

CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
A CASE STUDY OF GULU DISTRICT

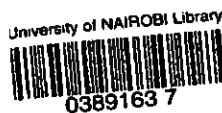
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DECLARATION

I Biira Moreen I declare that this thesis is my original work and it has never been presented to any educational institution for any award.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

Mr. Patrick Maluki

Signature: 

Date: 3/12/2012

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father Benjamin Binagwa and brother Byaruhanga Godwin who have oriented me, right from my childhood, to appreciate the values of excellence in all life endeavours.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of this work has been the result of contributions of many people who directly and indirectly helped me in the process of data collection, analysis and final report findings on the contribution of women in conflict management in the process of peace building in Gulu district. Mr Patrick Maluki my supervisor, I thank him for his advice, endeavours, comments and encouragement throughout the study. Professor Makumi Mwangi, the Director of the Institute of Diplomacy and international Studies, and many other lecturers of the Institute for their time and contribution to this work. The honorable members of Gulu district, Library staff, my colleagues and all other respondents. I owe you all.

Special vote of thanks goes to my family and friends for their spiritual moral and financial support. Finally, I wish to acknowledge God's unfailing love and countless blessings, which has enabled me to complete this research successfully and to see me through my educational career.

ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent to which women contributed to conflict management and peace building process in Gulu district in the period of 1999-2006. The government of the Republic of Uganda in the period of 1986-1999 used force of arms to end the violence in the region caused by the IRA invasion. However in the period since 1999, the government of Uganda chose to negotiate with LRA as the means of ending the violence in the region. Gulu district was chosen as the area of study due to the willingness and cooperation of the stakeholders to participate in the research. Besides it is geographically accessible and there prevails relative peace and security. The research uncovered the statement of the problem of the traditional thinking and practices of society which assumes that women are unimportant and insignificant when it comes to solving problems in society. This undervalued the role of women in contributing to conflict management and peace building processes. In pursuing this theme, the researcher used a descriptive cross-sectional study and qualitative methods of data collection (in-depth interviews). This method enabled the researcher to provide an in-depth description, exploration and analysis of the views on different respondents regarding the contributions of women in conflict management and peace building in Gulu district. A total of 55 respondents were purposively selected and interviewed due to their understanding of the relationship between the role of women and their contribution to conflict management. Findings of the research indicated that women highly contributed to peace building in Gulu district as peace negotiators, counselors, combatants, legislators, lobbyists, activists advocates, decision maker and social workers. The research recommends that the government of Uganda implement the UN resolution 1325 on the involvement of women in peace building process and security.

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ACRONYMS

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
UN	United Nations
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
MPs	Members of Parliament
CPA	Concerned Parents Association
USA	United States of America
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliament Association
NUPI	Northern Uganda Peace Initiative
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
SPLA/M	Sudan People's Liberation Army / Movement
JPC	Justice and Peace Commission
HURIFO	Human Rights Focus
CECORE	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
GoS	Government of Sudan
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
UNMIS	United Nations Peace Keeping Mission

ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
SSLM	Southern Sudanese Liberation Movement
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
AU	African Union

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Study

This chapter examined the historical background of the conflict in Gulu District which was my case study. The conflicts in this region awakened women's participation in conflict management and worldwide.

According to Angela (2001). For the past few decades Africa has probably suffered more from armed conflict than any other continent. Between 1960 and 1998, there were 32 wars in Africa, seven million lives lost and over nine million people became refugees, returnees or displaced. In 1996 alone, 14 out of 53 countries in Africa were afflicted by armed conflicts, accounting for more than a half of all war-related deaths world-wide. The crisis in Democratic Republic of Congo alone has involved a dozen or so states and over 50 million people of Great Lakes Region. This is not a record of which the continent can be proud of. That the consequences of these conflicts have seriously undermined Africa's efforts to ensure long term stability, prosperity, human rights and gender equality for its people.

Conflicts have changed in nature. Interstate conflicts have given way to internal civil wars whose main victims are civilian populations. The tragic Rwandan genocide in 1994 will forever remain one of the darkest pages in African history. The new types of conflicts no longer aim at defeating the opponent's armies but at inflicting pain and humiliation on civilians by destroying their identity and sense of community. They erode

institutions that provide a basis for the sustainability of African societies and undermine societal values replacing them with institutionalized violence. Women become specific targets. Rape, forced pregnancies, sexual slavery and assault have also become deliberate instruments of war. Such instruments destroy the bonds which hold communities together.

These realities make the issues of gender equality and human rights particularly salient features of conflict management. It is therefore vital that attempts at managing violent ethnic conflicts or preventing them, must bring women into the process at an early stage as contributors and active participants in all stages of conflict management.

Gulu district which my area of study, according to Maken (1999) and Turshen (1998), the violence emanates way back from the colonial era, when British colonialists caused conflicts because the peoples of the northern region were against the people of the southern Eastern and Central regions. This demarcation of zoning of regions has been a major source and contribution factor to the conflict in the North.

The British government that colonized Uganda created ethnic imbalances in the security services by recruiting mainly the Acholi on the basis that they are stout and courageous. By the time Uganda got independence in 1962, the Acholi were the dominant tribe in the army. They therefore made themselves believe that their work was to be in the army and even coined a phrase "Monyi Megiwan." This means the army is ours and was derived from the misconception that the Acholi were the best fighters. Given the turbulent

political history of Uganda that brought the current National Resistance Movement (NRM) to power in 1986 after ousting Acholi generals that were in power ground was now set for the current conflict.

Thus the rise of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) formed in 1987, is a rebel self proclaimed guerilla rebel army operating mainly in Northern Uganda and parts of Sudan. This group is engaged in armed rebellion against the government of Uganda in what is now Africa's longest running conflict led by Joseph Kony who proclaims himself to be the spokesman of God and a spirit medium, primarily of the Christian Holy spirit which the Acholi believe can represent itself in many manifestations.

Trushen, (1998), observes that the violence has caused thousands of deaths among people of Gulu District due to invasions by the LRA. That it has also caused disturbances such as abduction of children totaling to more than 25,000 aged 7 – 17 years. The violence in the area has exposed the people of Gulu District to untold suffering that is mutilating of their body parts, forcing children to kill their own parents; with about 1.6 million people the majority which are women and children. These have been relocated in Internally Displaced People Camps (IDPs) without food security and other basic needs. It has been pointed out by a number of observers that conflict resolution has in its development, conceptualization and methods, been gender-blind (Reinmann, 1999:2002).

Traditionally women are mothers and caregivers to society; they feed and sustain their families, they have since stepped out of their traditional roles and assumed the role of

conflict managers or peace builders and this has been supported by various parties, the government of Uganda, human rights movement, United Nations and Liberal Libertarian theorists.

For example, in 1990 the United Nations Commission on the status for women decided to include “women in international decision making” on the agenda of its thirty-ninths (39th) session in 1995 as the priority theme under the rubric “peace.”

Besides the United Nations Security Council Resolution, 1325 provides that women are involved in peace and security concerns. This provides the basis for studying contributions of women in conflict management involving negotiations, decision making and war. The report (E/CN.6/1995/1, New York, 15 March-4 April (1995).

The government of Uganda also encourages women’s contribution in decision-making and making public policies in its constitution of the Republic of Uganda of 1995, in which it legally and politically empowers women to participate in public policy making, negotiations, decision making, the government of Uganda appointed Betty Bigombe to negotiate with the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and other stakeholders in the conflict in Gulu district (Obong 2000).

However little recognition has been made of women contributions to peace building in times of political disorders and security therefore it should be put into consideration for the role of women in the participation of conflict management as a public policy.

1.2 Background to the Study

In Gulu District, various methods have been applied in an attempt to bring the conflict to an end. In 2000, the Ugandan parliament passed the Amnesty Act as tolls to provide peace and encourage rebels denounce their activities. Since then, it is estimated that the Amnesty Commission has granted Amnesty to not less than 15,000 ex-LRA rebels including abductees. Following the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States found a significant ally in the government of Uganda and quickly declared the LRA a terrorist group and increased military aid to the Ugandan government (Obong 2000), in July 2003, the government of Uganda called upon the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the situation surrounding the LRA. In 2004, the ICC announced that it would undertake a full investigation of the situation in Gulu District.

Despite several efforts to bring the war to an end, overall peace has not yet been achieved. I believe it is because the peace settlement has lacked women participation. In order to transform the conflict in Gulu district, women capacities and skills have to be integrated in this effort in addition to their male counterparts.

According to the Liberal Feminist theory, women have the natural instincts to nurture and hold families. They excel in settling disputes through reconciliation and other aggressive measures (Listre, 1998).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite women's participation in conflict management in the war in Gulu district, their contribution towards conflict management and peace building has been undervalued not recognized or and at times neglected. Women are always denied the right to be part of the decision making process, most men think politics is only for them, that women's work is to cook and give birth to children for their husbands.

The most insidious barrier to women's equal participation in decision making and leadership however is patriarchal stereotypical attitudes towards the specific gender role of women and men. These attitudes have to change within the government and within society and both on the part of men and among other women themselves. Therefore this research sets out to examine the contributions of women to conflict management in Gulu district in order to bridge the gap left behind by traditional mentality and practices of patriarchal society who assumed that women were unimportant.

1.4 The Objective of the Study

1.4.1 The General Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the extent to which women have contributed to peace building process through conflict management in Gulu district.

1.4.2 Specific Objective

The study specifically sought:

- i) To examine the extent to which women have contributed to peace building process in Gulu district?
- ii) To identify the contributions of women to conflict management and peace building in Gulu district?
- iii) To find out strategies through which women contributions to conflict management and peace building process can be enhanced?
- iv) To examine the extent to which traditional roles of women have influenced their participation in peace building process both in Gulu district and the Darfur region.

1.4.3 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions.

