**PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES AN OVERVIEW OF BASIC CONCEPTS**

Peace and conflicts resolution started in US College in form of campus club in the years following the American Civil War; in Sweden in the last years of 19th century and spread to other countries later. As at then, it was students’ originated discussions and not formal courses in the college curricula. The study of Peace and Conflict can be approached in two ways- namely theoretically and through research. Through the theory teachers transmit knowledge to students and through Research, students attempt to discover or create new knowledge about sources of conflicts.

**Definition of Basic Concepts**

**PEACE**: Peace is generally defined as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence. Peace implies creating and maintaining a society that thrives on a just order. Peace is concerned about resolution of conflicts through non-violent means.

* The above definitions notwithstanding, there are many other ways through which peace has been defined by peace researchers. These are: peace as justice and development, peace as respect and tolerance between people, peace as end state of war. A state devoid of violence, crime, any form of disturbance and the presence of justice and a state of harmony, free from conflict or disagreements.
* In the absence of peace, that is when there is war, the following are devastating effects: Loss of human lives and suffering, state collapse, society disintegration, heavy disruption of economic and agricultural activities and the destruction of infrastructural facilities.
* In Africa today, Peace is the prime value and most pressing challenge the continent is facing in the 21st century.

**Evolution of Peace Research (Origin)**

Peace studies or peace research had its origin in Europe as an academic discipline in the late 1940s and 1950s. Institutions for peace research are scattered all over Europe and other parts of the world where peace studies are treated as specialized study in social science. The essence of peace research is to evolve ways of understanding the causes of violence and conditions necessary for peaceful world.

**Social Dimensions of Peace**: Peace is what we desire in our social institutions, such as domestic, religious, political, environmental, industrial and cultural spaces. Peace in this area is said to be achieved when the institution is devoid of dissatisfactions, deprivation, disequilibrium which leads to mass protest, disaffection, demonstration and other forms social dislocation.

**Psychological or Intrapersonal Peace:** This is the peace an individual has when he is free from anxiety. It can also be called the peace of the mind. Since the idea of violence originates first from the mind of individuals. Peace of individuals is vital for peace at the higher levels. Human beings individually through their acts of omission or commission contribute to the tension that possibly results into war and other bloody conflicts in every community.

**Domestic Peace:** It explains the harmonious interaction at the family level. It comes with the unity of purpose with which components of a family adopt in relating with one another. It should be noted that the family is the first element of a social structure. Therefore, peaceful coexistence within the family often translates, to a large extent, to a peaceable society at large.

**Religious and Cultural Peace**: Religious and Cultural peace connotes human efforts at tolerance, mutual respect and empathy towards the ethnic and religious difference of other people. A good religious practitioner must be sensitive to the sensitivity of other religious worshipers while xenophobia (i.e. fear of strangers or foreigners) should be avoided for peace to reign in any society.

**Industrial Peace**: Peace at industrial level involves the creation of conducive working environment devoid of frequent industrial accident, prompt payment of salaries and creation of welfare emolument, adequate communication flow and healthy union/management relations.

**Political Peace:** This is the kind of peace that exists in a country when all the three tiers of government (the executive, judiciary and legislature) and its agencies are working harmoniously in pursuit of good governance, respect for human rights, and rule of Law and supremacy of the constitution. Under this kind of peace, the military subordinates itself to the authority of the democratically elected civilians. Political peace guarantees political stability in the polity as free and fair periodic elections leading to change of government are held in line with provisions of the law. The electorates and contestants in any election must also respect the wish of the people instead of embarking on frivolous litigations to upturn the verdict of the people or to instigate violence in the case of losers at the polls.

**Economic Peace**: This entails equitable allocation of resources of the state to its component units or nationalities. It also occurs when the wealth of the nation is distributed in a manner that the gap between the rich and the poor is not wider than necessary. Other conditions necessary for economic peace include industrial harmony, market forces, free economy and economic justice.

**Environmental Peace**: This is the kind of peace we experience in our physical environment when men respect nature by desisting from any act capable of causing environmental degradation. Such practice that threatens the environmental peace includes Bush burning, indiscriminate felling of trees, Blocking of water ways and unhealthy agricultural practices.

**Community Peace:** There is need for peace in every community. This is to say that people living together in various communities should not only tolerate one another but desist from any act capable of causing communal clashes. Thousands of lives and properties worth millions of naira have been lost in this kind of clash and since the nation or country is a function of various communities, such conflicts contribute to tension in the country. Clashes between the Hausas and Ibos living in the northern part of the country started as communal clashes. Other examples of communal clashes in the past include, the Ife Modakeke crisis, Ezza-Ezillo community war in Ebonyi state, Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra state, Zango-kataf in Kaduna state, the Isekiri-Ijaw conflict in Delta state and the Ogoni Shell in Rivers state. This is in addition to crises and riots between communities in the northern part of the country along religious lines.

Peace at the level of a nation or country is necessary for maintenance of order at the lower levels such as community, family and individual. Internecine wars in Africa have remained threats to national, world and communal peace. Other threat to national peace includes: ethnic nationality and identity, religious bigotry, inequality in the distribution of national wealth, sit-tight leaders, corruption, military intervention in politics and negative politics.

**CONFLICT DEFINITIONS AND TYPES**

Conflict pertains to opposing ideas and actions of different entities, thus resulting in antagonistic state. Conflict is an inevitable of life. As many as there are humans, there are differing ideas, opinions and sets of beliefs. Hence, people often find themselves in conflict in various scenarios as they relate with others. Consequently, conflict influences peoples’ actions and decisions in one way or the other.

* Conflict also refers to some form of friction or discord arising within a group as a result of difference of opinion, disagreements among individuals or scarcity of resources.
* Another definition sees conflict as an activity which takes place when individuals or groups wish to carry out mutually inconsistent act concerning their want, needs or obligations.
* Conflict is an escalation of disagreement which could be characterized by aggressive behaviors, in which conflicting parties actively try to destroy each other.

Conflict is broadly classified into these four categories:

**Intrapersonal Conflict** occurs within an individual. The experience takes place in the mind of an individual. Hence, it is a conflict that is psychological – involving the individual’s thoughts, values, principles and emotions. Intrapersonal conflict may occur on different scales; from simpler ones like lunching out, doing laundry now or latter, to more serious ones like choosing a career, getting a divorce, or involvement in criminal activities. It leads to restlessness and uneasiness or sometimes causes depression. Ones’ ability to resolve intrapersonal conflict and gain inner peace will go a long way in determining the way one interacts with others.

**Interpersonal Conflict** refers to conflict between two or more individuals. This occurs mostly to reflect the difference between and among people. Varying personalities result to incompatibility of goals, choices and opinions. Apparently, it is a natural occurrence which can eventually lead to personal growth and or develop one’s relationship with others.

