace talks. As key decisions for post-conflict planning are taken during peace negotiations, it becomes more difficult to engage women in post-conflict planning if they have been excluded from peace talks that make crucial decisions about power-sharing, socio-economic recovery and development. The UN Security Council in retaliating the sentiments of the UN Women agrees that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

While there has been increased dialogue and more inclusive policies on women’s human rights and participation, and at times progress can be noted across a broad range of issues, there is still a vast gap between words and their implementation. Meaningful engagement and peaceful transformations will not be a reality if leaders, governments and the international community only talk about the importance of women’s empowerment. Rather, there must be a focus on creating an enabling environment for implementation to become a reality (Suthanthiraraj, 2010).

Women often shoulder an additional burden due to traditional gender roles; their labour, strength and determination maintain their families and communities during the war and throughout the long and slow process of rebuilding the peace. This provides them with valuable knowledge and experience making them useful during peace talks. Women are an important resource hence overlooking their capacities and commitment to peacebuilding is an indication of bad planning and failed peace processes (Speake, 2013).

The UNSC in its bid to empower and encourage women participation reinforced SCR 1325 in October 2009 with Security Council Resolution 1889 (UN Women, 2013). This resolution
affirms measures within SCR 1325 and calls for improved women’s participation and empowerment across all stages of the peace process. SCR 1889 also incorporates more solid measures for funding and access to resources, renewed efforts to involve women in the peacebuilding process, and stronger provisions on monitoring and reporting (United Nations, 2012). Similarly, SCR 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009), also focus on responses to gender-based violence during conflict and post-conflict.

All the four resolutions are the result of decades of advocacy by civil society and are based on a series of important international instruments and treaties. Some of the significant international instruments and treaties include, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, the Windhoek Declaration of 2000 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (UN Women, 2009).

CEDAW was adopted in 1979 and it aims to promote women’s participation in decision-making and leadership positions. For this reason, it is often called the international bill of rights for women. CEDAW also recognises culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action shares similarities with CEDAW. It advocates for women’s human rights and emphasises the importance of women’s full participation in political structures through the inclusion of women in local and national governments (UN Women, 2009).

Building on this international framework, regional organisations have made a range of commitments that support SCR 1325 and at times have propelled action within their regions. The African Union (AU) has adopted a gender policy which mandates the mobilisation of women leaders in all levels of peace, mediation and related processes. Similarly, the European Union (EU) has specified that women’s participation is key to the advancement of human rights, and necessary
to fully address specific needs and concerns of women. Additionally, the Southern African Development Community (SADC)’s Protocol on Gender and Development mandates women’s equal representation and participation in key decision-making positions by the year 2015 (SADC, 2014).

In the peacebuilding arena, women are often more active through informal community structures aiming to ensure that women’s rights and gender perspectives are incorporated into local programs. Minimal representation of women within political structures or in leadership positions at both local and national levels have led women’s organisations to rely on extensive networks, strong advocacy skills and resourceful means of achieving their objectives. Women are often confronted with challenges including cultural barriers, traditional patriarchal structures, minimal legislative support and lack of resources. These are critical obstacles inhibiting the transfer of their learned knowledge and first-hand experiences into a recognised and formal peacemaking and peace-building environment (Suthanthiraraj, 2010).

According to Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon’s report on Mediation (2009), peace processes need to ensure not only adequate representation of women as participants and observers but also gender expertise in agenda-setting, substantive talks and implementation, in order to redress past inequalities, so that new institutions can be built to provide greater social justice for all. Therefore, involving women in peace processes starts with providing women with access to formal peace structures. This means getting women to the peace table as meaningful participants in peace negotiations and agreements, providing women with key roles as mediators and signatories, bringing gender perspectives into peace agreements and tapping into the expertise of women on issues ranging from security and the rule of law to the building of infrastructure (Suthanthiraraj, 2010). Despite these odds, women have persevered in seeking to be present at the
peace table or influence peace negotiations in places such as Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Liberia, Burundi and El Salvador. When women have been involved in formal negotiations they have done much to ensure that voices of victims are consistently heard (Andelini, 2011).

1.8.3 CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTH SUDAN

Peace and security remain important to development. Addressing and resolving internal conflicts and disagreements and establishing sustainable peace are the central building blocks to achieving South Sudan’s desired development and peacebuilding objectives. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), South Sudan is faced with major political and socio-economic challenges, which continue to be compounded by inter-communal animosity, an insurgency by rebel groups and localised conflicts over land and natural resources (UN News Centre, 2016).

Okeke-Uzodike (2014) explains South Sudan’s insecurity and violence as being further aggravated by the mass arrival of South Sudanese refugees from Sudan and other parts of Africa and the inter-ethnic competition between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups. The Nuer contest the domination of political and economic space by the Dinka. The priorities of central and state governments are primarily centred on privileging and promoting the interests of SPLM members and its military wing that heavily draw their membership from the Dinka to the exclusion of other ethnic groups (Okeke-Uzodike, 2014).

On 15th December 2013, fighting erupted between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those aligned to the former Vice President Riek Machar, leading the country into another civil war barely three years after it gained independence. The Government of South Sudan essentially found
itself in a dire situation after the alleged coup attempt failed in Juba and turned into an open rebellion. The fighting also triggered a humanitarian crisis in South Sudan and there was a dire need for conflict resolution so as to bring about the cessation of hostilities in the country (ICRP, 2015).

According to ICRP (2015), following the eruption of fighting, a month after the violence began, the UN Security Council unanimously authorised a substantial increase in peacekeeping forces for the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) through Resolution 2132 of 2013. Its mandate was to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence within its capabilities and in its areas of deployment. Resolution 2132 called for immediate cessation of hostilities and the opening of political dialogue and supported an increase in the military component of UNMISS. Before the conflict erupted, the UN Security Council, in a number of resolutions, had emphasised the primary responsibility of the South Sudanese government to prevent conflict and protect civilians with UNMISS only expected to provide a supportive role. This was in line with the principle of the responsibility to protect (United Nations, 2017).

On 27 May 2014, the UNSC passed Resolution 2155 changing the focus of UNMISS’s mandate from state building to protecting civilians as a priority. On 25 November 2014, with Resolution 2187 the Security Council voted unanimously to renew the mission’s mandate until 30 May 2015 and authorised UNMISS to use all necessary means to protect civilians, monitor and investigate human rights, and support humanitarian assistance efforts (United Nations, 2016).

Despite the UN’s efforts, relations between President Kiir’s government and UNMISS became tense in mid-January when South Sudan’s Information Minister and his armed guards were barred from entering the United Nations compound in Bor, leading to threats against UN
staff (United Nations, 2016). While UNMISS insisted that only unarmed civilians were permitted to enter the compound, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan accused the UN of hiding rebels and guns at the camp, and of setting up a ‘parallel government’. UNMISS has been careful to stress their impartiality in the South Sudan conflict (The Guardian, 2016). Similarly, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has led the efforts to engage the warring parties in negotiations to stop the fighting. IGAD has led six rounds of peace talks between the warring parties since January 2014, resulting in four cessations of hostilities agreements each of which has been broken. Each round of peace talks has been marked with tensions and disagreements resulting in significant setbacks and delays (Al Jazeera, 2014).

The ICRP (2015) led the first round of talks that began on 4 January 2014 in Ethiopia and was focused on reaching a cessation of hostilities agreement, a release of detainees and a process of dialogue. After a significant delay over the issue of political prisoners, a cessation of hostilities agreement was finally signed on 23 January 2014. By 25 January 2014, however, both sides were reported to have breached the terms of the agreement. In March 2014, IGAD led another round of talks but there was no significant outcome except the authorization of an IGAD Protection and Deterrent Force intended to monitor and enforce the ceasefire consequently, 90 Ethiopian peacekeepers were deployed in July as part of the Protection and Deterrent Force (ICRP, 2015). According to BBC (2014), another new ceasefire, achieved during the next round of peace talks in April 2014, was also short-lived as accusations emerged 5 days later that both sides of the conflict had violated the agreement in Unity, Jonglei, and Upper Nile states. On 22 May 2014, a new round of fighting displaced more than 2000 people in Upper Nile State (BBC, 2014).

On 9 June 2014 another round of peace talks began focusing on a new aim of the formation of a transitional unity government. However, such an objective proved very difficult to accomplish
given the differences in views on what the most desirable new government is. IGAD was forced to adjourn the subsequent round of peace talks scheduled for 20th July 2014 because the rebels boycotted the negotiations accusing IGAD of unfair inclusivity in the selection of stakeholders’ process. The fifth round of peace talks failed again because of the opposition’s refusal to take part in the talks, bringing the process to a standstill and diminishing any hopes that a comprehensive agreement would be reached (ICRP, 2015).

Finally, on 10 November 2014, the two warring parties committed once again to abide by the cessation of hostilities agreement signed in January 2014. IGAD threatened to take strict actions if the two sides failed to abide by the agreement, giving both sides of the conflict 15 days to hold consultations with their constituents in order to work out the details of a power-sharing accord. Nevertheless, though the deadline has passed and UNMISS has reported heavy fighting between the government and opposition forces, IGAD has yet to take any punitive action against the warring parties (United Nations, 2016).

By December 2014, the United States, Canada, and the EU had imposed limited sanctions, such as asset and travel bans, against military commanders on both sides for human rights violations and obstructions of the peace process. In early November 2014, the US indicated that it will seek to pass a draft resolution in the Security Council calling for sanctions targeting the two South Sudanese leaders at the core of the conflict, President Salva Kiir and his rival Riek Machar. In response, South Sudan warned that sanctions would fuel the confrontation more and established a high-level panel tasked with lobbying the Security Council against the imposition of sanctions (BBC, 2014).
According to ICRP (2015), peace negotiations in South Sudan have also been compromised by the presence of Ugandan troops in the country. Ugandan forces entered the country shortly after fighting in mid-December 2013, claiming to be on a rescue mission aimed at evacuating Ugandan citizens from South Sudan. Uganda denied reports that her troops were actively engaged in combat until 15 January 2014, when Uganda acknowledged its role in suppressing a rebellion in South Sudan. The South Sudan government defended Uganda’s involvement as legitimate. Arguing that Uganda deployed troops in accordance with a status of forces agreement signed even before South Sudan’s independence. However, rebels have accused Uganda of taking sides in the conflict by supporting the South Sudanese government and have demanded that Uganda withdraws its troops as a condition for renewed peace talks. In early February 2014, Ethiopia while hosting peace talks between South Sudan leaders expressed fears of the conflict intensifying and Uganda was asked to withdraw her troops (The Guardian, 2016).

On 29 November 2014, South Sudanese rebels met with the Ugandan president to discuss the possibility of a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Ugandan army indicated that they were willing to withdraw as soon as an African force arrives. However, IGAD has not deployed a Protection and Deterrence Force that Uganda deems sufficient to remove its troops from South Sudan. As a member of IGAD, Uganda’s presence in South Sudan may cast doubt on the impartiality of the process of conflict resolution (ICRP, 2015).

The African Union (AU) has also been at the forefront expressing its deep concern for the insecurity and violence in South Sudan. On 17 December 2013, the AU called for a humanitarian truce and dialogue. On 31 December 2013, the AU took a stronger position on the conflict, threatening targeted sanctions against those inciting violence, continuing hostilities and
undermining peace talks. The conflict in South Sudan was one of the dominating agendas at the AU summit in the end of January 2014 (ICRP, 2015).