- i) What are the contributions of women to conflict management and peace building process in Gulu district?
- ii) To what extent have women contributed to peace building process in Gulu district?
- iii) What strategies are there to enhance the contributions of women to conflict management and peace building process?
- iv) In which ways have traditional roles of women influenced their participation in conflict management and peace building process?

1.5 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study and limitation was confined to the extent to which women contributed to conflict management and peace building in the period 1999 – 2010. It is focused on the contribution of women in peace building in Gulu district through efforts of negotiations, legislation, advocacy, mobilization, counseling and guidance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study explored the challenges faced by women in peace building in Gulu district in northern Uganda. Attention was paid in areas such as the roles they play, the importance they attach to peace building and how they benefited among others. The study hoped to create a vivid picture of women and the peace building process and shed light on areas where help was needed as well as to cultivate appreciation for women and their efforts in postwar reconstruction

The research also benefited many stakeholders including the following.

- (i) International governmental and non-governmental organization involved in counseling and reconstruction programmes of war ravaged areas.
- (ii) Policy makers such as members of parliament, politicians and others who are involved in activities of public policy on women empowerment.
- (iii) References material for researchers and academicians on gender relations and peace studies.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The researcher used the liberal feminist theory to justify women's contribution to conflict management and peace building. The liberal feminist theory holds the view that all people are created by God and deserve equal rights. They believe that oppression exists because of the way in which men and women are socialized, which supports patriarchy and keeps men in power positions.

Liberal feminists believe that women have the same mental capacity as their male counterparts, for this reason they should be given the same opportunities in political, economic and social spheres and that women should have a right to choose but not have their life chosen for them because of their sex. (Morgan, 1970).

Liberal feminists create and support acts of legislation that remove barriers for women, they believe that removing barriers directly challenges the ideologies of patriarchy as well as liberates women. Liberal feminists are responsible for many acts of legislation that have greatly increased the status of women including reforms in welfare, education and health.

The liberal feminist theory explains three general factors that determine the capacity of women to participate in conflict management or peace building. It forwards that while keeping other factors constant particularly the political environment, legislation and culture, women are naturally persistent, friendly and peace lovers (Farag, 2002, Santa, 2004). Hence the framework indicates the thematic foundation of the factors that affect

the natural capacity of women in conflict management. It was conceptualized that if the political, cultural and legislative environment is negative to women, it limits their capacity to participate in public policy making such as conflict management. This is the view of what the theory of radical libertarian feminists holds that “women feminity and reproduction limit their capacity to contribute to society” (Humm, Magge, 1990).

Socialist and cultural feminism is also founded on this belief. If political, cultural and legislative environment is positive, women effectively and efficiently manage conflict situations. This is the model (figure 1) that relates the participatory capacities of women in conflict management.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Farag (2002) traces the capacity of women in conflict management to refer to a women participation or involvement in decision making as public policy. This research adopted this definition to examine the contributions of women in conflict management in Gulu district and the Darfur region.

1.8.1 Conflict Management

According to Nelson and Wright, (1995), conflict management is a process that involves a mapping guide, conflict analysis snapshot of the conflict, identifying key actors, stakeholders issues and relationships, identification of the actors, (external or internal) and third parties. According to Osman Ahmed Hassan (2004), conflict means

professional and non-professional violence that may be physical or non-physical harm involving two or more people.

1.8.2 Patriarchy

Is a social system in which the role of the male is the primary authority figure and is central to social organization, and where the father holds authority over women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege.
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism.

1.8.3 Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Sanson and Bretherton (2001:194) defines conflict as a belief that parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously, also it is defined as the process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concerns of theirs. Conflict can have both damaging and positive effects. Conflict can create suspicion and distrust, obstruct cooperative actions and damage relationships, escalate differences in positions and even lead to violent confrontations, as is the case with the LRA in the government of Uganda. On the other hand conflict can open up issues for analysis, leading to greater clarity and improving the quality of problem solving. It can also encourage more spontaneous and open communication leading to growth in the parties and in their relationship. Deutsch (1973) asserts that whether the outcomes of conflict are negative or positive depends on how it is handled.

1.8.4 Gender

Susan Moller Okin defines gender as “social institutionalizations of sexual difference, and note that much of this is sexual differences is not immutably biological but socially constructed”. (Held,1991:67). Gender also refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationship between women and men and girls and boys as well as relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a given context. In most societies there are different and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter forwards the theoretical framework of the study and reviewed the related literature in six sections. The first section brought forward the concepts and theoretical foundation of women in conflict management. It reviewed the liberal, radical, and socialist feminist approaches. The section examined political, cultural and legislative foundation of women participation in conflict management. The second section examined the role of women in managing conflict in war situations. The third section documented the impact of armed conflict on gender relations in Gulu district. The fourth section relates to gender perspective on peace. The fifth section examined women's traditional roles in society and how these roles have been applicable to conflict management. The six section examined women in conflict management to conflict transformation in Gulu district with reference to Betty Bigombe's peace efforts.

2.1.1 Women in Conflict Management

This section explains the conceptual relationship of women to conflict management in particular and international relations in general. Conflict management parse besides the application of force or violence, deals with the "art and science of conducting negotiations between representatives of groups, (individual), and or states as the other means of continuing with policy (Clausewitz, 1880), Satow, 1917, 1989)."

Conflict management can also refer to the long term management of intractable conflicts. It is the label for a variety of ways by which people handle grievances standing for what they consider to be right and against what they consider to be wrong. Those ways include such diverse phenomena as gossip, ridicule, lynching, terrorism, warfare, feuding, genocide, law, mediation, and avoidance which forms of conflict management will be used in any given situation can be somewhat predicted and explained by the social structure .en.wikipedia.org/wiki/conflict management.

2.1.2 Theories on Women in Conflict Management

The theory of women in conflict management and international relations in particular and social sciences in general holds that women by nature have special capacity to transform conflict situations such as peacekeeping negotiations and war. Farag (2002) traces the capacity of women in conflict management from their nature. He also recognizes some limitations to this capacity, hence states: "Nevertheless, women... are sometimes put in "a sensitive position" they do face some professional problems. (www.aucegypt.edu/academic/ anth/anth380/diplomacy.htm).

Nevertheless, Farag maintains that associated with development, women can play a central and active role in the process of image making. In fact, they help shape the image of a modern society by counter-balancing the old negative image of a patriarchal, undemocratic society. This dialectical approach has the merit of explaining how an image can change. The rising rate of women working in the field of peace building has opted for their integration into the world system. The analysis of women working as diplomats

reveals that any of the mentioned categories can function as a force and alter that ultimate image of peace building processes. Women working as conflict managers thus constitute a force that can work positively re-shape the image of a country often depicted as underdeveloped.

2.2 Feminist Theories

Feminist theories have their roots from feminist philosophy that emerged in the United States in the 1970s following only a decade behind the rise of the US women's movement in the 1960s although Simone de Beauvoir published her now highly influential "the second sex" in 1953, it would take at least a decade for women in the US to begin to organize around the injustices behaviour identified, and even longer for feminist philosophers in the US to turn to her work of inspiration.

Feminist philosophers have histories that date back at least to the early modern period and have different genealogies in different geographical regions. Both the history of and particular character of feminist philosophy in other countries and in other time periods varies in important and interesting ways.

2.2.1 Radical Feminism

Freeland (1998) promotes radical feminist thinking on the premise that society must be changed as its core in order to dissolve patriarchy, not just through acts of legislation unfortunately, this type of feminist also attracts a lot of negative media attention creating backlash of feminism. Radical feminist believe that the domination of women is the

oldest and worst kind of oppression in the world. They believe this because it spans across the world oppressing women of different races, ethnicities classes and cultures. Radical feminists want to be free both men and women from the rigid gender roles that society has imposed upon them. They completely reject these roles all aspects of patriarchy, and in some cases, they reject men as well. According to Frye and Sarah (2000), radical feminists emphasize their difference from men. They form groups that exclude male completely. This type of feminist highlights the importance of individual feelings experiences and relationships. Radical feminists have divided into two groups with very different view (Radical Liberations and Liberal (Feminism)).

2.2.2 Radical Libertarian Feminism

Radical Libertarian feminists particularly (Jaggar 1983) believes that feminist and reproduction limit women's capacity to contribute to society. Women should essentially be androgynous. Radical libertarian feminists like to violate sexual norms and believe that women should control every aspect of their sexuality. They also advocate artificial means of reproduction so that less time is devoted to pregnancy and more time is devoted to worthwhile things. They are strong promoters of abortion contraceptives and other forms of birth control.

2.2.3 Liberal Feminism

On the other hand, liberal feminism was most popular in the 1950's and 1960's when many civil right movements were taking place in USA liberal feminists hold the view that all people are created equal by God and deserve equal rights. They believe that

oppression exists because of the way in which men and women are socialized, which supports patriarchy and keeps men in power positions. Liberal feminists believe that women have the same mental capacity as their male counterparts. For this reason, they should be given the same opportunities in political, economic and social spheres and that women should have the right to choose but not have their life chosen for them because of their sex (Morgan, 1970).

Liberal feminists create and support acts of legislation that remove the barriers for women. These acts of legislation demand equal opportunities and rights for women, including equal access to jobs and equal pay. Liberal feminists believe that removing barriers directly challenges the ideologies of patriarchy, as well liberates women. Liberal feminists are responsible for many important acts of legislation that have greatly increased the status of women, including reforms in welfare, education and health. Unfortunately, liberal feminism has been known to only concentrate on the legislation aspect in the fight against patriarchy. It has been criticized for not breaking down the deeper ideologies of society and patriarchy. Also, it has been criticized for ignoring race and class issues or cultural orientations (Lloyd, 2001).