**Intragroup Conflict** is a kind of conflict that happens among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities, mistrust and misunderstanding among these group members lead to conflict. It arises from interpersonal disagreement, interest preservation or difference in views and ideas. Within a team, conflict can be helpful in coming up with decisions which will eventually allow them reach their objective as a group. However, if the degree of conflict causes disharmony and destructive disruption among member, then they may need an intervention from a mediating third party in order to resolve. Again, conflict is required among team members so as to avoid **group-think**.

**Intergroup Conflict** takes place when there ismisunderstanding between or among groups. This could be as a result of varied set of goals and interest of these different groups. In addition, competition also contributes to such conflict. The philosophy of the conflicting groups sometimes negates the needs and interest of the others within the larger society, thus, eliciting cause for misunderstanding.

**CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

**Introduction**

The word “conflict” is as old as mankind. This is because the word has been in existence in all spheres of human life since the inception of the world. In the recent past, the world socio-political environs have been on the boil despite the colossal amount of human and material resources expended on global peace and conflict management by several nations, states, regional organisations and the United Nations (UN). Rather than the global crisis diminishing in spite of the several steps taken, it is becoming more virulent and destructive because it has continued to drain the energy and man power resources of the troubled spots if not the entire world and emasculate governance.

**Historical Background and Conceptual Definition of Conflict**

The word “conflict” is derived from the Latin word confligere, meaning to “strike together.” Conflict means to strike. A fight, struggle or battle, clash, contention, confrontation, a controversy or quarrel, active opposition, strife or incompatibility, to meet in opposition or hostility, to contend, to be contrary or to be at variance.

Conflict also means contradiction arising from differences in interests, ideas, ideologies, orientations, beliefs, perceptions and tendencies. Although, conflict is a normal, natural and inevitable phenomenon in any interactive situation of human life, contradictions exists at all levels of the society intra–psychic/personal, interpersonal, Intragroup, intergroup, institution, domestic and international. Conflict is not necessarily negative in itself; it is often a by–product of social change and may lead to constructive transformation.

Conflict can also be defined as opposition among social entities directed against one another, it distinguished competition and defined it as opposition among social entities independently striving for something of which the resources are inadequate to satisfy all. Competitors may not be aware of one another, while they are parties to a conflict.

Two points which are directly related to conflict analysis and management can be deduced from this definition. One is that contrary to the old perspective which regards conflict as national, it is not inevitable, only competition can be so regarded. Secondly, conflict and competition are two points of a continuum on which conflict represents aggravated competition. In order words conflict arises when disagreement emerging from competition cannot be resolved. It follows therefore that conflict management has to begin with and include management of supposedly simple competition. The other point that can be inferred from Wright’s definition is that conflicts are themselves processes that tend to degenerate from non-violent to violent and from crisis to full-scale war.

**Causes of Conflict**

As earlier mentioned, conflict is inevitable and it keeps occurring in every individual life, either at home, work, social outings or even when we sleep in our bedroom without interacting with anyone. Although, we are familiar with those inexhaustible things that cause conflicts, but in this context, they can be categorised into four namely:

• Conflicts over resources

• Conflicts over psychological needs

• Conflicts involving values

• Conflicts over inadequate information

**Conflicts over Resources**

These types of conflicts are usually easy to identify because they can be seen and are more potentially easy to resolve. This conflict occurs when two or more people are competing for inadequate (or perceived to be inadequate) resources over a period of time. The competition may assume negative or destructive dimension when the available resources are not evenly and judiciously distributed. The relatively deprived would always struggle to improve their lot. This view agrees with the Marxian theory of conflict, which posits that the more the rate of unequal distribution of scarce resources in the society, the greater is the basic conflict of interest between its dominant and subordinate segments. He also says that when practices of dominant segment create “alienation dispositions” the more the subordinate segments of a system become aware of their collective interests and question the distribution of scarce resources, the more likely they are to join in overt conflict against dominant segment of a system. Resources that cause conflict include landed properties, money, vehicles, and company ownership/shares among others.

**Conflict over Psychological Needs**

Conflicts over psychological needs of groups and individuals are conflicts which cannot be seen but affect the psyche of the individual and group self-actualisation, need for individual and group respect, attempt to project one’s group to be better than the others. With particular reference to Maslow’s theory, he points out that when an individual psychological need is achieved or satisfied, such an individual becomes dominated by a drive for the other unsatisfied needs through a process he calls “Fulfilment Progression”. Example includes structural factor, politics, personality clash, and ethnicity.

**Conflict Involving Values**

Contradicting value systems such as religious beliefs, ideological positions, and general worldview is another factor responsible for social conflict among the interacting parties. Conflict involving values are the most difficult to understand and resolve because most times people could die for what they believe in. According to Weaver, who likens culture to an iceberg, he says “internal culture”, is implicitly learnt and difficult to change. That is part of culture that is below the waterline in the iceberg analogy. It includes some of our beliefs, our values and thought patterns, attitudes, non-verbal communication and perception. Beliefs are interrelated and form “belief system”, which because they are learnt in life, are difficult to change.

Examples of values laden conflicts include the Cold War, terrorism (suicide bombij.’bhn`/ng), religious conflicts such as 1980 Maitatsine crisis, the 1991 Bonnke crisis in Kano, the 2002 Beauty Pageant crisis. Others include the September 30, 2005 Cartoon crisis over a Danish newspaper, JyllandsPosten, published cartoons caricaturing Prophet Mohammad, the most recent of all the religious crisis in Nigeria is the Boko Haram crisis that has killed an estimated 3,500 people.

**Conflict over Information**

The last but not the least of the factors causing conflict in any society is “manipulation of information”. The pivotal role of information in societal conflict cannot be over-emphasised; they can either be manipulative or constructive. Especially in a widespread conflict situation, the role of information becomes more crucial, difficult and dangerous. When the information system in a society is tampered with, there is bound to be conflict. The information system can be tampered with in different ways. This can be either by feeding people with lies or giving the right information at the wrong time. In our contemporary societies, the quantity and quality of information vary dramatically and are dependent on wide range of factors, from level of literacy to social cohesiveness and stability to available technology. Central to the availability and quality of public information is the media (print, audio and audio-visual).

Also, in deeply divided societies, the media can also shape opinion and decisions related to the nature and scope of conflicts, as well as the potential alternatives to conflict, where social, political and economic conflict have degenerated into widespread violence, the role of information in mitigating the effects of violence or in presenting alternatives can be crucial. Because communication is an integral part of conflict, it comes as no surprise that those participating in organised violence often use the media to attack opponents, and “spread disinformation or misinformation” and “rally external and internal support.” Some of the communication barriers that are capable of distorting meanings are physical distance, language, and the listener’s value judgement.