On 30 December 2013, the AU Peace and Security Council’s established a commission of inquiry on the violent conflict in South Sudan. International Crisis Group (ICG) analyst Casie Copeland notes that it is in the commission’s mandate to make recommendations for accountability and justice, as well as report on human rights violations, thereby providing the AU with an opportunity to define action in situations of mass atrocities (United Nations, 2016). The commission submitted its first preliminary report on 27 June 2014 requesting more time to verify the crimes it had found and determine whether they constitute international crimes. On 5 December 2014, the AU released a report expressing their deep concern over the failure of South Sudan’s warring parties to abide by the latest ceasefire agreement mediated by IGAD and warning that strict measures will be taken if the violence continues (United Nations, 2016).

ICRP (2015) reports that in an effort to promote reconciliation within the SPLM, Tanzania hosted an internal SPLM dialogue in Arusha from 12 October to 18 October 2014. The rival parties admitted responsibility for the deadly violence and pledged measures to stop it. On 20 October 2014 high-level officials representing the SPLM and the SPLA signed a framework agreement committing themselves to dialogue. Although, the Arusha talks are separate and distinct from the IGAD peace process, the two are mutually reinforcing.

Civil society organisations, including Amnesty International, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, International Crisis Group, and the Sudan Consortium, called on the international community to facilitate mediation efforts and to ensure that the South Sudanese government protects vulnerable populations. *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) has described the
‘speed and scale’ of violence in South Sudan as ‘unprecedented.’ Since the conflict began, Human Rights Watch published reports providing much-needed information about ongoing mass atrocities (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

On 4 November 2014, more than fifty NGOs signed a petition urging members of IGAD to impose a comprehensive arms embargo on the country (ICRP, 2015). Then, on 8 December 2014, the International Federation for Human Rights released a report urging IGAD, the AU, and the UNSC to establish an arms embargo and take a firm stand against those impeding the peace process. On 9 December 2014, Human Rights Watch released an open letter to the UN Security Council calling for an arms embargo on South Sudan as well as travel bans and asset freezes against all individuals violating human rights and the arms embargo in the country.

ICRP (2015) states that although some countries have called for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to take action on South Sudan, the court has made clear that it cannot launch an investigation in the country without a Security Council resolution to that effect, as South Sudan is not within the ICC’s jurisdiction. South Sudan has been urged to ratify the Rome Statute.

1.8.4 WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTH SUDAN

Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SWEP), is one of the pioneer women’s peace movements in both Sudan and South Sudan. SWEP was formed in 1997 with an aim of working for the betterment of Sudanese women through strengthening and empowering them politically, socially and economically (SWEP, 2010). In the north (Sudan), SWEP is currently based in Khartoum while in the south, (South Sudan) its operations are based in Juba. In the South, SWEP
operates in three sector groups namely, SPLM-women, Network for Peace Group and Women Action for Development (SWEP, 2010). It was formed with the main goal of stopping hostilities between the communities of the north and the south by using negotiation as a tool for conflict resolution.

In all its peace efforts, SWEP pushed for the inclusion of the agenda for women to create opportunities for women to participate in all the negotiations that took place prior to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). It lobbied for women’s participation in the peace processes and encouraged women to take part in peace building and development processes. Most importantly, SWEP advocacy is for the recognition of women’s rights (Elsawi, 2011). SWEP was South Sudan’s first women powered movement with an aim of promoting a culture of peace and pushing forward women’s agendas.

SWEP’s popularity grew over time with different organizations and institutions building alliances with the movement. According to Elsawi (2011), some of the key strategies and capabilities the movement was involved in, include, building links among women for sustainable peace and development, lobbying for international support on peace processes and forums and building alliances with other women’s groups with the similar goal of promoting peace and promoting the advancement of women. SWEP also lobbied with Sudanese men and women in efforts to achieve long-lasting peace. The movement also acted as a social forum for sharing information and ideas on how to better achieve peace and encourage the involvement of women in the process of reconstruction of the country (Elsawi, 2011).

Elsawi (2011), adds that SWEP’s strategies for peace involved tools and approaches that included, advocating for the inclusion of women in all sectors of the society, training of members and the public in conflict resolution mechanisms and mediation processes, raising awareness and
sharing information. The movement established information sharing centers in all its regions. It was also involved in advocacy and publicity strategies through newsletters that were published quarterly and the creation of websites. These approaches have helped the movement reach a wider audience and sensitize people on the need for peace and most importantly the need to include women in peace processes. SWEP’s role became even more profound with the signing of the CPA.

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 propelled the argument of women’s participation in the political realm. The agreement stipulates a twenty-five per cent affirmative action for women’s representation in all levels of government, hence, increasing women participation in decision making including in matters pertaining to conflict resolution. In terms of women’s participation in policy formulation, implementation and governance, women’s involvement is yet to be seen on a large scale. Despite the provisions of the CPA, women are still marginalized in politics and ultimately decision-making with regard to conflict resolution in South Sudan (SSWEN, 2014).

South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN) is a non-profit organization with a mission to empower Sudanese women both in South Sudan and Diaspora through the formulation of policies that promote women’s rights, education, policy advocacy, and organizational development (SSWEN, 2014). Such empowerment seeks to ensure that women achieve gender, economic and social justice as well as human rights in all spheres. While advocating for women’s rights, SSWEN seeks to raise sensitization among local, national and international leaders with regards to the situation facing South Sudanese women (SSWEN, 2014).

The South Sudan Human Rights Advocacy (SSHURSA) also advocates for a democratic and human rights country hence advocating for women’s rights. It monitors, documents and publishes the human rights status in South Sudan and propagates public sensitization on their
fundamental rights and freedoms, good governance, rule of law and democracy (SSHURSA, 2015).

Women for Women International (2015), an organization that advocates for women’s rights focuses on empowering women in a bid to ensure that they actively participate in different spheres in their nation. Furthermore, it empowers women’s skills and abilities thereby enabling them to influence their homes and communities positively. This acts as a mode of advocating for women’s rights through women sustainability and independence (Women for Women International, 2015). Sudanese women place high priority on employment and this reflects the essential role of economic empowerment in the country so as to aid in post conflict reconstruction and hence contribute to South Sudan’s stability and security (Alam, 2014).

Unfortunately, due to the conflicts that have been prevalent in South Sudan, women have often faced challenges since they are viewed as subjects hence barring them from seizing business opportunities (Atil, 2010). Zuckerman & Greenberg (2004) argue that the involvement of women in the formal and informal sectors in South Sudan is limited due to the high levels of illiteracy that are prevalent among the women. This often affects women participation in conflict resolution in the political realm. Moreover, high rates of unemployment affect women. This is because women are lower income earners at all income levels in comparison to their male counterparts. Therefore, generally women’s participation in politics, development and ultimately conflict resolution is minimal (Zuckerman & Greenberg, 2004).

By examining the available literature a lot of research has been done concerning women’s participation in conflict resolution and peace processes, however, little is available on the dimensions of such participation and especially with reference to South Sudan. This is the gap that this study fills by identifying the dimensions of women’s participation and the part they play in
conflict resolution. In the upcoming chapters, this study provides a detailed analysis of the context of the South Sudan conflict, the role of women in the resolution of the conflict and the dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In analyzing the dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution, this research relied predominantly on the qualitative research design. Qualitative research design gives an insight of the problem by understanding the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. This helps in development of ideas (Wyse, 2011). This research design was most suitable for this research because it is flexible and it helps to get a better understanding of the topic of study by identifying the underlying issues affecting women’s participation in conflict resolution and the challenges they face hence narrowing down the search to achieve the goals of the study.

This study was a desktop research. Secondary sources such as books, reports, academic journals and newspaper articles, working papers, documents from the United Nations and other trustworthy organizations and relevant online sources were consulted and used as secondary data for the research. All sources used in this research are acknowledged and cited in the references to avoid plagiarism of other writer’s and scholar’s intellectual content and to uphold the code of ethics of research work.
1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis comprises of five chapters with the introduction and conclusion of the items studied.

**Chapter One** is the general introduction and it covers the background to the study, statement of the research problem, objectives, research questions, the hypothesis, and the justification of the study. It also provides the theoretical framework and the literature review which reviews past literature on conflict resolution and peace processes and women’s participation in conflict and conflict resolution so as to identify the gap of knowledge in this area. The literature review section begins with a conceptualization of conflict resolution. It also looks at conflict resolution in South Sudan and women’s involvement in the resolution of conflict. The chapter concludes with the methodology of the study.

**Chapter Two** contextualizes the conflict in South Sudan by looking at the genesis of the conflict, the causes, the dynamics and the context of the conflict. The chapter further gives an understanding of the actors involved in the conflict and the impact of the conflict in South Sudan.

**Chapter three** examines the role of women in conflict and the impact of the conflict on the women of South Sudan.

**Chapter four** gives an insight on the extent to which women have been involved in peace processes. It analyzes the dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution in South Sudan. The chapter explores the political, social and economic dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution. Here, factors such as policy formulation, governance, transitional justice and security reforms, the maternal role of women in conflict resolution and women’s role in rebuilding the country economically are considered with respect to South Sudan.
Chapter five provides the general conclusion of the study and makes recommendations on how better to improve women’s participation in conflict resolution. This chapter also provides areas for future research.
CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXTUALIZING CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the genesis, the causes of the conflict, the context, the actors and the impact of the conflict in South Sudan. It begins by exploring the origin of the issues that led to South Sudan’s cessation from Sudan to the current issues surrounding the conflict in the country.

2.1 THE BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

The conflict in South Sudan can be traced back to the 1950s under the Anglo-Egyptian rule. In 1956 Sudan gained its independence after which Britain handed over autonomy to the Arab Muslims (Laghari, 2014). According to Mutanda (2015), the root cause of conflict in Sudan can be traced to the division made between the south and the north by the colonialists. The first civil war in Sudan involved Southern insurgents called the Anya Nya who fought the officers of the Government of Sudan in efforts to gain greater autonomy. In 1971, the insurgents combined and became the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) which later became the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement or Army (SPLM/A). The war lasted twenty two years and ended with the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement in 1972. The agreement stipulated that South Sudan had achieved regional autonomy from Sudan (Mutanda, 2015).

A second civil war ensued when the Sudanese government canceled the autonomy agreed on in the Addis Ababa agreement and imposed Sheria law in Sudan (Laghari, 2014). The south was against the new imposed law and due to this, the second civil war broke out from 1983 to 2005 (Mutanda, 2015). In reaction to the imposed Sheria Law, Dr. John Garang, an educated tribesman
from the Dinka community formed the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) whose aim was to fight against sharia law and advocate for secular reforms and to preserve unity in Sudan. The SPLM in collaboration with the Justice and Equality Movement fought against President Al Bashir’s Sudanese government and accused the government of marginalizing the non-Arabs in Darfur (Laghari, 2014).

Dr. Garang succeeded in recruiting and mobilizing fighters from marginalized regions in Sudan. He targeted the marginalized South Kordofan region also known as Nuba which is a region that is home to approximately one hundred non-Arab tribes each speaking its own language and with its own homeland (Mutanda, 2015). The communities in South Kordofan were limited to small land for occupation and were seemingly oppressed by the rule under Al Bashir’s government.

SPLM under Garang documented the grievances of the southern people of Sudan citing issues affecting the people of the south. One of the cited grievances was that the development of the North was proportional to the underdevelopment of the southern region of Sudan (Mutanda, 2015). Other grievances cited were the harsh policies imposed on the southerners and the grabbing of land from the southerners by commercial investors in farming. They also cited that the north was trying to corrode the local culture by imposing the Arab-African culture on them. The economic decline of the south was brought up with Garang and his group citing the south was deplorable yet Sudan was an oil rich country (Mutanda, 2015).