2.2.4 Cultural Feminism

Cultural feminists believe that there are fundamental, biological differences between women and men, and that women should celebrate these differences. Women are inherently more kind and gentle. Cultural feminists believe that because of these differences if women ruled the world there would be no more war and it would be a

better place essentially, women's way is the right and better way for everyone. Western society values male thought and the ideas of independence hierarchy, competition and domination. Females value ideas such as interdependence cooperation, relationships, community, sharing, joy, trust and peace unfortunately, cultural feminists believe that these ideas valued in contemporary western societies.

Cultural feminists are usually non0-political instead focusing on individual change and influencing or transforming society through this individual change. They usually advocate separate female counter cultures as a way to change society but not completely disconnect (Pearsall 1999).

2.2.5 Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminists particularly (Jaggar 1983) believe that there is a direct link between class structure and the oppression of women. Western society rewards working men because they produce tangible, tradable goods. On the other hand, women's work in the domestic sphere is not valued by western society because women do not produce tangible, tradable goods. This gives men power and control over women. Socialists feminists reject the idea that biology predetermines one gender. Social roles are not inherent and women's status must change in both the public and private spheres.

Socialist feminist believes that the way to end this oppression is to put an end to class and gender women must work side-by-side men in all spheres. In order to get anything accomplished, women must work with men, as opposed to ostracizing them. There must

be a coalition between the two to and they must see each other as equals in all spheres of life. In contrast to ideas of liberal feminism which tend to focus on the individual woman, the socialist feminist theory focuses on the broader context of social relations in the community and includes aspects of rally ethnicity and other differences. The research is going to cover the extent to which women have contributed to conflict management and peace building.

2.3 Role of the Women in Armed Conflict

Where there is no peace, there is conflict and it manifests itself in a violent manner and the most affected are the vulnerable. Peace is usually known and thought better by its absence. When economic activities come to a stand still, misery, poverty, violent confrontations and destructions of lives and property force people to seriously transform the conflict (Onenga, 2004).

The role of women in the peace movement the newest approach to peace building places much emphasis on gender uniqueness in the process of conflict resolution (Mbagwu 2001). The majority of persons displaced by war are women and so it is now understood that they could play an important role in efforts to resolve conflicts.

Women are the life givers of the world, therefore have a stake in the world pursuit of peace since they exhibit a high level of perseverance, patience and tolerance in achieving set objectives. Surprisingly women have not walked away unconcerned either because of fear or anger they have been proactive in the resolution. In Mali, Liberia, Nigeria and

indeed other parts of the world like Uganda (Gulu district) women have demonstrated peacefully as mothers to condemn the killings of their husbands and children. But to the dismay of the peace process, women have not been fully included at all the levels of peace making. They are excluded and marginalized, their efforts are rendered invisible.

However, several documents reveal that the roles of women are divergent and complex with the top primary, roles being porters, food producers, and domestic helpers. For the case of Uganda (Gulu district) most reports on women and girls within the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) highlight their roles as sexual slaves and captive wives, and also most of them received military training.

2.4 Women in Conflict Management as Policy

According to Wilson, it logically follows that society survives when smiling social interaction and less aggression dissolves into harmony as opposed to the conflicts precipitated by male aggression or aggressiveness. Closely connected to the above escalations of Emanuel Kant. Kant's metaphor provides one of the strongest grant stands for human valuation especially that of women. In the "observations of the feeling of the beautiful and the sublime," Kant leaves no one in doubt the qualities of women are those that tend towards steadiness and universality so that they can be called "principle' in contrast to "impulse." The "beautiful" is nature's gift to women. Through women, humanity is entitled to arrive at the state of harmony. According to Steven G. Smith, in his interpretation of Kant, the "beautiful" is everything that delights, charms and makes us feel lively and gay – the happiest versions, one might say, of our ordinary selves. In

the words of Carol Bigwood, Frigaray, Ciixous, O'brien, King, Hartstock, Griffin, Daly, Ruddrick are specific examples. These feminists in Bigwood's opinion believe that there is a cultural need to rediscover the nurturing power of a mother. Given the nature of women the world is not a vacuum because women agree to reproduce and nurture.

In 1995, on its 30th session, United Nations Commission on the status for women decided to include "women in international decision-making," under the priority rubric theme. "Peace" the present report, on the participation of women in political life and decision making, focuses on the participation of women in peace and security operations. It states the hypothesis that women's participation brought new elements, values and perspectives to those operations. If women were involved on an equal basis in political and socio-economic life, including decision-making at national and international levels, they would make the qualitative difference, in terms of content and style, to the benefit of society and the achievement of the goals of peace. The report (E/CN.6/1995/1, New York, 15 March-4 April (1995) resolved among others the following as a policy to involve women in national and international conflict management.

- i) The participation of women in military and police takes on particular significance in the United Nations Peace and Security Operations, the main purpose of which is to avoid or diffuse conflict workout peaceful solutions.
- ii) The participation of women in the implementation of the agenda for peace and security and recommended increased participation of women in the United Nations Peace and Security Operations and incorporation of Women's perspectives in all peace-related activities.

2.5 Armed Conflict in Gulu District

The entrenchment of violence in society usually create daily insecurities for women, overwhelming fear, exposure to abuse and obscenities, exploitation, threats, rape, kidnapping or death for themselves, their children or other relatives. Violence against women does not end when the peace accords are signed.

The conflict between the government of Uganda and the LRA arose out of a repressive political climate embedded by the British divide and rule colonialism. It was perpetuated by the post-colonial Ugandan politics in which a politicized North-South divide created a climate conducive for insurgency (Moore, 2003). The conflict emerged in 1986, with the coming to power of the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The regime alienated the people of Gulu district by creating perceptual and actual incentives for rebellion. The NRA was largely abusive towards the people of Gulu district which forced displacements, restrictions on movement and detentions without trial.

Consequently, an Acholi leader Alice Lakwema began a conservative reform movement with a quasi-religious gloss. She combined Acholi and Christian doctrine to form the Holy spirit movement, which fought the NRA's abuses against the people of Gulu district. The Holy spirit movement advanced south until the NRA routed it, just 100 kilometers from Kampala with Alice Lakwema fleeing into exile in the neighbouring Kenya. The LRA quickly took on the heels of her movement by incorporating her Holy spirit followers and some remnants of the previously defeated government army, Joseph

Kony claimed to have inherited the same spirits that possessed Alice Lakwena and so received some popular support as it responded to governments formation and local militias and IDP camps as government allies (Onenga 2004).

In 1994, the conflict morphed into a proxy war that cannot be understood separately from the geopolitics of the Great lakes Region. In 1994, the Sudanese government began to provide military assistance and support to the LRA, while the Uganda government provided military assistance to the SPLA, an insurgency based in southern Sudan. The west especially the UN saw this as a battle front of the war against the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in sub-Saharan African and therefore aided the SPLA through Uganda. In 1999, the Sudanese and Ugandan governments agreed to stop supporting rebel groups in their counties. Consequently, in March 2002, improved bilateral relations between Uganda and Sudanese government surfaced. As such Sudan granted Uganda military access to its Southern border to pursue the LRA. The Uganda army launched “Operation Iron Fist” which forced LRA to flee for its Sudanese bases back into Gulu district (Onenga 2004). This marked the highest period of insurgency in Gulu district.

The war in Gulu district has been a war against the civilian population inhibiting the region. It has been marked by extreme brutality and included sexual abuses, both physical and mental. Abductions into the rebel forces became a central part of the conflict. As a result of lost popularity in regards to the LRA, the insurgency filled its army ranks primarily with abducted boys and girls. The LRA would take its captives (slaves to bases in southern Sudan where the slave labour or abducted girls and women helped support the

fighting force. In mid 2003 the LRA expanded its attacks to include the areas of Lira and Teso in eastern Uganda.

The LRA intensified their attacks which wide spread abductions, killings and lootings. This caused an upsurge of internally displaced people by the end of 2003, there was an estimated 800,000 IPDs. In 2004, the UPDF decided to embark on “Operation Iron Fist II” with the consent of the Sudanese government. The operation has yielded some success and restored relative peace within the Northern region. There have been major development in the conflict.

2.6 Participation of Women Parliamentarians in Gulu District

The participation of women MPs is varied according to the respondents, where as a majority of them have contributed financial and materially through the resolution of parliament, where at least every member paid one hundred thousand Ugandan shillings towards IDPs in Gulu district. The women went an extra mile in contributing sauce pans, clothes, blankets and sanitary towels and appeals on radios were made.

Naraghi Anderlini (2000), observed that whereas many women in conflicts situation have been engaged in “informal” peace activation, only a few women have managed to gain access to formal processes of negotiations. Often these begin in the midst of conflict, and continue through the various phases of the transition to peace. She further stresses that women are typically left out of the official peace negotiations of society and only a

limited number of women have managed to participate in peace talks and in signing peace accords

Akello's ambitions and urge to participate in finding a solution to the North/East conflict stems way back from the time she was made a chairperson of presidential commission for Teso in 1994 after the Teso insurgency she assumed the office of the minister in charge of Gulu district. Akello shifted to Gulu; while there she toured affected areas, organized talks with local women leaders and ex-rebels. She was engaged in radio talk shows with other women MPs such as Betty Aketch, Baboko Bakoru and introduced a programme called "Mother Heart" on this programme one of the main reasons was to disseminate information to the rebels in the bush about the need for the peace, law and order and government's commitment to protect them while out of the bush. Akello observed, "the war has to end, we have to protect our children" some people did not want information to reach people when we talked and after talking, other rebels sent messages and wanted to come out of the bush.

To Grace Akello, this programme to an extent got some LRA people come out of the bush. When asked on how the infiltration of rebels in Teso region had been dealt with, she revealed that it was through establishment of Teso commission. I mobilized and slept with the people, sent messages and items to them. This helped in getting the Iteso rise up and fight the rebels and on the other hand. "It was not easy to access the region." Said Grace.