**Classification of Conflict**

Wright for instance distinguishes between “ordinary” conflict which involves small-scale violence usually at the individual and group levels and war, which is carried out by armed forces and involves violence of considerable magnitude. Similarly, Gurr distinguishes between “turmoil,” which includes both non-violent and small-scale violent conflict and rebellion or internal war. The point in this latter classification is that notwithstanding their peculiarities, conflicts differ largely in degree rather than kind and should therefore be analysed in terms of continuum which has non- violent conflict at one end and violent ones at the other. This enables us to pay close attention to the possible escalation or worsening of conflicts, sometimes a simple non-violent/violent classification appears to shape the other.

Another popular classification categorises conflict into structural and non-structural conflicts. Structural conflicts which tend to be endemic are those which are predisposed by the innate character of the polity. Typically, they result from “unjust repressive and oppressive socio-political structure”. Structural factors also include inequality among groups in obtaining access to socioeconomic and political privileges and benefits such as education, income distribution, unemployment, and control of political power, as well as low levels of national integration which encourage “zero-sum” context for state power.

The third classification of conflicts is based on the character of the parties in conflict. Thus, ethnic and religious conflicts (which are most prevalent in Africa) tend to be the most important bases of identity for most individuals and as such attract strong loyalties to the groups involved.

**Conflict prevention**

This is the anticipation of conflict that seeks to redress causal grievances to avoid the escalation of violent forms of conflict engagement or to curtail the re-occurrence of violent exchanges or some combination of these elements. The term ‘conflict prevention’ can be misleading, because theoretically none of the aforementioned aspects aspire to ‘prevent’ conflict as such. Instead, the aim is often to resolve a conflict at hand or more typically to prevent escalation or violent manifestations. Although at times referred to as ‘preventive diplomacy’ and ‘crisis prevention’, such activities usually involve maintaining the status quo due to potential threats associated with crises or the anticipated outcomes from engaging in a dispute.

Conflict prevention, however, recognises that in order to avoid the catastrophes associated with strife, particularly violent upheaval, change is usually necessary, for example, through new institutions, revitalised processes, or the sharing of power. Such efforts are collectively categorised as ‘early warning systems’, which vary in complexity and approach. They may include fact-finding missions, consultations, inspections, report mechanisms, and monitoring. The predictive nature of conflict prevention raises several issues, particularly regarding the timing of intervention and the possibility of precipitating pre-emptive action by parties beyond the conflict.

Humanitarian and moral concerns are often insufficient for initiating effective conflict prevention efforts, even in the face of egregiously violent circumstances. As a result, numerous arguments are put forth on behalf of conflict prevention, for example, geo-strategic concerns, security interests, cost-benefit analyses, and refugee issues. Despite the increasing technical capacity and human ability to identify deadly conflicts before they erupt, as well as the likelihood of extreme costs in life, social cohesion, and regional instability, conflict prevention remains in the realm of theory more than practice.

Conflict prevention has predominantly been viewed as the task, if not the responsibility, of international organisations or nation-states neutral to the given conflict. It, however, does not necessarily rely nor should it depend solely on external parties. The most effective method of conflict prevention, although not described as such, is accountable governance, whereby citizens and groups have access to effective avenues and mechanisms for resolving the range of disputes and conflicts that ordinarily arise within societies. Such access not only involves governmental structures, but also requires the cooperation of civil societies and business communities. This is particularly true in settings where violent conflict has already occurred and conflict prevention focuses on inhibiting recurrences, for example through some form of reconciliation.

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION**

This is the management of conflict, using peaceful and non-violent methods. These methods are available at individual, family, group, community and international levels. This topic introduces these methods on two broad categories at *proactive* and *reactive* levels. The aim of conflict transformation is to change parties’ perception and attitude so that causes of conflict can be recognized and avoided in the future.

**Conflict management**

Conflict management is an interventionist effort towards preventing the escalation and negative effects, especially violent ones, of on-going conflicts. Rarely are conflicts completely resolved. More often, they are reduced, downgraded, or contained. Such developments can be followed by a reorientation of the issue, reconstitution of the divisions among conflicting parties, or even by a re-emergence of past issues or grievances. Conflict management when actively conducted is, therefore, a constant process. A variety of techniques have been identified and employed in conflict management efforts. The following are the most prominent: First, conflicting parties are brought together to establish a mutual agreement. Second, governments or third parties to the strife may directly intervene to introduce or impose a decision. Third, new initiatives, programmes, or institutional structures (for example, elections) are implemented to address the conflict in question. Fourth, contending parties are compelled or coerced to utilise previously established means of resolution or containment. Fifth, government or another third party may use coercion to eliminate or instil fear among one or all those engaged in a given conflict, leading to subsidence. Conflict management should not be viewed as a simple, linear or structured process. Those assuming or charged with such a task must usually overcome an intensely chaotic situation. Conflicts are frequently managed directly by the society in which they occur. When not possible or when conflicts become national in scope, government normally assumes the task, provided it is not a party to the conflict. In cases where a government is unable or unwilling to intervene, international organisations increasingly assume the role of conflict manager.

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, an unavoidable concomitant of choices and decisions. . . . The problem, then, is not to court the frustrations of seeking to remove inevitability but rather of trying to keep conflicts in bounds. Zartman 1997: 197. “Conflict management” correctly posits that conflicts could be protracted in span, which makes it difficult to be swiftly resolved, but “management” implies that people can be directly or remotely manipulated, as they were physical objects. Furthermore, the notion of management implies that its goal is the mitigation or control of volatility without dealing with the real source of the problem.

**Conflict resolution**

It is a variety of approaches aimed at resolving conflicts through the constructive solving of problems distinct from the management or transformation of conflict. Conflict resolution is multifaceted in that it refers to a process, a result, and an identified field of academic study as well as an activity in which persons and communities engage every day without ever using the term. The antagonisms in question may involve interpersonal relationships, labour-management issues, business decisions, intergroup disputes, disagreements between nation-states, or international quarrels. Not all conflicts are harmful. Some may ultimately result in positive social change. As noted by Nigerian sociologists Onigu Otite and Isaac Olawale Albert (1999: 17), ‘although conflicts have negative connotations . . . [many] constitute an essential creative element for changing societies and achieving the goals and aspirations of individuals and groups’. Conflict resolution involves recognition by the clashing parties of one another’s interests, needs, perspectives, and continued existence. The most effective forms identify the underlying causes of the conflict and address them through solutions that are mutually satisfactory, self-perpetuating, and sustaining. Conflict resolution can also be practised with a variety of emphases, including but not limited to cooperation, non-confrontation, non-competition, and positive-sum orientation. Serious challenges are found when parties at times favour, for various reasons, continuation of conflict over its resolution. In such cases, the role of external parties can be critical in creating a balance of power, enacting sanctions or incentives, or acting as neutral mediators or invested facilitators. Not all conflicts lend themselves to conflict resolution techniques.