In retaliation to the SPLM, the Sudanese central government created the Popular Defence Forces in 1989 to fight the SPLM (Mutanda, 2015). In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between SPLM and President Omar al- Bashir’s National congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum. The agreement was signed by the Vice President of Sudan Ali Oman and Johan
Garang on behalf of SPLM (Laghari, 2014). The signing of this agreement brought to an end the civil war that had lasted for over twenty years. The CPA provided that there would be a referendum which was held on the 9th of January 2011 to determine whether the south was to become independent of the North. Ninety eight percent of South Sudanese voted for independence and Sudan was divided into two states following the referendum; the north and the south (Mutanda, 2015). South Sudan was granted regional autonomy and representation in a nation power-sharing government. South Sudan was given the opportunity to develop the foundations for their own independent government and constitution according to local and international laws (Laghari, 2014).

After its independence, in 2011 the Republic of South Sudan engaged in conflict with Sudan over the border of the oil rich region of Abyei. The two states however came to mutual understanding with the help of the United Nations which deployed the United Nations Interim Security Force to ensure security in the Abyei region (Laghari, 2014). This however was not the only challenge that the newly born country was facing. Internal wrangles within the country and within SPLM due to nepotism, corruption and tribalism would prove to be recipes for yet another civil war but this time within the country itself.

General Salva Kiir was the national deputy of the SPLM and his loyalty to the movement gained him popularity with the people. Riek Machar on the other hand had been handpicked by Dr. Garang to organize and participate in talks to stop the conflict between the people of the Sudan, South Sudan, Kordofan, Abyei and Blue Nile (Deng, 2017). Following the death of Dr. John Garang de Mabior, General Salva Kiir succeeded him and took presidency of the country of South Sudan a move that was widely accepted with no dispute.
The next civil conflict in the new Republic of South Sudan can be traced to April 2013 when South Sudanese President Salva Kiir conducted a cabinet reshuffle which saw a number of key ministers within the government dropped from the cabinet among them Riek Machar (Mutanda, 2015). The reshuffle was aimed at saving resources to be used for the improvement of infrastructure and for basic service delivery. Instead, political rivalries were created and tensions arose within SPLM. According to Mutanda (2015), Vice President Riek Machar had expressed interest in running for a leadership position in the party and had begun campaigns which he hoped would eventually lead to him assuming the leadership of South Sudan.

2.2 THE ACTORS AND CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

The main actors in the South Sudanese conflict are Salva Kiir and Machar and the forces loyal to each of them. Salva Kiir Mayardit is the first president of South Sudan since 2011 (BBC, 2013). Kiir had actively participated in the liberation movement to fight against discrimination and for the rights of people of South Sudan. He assumed leadership of the SPLM following the death of Dr. Garang in 2005. Riek Machar on the other hand was elected to the office of the Vice President of South Sudan by the SPLM after the death of John Garang. Machar retained his position as vice president until he was removed in a deposition during a cabinet reshuffle in 2013 (BBC, 2016).

The political tension within the ruling party grew and finally resulted in conflict between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir a Dinka and those loyal to Riek Machar a Nuer. President Kiir’s government accused Riek Machar and his allies of attempting a coup d’etat against his government which was lawfully elected, an allegation refuted by Riek Machar (Mutanda, 2015). The ensuing conflict proved to be the perfect opportunity for Machar to announce his intentions
of removing Kiir’s government from power through the use of military force. Riek Machar accused President Kiir of failing to tackle the issue of corruption in the country and for turning into a dictator by tailoring the constitution to concentrate power on him (BBC, 2014). The conflict became full blown and surrounded the issues of power, wealth and tribalism.

As the conflict became more prominent, ethnic factors began to arise. The fact that President Kiir was a Dinka and Machar a Nuer became a driving force for the mobilization of forces loyal to each of them resulting in hatred, massacres and human rights violations (USIP, 2014). The initial underlying source of conflict however goes beyond the ethnic differences between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar. While the ethnic differences might have played a role in fueling the conflict, they were not the main cause of the conflict.

### 2.3 THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

The 2013 civil conflict in South Sudan shook the country’s fragile stability and resulted in South Sudan facing a number of challenges and setbacks. The civil strife resulted in many people fleeing for their lives with many ending up internally displaced and others seeking refuge in the neighboring countries of Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda (Mclaughlin, 2016). Millions of people were internally displaced with hundreds of thousands becoming refugees. This type of displacement is not only detrimental to South Sudan but also to neighboring countries as it causes the host countries to overstretch their resources. The influx of South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia for example has been placing a huge strain on the resources of the country as it attempts to not only sustain itself but also provide for the large number of incoming refugees in the Jewi, Kule and Tierkidi camps in the Gambella region (Mclaughlin, 2016).
Food insecurity has also been an impact of the conflict in South Sudan. According to a report to World Vision by Reid (2017), as of the year 2016, an estimate of over five million people in South Sudan were facing severe food shortage. Displaced families are unable to farm and feed their livestock, others leave everything behind as they flee and therefore end up with no source of livelihood to help them earn a living and feed their families. Children go without meals and face the likelihood of dying of starvation. Those who can access food are faced with the challenge of high food prices. Due to the conflict, relief groups are not able to deliver relief food in remote areas and therefore many people face starvation in the country (Reid, 2017).

South Sudan is facing economic decline due to the conflict. Too many of the country’s resources are used to fund the conflict placing a financial burden of the country. With the displacement of people, most of its nationals are not able to go to work or participate in income generating activities leaving them in a state of poverty and dependence on aid (Reid, 2017). Similarly, due to the conflict, foreign investors shy away from bringing their businesses and making investments in the country in fear of their lives and destruction of their property. This in turn harms the economy of South Sudan as it is not able to generate taxes from the locals to build its economic ties with foreign investors to improve its economy leaving the country in state of poverty.

Like any other country facing conflict, the situation in South Sudan has resulted in the destruction of property and infrastructure. Destruction of schools has made many children to drop out of school resulting in illiteracy with the young girls being exposed to early marriages and young boys being recruited to fight in the conflict (Reid, 2017). In 2015, United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund reported that seventy percent of schools in the Upper Nile region and in Jonglei were not functioning and an estimate of four hundred thousand children had dropped out of school.
after the conflict (Hodgkin, 2016). Hospitals were also attacked during conflict (Reid, 2017). Individual businesses were destroyed and government structures vandalized during the conflict. This destruction deprives the people access to basic services such as medical care, education and from seeking a source of income.

The conflict has also led to lack of access to basic needs and necessary services. Nutrition, sanitation and access to clean water are some of the basic needs that most of the people of South Sudan can no longer enjoy. Most importantly, the lack of access to medical care has been the biggest challenge for the people. Poor nutrition and sanitation contribute to the emergence of different diseases such as malaria as it is the case currently in South Sudan. Women and children are affected the most when access to medical services becomes a challenge. Pregnant women face a great risk when they contract diseases such as malaria and are unable to access medical centers. There has been a rise in cases of women dying of child birth related complications because they were not able to seek medical services during the time of the conflict.

The conflict in South Sudan has resulted in several human rights violations among them sexual and gender based violence, cannibalism and disembowelment of dead bodies (Amnesty International, 2016). The conflict has been characterized by mass killings, torture, abductions and rape. Rape has been used as a weapon of conflict and women taken as trophies by the men fighting in the conflict. This results in unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and discrimination against women (Hodgkin, 2016). Cases of torture and mass killings have also been reported in the country since the conflict began. The international community among them the United Nations and Amnesty International have come forward to condemn the acts that violate the human rights of people in South Sudan.
The conflict has had a devastating impact on the mental health of the people in South Sudan. Many of its people are suffering from trauma and psychological distress as a result of what they have witnessed and experienced during the conflict. Amnesty International (2016) attributes the psychological distress to the mental torture the people experienced by witnessing the killing of their loved ones, the torture they might have undergone in the hands of the conflicting factions, the instances of forced cannibalism and disembowelment of dead bodies, rape and abduction. Witnessing such atrocities leads to depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which affects the whole well-being of a person (Amnesty International, 2016). A call to help facilitate mental healing through the establishment of mental health care centers offering professional health services has been made by Amnesty International.

Hatred and bitterness amongst different communities has been witnessed in South Sudan since the beginning of conflict in 2013. The conflict that was initially caused by power wrangles within the ruling government has over the years escalated to ethnic rivalry between South Sudan’s Dinka and Nuer ethnic communities. At the start of the conflict, government forces killed hundreds of Nuers because they were considered to be loyal to Riek Machar. Machar’s army comprising of mostly Nuers retaliated and carried out massacres against the Dinka ethnic community in Bentiu, Bor and Malakal (Copnall, 2014). The ethnic divide of communities has bred hatred and bitterness that may last for years to come.
2.4 CONCLUSION

The secession of South Sudan from Sudan was a journey that was filled with hope as the new nation prepared to finally enjoy the autonomy that it sort for so many years. It is clear from this chapter that the civil conflict between Sudan now the Northern Sudan and South Sudan was based on control of power and the fight for freedom for South Sudan to free itself from Sudan. The conflict that lasted over twenty years came to an end with the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement which provided for the secession of South Sudan and complete autonomy for the now new state to govern itself once a referendum had been held.

Important to note is that it was the hunger for power and wrangles within the governing SPLM party of South Sudan that was the main cause of the 2013 conflict. Other factors such as ethnic differences in communities and corruption were merely catalysts to the conflict. The conflict resulted in human rights violation, destruction of property, disruption of everyday life, displacement of millions of people, death of hundreds of thousands, mental and psychological torture, poverty, economic decline and high level of insecurity. These effects of conflict are however not unique to South Sudan as they often come up in conflict in different regions of the world. The magnitude however of the impact varies between states, the nation’s ability to bounce back after a conflict is the key for any nation to achieve and sustain successful peace building.
CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON WOMEN IN SOUTH SUDAN

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the roles played by women during conflict as actors that is peacebuilders, perpetrators and victims of the conflict. It also examines the impact of conflict on women in South Sudan.

3.1 THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON WOMEN IN SOUTH SUDAN

In times of conflict, women’s lives like those of men are disrupted. Conflict often results in insecurity, violence, loss of lives and livelihoods, poverty and displacement. The impact of conflict on women is however distinct from that of men in that in times of conflict women are susceptible to acts that constitute human rights violations. In addition to insecurity, poverty and displacement, women and girls are exposed to acts of violence which undermine their human rights and deny them a chance at equality (Agbalajobi, 2009). These include gender based violence, sexual assault, exploitation, early and forced marriages and abductions (GAPS, 2017). Similarly, women lack access to medical centres and medical facilities that lead to either their death or that of their children during child birth. These are some of the impacts of conflict that are addressed under this section.

Displacement of people is one of the impacts in the conflict in South Sudan. As of May 2014, an estimated nine hundred and twenty three women had been internally displaced in South Sudan and thousands had fled the country and had become refugees in neighbouring counties (Perez, 2014). As of 2016, the number of internally displaced people had risen to one million, six
hundred and sixty six thousand and the number of South Sudanese nationals who fled to neighbouring countries as refugees stood at two hundred and sixty five thousand, seven hundred (UNOCHA, 2016). Many of the displaced are women and children. Due to the insecurity in the region, women are forced to flee with their children in search of refuge. According to a 2016 report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), one in every five people in South Sudan has fled their homes since the conflict began. This disrupts their lives as they are forced to leave behind their sources of food, homes and livelihoods in search of safety. The displacement not only leaves them homeless but also results in separation of families. As women escape the violence that comes with conflict, in some cases, families are split and women end up losing their children and family members in the process. UNOCHA (2016) records an estimate of ten thousand children in South Sudan who have been registered as missing or separated since the start of the conflict.