Aketch, (1994) ascended to Uganda political scene in 1994 when she was elected a constitution assembly delegate. In 1996, she was elected to the sixth parliament and re-elected to the 7th parliament in 2001 in all the three legislative organs she represented Gulu district in parliament. The appointment of Aketch as a minister of state for higher education 2001 – 2004 of security enabled her to fully participate in finding a solution to the conflict in the north. Her district had been at the centres of the northern insurgency. In her endeavor to mitigate the suffering on the people of Acholi, Aketch started a home for the children. This home accommodated the children returnees from the bush, and child mothers. This was done in an effort to address the alarming situation in which children who did not have parents were going through. Some of the appalling situations witnessed were:

Children sleeping on the streets, the girl child being exposed to rape, sexual harassment. Nevertheless, this home provided counseling to the traumatized children who had been abducted by the LRA rebels and turned into child soldiers. Aketch states thus "I decided to establish Gulu Save the Children Organization (GUSCO) to act as a home for the children. I realized children were returning home and they did not have a home. This was a redemptive mechanism for mothers." She had an upper hand in calling upon fellow women MPs through workshops and meetings to take an active role in transforming the conflicts in northern region. Aketch engaged herself in mobilizing communities in the northern region to persuade their relatives to come out of the bush. To Aketch this was a peaceful means of conflict resolution. Aketch introduced the "Duogo Pacho" programme over radios. The term "Duogo Pacho" means "Return Home" This programme targeted

the LRA militias to come out of the bush inform them of their awaited reception in the country.

.Kabonesa (2004) observes that conflict completely changes the role of women in their family, community and in the public domain. It regularly forces women to become household heads and bread winners, taking over the responsibility for earning a livelihood caring for farms and animals, training and being active outside the home-activities traditionally carried out by men. Santa concurs with Kabonesa (2004) when she decries the productive role of women thus; “soon firewood might not be there.” This statement points out that women have a dual role of household resource production and child bearing.

In the wake of war, this has left most women as bread winners, and heads of the family. Santa is right to worry about the welfare of the women in regard to fuel. She further observes that in the wake of the conflict the education sector is completely, disoriented. “Children are displaced from schools and some study under the tree shades.” Girls are mostly affected and the drop rate is too high. In the Primary Leavers Examinations (PLE) results of 2004, Pader district produced only one girl in the first grade.’ On 23rd June 2003, the monitor reported that the conditions in which the girl-child lived were even worse to guarantee her security and being able to go to school. This was confirmed by Bishop Emiritus Baker Ochola while addressing a conference on the theme “current and post conflict strategies for peace” in Gulu district at Hotel Equatorial in Kampala. Santa

ends by asking the government to have a “Grand Programme of redeveloping the Northern region during the post conflict period.

Unicef (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund) reported that one in fifty children in southern Sudan completes primary education. “After 21 years of war southern Sudan ranks as the worst place in the world for many key indicators of women and children’s wellbeing, including its rates of chronic malnutrition, primary school completion immunization and antenatal care.” (Moszynski 2004:13). The education system in Sudan has not been spared by the long civil war that has characteristically led to the exclusion and political vulnerability of southern Sudan (Deng 2003).

For the case of Uganda, many women ever since have advocated highly for the restoration of peace in the region for example Jesca Eriyo member of parliament of Adjuman, Bakoko Bakoru member of parliament Ayivu and Joyo Mindra, member of parliament of Moyo (Parliamentary Hansard 23rd June 2004, 9760).

The most admired peace envoy Betty Bigombe who believes in the theory that unless you know the problems of the people you will never be able to address their problems. This is synonymous to a doctor who before treating the symptoms. In other words “if this assertion could be followed then the conflict in Gulu district could be transformed as well.”

Women members of parliament have played a leading role in peace building in the northern region through their roles as legislatures, mobilizers, lobbyists and advocates. Waliggo (2000) in his presentation on 'political religious conflicts in Uganda, their interpretations and lessons,' observed that lawmakers should be adequately trained to know the history of this country this country and be able to avoid the pit falls of that history by being fair and just to all groups and areas of Uganda in the sharing of power and resources.

He further observes that lawmakers must move from adhoc reactions to finding the very root cause to the conflict and decide to address these root causes and eliminate them. Waliggo cautioned lawmakers to refrain from using the cheap means of bandaging a conflict or thinking it will go with time, silence or prayer and learn to handle each possible conflict on time through the means and skills of medication, negotiation, arbitration and reconciliation, he further observed that women's positive contribution to peace building has become something of great importance in conflict transformation. Women are said to be "active and ingenious participants in almost any aspect of post war recovery and rebuilding." (Sorensson, 1990).

Christine (2004), in her dissertation said "on another level, women have raised awareness on persuasiveness of conflict in communities during war." Howard (1996) observes that conflict prevention activities in this respect of her the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, 32 women organization formed a consortium to help rehabilitate Rwanda society as it were, and launched a national.

The role of women in conflict management is manifested by and Sister Rachael. In 1996, the LRA abducted 139 students from St. Mary's (Aboke). As a result, she followed the LRA to their camps until she managed to convince them to release 109 (Temmerna, 2001). She said "it was a matter of saying the right words at the right time." This quality and determination if encouraged can help in transforming some conflicts we are experiencing today some scholars subscribe to the feminist school of thought which holds that women are socially conditioned to be more peaceful, peace-loving and less violent than men. They further argue that as result of women's intermediary role within the household and community, they believe women have well developed negotiation skills, which could and should be extended into conflict management in national and international arenas.

However, putting all this into consideration the research will critically reveal that women can play key role in handling conflict at any level of occurrence. Arguments supporting the integration of more women in peace keeping are usually based on the conviction that women are naturally more inclined towards peace than men. The argument for more women to participate peace keeping is supported by the contribution of women in decision making. Women decision makers, according to Beil Stein (1995), contribute to the decision making process in terms of "content priorities management style, and organizational regional and global call for social peace and justice within Rwanda."

She further stresses the need of women to stop conflict. According to the agency of UN co-op (1997) the Congolese women under the auspices of the national women's

committee for peace, organized peace debates and prayer meetings, printed posters and produced shirts with strategic messages and distributed them in different communities across Congo. Women sustained demonstrations throughout the country, which "forced" president Lissouba to sign a cease fire agreement with Sassou Nguesso, the then opposition leader, and temporarily ended the conflict.

Hellen and Kristensen, argue in favour of women being integrated in conflict management. They believe women bring a new dimension to the accepted way of doing things which happen to be a male perspective. They further argue that, gender equality within peace missions influence gender relations within local communities. They maintain that gender equality provides results for the mission and its mandate factors that formulate our assumption about the role of women in conflict management usually advanced as "unprogressive" and, therefore perpetuate the stereotype that women are incapable of playing meaningful role in this field. The stereotype that women lack tenacity and mental fitness for the role of conflicts managers is unfounded culture and group dynamics.

The discussion on the participation of women in relation to war and peace predate the recent discussion post conflict reconstruction. In 1975, the Nairobi conference, which marked the opening of the United Nations Decade of women, pointed to the need to involve women in conflict management. The recommendations of the Nairobi Conference forward thus, "Governments should be encouraged to increase the participation of women in peace process at all levels." Women should be part of

delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace and disarmament and establishing a target for the number of women participating in such delegations. (United Nations Economic and Social Council 1993). At the Beijing Conference in 1995, the issue was again raised at the international policy level, when the conference defined it as strategic objective to ‘increase the participation of women in conflict management.’ This research is going to show how women can be good violence transformers than men.

2.8 Gender Specific Effects of the LRA Invasion

Gender which is taken to mean the historical and social construction of role differences between men and women implies a relationship of power, which has a pervasive effect on all areas of behaviour and in all social institutions and practices. Since the conflict war continuum is also a constructed social practice embedded in a resolution, which attempts to engage non-violently with that continuum, if it is to be effective, cannot afford to be a gender-blind as its critics have implied (Reinmann 1999:2002). Although much of it emanates from the field of enquiry outside the peace and conflict research field, there is an extensive literature on war, women and gender relations (Pengo, 1991).

According to the Human Rights watch, women and girls are particularly affected by conflict in various ways. The LRA has committed mass killings, which has kept the northern population especially women in constant state of terror. In February 2005, rebel attacks on camps and settlement increased. In March 2005, civilians including district an attack on Dzaipi trading centre. In May 2005, 14 civilians were killed in an ambush of particularly bad atrocities in the conflict. Comprising 20 to 30 percent of all abductions

by LRA, girls are often forced to become the sexual slave and domestic servants of commanders or other fighters and are repeatedly raped. Girls who evade abduction are still at risk for rape, sexual abuse by invaders attacked in Agoro sub-county, Kitgum conflict usually result with the majority of them being women and children.

Gulu district has the largest number of internally displaced people, with a single camp such as Pabo camp inhabiting 65,000 IDPs. These camps have squalid conditions with basic necessities such as access to safe drinking water, food, medical suppliers and others being non-existent. Such displacement has affected gender relations with women taking up roles that were initially given to men unequal access to essential services and goods. Decisions about food distribution in refugee camps, for example, are often made by international organizations in consultation with male leaders who may have little understanding of the needs and circumstances of women who prepare food (Forbes 1992).

Widowhood is another effect of the consequences that many women experience in situations of armed conflict, widowhood frequently changes the social and economic roles, of women in the household and community while the impact varies widely between communities and societies, widows may struggle to gain access to basic goods and services their rights to inheritance and land challenges and relegated to a position of lesser social status in their community. In some communities widows may not be allowed to keep their children or may have to care for dependent in the deceased husband's

family. Women have organized themselves into groups to fight for their recognition and rights (Lindsay 2001).

2.9 Marginalization of Women in Society, Governance

In many countries, virtually any human rights violation against females is tolerated in the name of culture. Long standing traditions are deeply held religious convictions often restrict girls and women's liberties, incite discrimination and generally perpetuate the evaluation of girls and women in society (ABETO, 2002).