Conflicts arise from both systemic and individual perceptions. Therefore, a lasting resolution for any conflict requires both systemic and individual analysis and intervention. Conflict resolution and peace building thus call for a collaborative approach that addresses both of these levels. The parties to the conflict are the experts in defining their needs and how to satisfy them. The role of a third party is to assist parties in identifying and understanding those needs and values when negotiations have deadlocked. Imposing outside resolution may provide temporary relief, but a lasting arrangement can only be designed and implemented by the parties themselves. Conflict Resolution opines that most conflicts in Africa are endemic by definition to the extent that the predisposing factors are not embedded in the political system. They result from specific policies or actions by the state or groups and do not generally last for too long.

**Conflict transformation**

Conflict transformation is essentially integrative conflict resolution orientation that aims at positively altering those perceptions, communication and root factors that instigate conflicts. This laborious approach is preferred because it focuses on:

• producing transformation in the whole conflict environment

• producing transformation in the relationship of the conflicting parties, or

• producing empowerment-based transformation in parties to the conflict

Conflict transformation is the aggregate of all efforts that concentrate on the developmental stages or processes of a conflict, rather than simply on its end point. In addition, it pays attention to how conflict transforms relationships, communication, perceptions, issues and social organisation. Based on this, conflict transformation aims to transform the conflict from violent manifestation characterised by armed conflict and war to constructive and peaceful expression.

Conflict transformation also focuses on transformation and sometimes the removal of all structures that impede sustainable positive peace. It also seeks ways of involving all stakeholders including erstwhile combatants, local individuals, communities and external third parties in a concerted way.

Conflict transformation can also be defined as an improvement of the whole context of the conflict, a positive change in the disputants’ relationships or complete behavioural and attitudinal changes of the disputants. Conflict transformation entails an informed reassessment and redefinition of the disputants to explore avenues for new compensations and appointments. The aim of this is to transcend zero-sum (win-lose) phase to arrive at a positive-sum (win-win) agreement.

Conflict transformation has also been defined as a particular approach that takes into cognisance the grievances, needs and issues of all the parties. In approaching conflict transformation, there is a major theory to look at and that is the Gandhi theory also known to be the non-violent conflict transformation. The non-violence theory or Gandhi theory is vehemently intolerant of the use of either structural violence or physical violence because it will contradict the spirit and letter of the non-violence theory. In addition, non-violence is an admonition to struggle against both direct and structural violence, and an equally strong admonition not to use them in the struggle. Non-violence or Gandhi theory will also not condone the fair protractile devices earlier mentioned because they are antithetical to the non-violence theory of conflict transformation. For Gandhi; “there is no way to peace; peace is the way; to be taken, now.”

Conflict transformation may occur through the unintended consequences of actions taken by parties internal or external to the conflict, yet deliberate attempts at transformation may also be made. The latter aims to generate opportunities for conflict resolution or conflict management and ultimately more equitable outcomes, particularly where a given conflict is considered intractable or where it has encountered a seemingly insurmountable impasse. Conflict transformation requires that the parties involved alter their previous strategies of handling or avoiding the discord in order to implement new approaches towards ameliorating the situation. The non-violent transformation of conflict and the weaponry of non-violent struggle are desirable for those who seek non-lethal means of conflict engagement, which can improve the odds for reconciliation.

**PEACE EDUCATION AND PEER MEDIATION**

**Introduction**

Peace Education is the deliberate attempt to education school and adult in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace-making skills in home, schools and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instruments of socialization. It provides education for global securities and focuses on direct, organized violent, particularly the institutions of war and army conflict, employing the frame work based on recent theories of human securities. Peace Education concerns itself with human and social dimensions of peace. It introduce the concept of human dignity and human right with specific reference to such values as economic equity, political participation, ecological balance and particularly the formative principle fundamental to international human right standard. It concerns itself with the global ethnics, gender issues and various aspects of cultural violence. Global governance is also of the great concerns to peace education which create the concept of global civic society. Overall, peace education is an investment in the younger generation and attests to the fact that Educating younger minds in virtues of peace, the skills of conflict analyses and management, identification of conflict and source of conflict e.t.c, a more peaceable future could be secured for humanity.

Peace Education is an integral part of the work of the United Nations. Through the harmonizing process of teaching and learning, this education is out to enlighten students and adults concerning the ill that confronts the human race on daily basis. These dehumanizing ills which are caused by man and woman’s inhumanity to human kind among other include discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, poverty, prejudices and war e.t.c, but peace education will create a culture of peace based upon fundamental specific and ethnical principle.

**THE USE OF SCHOOLS SUBJECT FOR TEACHING PEACE**

 This is primarily directed towards developing students’ capacity for critical thinking inquiry and reflective skills that enables them not only to understand obstacles to peace but more importantly to develop skills and abilities to confront issues, envision realistic alternative and device implement strategies for the realization of the alternative.

***Religion:*** Since most world religion have peace entrenched in their holy books, religion can easily be used as an instrument for peace education among person as well as other followers and adherents. Members of different faith should respect one another opinion and religious belief. There should be unity and respect in the diversity of religions. Religions should teach and promote the virtues of peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, love, respect for life and other values that promote non violent change. Failing to do this, religions has also been known to have capacity to socialize and indoctrinate young person into vicious cycles of hate and violence. This can and should be turned around.

***Geography:*** All human being share basic fundamental things which can be endowed by nature. This is clearly seen in ability of all human to live on earth, share the beauty and the resources of the earth and protect it for its sustainability and the good of generations yet unborn. This is regardless of which part of it one live on variety, they say is the spice of life, meaning that people differ but should be able to learn from each other culture, background, exposure or the lack of it, without prejudice

***History:*** Historically, we should respond to the various historical events in the past which have tended to divide rather than unite. In this case, our experience should not be the best teacher rather than we should learn from the mistake of others. Mysteries have too many lessons of the inhumanity of human kind propelled by violent conflict. West Africa is a rich case study. The violence unleashed in innocent civilians in the Nigerian Civil war, the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Guinea, among others, can constitute rich case studies for the teaching of peace education. The lessons of history as part of education should not be exposed the ills in the past, and draw attention to the potential good in non-violent alternatives.

***Science:*** Science as a subject avails us with the need and aspirations of the human being. This knowledge exposed all to the requirements of all being which should make us have respect for others. It can become an important aspect of peace education at the primary and secondary school level.

***Music:*** Music can also be used to teach peace education. Young people can differentiate between good music and bad music, between the musical note and instrument that are in harmony and those that are riotous. As good music that is sweet to the air and smoothens to the soul is likely to peace, so is bad music likely to conflict.