Conflict leads to the loss of lives. Husbands, fathers and sons lose their lives during the violence. With the demise of their husbands, women are left with the role of being the head of the household. They are left to care for their children on their own and instances where both parents have been killed during the war, young girls take up the burden of being the primary care givers for their younger siblings. In a statement made by the UN Women Executive Director in 2014, fifty eight percent of households in South Sudan have females as the heads of the households while an estimated thirty four percent of households are missing one or more members of the family (Perez, 2014).

Women experience psychological and mental strain in times of conflict. This is mainly because of the overwhelming responsibilities they are left with when their spouses go to war or are killed in war. UNOCHA (2016) estimates that about sixteen thousand children in South Sudan
are recruited by the armed forces. Women assume the roles of the head of the household and have to ensure that their children are safe and have access to basic needs in times of conflict. This takes a toll on them as they have to deal with the traumatic experiences they face which not only include mourning for their loved ones lost at war but also adapting to the new conditions of living in the refugee camps. They suffer psychological and mental breakdowns because they lack the proper support system to help them move on in times of conflict. They also face the fear of not being safe as refugee camps are not always safe for them and their children in times of conflict. The new living conditions also create uncertainty among women as they are often not sure of what to expect in terms of safety for their families at the refugee camps (Perez, 2014).

Conflict breeds poverty. In situations of violent conflict, the insecurity leads to the decline in economy of the entire country. This is because people flee their homes in search of safety abandoning their sources of livelihood. Similarly, those who do not flee are unable to access their work places and stations due to the violence. For this reason, many people lack income generating activities to sustain them in times of war. This results in poverty and economic decline. Women in such cases have to leave their jobs and their farms as they flee to safer regions leaving them with no ability to cater for their children financially and hence end up in situations where they have to rely for food from relief organizations. UNOCHA (2016) reports that in 2015, an estimated thirty thousand people in South Sudan faced severe food insecurity which resulted in starvation and ultimately death.

The lack of access to infrastructure such as medical centres and schools is also an impact of conflict that directly affects women. Despite the fact that hospitals and medical centres are granted protection status under international humanitarian law, violence often extents to the health centres and the staff flee for their lives. For this reason women are left with no access to medical
facilities. This is often catastrophic for expectant mothers who need medical services for delivery. According to a 2017 report by the Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), one of five pregnant women die of child birth in South Sudan and one in three pregnant or lactating mothers die due to malnutrition. Death by malaria is also attributed to lack of access to proper medical services by women in South Sudan (UNOCHA, 2016). Schools in South Sudan have been destroyed as a result of the conflict. UNOCHA (2016) gives an estimate of about nine hundred thousand children who cannot access education because one in three schools in the country have been destroyed during the conflict. Girls are therefore not able to access education and thus there is high illiteracy in South Sudan among girls. As a result they are often subjected to early marriages.

The South Sudan conflict has been characterised by severe human rights violations. Rape, sexual assault, gender based violence and sexual exploitation have been witnessed in South Sudan since the conflict broke out (GAPS, 2017). Rape has become a common weapon of war in South Sudan (Awokoya, 2015). UNOCHA (2016) reports that over one thousand three hundred women and girls were raped from the months of April to September 2015, while one thousand six hundred women and children were abducted within the same time period in Ler, Koch and Mayendit counties of Unity in South Sudan. Sexual and gender based violence is also being used in the country to reward fighters for their involvement in the conflict (UNOCHA, 2016).

Sexual and Gender Based Violence is however not just a component of conflict, it may keep reoccurring even after conflict has ended. The impact of the sexual and gender based violence is manifested by the increased number of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and diseases and stigmatization within the community (Ali, 2010). In times of conflict, SGBV is often a consequence of insecurity, discrimination against women, inequitable laws that do not
protect women and impunity. Women are therefore not in a position to access education or gain financial independence (Ali, 2010). Sexual and gender based violence is the most prevalent form of human rights violation against women in South Sudan since conflict broke out in the country.

3.2 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This section examines the role of women in conflict as perpetrator/combatants or victims of the conflict. It also looks at the role played by South Sudanese women as peacebuilders in the resolution of the conflict in the country.

3.2.1 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT AS COMBATANTS/ PERPETRATORS

In various conflicts in the conflict-ridden regions of Africa such as Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Eritrea, Angola and Rwanda women have often been involved as combatants. In discussing the role of women during conflict and post-conflict one encounters glaring differences. In her article on the reintegration of female soldiers in post-conflict societies in Africa, Barthe (2002), observes that during war, women may perform tasks usually performed by men. In some instances, women are themselves soldiers and combatants in the conflict. She notes that once a war is over, women's contributions during the conflict rarely receive recognition, the reason being that the needs and priorities of a post-conflict society are very different from those of a society at war.

While both men and women are encouraged to act out similar roles such as those of soldiers in an army or guerrilla movement during the conflict, post-conflict society encourages difference between the gender roles (Barthe, 2002). The role of women in violence demonstrates that gender is a key component of discourse in conflict and peace. Shekhawat (2015) avers that an examination of theory and practice of women's participation in violent conflicts shows that both conflict and
post-conflict situations are gender insensitive. While carrying out a research on male and female actors and ex-combatants in South Asian conflict-ridden regions of North and East India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, she observed that the conflict scenarios were similar in one aspect, because women were visible in conflict-making but invisible in peace-making (Shekhawat, 2015).

The International Labour Office also noting that little research had been done on the lives of female combatants in violent armed conflicts, examined the dimension of sexual violence against women and whether and how sexual violence and gender-based discrimination has affected the women’s decisions to join armed forces and what role gender-based violence played during and after combat. Their report was informed by and sought to raise national and international public awareness on the problem of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare and its consequences (Specht, 2006). The report found that the issue of women as actors in conflict needs to be explored further due to the ever-increasing presence of women in conflicts across Africa and the world. It claims that war is not exclusive to men, and women are not necessarily always peaceful or always the victims. War is widely understood as a masculine endeavor for which women may serve as victims, spectators or prize (Goldstein, 2003). For this reason, it is important to adopt a holistic approach in considering the reasons for women involved in conflict as combatants and ultimately their involvement in conflict resolution as peace builders.

Cunningham (2003), in attempting to understand the spectrum of women’s involvement in violence, explained the complexity of what drives women to be involved in wars. He narrowed down the several factors that prompt their involvement to domestic/international enforcement, conflict, and social dislocation. Similarly, Shekhawat (2015), notes that the enlistment of women in armed conflict is prompted by mundane and contingent factors, partly as a response to the
conflict situation and partly to the pre-conflict situation and maintains that there are women who commit violence voluntarily, and there are others who are forced to commit violence.

The exclusion of women from conflict resolution and peace processes in all aspects; as combatants and peace-builders is an issue of global concern (Shekhawat, 2015). The International Labour Organization’s (ILO) reports that the process of disarmament and demobilization can only be successful if strong reintegration support including that of women combatants follows immediately after conflict (Specht, 2006). Additionally, Stone (2011) echoes Specht’s argument that due to the failure of many programmes to address the special needs of women, and girls, use of female combatants is very useful in Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).

**3.2.2 WOMEN AS VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT**

The United Nations SCR 1325 continues to be a landmark resolution, providing the first legal and political international framework recognizing the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and the role of women in peacebuilding. The resolution characterizes women’s roles beyond victims to equal participants and decision-makers across peacemaking and peacebuilding issues. Through its 18 provisions, the United Nations SCR 1325 provides a framework for women’s participation in activities such as: negotiating peace agreements, planning humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and rebuilding war-torn communities. The resolution further places firm obligations and accountability upon all member states, the Security Council, and the Secretary-General (SG) and non-state actors to protect women’s human rights as well as to ensure a gender lens across all peace and security initiatives (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010). Similarly, the resolution acknowledges and endorses the role of civil society in all aspects of the
peace process, providing women’s organization and other NGOs formal recognition for their efforts. (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).

Sexual violence has often been used as a weapon of war by perpetrators and combatants in conflicts across the globe where women and girls are shamefully singled out for rape, imprisonment, torture, and execution (Ali, 2007). Terming rape as the most intrusive of traumatic events, United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has documented its use in many armed conflicts including those in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cyprus, Haiti, Liberia, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, Syria and Sudan (UNICEF, 2014).

UNICEF (2014) further reports that systematic rape is often used as a weapon of war in 'ethnic cleansing' where many of the women and girls who became pregnant are later ostracized by their families and communities thus suffering double tragedy. Furthermore, sexual violence against women not only erodes the fabric of a community but is also an attack on her family and culture, especially considering that in many societies women are viewed as repositories of a community's cultural and spiritual values (UNICEF, 2012).

Various measures have, however, been put in place by the International Community as an effort towards the protection of the victims of sexual violence that comes with war and other conflicts. One such measure or mechanism for deterrence of violence against women is the International Criminal Court (ICC) whose jurisdiction extends to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The jurisdiction which covers individuals accused of these crimes includes persons who are directly responsible for committing the crimes as well as those who may be liable with regard to aiding, abetting or assisting in the commission of the crimes (UNICEF, 2012).
The jurisdiction of the ICC and the provisions of Article Seven of the Rome Statute drive state leaders and other concerned public officers to be in the frontline in ensuring such atrocities of sexual violence are not committed within their territories whilst setting up an effective criminal justice system at domestic level to ensure justice is served within the rule of law (Rome Statute, 1999). Finally, the inclusion of rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity against women in the definition of crimes against humanity invaluably adds to the fight against such forms of violence against women (Rome Statute, 1999).

However, the picture still remains grim in some conflict-ridden regions where the rule of law barely exists. As observed by the Human Rights Watch (HRW) in its 2016 World Report, patterns of rape in South Sudan in 2014 and 2015 show that various South Sudanese units have purposefully committed rape and other forms of sexual violence against large numbers of women in many attacks at various locations and times. Despite this, no one is known to have been held accountable (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Due to the sexual and gender based violence that women face, South Sudanese women are fearful of male military peacekeepers and therefore including female peacekeepers in troops helps build trust and reduce the cases of sexual violence against women (Haastrup, 2016).

Pressure is now piling on the African Union Mission in Sudan and the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission (UNAMID) to increase their investigations and public reporting on abuses whilst protecting civilians who live under constant threat from all warring parties in the volatile region. It is necessary for the African Union, the United Nations and other players in the International Community to counter the prevalence of sexual violence which reflects wider discrimination against women and girls across conflict-ridden regions through creation of
awareness, training and inclusion of women in conflict resolution and generally empowering human rights defenders, who cannot defeat this scourge alone (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

In South Sudan, the perpetrators of sexual and gender based violence are men who are part of the official military of the country and those from the militia affiliated with the opposition (Haastrup, 2016). In its aim to reduce the cases of sexual and gender based violence, the United Nations Security Council in its Resolution 1888 of 2009 encourages female peacekeepers to engage with local women and encourage them to participate in building a strong security sector that is responsive and accessible to all women. The Resolution, therefore, urges local women to join the national armed and security forces so as to gain access and positions that can help them participate fully in transforming the security sector of the country.

The victimization of women in conflict has however been used to overshadow their contribution in peacebuilding processes. Women are portrayed as victims in need of aid and this obscures their ability to participate in conflict resolution and peacebuilding which increases the chances of success with the involvement of women (Dahlstrom, 2012). According to Itto (2016), often women’s role and participation in peace negotiations and processes, in general, is overlooked and instead, they are treated as victims of war as opposed to active players and actors in the society.

3.3 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTH SUDAN

There are numerous opportunities for women to access and be involved in peace processes. Women, for example, gain access to official peace processes through international support. In Burundi, UN Women formerly UNIFEM formed an All–Party Burundi Women’s Peace Conference which encouraged women’s participation by bringing together women from nineteen
negotiating parties, IDPs, observers and refugees to take part in the Burundi peace process (UN Women, 2015). In South Sudan, the UN Women has also been actively involved in lobbying women to bring peace through active participation.