Regardless of women's socio-economic class, religious cultural background, ethnicity, etc. There is one common component of gender that relegates all of them to secondary status in the realm of politics. They all have to execute their political agendas within a historically entrenched male paradigm. Most women initiatives have not been acknowledged and their work towards conflict resolution has not been documented. The privileges that men enjoy due to the patriarchal setting are simply not available for women, therefore, takes place within a context of tacit acceptance of the sex gender division of labour (Tamale, 1999).

Highlighted is gender as an important similarity, a chain that links women across and within the specifics that defines each one as of them yet as different and distinct individual. Their material existence of women and homemakers, no doubt, influences the way that they 'do politics.' Women's experience in the "private" sphere defines their lives in the 'public" arena. The case of Bigombe demonstrates this point yet very well.

For her, the stereotype “soft” qualities of a woman, for example compassion, nurturing and sensitivity, proved to be very appealing to the people and her peace negotiating work (Tamale, 1999).

Women have been marginalized in the governance of society for a long time. Since the pre-colonial period, social institutions did not have a place for women. During colonialism a patriarchal legacy was promoted based on Buganda administrative structure that had, in the past, sidelined women. Women’s low participation partly results from cultural beliefs and low literacy levels among women (Mwaka, Mugenyi and Banya Kyokutamba 1994). Karugiye (1980) argues that western education effectively disenfranchised women who form the majority of the literature class and have largely been spectators rather than active participants in politics.

At independence women were excluded from politics. During the UNLF regime, apart from the appointment of Namirembe Bitamazire as Education Minister, women participation was not felt. Between 1980 and 1985, more women were involved than before as political parties went out to recruit new members however, women were only encouraged to vote, and deliberate effort was made for them to contest (Karugire 1980). In 1986, NRM government established pro-women institutions and policies that encouraged women’s participation in politics. Despite the government’s commitment to increase women’s participation in politics, the number in decision making position still remained low. Women therefore lack a meaningful voice in community affairs while

their problems are secondary in planning. For women, equality has not been realized because political power is shared unequally.

2.10 Women Traditional Roles in Society

There is a relationship between violence in the family and society. Hence, if discord in the family is solved by violence, there is little hope that it will not be applied to problems at a large scale. People who suffer from family violence believe this to be the only way to solve situations. As women in most societies have the active role of passing cultural identifies to children, this places them in a unique position as transformers of a culture of violence to a culture of peace. Women's natural instinct is to nurture and hold a family together (Listre, 1998).

The Zanzibar Conference on Women of Africa for a culture of peace observed the marginalization of African women in decision making had "denied Africa the use of women's talents, experience and skills as agents for peace and development" (Zanzibar Declaration, 1999: Clause 2). At the end of the conference, participants further made an appeal to African governments and parliaments to reduce military expenditures and transfer such resources to the production of basic needs for society.

The Zanzibar declaration highlights the importance of education in establishing a culture of peace and calls for the strengthening of African women's capacities to sensitize, mobilize and capacity the entire continent through measures of dialogue (Zanzibar Declaration, 1999; Clause 16). The conference applauded the important role that women

play in conflict transformation. At the conference, the Director General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, observed thus: “Women and life are synonymous terms” they give life and they are most apt at preventing violence: He further observed that out of a total number of decisions made in the world, women made only four percent of the decisions (UNESCO Press 1999).

The chairperson of the African Women committee for the peace and development Wandera Kazibwe Specioza (former vice president of Uganda) stressed the importance of women in peace building. She further argued that women do not only “seek power for power’s sake, but to improve the human condition’ (UNESCO Press 1999). Both women and men have the potential for peace due to their emotional strength to transcend pain and suffering. Their traditional role in society as ‘peace enforcers’ within the family gives them the natural predisposition of resolving conflict peacefully. Women’s wish to be included in the peace negotiation process is more than a simple demand for numeric representation. It is a demand based on the belief that institutions governed by men are unlikely reflected in the specific interests and views of the female population; however these institutions would reproduce and even reinforce the marginalization position of women in society (UNESCO Press 1999). This research is going to find out about gender perspective or peace.

2.11 Women in Conflict Management in Gulu District

The process of making women visible as change agents has produced a wider army of case studies where women have taken leading roles in peace building, and recent studies

which correct male bias in data gathering and analysis, especially in relation to the participation of women and girls in armed militias and fighting forces (Mckay and Mazurana, 2004).

For many years the role of women in war has been marginally perceived. Recent accounts of war have cast men as the 'doers' and women as passive victims with stories of men in combat continuing to eclipse the active role of women (World Vision Report, 2004). The report points out that armed conflict in Gulu district has been overlooked and misunderstood for the past eighteen years. It is a tragic struggle for power involving women and children, who are used as powers for military and political purposes. The report further observes that the nature and duration of the conflict created tremendous humanitarian, social and economic costs of Uganda. Despite the existence of the national and international laws which guarantee the right of children, violence has persisted to harm them. In fact, over 20,000 children have been singled out for special attention in peace building efforts of international agencies national governments and local civil society organizations in recent years. The unquestioned assumption underlying all these efforts is that "women" in this case, constitute a person with common characteristics that lead them to participate in peace building process (World Vision Report, 2004).

Obong (2000) observes that attempts have been made to end the conflicts through negotiations for example, Nairobi Peace Talks of 1985 – 1986, these efforts have not yielded any positive outcomes. Violence has continued, people continue to die in hundred

and property worth millions of shillings is constantly destroyed and many such evils of similar nature.

Peace agencies and activists should take up the torch for peace with their own families (Enloe 1993). Grace Akello defined the African women as mothers of the continent in her operating remarks, at the conference on the “Role of Women Parliamentarians in promoting peace and security in Africa” she urged women members of parliament to collectively stand for the fate off African women in that she farms, herds etc. Akello (200) further stresses that the African woman is Africa itself. She added that when peace breaks down and insecurity prevails, women are the victims. For this reason, they should come out to prevent violence. The plight of the people in Gulu District has encouraged a growing number of women to participate in civil society at grass root levels.

Across Gulu district women are setting up community –based organizations and joining local NGOs. Against the backdrop of war, they are determined to be involved in rebuilding broken lives and carry forward peace initiative as indicated in the following grassroots peace initiative as indicated in the following peace initiatives.

- (i) Angelina Atyam: she formed the Concerned Parents Associations (CPA) on the 10th October 1996 after the abduction of her daughter. The organization is a NGO concerned with the rehabilitation of abducted children its goals include advocacy, work at the grassroots level, and national and international levels for the safe return of abducted children. The organization also provides the means of

rehabilitation and integration of former abducted children and advocates for the peaceful transformation of the conflict in the region.

- (ii) **Rosalba Oywa:** In 1995, she founded the people voice for Peace (PVP), a local NGO dedicated to working towards restoration of peace in Gulu District. Rosalba, former school teacher and former IDP herself, she decided to use her experience and turn it into positive action PVP helps traumatized victims of the war especially sexually abused women, land mine victims and those that have been mutilated. PVP helps these victims with medial treatment and with income generating activities PVP has had a great impact on the victims, by changing their roles from that of passive victims to active agents of peace. PVP also believes in a peaceful resolution of the conflict as opposed to fighting (The Daily Monitor, July 16, 2005).

2.12 Strategies for Further Inclusion of Women in Conflict Management

In recent years, there has been an increase of women in conflict management. However, these efforts of women involvement in peace building have not been widely recognized. Former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Anan, observed in a speech delivered to the United Nations Security Council thus “Sustainable peace would not be fulfilled without the full and equal participation of women (UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)). Hence, he argued that only did women suffer form the impact of conflict disproportionately but they are keys to conflict transformation. In his speech he further stated that the grassroots of women had provided many strategies for effective conflict prevention, worked tireless and courageously in providing social order. Kofi Anan

reiterated that the ‘World can no longer afford to neglect the abuses women and the girl child suffer during armed conflict neither to ignore the contributions women make in search for peace.’ Thus he recommended that it was high time women were given the voice in formal peace building processes.

The UN Security Council Resolutions, 1325 (2000), provides the basis for strategies towards national and international involvement of women in conflict management and peace building processes. These include the following

- i) Government should increasingly involve women in conflict management, peace building and decision making.
- ii) The government should provide resources to facilitate activities of women in nurturing peace at the grassroots levels. This political will on the part of the government is crucial to encouraging women in their efforts of conflict management.
- iii) Government should train more women leaders to enhance their role in conflict management.
- iv) Government should support and promote women civil society organizations.

In conclusion, documentary evidence indicated that when the political, cultural and legislative environment is supportive to women, they assume societal roles. This was observed in the many activities of peace building that women carried out in Gulu District in the period 1999 – 2005 for the case of Darfur.

For this reason, the research rejected the assumption of male dominance and radical Libertarian feminists who assumed that femininity and reproduction of women limit their capacity to contribute to society. This research is going to cover women in conflict management in Gulu District and the Darfur region and what strategies should be formed for further inclusion of women in conflict management.

2.13 Gender Specific Effects

In Darfur, sexual violence is a pervasive strategy and weapon of war, women and girls are being attacked to dehumanize them, to humiliate their men, and to destabilize their communities. In addition to killing, women have experienced abduction, sexual slavery, rape, torture and forced displacement.

As noted by Roger Klintner, Assistant Administrator, United States Agency for International Development.” These acts raise questions about the country’s long term ability to survive and re-establish itself.” Impunity is the second half of the problem. As noted by High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, “there is no structure in place in Darfur that is able to seek on (Women’s) behalf appropriate justice and healing. As a consequence, there deterrent.....”