***Fine Art:*** Fine Art coming in form of drawing, painting, design, cartoon etc also help to geographically portray the message of peace and conflict. The creativity in Art students can help to depict the ill of war, the beauty of peace and how young person may be channeled to love and pursue non-violence.

**TYPES OF PEACE EDUCATION**

**Formal Peace Education**

Formal peace education can be incorporated into school curriculum and taught within many school subject area including religion, geography, history, science, social studies, literature, drama, music, art and mathematics. In formal peace education, the following programs are emphasized:

1. **Knowledge:** Since the saying goes that, “Knowledge is power” students should therefore know the following about: themselves and others: the poor and the rich: of peace and conflict: our environment and the world tomorrow.
2. **Attitudes:** Positive attitudes are very necessary for the attainment of peace. Such attitudes affect our responses to conflict and the ways we look at and do things. They include factors such as human dignity, curiosity, appreciation for culture, empathy, justice and fairness.
3. **Skills:** Peace is built over time, through processing of encounter and reflection that address not only practical issues of conflict but also deeper issues of relationship, human development and structural varieties. Peace education requires that the students acquire skills which will equip them to be peace builders. Some of these skills are: enquiry, communication skills, grasping concepts, critical thinking and political skills,

**Informal Peace Education**

 Schools and colleges are not the only place one can acquire knowledge. Much peace education takes place in formal settings where people gather for work or lecture, through socialization and initiation processes within the communities, in family settings e.t.c. just as in schools, formal peace education address attitude and aim to have a direct impact on personal behaviours.Peace education, in both formal and informal settings, requires a more relaxed atmosphere than the standard lecture. People-relationship needs to be credited in more opened and inviting arrangement where people can be encouraged to embark on the difficult task of looking at issues that are important to them, reflect on their own behaviour/attitude and generate alternatives for the future. Peace education can help people to become aware of bias and prejudice in themselves and their society.

Informal peace education can tackle important issue in almost an infinite number of ways. It can take the form of a work shop. Item to discuss could include publishing story books for children, designing posters, print badges and printing of T-Shirts and posters with peace messages.

One important way of informal peace Education is using folk languages and identifies all proverbs, all poems and anecdotes that promotes peace. This raises people’s awareness of how language can shape attitudes and behaviours and even come up with proposals to make the language more peace sensitive, and respect for others.

**THE CULTURE OF PEACE EDUCATION**

A culture of peace is built from values, attitudes, behaviours and ways of life based on non- violence, respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights, equality between men and women, appreciation of cultural diversity, and respect for others. In a cultural of peace, powers grow not from the barrel of a gun but from participation, dialogue, and cooperation. A culture of peace rejects violence in all its form, including war and the culture of war. It replaces domination and exploitation by the strong over the weak with fairness through respect for its rights of everyone both economically and politically. It protects the right of the handicapped, the elderly and the social disadvantaged.

The movement for a culture of peace brings together the rich diversity of lives, together in an atmosphere marked by intercultural understanding, tolerance and solidarity. Where others are contradictions such as xenophobia, racism or designating others as enemies, they are resolved through non-violent means. The culture of peace must take to cognizance the following:

1. **The respect of Life:** Since most human beings like themselves, such should be accorded other fellow beings that have the same feelings. All holy books teach about the sanctity of life.
2. **Liberty:** Nobody wants to live in bondage. People need to have their liberty in as much as others’ rights and freedoms are not impeded by their liberty. When liberty is tampered with, a crisis ensues.
3. **Justice:** There is no talking about peace without talking about justice, for peace to abound there must be individual and social justice. Justice that focuses on healing of social relationships, and attempts to build the types of society that reflects the value of those who suffer and so bring about peace. But if justice is seen as retribution or revenge for what has been done, it then becomes difficult to see how the pursuit of justice is not contradicted by the concept of mercy, and amnesty in particular.
4. **Human Rights:** Douzinas, (1996:119) in Joeng (2000), sees human rights as “Universal reason and assertion of common humanity”. Their application undoubtedly reflects the uniqueness of each separate situation. The rights of all actual and potential parties to a conflict, and indeed every person, must not be infringed upon. When rights are denied or deprived, conflicts becomes likely.

**Peer Group Meditation**

Peer group meditation has been identified as a potent instrument for the promotion of peace education among young persons. This is against the feeling that young person’s can do lot among themselves when properly guided, and better understand themselves. The lessons and principles of peace promotion and non-violence can be enhanced.

A peer is a person who is approximately the same age as another. In most cases, peers are heavily influenced by others of their age bracket at school or in the community. Their actions are usually done in groups, which are known as peer groups. A peer group is a social relationship beginning with the preschool years. The relationship become increasingly sophisticated which influenced the children’s value and behavior. Membership of groups change with age: pre- adolescent groups are homogenous and come from the same neighborhood.

Peer group meditationis a concept which stems from the belief that children and young persons may prefer to confide in other children of their age than adults. Since conflict is inevitable and can either be productive or disparaging, depending on how it is handled, there is need to confront it, sometimes through peer meditation. Peer meditation works because it empowers young people who are usually vulnerable to being used for conflicts, to resolve their own disputes themselves. This is done by equipping them with skills that remain with them long after the resolution of the dispute.

For peer meditation to work, it should be built on positive relationships, trust, support, open communication, mutual respect and tolerance, cooperation and readiness to work through problems.

**Skills for peer Meditation**

The goal for peer mediation is to reduce conflict and provide children and young persons with problems solving skills. Students should participate in activities and role plays that promote empathy, self respect, self discipline, responsibility, bias awareness, patience and respectfulness. The gain is understanding of conflict and learns strategies for dealing with anger. Confidentiality is stressed. Students should know and practice the following meditation techniques and skills:

1. **Communication verbally and Non -verbally:** Mediators are required to be persons who can effectively communicate both verbally and non-verbally. It has been said that negotiations begin the moment communication is made to another person that there is a conflict and you wish to resolve it. In communicating, the mediator should be able to facilitate dialogue, such as getting round rules, paraphrasing, and coping with strong emotions.
2. **Active Listening:** A good mediator remains an active listener always. He/she is alert, asks questions to clarify accuracy with the speaker and ensures that the other party has heard the point. Mediators show understanding of each party’s perspective through non-verbal reactions and comments.
3. **Problem Analysis/conflict Analysis:** An analysis can be seen as an intervention as well as preparation for action. It provides understanding to background and history of the situation as well as current events, it helps in identifying all the groups involved in the problem, helps to understand the perspectives of all the groups and how they relate to each other; identify factors and trends that underpin conflicts and to learn from failures as well as successes. It is not a one-time exercise but is an ongoing process as the situation is developing. The mediator must be able to analyse the problem before attempting to mediate. There are very many problems analysis tools that exists, which the mediator will have to use either singly or collectively.
4. **Identifying common Interests:** A problem identified is a problem half-solved. The onus lies on the mediator to identify and capitalize on common interest. He/she evaluates alternatives in relation to needs and interest of both (all) sides. He/she encourages creativity in combining options and seeking common ground. Together, decide what to try. Identify who will do what and when. Write down the solutions in an agreement and have both (all) sides sign it.
5. **Plan development:** For meditation to succeed, adequate development plans must be made. Tasks like getting the parties participate, selecting mediators and preparing oneself for meditation are invaluable (Kraybill Evans and Evans 2011)