Sharing of information is another strategy that offers women an opportunity to participate. By creating an open and transparent communications avenue and strategy an environment of trust is created and women can be deeply involved in peace processes particularly conflict resolution. This method has been employed in the past by Burundian women earning them a strong mandate to discuss their experiences during peace negotiations. South Sudan similarly employed this strategy through SWEP which encouraged the use of an open communication strategy to earn the trust of all people through social media and distribution of informative newsletters.

Women’s experiences in informal peace processes are of high relevance for official peace processes. Due to barriers such as illiteracy, cultural and traditional practices, not many South Sudanese women have been actively involved in official peace processes. They are however quite experienced in informal conflict resolution methods. This offers them a great opportunity to participate in the peace process. They gain experience as agents for change in local peace activism which gives them an opportunity to reach out to other locals to spread the message of peace.

In Liberia for example, women worked tirelessly by using informal conflict resolution means to convince the conflicting parties to embrace negotiations. Women’s groups such as the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) organized public marches in 1991 to advocate for peace and by 1993 peace talks were underway (Bekoe, 2007). The group spearheaded a campaign; the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign, to confront the rebels directly to lay ground for peace talks. The women travelled to all camps to meet the rebels and convince them to
cease fire (Bekoe, 2007). This informal conflict resolution method championed by Liberian women shows the impact of women’s participation in conflict resolution.

Local and national political campaigns also offer an opportunity for women’s participation as they promote the rights of women and the relevance of their participation in peace processes. Such campaigns offer a great opportunity to mobilize large numbers of people from different backgrounds from ethnic, religious or educational backgrounds for the agenda of peace. This kind of support through local campaigns gives women a voice to be heard and to contribute ideas and strategies that are useful for conflict resolution. South Sudan’s SWEP embraced this strategy in its peace building efforts in South Sudan (UN Women, 2015).

South Sudanese women have played significant roles in resolving past conflicts making them better equipped with skills and experiences that are essential in tackling the issue of conflict resolution. Women’s activities in peace processes not only support healing but also encourage reconciliation efforts within the community. Women are often a bridge in divides relating to conflict and hence are strategically positioned to encourage the peaceful resolution of conflict. The war impacts men and women differently and as such, the needs of women and their priorities in peace building are significantly different from those of men.

Despite their eagerness to be involved and to actively participate in conflict resolution processes and peacebuilding initiatives, women have on occasion been unfairly represented and underrepresented in peace processes. Women are particularly well suited to carry out diverse essential peacekeeping duties and tasks such as interviewing victims of sexual and gender based violence. They are also better suited to take up jobs in women’s prisons, nursing and assisting former female combatants and mentoring female police officers (UN Women, 2015). For example
in 2007 in Liberia, the presence of women in uniform appeared to encourage Liberian women to report the sexual atrocities they experienced (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).

### 3.4 CHALLENGES OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In South Sudan, groups of women have been trying to penetrate the barriers of women’s participation. In the past, the women have sought assistance from the international community to intervene in their country’s affair. However, women’s participation has been barred by a number of challenges and obstacles. The challenges identified by this study on South Sudan include, ethnic divisions, absence of a formal place for women at the peace tables, stringent traditional gender roles and expectation, cultural barriers that place peace and security as male dominated agendas, absence of or limited female local leadership positions, high level insecurity and potential threat to the individuals, a disconnect between government obligations, commitments and implementation of the obligation (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).

Further obstacles towards women participation include; high illiteracy levels among South Sudanese women which poses a challenge to their inclusion in peace processes, absence of proper communication and consultation networks between the women’s organizations and the community, lack of resources available to women that may aid even contribute to promoting education and facilitating the training of women. There is also a lack of unified advocacy strategies to advocate for women’s rights to participate as well as other rights of women, cultural impunity and lack of accountability also pose a challenge to their full participation. Other obstacles include lack of proper documentation of crimes against women and limited or no access to victims of conflict (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).
The disconnect between government obligations, commitments and implementation pose a great obstacle to women’s full participation. Even with the passing of Security Council Resolution 1325, South Sudan has not been in a position to fully implement and incorporate the provisions of this resolution into its laws (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010). Female representation in peace tables is not assured as is stipulated by the resolution. Leadership positions for women both at the national and community level are yet to be availed. Lack of training for leadership positions and the reluctance in promoting and supporting women’s leadership also causes major impediments to women’s participation in conflict resolution (Adeogun, 2015).

Gaps between the government and the legislative policies pose a big challenge to women’s participation and need to be closed. Women are often utilized as tools for peace but continue to be excluded from peace talks and decision-making roles in both peace negotiations and the government. Senior government officials often lack the motivation to push the agenda of women’s participation, therefore, there is need to include women in leadership positions hence placing them at a strategic position to push for agendas for women as opposed to women being reduced to political puppets (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).

Familial obligations create time constraints that also pose a hindrance to women’s participation. Participation in peace processes and leadership positions require constant resource investment and commitment in organizing campaigns and meetings and working significantly longer hours in parliament and local government. This ends up being strenuous to women who have to manage family commitments and have to choose between familial obligations and participation in societal and the country’s processes (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).

The absence of resources also poses a challenge to full women’s participation (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010). Due to the high levels of illiteracy amongst the South Sudanese
women, there is a need for adequate resources to facilitate their education and training needs so as to prepare them to take up significant positions in peace processes and in government. The lack of these resources ends up leading to the exclusion of women peace building and leadership positions. Training is needed to address this shortcoming as well as the availing of necessary resources so as to empower and promote women into participating in peace processes.

The absence of functioning consultation and communicating community networks is also an obstacle to women’s full participation. Women are often the victims of violence and face grave insecurity but are rarely consulted in regards to addressing this insecurity or reshaping security structures. Women in organizational networks and community groups use innovative community strategies to address security issues (Dahlstrom, 2012). They are however unable to translate their local knowledge and expertise into national policies hence the need for women’s networks to coordinate with the community women’s groups and offer consultation on national level matters of peace and security (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).

Traditional patriarchal structures and institutional barriers pose a major challenge to women’s participation. In South Sudan, security is still viewed as a man’s world and this intimidates many women who wish to venture in the sector. While the stronger male-dominated institutional barriers pose a challenge, it is evident that women also face the barrier of seeing gender in security as a women’s issue as opposed to viewing it as an essential component of overall security (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010). This type of socio-cultural stereotyping of women and the strict division of labor distinguishing the roles of men in the public and private issues in the country prevents women from participating in officially peace processes.

Lack of attention to former female combatants. The absence of proper care and attention being accorded to ex-combatants poses a challenge for women’s participation in conflict resolution
especially in the capacity of peacekeepers. There is an absence of programs that assist female ex-combatants in facing the world when they return from conflict. Due to stigmatization, they receive from the community in return, some opt out of the peacekeeping system. In many cases, rejection from the local community, minimal training on reintegration skills continue to hamper the reintegration process for the women (Suthanthiraraj & Ayo, 2010).

The high level of insecurity in South Sudan has also been an obstacle to women’s access and participation in peace processes. The insecurity possesses a personal threat to the women. With women likely to face hostility in the course of the peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes, some women opt to avoid taking up such roles and tasks that expose them to the prevailing danger in the country. One of the contributing factors to the making of the decision to refrain from peace processes particularly those involving the cessation of hostilities is that a large number of women are widowed as a result of the conflict. This leaves them as the sole providers for their children.

Women in South Sudan recognize their impact in the society and are pursuing their rights of expression and right to be heard tenaciously. They are actively participating in peace processes by taking a seat at the peace table both as direct representatives of the conflicting parties or as neutral actors through civil society organizations (Elsawi, 2011). Women continue to advocate for the concerns and interests of all the women in South Sudan and the South Sudanese population as a whole. The women have made use of various forums to express their strong desire to find ways of ending hostilities and focus on peace-building and nation-building (UN Women, 2015).
3.5 CONCLUSION

The impact of conflict on women is distinct from that of men. While it is evident that women face challenges similar to those experienced by men during conflict, there are violations and forms of violence that are unique to women. Women are often left to fend for their families as heads of the household when their husbands are away from war or die as a result of the conflict. This not only places a financial burden on the women but an emotional one. The violation of women’s human rights through rape, sexual violence and sexual exploitation portrays that women are most vulnerable during conflict. It is therefore essential that women embrace the culture of participating in conflict resolution because they are best suited to address their needs as they experience them.

Women are not just victims of conflict but also perpetrators and combatants in conflict. Their position as combatants is important especially because they are able to address the issues that affect them during conflict and also offer protection to other women during conflict. In South Sudan, sexual and gender based violence is very common with rape being used as a weapon of war and women being used as trophies for the fighters. In such situations female combatants are best suited to intervene to ensure that the rights of women are protected and that justice and equality for women is upheld during the conflict.

While women’s participation is important, women face many challenges in their pursuit of conflict resolution. Illiteracy has been a challenge as most women are not educated and cannot access education in times of conflict. Young adolescent girls are exposed to early marriage which interferes with their education resulting in many of them dropping out of school. The absence of proper communication channels also possess a challenge to women’s involvement in conflict resolution. Other challenges include familial obligations, existing government and legislative
policies, highly patriarchal traditional structures and lack of proper care for female combatants during and after the conflict. It is however important to note that despite all the challenges women face, there are those who are constantly striving to increase their participation in conflict resolution by coming up with strategies that overcome the existing barriers to their participation.
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYZING THE DIMENSION OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTH SUDAN

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an insight on the extent to which women have been involved in conflict resolution. The chapter explores the political, social and economic dimensions of women’s participation in conflict resolution. Here, factors such as policy formulation, governance, transitional justice and security reforms, the maternal role of women in conflict resolution and women’s role in rebuilding the country economically are considered. The chapter examines the political, social and economic dimension of women’s participation in conflict resolution.

4.1 THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When conflict arises within a certain territory, women are the most vulnerable hence they need adequate protection and involvement in the political affairs of every nation. With the increased empowerment of women across the globe, there has been a dire need to include them in the participation of the political sphere of every country. Efforts to promote gender equality have resulted to the increased desire to ensure that everyone has a stake, a choice and a voice on the issues affecting them. Therefore, this section focuses on the political dimension of women participation in conflict resolution. This analyzed through discussing policy formulation and implementation, governance, advocacy for women’s rights, disarmament of small arms, demobilization, disarmament and reintegration, transitional justice, security reforms and national peace institutions.
Though the international community recognizes equal rights and status of women as a legitimate goal across the globe, the achievement of this goal varies depending on the prevalent cultural settings in a country. Generally, in most African countries, women are not fully involved in political participation due to the existence of a patriarchal society. Additionally, peace building includes but is not limited to the promotion of intercultural tolerance and understanding; women’s empowerment in economic, social, cultural and political spheres; the recognition and respect for Human Rights; and the practice of non-violence (Ali, 2011).

According to the Canadian International Development Agency (2000), gender is a relevant dimension in peace building. This means that for conflict resolution to be effective in any nation both men and women have to fully participate. Such participation is attributable to the fact that different genders are affected by conflict differently. It is important to note that men’s and women’s participation in such processes tend to vary since women often play only minor roles in formal negotiations or policy making. Therefore, political participation of women in peacebuilding mechanisms and decision-making processes is likely to yield better results since there is a common pool of ideas from both men and women (Meier, 2005).

In terms of women’s participation in policy formulation, implementation and governance, women’s involvement is yet to be seen on a large scale. South Sudan being a newly born country in Africa, gender equality and politics are still new issues that require more involvement. The signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972, propagated the increased involvement of women in the political arena and other areas (CPA, 2005).