In January 2005, the international Commission of Inquiry on Darfur released report to the United Nations Secretary General. The commission found that the government of Sudan and Militias conducted attacks on civilians, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and concluded that these acts could constitute crimes against humanity.

The United Nations Security Council, in resolution 1593, referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) provides an important example of how women can contribute significantly to the judicial process as judges, witnesses, investigators and staff. Their skills and insights should be similarly leveraged and included in the case of Sudan.

In addition to the need for accountability, there will be an urgent need for reconciliation in Darfur. Sustainable peace will depend upon the degree to which the parties can reconcile the past and co-exist harmoniously. Resolution 1595 emphasizes the need to promote healing and reconstruction and encourages the creation of institutions, such as truth and reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa demonstrates how women specifically helped structure the transitional justice process and fostered national healing and reconciliation through their testimony and approaches to managing TRC.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology used in the study of women contributions to conflict management in Gulu district. It comprises of research design, variables, study area, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, research instruments, data collection techniques, data control procedures, (Validity and Reliability) data analysis and limitations to the study.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher used a descriptive cross sectional and evaluative design. The researcher used exploring technique to explain and gather qualitative data on the contributions of women in conflict management and peace building in Gulu district. The qualitative design was used to provide an accurate characterization of the phenomenon under investigation. Primary data was obtained from the field where the research took place.

3.3 Study Area

Gulu district was selected due to its geographical set out, cooperation and willingness of the stakeholders to participate in this research, relative security that prevails in the district and availability of documented literature.

3.4 Study Population

Population sample was taken from stakeholders who were targeted in the following categories; 3 religious leaders, 1 political leader, 1 governmental official, 10 women members of parliament, 25 people living in 25 Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Gulu district, 10 respondents from five Non-Governmental Organizations and the 10 civil society, totaling to 60 respondents.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Respondents were selected using stratified random sampling and purposive methods in each category of stakeholders depending on their availability, familiarity of the statement problem, their participation in the peace building process in Gulu district and willingness to cooperate in the research study.

3.6 Sampling Procedures

The research used random selecting of respondents in the IDPs who were grouped in four categories of 15 people, for the FDGs. two sessions were conducted; one in the morning and another in the afternoon with the assistance of two research assistants and two informants. The informants were used as interpreters due to language barrier. Purposive respondents were selected to give an in-depth evaluation and analysis of the study area.

3.7 Sample Size

Table 1: Sample Size

Categories of Respondents	Method	Information	No.
Religious leaders	Questionnaire	Traditional norms hindering women participation	3
Political leader	Questionnaire	Evaluation of women in conflict management	1
Government officials	Questionnaire	Contribution of women in conflict management	1
Women leader	Questionnaire Face to Face	Gender mainstreaming	10
IDPs	Interview guide	Effect and impact of armed conflict and gender disparities	25
NGOs	Questionnaire	Gender imbalances in conflict management	10
Civil Society Organization	Key informant in-depth interview Questionnaire	Effects of gender imbalances in conflict management	10

Source: Field Study

3.8 Research Instruments

The research instruments that the researcher used in data collection process involved interviews, questionnaire, group discussions, observations and documentary reviews. The following instruments of data collection was used.

3.8.1 Interviews

This instrument of data collection was used to examine respondents on the contributions of women to conflict management in Gulu district, the extent to which women contribution to peace building process in Gulu district; strategies for the enhancement of the contributions of women to conflict management and peace building process, influence of traditional roles of women to their participation in conflict management and peace building process and recommendations in regard to these problems.

3.8.2 Questionnaires

The instrument of data collection enriched the research structured and semi-structured interview schedules upon which respondents will form opinions about the contributions of women to conflict management in Gulu district.

3.8.3 Group Discussions

This procedure was used to enrich the research with information on the contributions of women conflict management. It constituted of male and female respondents.

3.8.4 Observation

Observation method was used to obtain first hand information and emotion-feelings from respondents, the impact of the armed conflict to gender relations in Gulu district.

3.8.5 Documentary Reviews

This instrument was used to obtain on the past experience of women contributions to conflict management and peace building process in Gulu district.

3.9 Data Quality Control

Data quality control refers to the validity and reliability of data and the extent to which the research instruments used measure up to the research (Hussey 1997). It determines the consistence of the items of the questionnaire; hence, the researcher administered structured and semi-structured questionnaires to 35 respondents during a pilot study. The responses of the respondents was tested following the theme of the research, objectives of the study and the literature review. This was done through triangulation, collaboration and probing of respondents. All qualitative data will be put in thematic and exhaustive categories and re-edited on a continuous basis which was coded and entered into a computer whereby frequencies and percentages were generated.

3.10 Data Collection Techniques

Primary data was obtained from the field where the research took place. Data was collected using qualitative method that involved interviewer guide, in-depth interviews

and was evaluated through probing techniques. The research also arranged a focus discussions (FGDs) constituting of male and female respondents.

3.11 Data Analysis

The data was compiled according to the research questions, that was later on categorized and appropriately presented in tables, charts and graphs. The descriptive analysis was used to produce appropriate frequencies such as modes or percentages.

3.12 Delimitations and Limitations to the Study

There was no major delimitations and limitations to the study apart from language barrier. Non English speaking respondents were expected to consume a lot of the researcher's time. For this reason, the researcher used local interpreters that also turned out to be expensive.

The researcher used secondary data i.e. journals, books, reports, research done by others, newspapers which were found in the University of Nairobi library, Nkumba University Library, Human Rights Library in Uganda and the internet.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the findings. The chapter is made up of four sections; section one presents responses to contributions of women in conflict management and peace building in Gulu district, the second section related to the response of gender relations in terms of assuming male roles as household heads, the third section provides the contributions of women in conflict management in Gulu district. Finally the fourth section reports responses to the traditional roles of women in conflict management and peace building in Gulu district.

The analysis of results was conducted using descriptive techniques because the study used research questions. The findings of this study are therefore presented here following the topics of the research questions. Despite the hard work and initiatives by the government of Uganda and the international community to bring peace to northern Uganda region, insecurity continued to prevail in the region. For this reason, more stake holders particularly women should be increasingly involved in the process of conflict management and transformation and peace building as another measure to curb conflict, to add to other measures already in place.

4.2 Contributions of Women to Conflict Management and Peace Building Process in Gulu District

Research question one: (What are the contributions of women to conflict management and peace building in Gulu district?) Findings indicate that the general perceptions of respondents on the contributions of women to situations forwarded were positive. The respondents put women as household heads at 54% to be the highest factor as regards to the impact of war on gender relations, because their husbands were either killed in war during combat or actively engaged in conflict leaving women to head the families with no male representatives.

According to respondents, 32% of women have assumed roles that were initially for men such as trading, educating the children, rebuilding houses and many others. This was as a result of the reduced presence of males as the heads in a family, as most would have joined the forces or been killed during the attacks. Similarly, 14% (table 2) respondents felt that the war reduced the ability of men to provide for their families, this was caused by the loss of land and economic activities such as trade.

In order to come up with exhaustive views on the impact of war, information was collected and expressed in table 2. Table 2 is the summary of the common examples to which women contributed to conflict transformation in Gulu district. Responses were collected from both men and women. In most incidents the men were largely aware of the local efforts women had played towards conflict transformation, for example counseling and guidance, reconciliation, many of them however provided little recognition to the

efforts initiated at the grassroots levels. Much emphasis was laid on those efforts initiated at the national levels such as Betty Bigombe and on women who advocated for peace within the political arena such as those in parliament.

Table 2 Women's Contributions to Conflict Resolution

Grassroots level	National level
Women counseling victims of torture, mutilation and rape.	Betty Bigombe as mediator of peace talks between the LRA and the Ugandan government
Using experiences and turning it into positive action such as formation of local groups to help former victims.	Advocacy and lobbying / legislative, mobilization, moral and financial support
Guidance, awareness	Counseling, guidance and awareness
Women accepting former child soldiers back into the community and preaching reconciliation and forgiveness	Advocacy for peace as opposed to the military option

Source: Field Study

This indicates that apart from supportive political and legislative environment, armed conflict caused women to assume societal roles within and beyond household duties. This observation is widely supported by Onega (2004), Tibalemwa (1995) and Tamale (1999). According to Tibalemwa (1995:229) women continue to play a vital role in conflict management resolution and peace building. Tibalemwa recognizes the role women play

in decision making; however, she underrates the role played by men to compliment that of women.

The role of men and that of women during conflict situations differ as does the impact of conflict. Interestingly these roles are changing from the traditional ones. However women's participation has been limited to the role of counseling their fellow women victims affected by the conflict. Although these are important, the point should be made not to replicate patriarchal division of labour in conflict management intervention by assigning women to the periphery of political debate.

The participation of women MPs is varied according to the respondents, whereby a majority of them have contributed both financially and materially through the resolution of parliament, where at least every member paid a hundred thousand shillings towards IDPs in Gulu district. The women went an extra mile by contributing clothes, blankets, saucepans and sanitary towels and appeals on radios were made.