**Characteristics of Peer Meditation**

 A peer mediator must possess qualities that will endear him/her to both (all) parties. He/she should be seen to show to care for all parties, be serious about helping peers solve their problems, provide an opportunity for both disputants to tell their story, listen carefully and respectfully, show sensitivity to each person’s feelings and exhibit patience and be friendly. Mediators must not physically restrain peers, place blame on any party, takes sides, judge guilt or innocence, make decisions regarding a solution or force a solution on disputants.

**Procedure for peer Meditation**

In a general sense, peer mediation is a long process that is akin to the general principles of mediation, and could include the following procedure:

1. General instruction: the mediator introduces him/herself and also the disputants
2. Explain the mediators’ neutral role and discuss ground rules e.g. doing their best to solve the problem, telling the truth, being polite, no put-down or threats, listening to each other without interrupting, agreeing to a solution, signing a written agreement, and keeping the meditation confidential.
3. Define the problem by asking each student to their story.
4. Listen to and reflect on the content and feelings expressed by both students.
5. Shows understanding of each child’s perspective through non-verbal reactions and comments.
6. Verify the stories by paraphrasing what was said.
7. Ask the disputants to speak directly to each other as they discuss their issues, feelings, needs and hopes.
8. Keep them on the topic.
9. Ask clarifying questions and summarise the concerns and issues
10. Ask them to brainstorm ways to solve the problem.
11. Look for area of agreement and present possible solutions.
12. Together decide what to try. Clarify the first step that needs to be taken. Who will do what and when? Write down the solutions in an agreement.
13. Decide on a consequence if either party does not follow through and add it to the agreement.
14. Have both parties sign the agreement,
15. Congratulate them and have them shake hands. (Davies, 2005)

**CONCLUSION**

 The teaching of peace education and peer meditation in various institutions of learning is an invaluable decision. It will go a long way in equipping young persons and youths with knowledge and skills that would help bring about world peace through better understanding. Peace Education exposes students to concept of peace, conflict, violence and non-violence with the inherent values and problems. Students gain formal knowledge of self and the environment they live in; and appreciate poverty and wealth and the world as a whole. Attitudes to human dignity, change, human rights and the rights of the child and appreciate other peoples’ culture are taught. Students are able to empathize with others in difficult situations; they improve in their communication skills, critical thinking and political skills. Peace education encourages peer group meditation which empowers young people who are vulnerable to being manipulated into engaging in negative acts which would inevitably lead to conflicts, an insight into the likely dire consequences that might result when those negative acts are perpetrated. This knowledge regulates the rise and spread of conflict.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT, PEACE AND CONFLICT**

The focus of this topic is to discuss issues relating to the environment, peace and conflict. It looks at the environment as a resource and defence, and the way it constitutes new forms of threat to peace and security based on the activities of man. The influence of culture on the environment and the influence of the environment on human nature are also checked.

In the last years there has been a "greening" in this research field, environmental issues becoming on the one hand part of a widened concept of security and being on the other hand assumed to play a rapidly increasing role as causes of violent conflicts. But, referring to this; example of human interference which often affects the ecological equilibrium in the concerned regions. But it is only about these affected life-supporting conditions, or the negative impact on human beings and society that environmental degradation comes to focus.

Nature or the ecosystem has no consciousness by which value it could be valued. It is only from the point of view of a subject, in specific case human beings, that an environmental change can mean a loss of quality, degradation. Surely there are environmental changes whose impacts on human living conditions have been and still must be seen as positive. This valuation depends, of course, partly on the social and cultural context. The term **environmental degradation** is understood as a human-made environmental change having a negative impact on human society which may ultimately be the cause of environmental conflict. And this definition allows a distinction to the traditional resource scarcity problem.

The concept of environmental change and degradation allows or even forces a differentiation between renewable and non-renewable natural resources. The term resources encompass in a wide sense not only material "goods" provided by nature. The capability of the environment to serve as a sink for wastes and products of human activities can, in its instrumental dimension, also is interpreted as a natural resource; but rather in the sense of a service". However, the main fields of discussing environmental problems is narrowed to fresh water, soil, forests, air, atmosphere and climate, oceans, and biodiversity, represent all renewable "goods" or "services". They are renewable because they are ecologically integrated in a feedback circle system which guarantees their replacement or the preservation of their quality.

Minerals and fossil fuels, on the other hand, which are the traditional objects of resource conflicts, are non-renewable resources because they are not integrated in such an ecosystem. Therefore they can be **depleted** but they cannot be **degraded**. The extraction of oil, for example, does not mean by itself an environmental degradation. Even the total depletion of oil stocks would not cause any destabilization of the ecosystem; but it would, of course, represent a serious economic problem. Therefore, conflicts over the possession of or the access to oil cannot be regarded as environmental conflicts. They are originally economic or social conflicts. Only the consequences of the combustion of oil derivates, for example the greenhouse effect, or the damages caused by its production and transport may lead to environmental degradation which should be regarded as possible causes of environmental conflicts. Significantly, problems of resource degradation seem to have become more urgent than problems of resource depletion which dominated the debate until 20 years ago.

A further characteristic of renewable resources is that they can be less substituted than non-renewable ones, and in several cases not substituted at all. Food, fresh water, clean air and life-supporting climatic conditions are not just sources of wealth in an economic sense but also biological prerequisite of life. So, in addition to environment as a bank of material resources and as a sink for wastes a third dimension of environment as a space of living should be considered.

Surely, this last dimension is interrelated with the others, but it is not a synonym and should not be subsumed under the concept of resources. The loss of settlement areas due to the rise of the sea level, to desertification, or to industrial accidents means more than just a shortage of the resource 'land'.

Furthermore it includes an existential dimension. In less dramatic cases of environmental degradation it should also be considered anaesthetic dimension of environment's impoverishment.

The concept of environmental degradation leads to another important differentiation concerning the concept of resource scarcity.