The other policy formulation that has played a vital role in increasing women participation in politics is the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (TCRSS, 2011). Close
attention is paid to Section 16(3) and 4(a) which states that women shall have the right to participate equally with men in public life, in all levels of government by at least twenty-five percent as an affirmative action. Such an inclusion demonstrates that the South Sudan government is willing to remedy the prevalent gender inequality and imbalances in the political realm. However, the government is yet to attain a significant increase in women’s participation in politics (TCRSS, 2011).

The National Elections Act (NEA) (2012) is also an important policy that promotes women participation in South Sudan’s politics. Interestingly, the Act allocates fifteen percent of the proportional party list to women. This legislation ensures that a certain number of women are elected and involved in decision-making processes and consultations. Further, the Act reserves parliamentary seats for women subject to rotations of every constituency in each election. In a bid to further propagate women participation in politics, the South Sudan government through the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and other stakeholders organized and held a conference known as Mainstreaming Women’s Agenda in the Post-Referendum Arrangements (SSWEN, 2014). This is but one of the projects that South Sudan has embarked on to encourage women’s political participation in peace processes.

Advocacy for Women’s Rights is also a significant issue connected to conflict resolution (UN, 2012). Human rights must be accorded to all individuals irrespective of their societal status. South Sudan is a new country, it is still trying to establish its institutions, structures, and systems. Consequently, there has been constant conflicts between the current government and the opposing party thereby resulting to a violation of human rights. As earlier stated, women are among the most vulnerable groups during times of conflict. In a bid to protect women’s rights in South Sudan, there
has been the formulation of a variety of non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders.

The signing of the CPA Permanent Ceasefire and Security Arrangements on 31 December 2004 sought to propagate a sustainable ceasefire and disengagement of the armed forces in Sudan (Pande, 2008). South Sudan established the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program subject to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 by both Sudan and South Sudan. However, the program commenced serious operation in 2009 and later took a new turn in July 2011 subject to the secession of South Sudan. The only eligible members for the DDR program were members of Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and all other members were outlawed and disbanded (Small Arms Survey, 2009). Through the participation of women in the signing of the CPA, one would infer that women played a vital role in the resolution of the conflict in South Sudan.

The international community support was provided in a bid to propagate disarmament of small arms through an Integrated United Nations (UN) DDR Unit. This unit comprised of the UN Mission in Sudan, the UN Development Programme, the UN Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, and the UN Population Fund (South Sudan, 2009). Additionally, in late 2005, an Interim DDR Programme was formulated with the aim of setting up and building the capacity of DDR institutions and civil society through target groups. The involvement of the international community demonstrates the willingness of South Sudan to enhance women participation in conflict resolution.

In November 2007, there was an adoption of a National Strategic Plan outlining a two-phase approach to DDR in South Sudan. However, this program was faced with a variety of
challenges hence resulting to its irrelevance subject to the promulgation of the Multi-Year DDR Programme (MYDDRP) in 2009 (Brethfeld, 2010). The MYDDRP commenced its operations in June 2009 through processing adult participants in the DDR Programme. Interestingly, unlike in other parts of the world where the DDR program did not work, in South Sudan, the MYDDRP was more economical and fair hence best-suited for the prevalent situation (Brethfeld, 2010). However, the DDR programs were not successful in South Sudan due to the various challenges that were prevalent. Women were not actively involved in the DDR processes. Their exclusion from the programs created an oversight in the implementation of the programs as issues pertaining to women were not addressed and their influential positions as members of the community was lacking hence the DDR programs failed in South Sudan. The lack of success is highly attributable to the secession of South Sudan from Sudan.

Currently, South Sudan is still facing conflict. Such conflict has resulted in unlawful acts such as torture, killings, rape, mutilations as well as forced cannibalism (Anderson, 2015). International statutes stipulate that every individual has a right to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms, right to life, right to liberty and freedom from torture, slavery and servitude (UN, 1948). Therefore, the above crimes need to be urgently and impartially investigated and those responsible held accountable through fair trials. Such actions are likely to promote transitional justice.

Transitional justice is a holistic process that seeks to promote national healing and break the cycle of violence that has been prevalent in South Sudan (Roth, 2006). Therefore, for South Sudan to enjoy transitional justice and security reforms, there is a need for the government to be proactive in formulating a systematic framework that will remedy the injustices arising out of the prevalent conflicts. This is achievable through ensuring that there is no delay in the collection of
the relevant evidence from the South Sudan’s victims. Therefore, accountability is one of the core components of achieving transitional justice in South Sudan.

The prevalent peace agreement in South Sudan has had a positive influence towards putting an end to the prevalent abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights. This is highly attributable to its ability to provide for demilitarization, power-sharing and security reforms as well as outlining core transitional justice mechanisms. Such mechanisms include but are not limited to the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission, a reparation authority and a hybrid court with the help of the African Union Commission (Fletcher, 2009). Such an establishment will boost conflict resolution hence enabling women not to be victims of conflicts but to be peace builders. Subsequently, this will boost women’s participation in politics.

Security reforms in South Sudan are achievable through the involvement of all actors that participate in security matters. Additionally, the civil society in South Sudan also plays a very vital role in the promotion of security reforms (Dialogue and Research initiative, 2015). South Sudan can achieve this through involving the civil society in dialogues and formulating a human security network and mechanisms that will give early warning of conflict. The citizens of every nation play a vital role in the determination of the excellence or downfall of the nation. The involvement of the citizens of South Sudan is important in ensuring that security reform is an inclusive process (Dialogue and Research initiative, 2015). Therefore, for South Sudan to resolve conflict and break the cycle of violence that is prevalent, there is a need to engage all the respective parties involved. Finally, all security apparatus must be subject to accountability mechanisms and democratic controls for security reforms to be attainable.
UN Women South Sudan has made a number of efforts aimed at increasing support for women to enhance women’s effective leadership and participation at the national level and in the legislative assembly in South Sudan. It also encourages gender equality advocate for gender responsive law and policies to increase women’s leadership and participation (UN Women, 2015). Nada (2011) reports that with the signing of the CPA in 2005, saw the majority of activists in women’s organizations take up leadership roles and senior positions in the government of Southern Sudan and within SPLM structures. These positions gave women a greater voice and role in decision-making not only for women but also for the country as a whole (Nada, 2011). Women’s organizations, however, continue to carry out advocacy regarding peacebuilding, elections and articulating women’s priorities. The core national peace institutions in South Sudan which have notable women’s participation are the South Sudan Institute, the civil society, South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN) and the South Sudan Human Rights Advocacy (SSHURSA).

The adoption of “The South Sudan we want”, a seven point agenda on how to implement a gender-responsive peace agreement has been a game changer for women’s involvement in peace processes and especially in politics with over five hundred women responding positively to the agenda (Wani, 2016). This was as a result of the discussions began by the National Women’s Peace Dialogue in November 2015 in response to the September 2015 signing of the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. According to Wani (2016), the agenda’s focus was to integrate women’s voices in the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity and in the implementation of peace agreements. It addressed matters concerning respect for the freedom of expression for women and the media, the filling of twenty-five percent of the quota for
women provided for by the peace agreement. This includes the positions open to women but still not occupied by women in fourteen institutions and bodies of the government.

Consideration of women in security reforms to facilitate ceasefire agreements was also discussed in the forum. Other issues on the seven-point agenda include; gender sensitive training for all members, the inclusion of at least twenty-five percent of women in constitutional reform process, translation and training of people on the provisions of the peace agreement and the inclusion of at least thirty percent of women in institutions particularly those dealing with finance, land review, economic management and resources (Wani, 2016). As of 2014, twenty-seven percent of women held seats in the National Legislative Assembly, however, the twenty percent provided for in the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan of 2011, is not upheld in the post-independence cabinet (Huddock, 2016). Only five of twenty-nine ministerial positions are held by women and fewer women are represented at the sub-national level.

The Republic of South Sudan launched a National Action Plan to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda (Haastrup, 2016). The agenda is a globally recognized framework established in the year 2000 to assist women in using their experiences to inform peace and security in their countries. The agenda focuses on seeking justice for sexual and gender-based violence survivors by prosecuting the perpetrators, including the gender perspective in peacekeeping processes and ensuring full participation of local women’s groups in peace processes.

4.2 THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSION OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

War-torn countries are characterized by poor health, crumbling infrastructure and little or no access to health facilities. In addition, a slump in the citizenry state of the health as well as maintaining the systems of health can contribute to economic volatility, political instability,
infrastructural collapse and human resource scarcity, which are a result of war in a country (Mugo, 2015). South Sudan has been largely characterized by the civil war which has severely affected the country’s stability. Having gained independence in 2011 and it is a resource-rich state, it was expected that the country would, immediately after gaining independence, be on its feet towards economic growth and development. However, the youngest nation in Africa has been marred by conflicts between the President Salva Kiir and the former Vice President Riek Machar especially after the current fallout between the two. Health, especially maternal health and high illiteracy among women and girls have been cited as the key challenges women face in the post-conflict and during the peace processes (Nada, 2011).

Global Health Work Force Alliance (2015) reports that South Sudan faces a severe shortage of all categories of trained human resources for health professionals, including physicians (1 per 65,574 populations) and midwives (1 per 39,088 populations). It further attributes the reliance on inadequately trained or low-skilled workers to severe shortages in human resources for health (Global Health Workforce Alliance, 2015). Many villages have no medicines and clinics especially to provide maternity services. Reports on maternal health in South Sudan have been grim. CARE International (2015) highlights, that even before the current civil war in South Sudan an estimate of almost three hundred women died every day in childbirth. Many women died during childbirth due to weak or lack of health services. South Sudan’s has one of the highest maternal mortality rates of two thousand and fifty-four deaths per one hundred thousand live births (Rau, 2015). Due to the ongoing conflict, chances of improving the healthcare system are severely hampered.

Education is also a challenge for women in South Sudan. A large number of women and girls are illiterate and despite their contribution as peace builders, the lack of formal education limits their abilities to perform to their full capacities and hence participate effectively in different
levels of conflict resolution (Nada, 2011). Illiteracy poses a challenge to communication through written content to women at the grassroots levels. This is, in turn, is an obstruction to peace processes and hence different civil society organizations such as My Sister’s Keeper which is pioneered by women in South Sudan, are taking up the role of educating the women so as to reduce the levels of illiteracy and to empower women to take up more roles in conflict resolution and peace processes (Nada, 2011). The Southern Sudan Ministry of Education has also taken steps of including girl’s education through encouraging enrollment of more girls into primary and secondary schools and has also established four teachers’ training institutions solely for girls. By educating girls and women, more opportunities are created for their involvement in decision making roles such as peace processes. South Sudan’s Ministry of Education, Gender, Child and Social Welfare has taken up the role of encouraging women to seek education in schools so as to empower themselves and better be placed to fight for their rights, defend their freedoms and promote gender equality (Andersson, 2017).