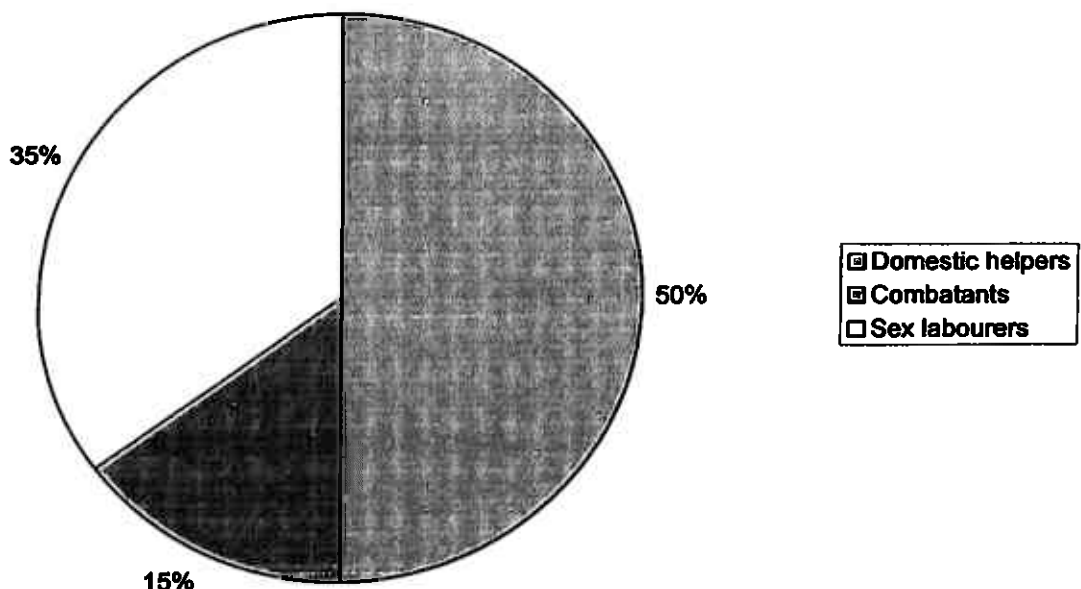
Naraghi Anerliru (2000) observed that whereas many women in conflict situations have been engaged in informal peace activism, only few women have managed to gain access to formal processes of negotiations. Often these begin in the midst of conflict and continue through the various phases of transition to peace. She further stresses that women are typically left out of the official peace negotiations and formal work for the reconstruction of society and only a limited number of women have managed to participate in peace talks and in signing peace accords.

Akello (1994), is a social worker who has represented Katakwi district in both the 6th and 7th parliament and a former minister of state for (etandikwa) and minister in charge of regions. Akello's political ambitions and urge to participate in finding a solution to the North Eastern conflict stems way back from the time she was made chairperson of presidential commission for Teso in 1994, After the Teso insurgency, she assumed the office minister in charge of Gulu district. Akello shifted to Gulu, while ther she toured affected areas, organized talks with local women leaders, and ex rebels. She engaged in radio talk shows with other MPs such as Betty Aketch, Bakoko Bakoru and introduced a program called "Mother Heart". On this program one of the main reasons was to disseminate information to the rebels in the bush about the need for the peace, law and order and government's commitment to protect them while out of the bush. Akello observed "the war has to end we have to protect our children" some people did not want the information to reach the people, when we talked and after talking, other rebels sent messages and wanted to come out of the bush.

4.3 Contributions of Women to Peace Building in Gulu District

Findings indicated that the respondents observed that over 50% of women in conflict times assumed the role of domestic helpers. They agreed that this factor was more dominant in relation to other roles carried out by women in armed conflict. According to respondents, this role was evident in the vast numbers of girl returnees with children. The second most dominant role assumed by women in armed conflict is that of sex labourers at 35% to soldiers and commanders. It was noticed that women also forcibly assume the role of combatants at 15% during armed conflict; (see figure 2).

Figure 1: Respondents Views on Women's Roles in Armed Conflict



Source: Field Study

Although the men commonly stated the effects of the war to lack of freedom to trade and do business, both groups agreed that women suffered more as the result of war. Table 3 is a summary of the responses given by each category. Respondents gave reason for their answers as follows; young girls were abducted and made wives of soldiers and commanders, they bore children in captivity against their will, they were infected with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), they were turned into slaves walking long distances in search for water and firewood, their dignity stripped off, raped and left scared both emotionally and physically.

It was against all these atrocities that women leaders such as Betty Bigombe and other women participated in the process of peace building in Gulu district. She encouraged our people and the rebels to negotiate with the government. She recommended that to achieve this objective there was need for tolerance and patience as part of the negotiations.

Tamale observes that despite the obstacles that stood in Bigombe's way during the negotiations of early 1993, she stubbornly carried out and slowly but surely began to win the trust of many. First, she convinced local populace to refrain from violence, NRA and finally LRA. Tamale demystifies the cultural male dominance and the belief that women cannot participate in conflict management. Tamale further analyses the strategy used by Bigombe as a multifaceted one.

a) Fact Finding

b) Talking to the people

c) Sharing with the people for example, meals, attending local burial ceremonies. Tamale refers to this as the first hand interaction, which helps in building confidence amongst the people one is dealing with. She concludes by asserting ironically, womanhood, which had been a source of resentment for Bigombe's appointment, proved to be one of the most powerful tools in pacifying the Northern region.

Table 3: Responses on Gender Specific Effects of the LRA War

WOMEN	MEN
Disintegration of the family because of abduction	Disruption of economic activities due to the insecurity of the region, and lack of free movement of internally displaced people
Sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS infections	Loss of property and land due to raids by LRA
Rape committed by LRA soldiers which has left many young girls child mothers	Lack of free association due to restrictions imposed on internally displaced people living within camps
Loss of family members, husbands, relatives and children from previous attacks by the LRA	Rape and torture of young girls and women leading to pregnancies and risk of infections
Scarcity of food, clean water and medical supplies as a result of the war	

Source: Field Study

4.4 Influences of Traditional Roles of Women to their Participation in Conflict Management

In this question respondents agreed that women have a natural gift to manage conflicts, women tend to choose less aggressive means of solving conflicts with fairness and justice which manifests itself in the way women deal with the issues of peaceful transformation of a conflict on a larger scale. Figure 5 represents the respondents' views that the level of women's involvement in peace processes are higher that is 62% than that of men which is

38%. Respondents attributed this to women's traditional roles as pacifiers within their families.

There is a relationship between violence in the family and society. Hence, if discord in the family is solved by violence, there is little hope that it will not be applied to problems at a larger scale. As women in most societies have the active role of passing cultural identities to children, this places them in a unique position as transformers of a culture of violence to a culture of peace. Women's natural instincts are to nurture and hold a family together (Listre, 1998).

The Zanzibar conference on women of Africa for a culture of peace observed that marginalization of African women in decision making had "denied Africa the use of women's experience, talents and skills as agents for peace and development" (Zanzibar declaration, 1999: Clause 2). At the end of the conference, participants pledged to promote non-violent means of conflict transformation.

The Zanzibar declaration highlights the importance of education in establishing a culture of peace and calls for the strengthening of African women's capacities to sensitize, mobilize and pacify the entire continent through the measures of dialogue (Zanzibar declaration, 1999: Clause 16). The conference applauded the important role that women play in conflict transformation. At the conference, the then director general of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, observed thus; "women and life are synonymous terms, they give life and they are most apt at preventing violence." He further observed that out of the total

number of decisions made in the world, women made only 4% of the decisions (UNESCO press 1999).

4.5 Strategies for the Enhancement of Women Participation to Conflict Management and Peace Building Process

The majority of the respondents with 85% felt that women significantly participated in peace building in the region. This means that a big section of the people in Gulu district are well aware of women's efforts peace transformation of the conflict. A small margin of the population with 15% however, is ignorant of these efforts (see figure 4 and 5) are graphs of people's views on women's participation in peace processes in Gulu district. In the recent years, there has been an increase in women's activities towards conflict management. However these efforts of women involvement in peace building have not been widely recognized. Former UN general secretary, Kofi Anan observed in a speech delivered to the UN security council thus: "Sustainable peace will not be fulfilled without the full and equal participation of women (UN Security Council Resolution, 1325 [2000]). The UN Security council resolution, 1325 (2000), provides the basis for strategies towards national and international involvement of women in conflict management and peace building processes. These include the following;

- i. Government should increasingly involve women in conflict management, peace building and decision making.
- ii. The government should provide resources to facilitate activities of women in nurturing peace at the grassroots level. This political will on the part of

government is crucial to encouraging women in their efforts of conflict management.

- iii. Government should train more women leaders to enhance their role in conflict management.
- iv. Government should support and promote women civil marginalization.

In conclusion, documentary evidences indicated that when political cultural and legislative environment is supportive to women they assume societal roles.

Figure 2: Respondents' Views on Women's Increase Participation in Conflict Management