Four distinct types of scarcity should be distinguished:

1) Physical scarcity means that a resource is only available in a finite amount;

2) Geopolitical scarcity means that resources are often distributed unequally on the surface of earth so that some countries depend on deliveries from others;

3) socio-economic scarcity concerns the unequal distribution of purchasing power and of property rights to provide natural resources between or within societies;

4) last type of scarcity concerning resources that have traditionally been regarded as plentiful and naturally renewable but are becoming scarce now because of the failure of human beings to adopt sustainable methods of their management.

We should call this type environmental scarcity-scarcity caused by environmental degradation! The four types of resource scarcity can be causally interrelated. Unequal geopolitical and socio-economic distribution are often a source of degrading behaviour; and the physical scarcity of a renewable resource can be a reason for the depletion of the resources' capital stock'

**An environmental conflict** is a conflict caused by the environmental scarcity of a resource that is, caused by a human-made disturbance of its normal regeneration rate. Environmental scarcity can result from the overuse of a renewable resource or from the over-stretch of the ecosystem's sink capacity that is pollution. Both can reach the stage of a destruction of the space of living.

This definition has two crucial implications: First, it excludes non-renewable resources from our specific interest. These resources can only be physically, geopolitically or economically scarce. Second, in the case of renewable resources the definition forces to a differentiation. As scarcity can also have just a physical, geopolitical or economic origin the emphasis is not primarily on the characteristic to be renewable. The emphasis is on the specific context of an environmental degradation in which renewable resources become environmentally scarce and relevant for a conflict.

Conflicts over agricultural land, for example, which is explained as a renewable resource, have to be seen as environmental only if the land becomes an object of contention as a result of soil erosion, climate change, changes of river flows or any other environmental degradation. They are not environmental conflicts in the case of simply territorial conflicts like both World Wars and most colonial and decolonization wars. And they are neither necessarily environmental conflict in the case of an anti-regime war with the goal of a more equal land distribution. This does not diminish the importance and the gravity of the conflict. And such a war can even be an environmental conflict, if unequal land distribution becomes for example a source of soil overuse. But it does not have to in every case.

It also should be kept in mind what war and the danger of war are, including both international and civil wars. But, of interest is early recognition of possible future wars caused by environmental degradation and in strategies for war prevention and peaceful conflict resolution, analysis should begin at an earlier stage than just already ongoing or imminent wars.

The conflict stage of interest should begin depends on the remaining political and historical conditions. In cases in which the relations between the parties are strained because of other issues or there are recent precedents of armed confrontation the attention should begin earlier than in cases in which regimes of peaceful conflict resolution are successfully installed. Nevertheless, examples of political crises caused by environmental degradation which have been or are being managed peacefully by working institutions can serve as patterns for conflict resolution proposals.

**Environmental Degradation and Violent Conflicts**

The idea of struggle over increasingly scarce resources which is often used to characterize the linkage between environment and conflict is not totally wrong, but it does not explain very much. The simple, density-dependent model of resource competition commonly used by biologists to study animal populations cannot be applied directly to human societies. Surely the scarcity of a resource represents an important challenge for every society. But if this will lead to conflicts and how these will develop always depends on a multitude of other factors which are socially and historically conditioned. "Social facts, such as conflicts, cannot be explained by natural facts, such as environment, but only by other social facts". Thus, a more complex model of analysis is needed which takes into account the 'culturally mediated' nature of human behaviour.

The figure suggests that the total effect of human activity on the environment in a particular region or at a global level is mainly a function of two variables: first, the product of the total population and the economic activities consumption per capita; and second, the vulnerability of the ecosystem to those particular activities. Population pressure is an important variable in the figure. But human-made environmental degradation is not alone a variable of population number as it would be in the case of animals. It is just as much a variable of the intensity of the polluting and damaging habits.

**DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE BUILDING**

This topic views conflict as having the capacity to severally constrain development endeavours by destroying infrastructures, interrupting the production processes and diverting resources from productive uses. However, the need for development could be used to facilitate the process of conflict de-escalation and peace building. Here, students are exposed to the rudiments of peace process and military/civil relations.

Peace building can be defined as a term describing outside interventions that are designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict within a nation by creating a sustainable peace. It addresses the root causes or potential causes of violence, create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution and stabilize society politically and socioeconomically. Peace building strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives. The critical importance of strengthening the rule of law to peace building, and to avoiding relapse into conflict, has long been recognized by the United Nations. The Brahimi panel, with its aim of strengthening the overall strategic and operational capacity of the UN system in peace operations, defined “peace –building for its purposes as “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war”. According to the Canadian Peace building Coordinating Committee (CPCC):

*Peace building is the effort to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the like hood of violent conflict. The overarching goal of peace building is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence”*

The definition varies depending on the actor, with some definitions specifying what activities fall within the scope of peace building or restricting peace building to post-conflict interventions. In 2007, the UN Secretary –General ‘s policy Committee defined peace building as follows” : "Peace building involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peace building strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives."

Peacemaking involves stopping an ongoing conflict, whereas peace building happens before a conflict starts or once it ends. Peacekeeping prevents the resumption of fighting following a conflict; it does not address the basic causes of violence, as peacebuiding does. It also differs from peace building in that it only occurs after conflict ends, not before it begins. Conflict resolution does not include some components of peace building, such as state building and socioeconomic development. Like peacekeeping, conflict resolution can only follow, not precede, conflict. The tasks included in peace building vary depending on the situation and the agent of peace building. Successful peace building activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace; reconcile opponents; prevent conflict from restarting; integrate civil society; create rule of law mechanisms; and address underlying structural and societal issues. For these goals to be accomplished, peace building must address functional structures, emotional conditions and social psychology, social stability, rule of law and ethics and cultural sensitivities (Nitze 2012).

Pre-conflict peace building interventions aim to prevent the start of violent conflict. These strategies involve a variety of actors and sectors in order to transform the conflict. Even though the definition of peace building includes pre-conflict interventions, in practice most peace building interventions are post conflict. In a nutshell many peace building scholars advocate an increased focus on pre-conflict peace building in the future.

Barnett et al. divides post conflict peace building into three dimensions: stabilizing the post conflict zone, restoring state institutions and dealing with social and economic issues. Activities within the first dimension reinforce state stability post-conflict and discourage combatants from returning to war. Second dimension, activities build state capacity to provide basic goods and increase state legitimacy. Programs in the third dimension build a post-conflict society’s ability to manage conflicts peacefully and promote socioeconomic development.