Gender issues in South Sudan are often viewed as non-issues mainly because of the low standing given to women in the society. A training course organized by the International Centre for Transitional Justice in Juba which included a course on gender and justice saw participants respond to the issue of gender as being a western concept aimed at promoting domination of women over men (Nada, 2011). A follow-up training, however, saw the change of perception to one where the participants agreed that gender plays a vital role in transitional justice. Among the reasons cited during the training was the fact that women promote a sense of national belonging which is important in addressing politicized ethnic differences. Noted from the training report was the finding that women’s role in not only biologically replacing generations lost during the war but also reproducing a new nation culturally (Jok, 2011).
Domestic violence is one of the factors fueling violence in South Sudan. It is viewed as a normal disciplinary measure towards wives. In times of violent conflicts, women face violence at the hands of the government military of insurgent groups. Former female combatants and sex workers are most vulnerable to gender-based violence. In an interview conducted by Nada (2011) on 2nd August 2010, Otim Julius, a gender and HIV specialist at UNDP’s DDR Program noted that some former female combatants take up roles in the government while those who aren’t able to are stigmatized and considered to be loose women who bring diseases to the community. Women’s movements in South Sudan are mobilizing in trying to change the outlook of women in the society by encouraging the demobilization and reintegration of women in the society and educating communities against stigmatization of women. Nada (2011) further reports that investments made toward the health and education sector especially for the benefit of women speed up the involvement and participation of women socially, economically, politically and even their involvement in human rights in the long run.

In a focus group discussion, the United States for International Development held in Yei, the results were that war and conflict worsen the situations for women especially culturally (Hudock, 2016). South Sudanese cultural practices and customary laws are discriminatory. South Sudanese culture allows women and girls to be married off early. For this reason, girls drop out of school to start families. The customary law does not give room for women to own property, to access land or any rights to inheritance. Many women depend on farming for sustenance which becomes a challenge for them in times of conflict because going out to farm becomes a security risk for them. With their husbands dead due to conflict, many women end up widowed and unable to provide for their families. Organizations such as Women for Women International have become involved with the training and empowerment of women (Hudock, 2016). They not only offer
psychological assistance on how to deal with the loss of property and loved ones but also encourage women to look beyond cultural and customary practices that hinder their progress and that contribute to conflict. Women from Yei in South Sudan for example, form social support networks to support each other with childcare, farming and house building (Hudock, 2016).

Women in South Sudan are rising and taking up the responsibility of conflict resolution. In Munuki near Juba, fifteen female volunteers formed a Women Peacekeeping Team (WPT) that meets to discuss viable solutions to the issue of conflict and gender-based violence (GBV) (Adeogun, 2015). The meetings are held in the offices of the Non-violent Peaceforce (NP). The first WPT meeting was held in November 2011 and since then, five other teams have been formed in the districts of West Equatorial State and the Central Equatorial State. The groups comprising of former leaders, literate and illiterate women have been involved in peace movements and agree that more women need to be involved in peace processes. They organize workshops to build on the community skills and gain an understanding of GBV, domestic violence, and civil disputes. These women aim to rise up against oppressive and discriminatory cultural norms, traditional and social practices against women. Fordham (2012) states that with assistance from UNICEF, the WPTs are playing a big part in conflict resolution within the spectrums of social welfare and law enforcement both at the national and community levels.

Women Aid Vision (WAV) is one of the civil society groups that have been formed to assist women to deal with social and cultural consequences of violence. Formed in 2009, WAV equips local South Sudanese women with tools to overcome post-conflict challenges (WAV, 2014). Its aim is to have South Sudanese women build a responsible and gender balanced society that is not only accountable but also one that is peaceful, literate, just, free of corruption and one that aims to overcome poverty. WAV advocates for peaceful negotiations to end the conflict.
Therefore, it brings communities together to resolve conflict through traditional conflict resolution methods. WAV has also managed to support women in the establishment of small businesses and has built a multi-purpose center for textile manufacturing to help women be financially independent (WAV, 2014).

4.3 THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Women’s economic empowerment is key to their effective participation in peace processes and poverty reduction. Often when men are involved in war, women take up the roles of providing for the family and engage in informal income generating activities. During conflict, women often find themselves displaced and these circumstances drive them to develop and create new ways of generating income. Only twelve percent of women in South Sudan are employed in the formal sector and even those who are employed earn lower wages than the men (Hudock, 2016). Women are usually not paid for their domestic labor and those who find employment experience great job insecurity as they faced gender discrimination. Women, therefore, suffer significantly in times of conflict because they become the bread-winners of their families.

South Sudan has experienced conflict since it became an independent state, it possesses an auspicious economic growth potential. Such growth potential is highly attributable to its endowment with profuse natural resources comprising of fresh water, oil, fertile soil and workforce potential (Republic of South Sudan, 2016). Despite having such a wide variety of natural resources, the nation solely relies on oil production for its sustainability hence exposing its economy to external shocks. Since South Sudan is a developing nation, business opportunities are many but they are yet to be tapped comprehensively. Currently, there are over one thousand local medium-
sized entrepreneurs in South Sudan. However, what is alarming is the fact that survey shows that women representation in such a sector is less than one percent (Manson, 2011).

Sudanese women place a high priority on employment and this reflects the essential role of economic empowerment in the country so as to aid in post-conflict reconstruction and hence contribute to South Sudan’s stability and security (Alam, 2014). Generally, for a business venture to be successful in South Sudan, the entrepreneur must possess the following basic elements; the ability to access education and or business guidance, build social and business networks, access satisfactory amounts of capital and enforce contracts (Atil, 2010). Unfortunately, due to the conflicts that have been prevalent in South Sudan, women have often faced challenges since they are viewed as subjects hence barring them from seizing business opportunities (Atil, 2010).

South Sudan can be rebuilt economically through the reduction of over-reliance on oil production and focusing on the other natural resources that are likely to boost the economy. This is achievable through public sensitization that will encourage all genders to venture in incentives that propel the nation’s economy (Zuckerman & Greenberg, 2004). Further, in order to fully assess and remedy the lack of women in entrepreneurship, there is a need for the government to adopt policies and programs that seek to empower women. This is attainable through adequate training that will equip and encourage women to venture into high-end job opportunities. Additionally, the government of South Sudan can also identify the talented, hardworking and reliable women and fund them as well as help them in networking. These are women who embrace entrepreneurship and earn a living through involvement in income generating activities such as selling of foodstuffs especially fruits and vegetables which are in high demand in the camps (Huddock, 2016).
The involvement of women in the formal and informal sectors in South Sudan is limited due to the high levels of illiteracy that are prevalent among the women (Zuckerman & Greenberg, 2004). This often affects women’s participation in conflict resolution in the political realm hence hindering gender equality. Further, high rates of unemployment affect women. This is because women are lower income earners at all income levels in comparison to their male counterparts. Interestingly, for most female-headed families in South Sudan, the key source of livelihood is crop farming. More than half of South Sudan’s population comprises of individuals living beyond the national poverty level (UNDP, 2016). Ideally, in South Sudan, family income and poverty is related to the prevalent educational levels of the person heading the household (Ali, 2011). Therefore, to remedy such challenges, there is a need to increase women’s participation in the economic life hence empowering women to participate effectively in both the formal and informal sector.

Economic empowerment of women is fundamental to growth, sustainable development, durable peace building and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Expanding women’s ownership and control also has benefits for their families, communities, and country. UN Women South Sudan aim is to assist government institutions in developing gender responsive policies, strategies and services that will enhance the sustainable livelihoods of women (UN Women, 2015). It intends to do this by providing technical assistance to key government institutions with a particular focus on the agricultural sector which is run predominantly by women. In partnership with others, it also aims to deliver targeted livelihood assistance, social safety net and protection to women and girls who are displaced by the ongoing conflict and living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps. It targets the enhancement of economic initiatives of
women entrepreneurs by providing them with business development services and behavioral skills to promote the growth of their businesses (UN Women, 2015).

The South Sudan government has taken steps to empower women in their economic ventures. The Sudanese Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Agnes Lasuba in an interview with Nada (2011), acknowledged that with the help of the World Bank, the Ministry of Gender in South Sudan has been able to fund small businesses through grants awarded to one hundred and nine women. Similarly, the South Sudanese government launched a women’s vocational training institute in the South Sudan Districts of Aluakluak Payam (Mayom, 2011). However, while these are notable efforts, the government needs to do more to increase women’s role in decision-making especially in decisions affecting the country’s economy. Findings from a research conducted by the World Economic Forum were that women empowerment in economic aspects contributes highly to economic growth. The research also identified that there is a strong correlation between gender equality and per capita gross domestic product (Ricardo Hausmann, 2010).

Civil society groups in South Sudan are also encouraging women to be financially independent and in their efforts to empower women to undertake economic ventures, they are training women on the importance of saving and encouraging them to join saving groups (Huddock, 2016). These groups are aimed at helping women learn how to save together and use the saved money for development be it on an individual or group basis. The groups also issue loans to its members from the collected savings. These groups also assist women in learning how to manage their money and to balance their expenses. Such groups are essential in South Sudan and other countries that are facing conflict because the groups provide resources for the survival of women and their children during the conflict and offer financial stability during the reconstruction.
of the country economically after the conflict (Huddock, 2016). This reduces poverty levels and ensures that there is food and women can sustain their families even in refugee camps.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Much is yet to be seen and experienced as pertaining to South Sudan’s women’s involvement in political, social and economic dimensions of conflict resolution. While efforts have been made by women, the government and civil society groups to increase such participation, such initiatives hardly come to life. It is critical that women participate in conflict resolution processes as planners and designers of gender justice mechanisms; truth commissions, national legislation, as lawyers and judges, and as civil society advocates monitoring and holding the State accountable for inclusive justice reforms and policies aimed at resolving conflicts. Research and studies in South Sudan have highlighted high illiteracy levels especially among women, lack of accessible medical care and facilities, lack of employment, extreme poverty, lack of human resources and infrastructure and inequality of income distribution are the major challenges and obstacles facing women’s participation in conflict resolution politically, socially and economically.
CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.0 CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the conclusion and recommendations on how better to improve women’s participation in conflict resolution. It also provides areas for future research.

The secession of South Sudan from Sudan marked a new beginning and a new era for the South Sudanese people. The autonomy they had sort and fought for was a ray of hope in a rather gloomy past characterized by over twenty years of conflict between the South and the North. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement had provided for a referendum to determine whether South Sudan should be given its independence. The referendum was passed with over ninety five percent of South Sudanese voting for the Secession. After its independence in 2011, Salva Kiir who had succeeded the late Dr. John Garang in leadership of the SPLM in 2005, assumed the office of the president of South Sudan with Riek Machar as the vice president.

The struggle for power within the ruling SPLM party between President Kiir and Machar ignited the 2013 conflict. While power was initially the main issue, other factors such as corruption and ethnic differences especially between the Dinka and the Nuer catalysed the conflict. The conflict has had a huge impact on South Sudan as a country. Some of the effects of the conflict are human rights violation, destruction of property, disruption of everyday life, displacement of millions of people, death of hundreds of thousands, mental and psychological torture, poverty, economic decline and high insecurity. These effects are however not unique to South Sudan as they often come up during conflict in different regions of the world. The magnitude however of the impact varies between states, the nation’s ability to bounce back after a conflict is however key for any nation to achieve and sustain successful peace building.
The impact of conflict on women is distinct from that of men. While it is evident that women face challenges similar to those faced by men during conflict, there are violations and forms of violence that are unique to women. Women are often left to fend for their families as heads of the household when their husbands are away from war or die as a result of the conflict. This not only places a financial burden to the women but an emotional and mental burden. The violation of women’s human rights through rape, sexual violence and sexual exploitation portray that women are most vulnerable during conflict. They often experience depression from violation of their human rights and face stigma from the society for unwanted pregnancies and bear the shame of the atrocities they face in times of conflict. It is therefore essential that women embrace the culture of participating in conflict resolution because they are best suited to address their needs as they experience them.