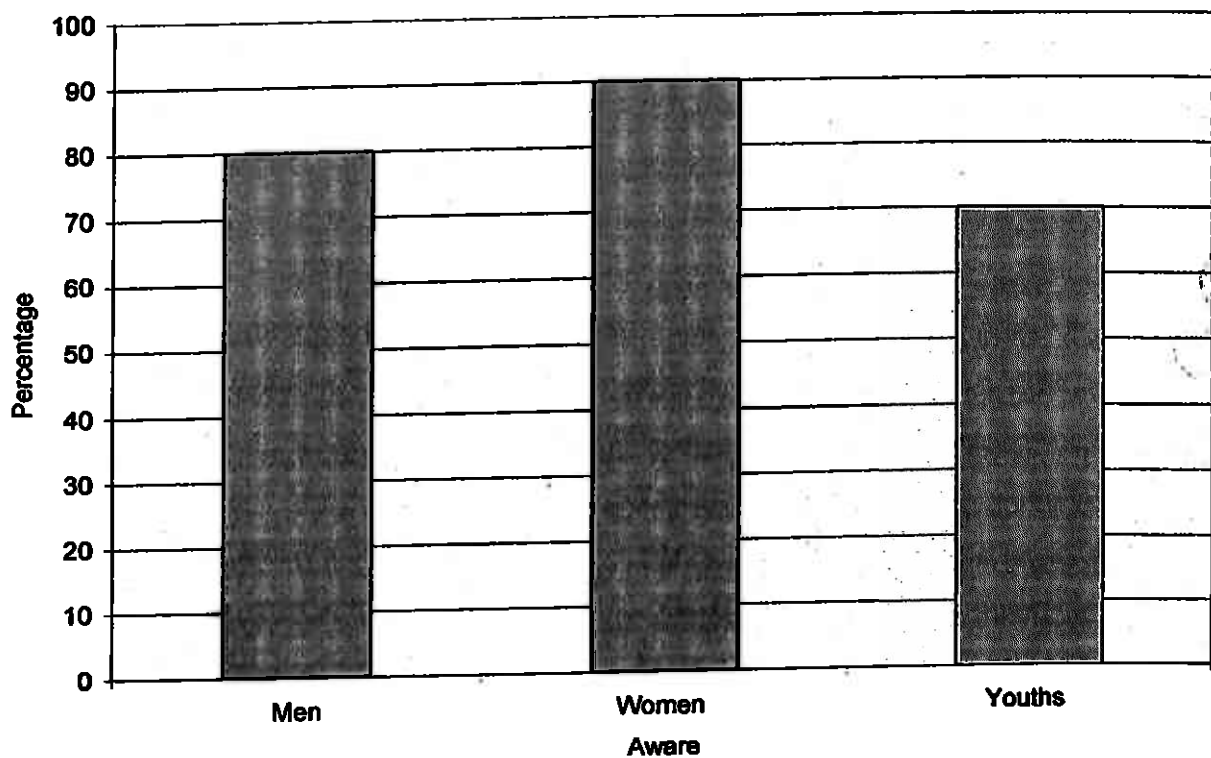
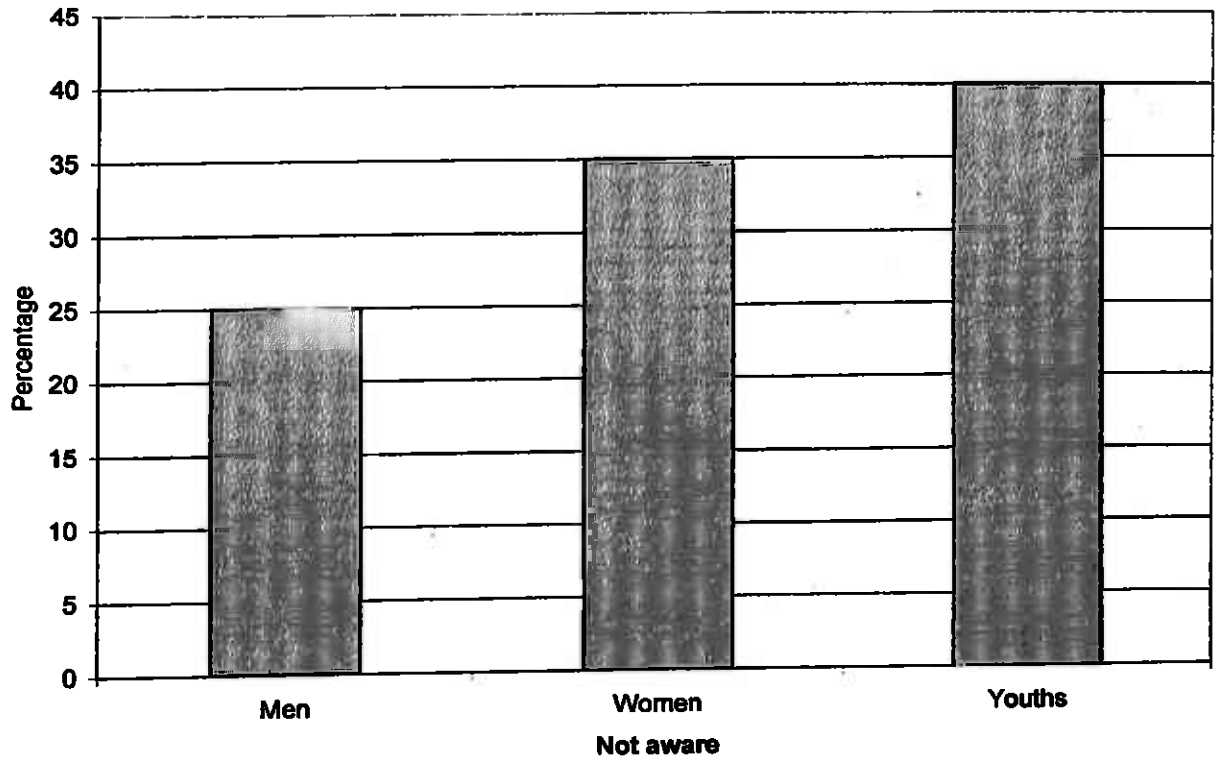


Figure 3: Respondents' views on Women's Decrease participation in Conflict Management



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study set out to identify and examine the extent to which women have contributed to conflict management and peace building process in Gulu district. The major cause of few women contributing in conflict management and peace building in society were found to be cultural whereby women are not important, insignificant, undermined this has undervalued their contribution to conflict management and peace building processes as they decide to sit back and wait for men to carry out the conflict resolution process.

Among other factors that have caused little participation of women in conflict management and peace process in Gulu district was that during conflict, most women and young girls were abducted and made wives of soldiers and commanders, they bore children in captivity against their will, they were infected with HIV/AIDS, they were turned into slaves walking long distances in search for water and firewood, raped, stripped of their dignity, left scared, both emotionally and physically and helpless.

However, women contributed largely to conflict management and peace building process in Gulu district in such a way that; Women became household heads by educating the children, trading, rebuilding houses, looking after their relatives' children and many others because of the reduced presence of males as the heads in the family. Most of them would have joined the forces or been attacked by the forces or been killed during the attacks.

Women also acted as counselors to child soldier returnees, negotiators, lobbyists to see to it that the war comes to an end and those who were abducted and returned used experience and turned it into positive action such as formation of local groups to help former victims by preaching reconciliation and forgiveness.

5.2 Conclusion

Women have been marginalized in the governance of society for a long time, since the pre-colonial period, social institutions did not have a place for women but women have come out to show that their experience in the “private” sphere (mothers, housewives) also defines their lives in the “public” (politics) arena.

The case of Betty Bigombe demonstrates this point yet very well. For her, the stereotype “soft” qualities of a woman, for example, compassion nurturing, and sensitivity, proved to be very appealing to the people and her peace negotiating work.

The privileges that men enjoy due to the patriarchal settings are simply not available for women, but this has now changed because in the recent years, there has been an increased involvement of women’s activities towards conflict management. In addition, laws have been made to include women in conflict management and peace building processes for example, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which provides the basis for strategies towards national and international involvement of women in conflict management and peace building processes.

5.3 Recommendations

The government of Uganda should address cultural and institutional barriers that limit women's participation in public policy making.

The Ugandan government should implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. It provides women the right to participation in conflict management and peace building

All stakeholders should join hands to sensitize, mobilize and reconcile their communities to see the end of the northern conflict.

Activities of NGOs operating in the Northern region should be monitored and coordinated to avoid duplicity.

The international criminal court should compliment efforts by the Ugandan government to find a peaceful end to the conflict through negotiations.

More resources should be allocated to the northern region rehabilitation program.

Provide specialized training on gender sensitivity to military and police forces and civilian staff in advance of development, training courses should be developed immediately and then specialized for a specific conflict area necessary.

Identify, assemble and disseminate the best practices to enhance the role of women in past stabilization and reconstruction operations so that these become fully integrated into future planning, lessons learned should also form the foundation of a course within the standard curriculum of the Foreign Service institute and other educational and training facilities of the United States government.

Require all actors in a given stabilization and reconstruction operation to submit plans to ensure that women are part of the reconstruction process. Report regularly on the assembling of lists of women's organizations and women leaders at all meetings, events and conferences.

Ensure women's participation and the adoption of a gender perspective in international interventions ceasefire and peace negotiations, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform as the survivors of violent conflict women have not only the right but relevant information and knowledge to participate in the design and implementation of programs to re-establish security at regional and national and local levels.

Engage women in justice and reconciliation efforts of war. This area is of particular concern to women given wide spread acts of sexual gender-based violence committed in war time. In addition, to the need for justice, many women are key actors in conducting healing and reconciliation processes noting their concern for their children's future as a strong motivating factor .

Promote women's socio-economic development in post war transitions by including a requirement in contracts implementing agencies that mandates the participation of women in reconstruction projects.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

I am Biira Moreen, I am a post graduate candidate of International Relations at University of Nairobi. I would like to request you to fill in this questionnaire about “The Contribution of Women in Conflict Management: A Case Study of Gulu District.” Your information and identity will be treated with confidentiality and only for purposes of my academic research. You are also requested to follow the guidelines while completing the questionnaire.

Thank you.

APPENDIX II
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Personal Information

1. Name (Optional)
2. Age
3. County.....
4. Gender M F

APPENDIX III
QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick where necessary and fill in the space provided

Factors affecting women capacity to participate in conflict management as public policy.

1.(a) What reasons are there in support of women to participate in conflict management?.....
.....
.....

The role of Women in Conflict Management

1(b) Have women played any roles in peace building process in Gulu district?

Use the scale to tick what is right according to you.

- 1. Very weak
- 2. Weak
- 3. Strong
- 4. Very strong

	1	2	3	4
To what extent have women influenced legislation on peace building in Gulu district				
Have women leaders participated in negotiating				
Is the involvement of women in conflict management in Gulu district necessary?				

1.(c) In which ways have women leaders such as members of parliament contributed to conflict management in Gulu district?

.....

2. To what extent have traditional roles of women influenced their participation in conflict management?

Use the scale to tick what is right according to you

- 1. Strongly influenced
- 2. Mildly influenced
- 3. No influence

	1	2	3
Do you think that the nature of politics in Uganda affects women capacity to participate in conflict management			
Do you think that traditional cultures of Ugandans affects women capacity to participate in conflict management			

3. Strategies for enhancement of women participation to conflict management. What strategies are there to enhance the contributions of women to conflict management and peace building process?

.....
.....

4. Recommendations

In your view, what would you recommend to bring about increased women participation in conflict management?.....

.....
.....