Women are often perceived to be victims of conflict however, they also play a role as perpetrators and combatants in conflict. Their role as combatants is important especially because they are able to address the issues that affect them during conflict and also offer protection to other women during conflict. In South Sudan for example, sexual and gender based violence is common. Women are raped during the conflict as rape is used as a weapon of war and women are awarded as trophies to the fighters. This makes female combatants best suited to intervene to ensure that women’s rights are protected and that justice and equality for women is upheld during the conflict. The presence of female combatants also ensures that less male militia are deployed in centers where women are located so as to protect women from human rights violations. International organizations such as the United Nations are embracing the role of women as combatants by increasing the number of female combatants deployed in conflict regions through the United
Nations Missions as has been the case in South Sudan since the intervention of the UN in the South Sudan conflict.

The international community has over the years acknowledged the essential role played by women in peace processes. The impact of women’s participation and or lack thereof have also been experienced in several global instances of violent conflict. The magnitude of the essentiality of women’s participation is beyond the matter of debate on its relevance and is now a matter of implementation. The countries of the world need to honor their commitment to encourage women’s participation in their respective countries and this can only be done by implementing the international standards on women’s participation.

The UN has recognised the importance of women’s participation in all stages of conflict and in post-conflict development, with the UN Secretary-General stating that bringing women to the peace table improves the quality of agreements reached, and increases the chances of successful implementation. There is need to strengthen the capacity of women’s groups even before conflict ends. While the virtual absence of women from the peace table is disturbing, women as individuals or part of a women’s movement have played critical roles in promoting inter-ethnic dialogue, providing innovative local solutions and ensuring that they are voices of reason and even protest when heightened pressure has been necessary.

While the progress of inclusion of women in peace processes should be applauded, the realities of women’s experiences of conflict and post-conflict environments reveal continued exclusion, marginalization and limited decision-making power. This is an indication of the gap between advocating for women’s rights of participation and the implementation of such advocacy in peace processes particularly in conflict resolution through the inclusion of women.
While women’s participation is important, women face many challenges in their pursuit of conflict resolution. Illiteracy has been a challenge as most women are not educated and cannot access education in times of conflict. Young adolescent girls are exposed to early marriage which interferes with their education resulting in many of them dropping out of school. The absence of proper communication channels also possess a challenge to women’s involvement in conflict resolution. Other challenges include familial obligations, existing government and legislative policies, highly patriarchal traditional structures and lack of proper care for female combatants during and after the conflict. It is however important to note that despite all the challenges women face, there are those who are constantly striving to increase their participation in conflict resolution by coming up with strategies that overcome the existing barriers to participation.

It can be observed that much is yet to be seen and experienced as pertaining to South Sudan’s women’s involvement in political, social and economic dimensions of conflict resolution. Women, the government and civil society groups have made numerous efforts to increase the levels of women’s involvement, however not many of these initiatives are successful. Women’s participation in conflict resolution is crucial especially their involvement as planners and designers of gender justice mechanisms; truth commissions, national legislation, as lawyers and judges, and as civil society advocates monitoring and holding the State accountable for inclusive justice reforms and policies aimed at resolving conflicts. High illiteracy levels especially among women, lack of accessible medical care and facilities, lack of employment, extreme poverty, lack of human resources and infrastructure and inequality of income distribution have been listed in various research studies as the major challenges and obstacles facing women’s participation in conflict resolution politically, socially and economically.
The inclusion of women in conflict resolution processes particularly in South Sudan is a necessity that needs to be met for successful resolution of conflict to be achieved. Their involvement is essential in all dimensions of conflict resolution be they political, social or economic. To overcome the challenges facing women’s participation in conflict resolution in South Sudan, the study has established recommendations that can be used to better improve women’s participation and how the recommendations can be tailored to encourage and accommodate women’s participation in conflict resolution.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The current peace-building process offers a great opportunity for promoting gender equality most significantly, the position of women in the peace-building process. The society needs to recognize the role of women in all pillars of conflict resolution and peace-building processes in the country. The position of women in peace processes and specifically conflict resolution can be improved only by recognizing their role in the conflict and acknowledging their importance in both the formal and informal processes of peace-building. Involving women sheds more light on how to better understand the causes of conflict and aid in coming up with alternative solutions to conflict.

Long-term conflict prevention and resolution measures are needed to invest a culture of peace which should be implemented through non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms. For example, legal legislations and policies to encourage women’s rights of participation at both national and local levels should be formulated, reviewed and implemented. Such gender equality policy changes will promote women’s involvement through advocating for training and funding of women so as to initiate positive institutional change favorable for women’s participation.
Gender responsive measures, approaches, mechanisms and processes should be employed to promote women’s participation. This can be done through changing and transforming men’s perspectives towards women’s participation in conflict resolution. Training and civil education of the importance of women in conflict resolution can be used as mechanisms to facilitate the transformation of views and mindset. Transforming the views of the men and the society and facilitating public acceptance by civil societies and local governments, offers opportunities for women because their contributions to peace talks will also be accorded a level of respect and relevance. This would be a great achievement towards peace especially to the highly patriarchal and male dominated country of South Sudan.

Women should be encouraged to take up positions of leadership and decision-making roles in the country. This should be encouraged especially in the rural areas where leadership is a male dominated field. Political participation of women offers a great avenue for the women to air out their views and opinions to the public. This increases the chances of the voice of the women and other victims being heard and subsequently such views being adopted in peace initiatives. In this respect, education and training for women should be funded and encouraged to curb the high numbers of illiteracy among the South Sudanese women. Such training will offer women a better chance of advocating for their rights and also familiarize them on how to be actively involved in conflict resolution and more significantly in peace talks.

Funds and technical assistance should also be increased to assist women’s organizations at the local and national level to promote women’s participation in the security of the country more aggressively. Women’s involvement in security reforms, peacekeeping initiatives, and control of small arms and light weapons and disarmament is crucial to the country’s conflict resolution process. Women are often victims of gender-based violence in times of conflict and therefore
consulting women’s organizations on security matters not only sheds light on how to address security issues long term but also creates transparency in the country’s security sector. Training of senior level female security personnel is a good way of increasing women’s participation as such personnel is better equipped with skills on how to handle fellow women in times of violent conflict.

Economic development is an important factor in any peacebuilding process, should be prioritized. Women should be offered more economic opportunities both in the formal and informal business sectors. This not only helps sustain the county’s economy but also offers a source of livelihood for the women who are often the breadwinners in times of conflict. Such trading activities also encourage the country’s healing process as women are able to interact with other women in trading centers and therefore contributing to conflict resolution and peacebuilding is encouraged.

Judicial institutions, mechanisms, and processes should be tailored in such a way that women’s rights are advocated for. Women who are victims of conflict should be able to access justice in the judicial processes of the country. Documentation and prosecution of women’s rights abuses should be supported especially in instances of gender-based violence. For this reason, it is of importance that women’s groups and civil society organizations be consulted in the formulation of judicial reforms so as to secure the rights of women and women’s access to justice.

Women’s participation should also be encouraged by reaching out to non-traditional actors. Peace initiatives pioneered by women’s organization should offer training and advocacy to individuals in the community that do not necessarily fall within the bracket of women. Religious leaders in the community, village elders, and even tribal chiefs can be sensitized on the importance of encouraging women’s participation in conflict resolution. Such sensitization and awareness raising equips them with a better mindset that aims at long terms transformation of perspectives.
towards women. Open and safe spaces for women participation should be created for information sharing and sharing of ideas experiences.

Existing women’s groups and organizations should forge alliances and network amongst themselves so as to promote sustainable networks at both the rural and community level. Organizations that only operate within the urban areas should reach out to women’s groups in the rural areas so as create a greater impact by providing a united front in matters of peace and security. Such networks also create encouragement among the women that there are bigger than their small groups in the rural areas and opens them up to be more vocal in matters affecting them and issues of conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Alliances can also be forged with men by identifying common peacebuilding needs between women so as to offer a united front in meeting the needs. Such needs may include issues dealing with development and security.

The South Sudanese should consult women organizations that are experienced in dealing with issues that affect women both at the local and the national level and have the expertise to formulate gender policies that are non-discriminatory to women. By using experienced women’s groups and organizations the government will gain a better understanding of the concerns of the women and hence formulate gender sensitive policies. The relationship between the government and the organizations should be long-term to facilitate a holistic approach towards women’s needs in the community and in the entire country.

Creation of mentor and mentee programs would also help with the peace process in South Sudan. The programs will aim at giving an opportunity to more experienced female and male mediators mentoring the younger women and men on conflict resolution and peace processes. This will raise a generation of determined women activists and local mediators and also do away with the stereotyping of women based on their roles. This strategy will also encourage more women’s
participation and ensure that women are represented in all types of peace processes be it formal or informal.

Sharing of information on peace processes with women is also essential for conflict resolution and the sustainability of peace. Peace agreements and other documents relevant to the peace process should be translated to local languages that are easily understood by the locals. This ensures that women understand the contents of the agreements and participate as agents of peace in peace processes. It also ensures that women who are not conversant with the English language are constantly informed through their indigenous languages that their rights are being advocated for and that their issues are being addressed so that they can offer support to other women peace and human rights activists.

Civil society groups and women’s organizations should be actively involved in peace processes through monitoring and evaluation. This ensures that the strategies and programs that are formulated are reliable and effective. The groups should be independent of the government so as to allow nonbiased responses during the monitoring and evaluation process. The groups serve as watchdogs to the government so as to ensure that women’s needs are met and that their rights are respected.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programs should be gender sensitized so as to provide for the needs of women. Most programs are ignorant to the needs of girls and women in combat. They are tailored to cater for male combatants and therefore are gender insensitive and promote gender inequalities. Ignorance of the presence of women in armed forces creates an environment suitable for stereotyping. Successful DDR programs cater for the needs of all members of the armed forces including the women. They acknowledge the different roles, responsibilities, and vulnerabilities of women and men and discourage stereotyping. DDR
programs that are sensitive to women encourage women to claim their rights to education, housing, and land and also discourage men from using violence and aggression against women.

There should be coordination between International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and local actors to create a channel of communication between the INGOs and local civil society groups to allow consultation on women issues. This is useful in increasing funding of local initiatives by international organizations. The funding is used to train local leaders and to aid in formulating programs, strategies, and policies that encourage and promote women’s participation not only in conflict resolution but in the entire running of the country be it politically, economically or socially.

South Sudan should make a national level commitment towards the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 to ensure support for women’s full participation and leadership in peace processes. The implementation of this commitment should be monitored and evaluated and institutional and legislative barriers to its implementation removed. The South Sudan government should be transparent regarding its structures and officials so as to ensure consistency in compliance with existing international gender standards. Transparency also breeds trust which is a key component of peace.

South Sudan specifically needs to acknowledge the role played by women in the country’s recurring conflict and its failure of achieving peace. Several factors need to be taken into consideration through the creation of initiatives to promote and encourage women. Peace cannot be achieved in any country if women, who constitute half of the population are not involved in peace talks and peace processes as a whole. It is commendable that South Sudan has in the past offered a voice to women in peacebuilding, however, the voice offered had continued to fade away with the recurring conflict.
The women of South Sudan, however, have demonstrated their determination to overcome barriers to their full participation in conflict resolution processes. The recommendations offered in this study present key pathways to progress for women in peace processes to overcome the so evident obstacles that are barring them from contributing to peace processes. While South Sudan is aiming towards full participation, the study shows that there is still more to be done towards the realization of full women’s participation in the country. A point to note is that achieving gender justice especially through women’s participation in peace processes is a long-term process that involves political, socio-cultural and economic transformation which can only be achieved through patience, determination, unwavering faith in the process and most of all unshakable commitment.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study identifies the following relevant areas for further research.

1) The economic impact of women’s participation in conflict resolution.

2) The barriers to the global implementation of SCR 1325 on women’s participation in conflict resolution.

3) The cultural and social impact of women’s participation in conflict resolution.
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