**Peace building** processcould be seen asPolicies, programs, and associated efforts to restore stability and the effectiveness of social, political, and economic institutions and structures in the wake of a war or some other debilitating or catastrophic event. Peace building generally aims to create and ensure the conditions beyond ‘negative peace’, the mere absence of violent conflict engagement, and for ‘positive peace’, a more comprehensive understanding related to the institutionalisation of justice and freedom. Speaking in relation to post-conflict situations, Boutros-Ghali (1995:15) identified a range of peace-building programmes, including ‘co-operative projects ... that not only contribute to economic and social development but also enhance the confidence that is so fundamental to peace’. More specifically, he mentions activities focusing on agriculture, transportation, resource management, cultural exchanges, educational projects, and simplification of visa regimes. That there exists a connexion between security and development is an accepted tenet in peace building, and the implications of this mutually reinforcing relationship are extensive. The following represents a small selection of the functions of peace building:

• assisting an end to military or violent exchanges through the decommissioning of arms, the demobilisation of combatants, and rehabilitation and reintegration programmes

• providing humanitarian relief to victims

• protecting human rights

• ensuring security and related services

• generating an environment of trust in order for social relations to function properly

• establishing non-violent modes of resolving present and future conflicts

• fostering reconciliation among the various parties to a conflict

• providing psycho-social or trauma healing services to victims of severe atrocities

• repatriating refugees and resettling internally displaced persons

• aiding in economic reconstruction

• building and maintaining the operation of institutions to provide such services, and

• co-ordinating the roles of numerous internal and external parties involved in such interrelated efforts.

As an extremely broad concept—encompassing democracy, development, gender, human rights, and justice—peace building can be thought of as a bridge from conflict resolution to ‘positive peace’. Peace building aims to create and foster stability and adequate functioning of a region or society. Attempts to refine and implement peace building have encountered several difficulties, including the following:

• failures to address the underlying or root causes of the conflict • lack of legitimacy in the eyes of recipients and target groups, particularly in relation to newly formed institutions • lack of agreement over the acceptance of roles and implementation of responsibilities by all parties to the conflict • limits on leadership in times of political transition or extreme crisis • over-reliance on external parties • aspirations to build a society that functions generally better than it did prior to the conflict

In today’s conflicts, 85% of victims are civilians of which the majority are women. Women in unstable, disruptive conflict and post- conflict situations are at risk from multiple forms of violence and share a set of common vulnerabilities. . . . In conflicts world-wide, rape, sexual assault, military sexual slavery, enforced prostitution and forced pregnancy are being used as deliberate military tactics. Studies of forced migration confirm that 80% of refugees and IDPs are women and children and the indefinite and long term nature of forced migration creates unique problems for women who are forced to beg for food, live in refugee camps or to earn a living in unfamiliar environments.

**Understanding Peace Building**

It should be noted at the outset that there are two distinct ways to understand peace building. According to the United Nations (UN) document “An Agenda for Peace,” peace building consists of a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation. Peace building is a long-term process that occurs after violent conflict has slowed down or come to a halt. Thus, it is the phases of the peace process that takes place after peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs), on the other hand, understand peace building as an umbrella concept that encompasses not only long-term transformative efforts, but also peacemaking and peacekeeping. In this view, peace building includes early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, advocacy work, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, and the establishment of peace zones.

In its narrower sense, peace building is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, institution building, and political as well as economic transformation. This consists of a set of physical, social and structural initiatives that are often an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

It is generally agreed that the central task of peace building is to create positive peace, a “stable social equilibrium in which the surfacing of new disputes does not escalate into violence and war.” Sustainable peace is characterised by the absence of physical and structural violence, the elimination of discrimination, and self-sustainability. Moving towards this sort of environment goes beyond problem solving or conflict management. Peace building initiatives try to fix the core problems that underlie the conflict and change the patterns of interaction of the involved parties. They aim to move a given population from a condition of extreme vulnerability and dependency to one of self-sufficiency and wellbeing.

Long-term peace building techniques are designed to fill some gaps; and to address the underlying substantive issues that brought about conflict. Various transformation techniques aim to move parties away from confrontation and violence, and towards political and economic participation, peaceful relationships, and social harmony.

This longer-term perspective is crucial to future violence prevention and the promotion of a more peaceful future. Thinking about the future involves articulating desirable structural, systemic, and relationship goals. These might include sustainable economic development, self- sufficiency, equitable social structures that meet human needs, and building positive relationships.

**The Structural Dimension of Peace Building**

The structural dimension of peace building focuses on the social conditions that foster violent conflict. Many note that stable peace must be built on social, economic, and political foundations that serve the needs of the populace. In many cases, crises arise out of systemic roots. These root causes are typically complex, but include skewed land distribution, environmental degradation, and unequal political representation. If these social problems are not addressed, there can be no lasting peace.

Thus, in order to establish durable peace, parties must analyse the structural causes of the conflict and initiates social structural change. The promotion of substantive and procedural justice through structural means typically involves institution building and the strengthening of civil society.

Avenues of political and economic transformation include social structural change to remedy political or economic injustice, reconstruction programmes designed to help communities ravaged by conflict revitalise their economies, and the institution of effective and legitimate restorative justice systems. Peace building initiatives aim to promote nonviolent mechanisms that eliminate violence, foster structures that meet basic human needs, and maximise public participation.

It is important for governments to adhere to principles of transparency and predictability, and for laws to be adopted through an open and public process. For the purpose of post-conflict peace building, the democratisation process should be part of a comprehensive project to rebuild society’s institutions.

In addition, societies need a system of criminal justice that deters and punishes banditry and acts of violence. Fair police mechanisms must be established and government officials and members of the police force must be trained to observe basic rights in the execution of their duties. In addition, legislation protecting minorities and laws securing gender equality should be advanced. Courts and police forces must be free of corruption and discrimination.

But structural change can also be economic. Many note that economic development is integral to preventing future conflict and avoiding a relapse into violence. Economic factors that put societies at risk include lack of employment opportunities, food scarcity, and lack of access to natural resources or land. A variety of social structural changes aim to eliminate the structural violence that arises out of a society’s economic system. These economic and social reforms include economic development programs, health care assistance, land reform, social safety nets, and programs to promote agricultural productivity.

**The Relational Dimension of Peace Building**

A second integral part of building peace is reducing the effects of war- related hostility through the repair and transformation of damaged relationships. The relational dimension of peace building focuses on reconciliation, forgiveness, trust building, and future imagining. It seeks to minimise poorly functioning communication and maximise mutual understanding. Many believe that reconciliation is one of most effective and durable ways to transform relationships and prevent destructive conflicts. The essence of reconciliation is the voluntary initiative of the conflicting parties to acknowledge their responsibility and guilt. Parties reflect upon their own role and behaviour in the conflict, and acknowledge and accept responsibility for the part they have played. As parties share their experiences, they learn new perspectives and change their perception of their “enemies.” There is recognition of the difficulties faced by the opposing side and of their legitimate grievances, and a sense of empathy begins to develop.

Each side expresses sincere regret and remorse, and is prepared to apologise for what has transpired. The parties make a commitment to let go off anger, and to refrain from repeating the injury. Finally, there is a sincere effort to redress past grievances and compensate for the damage done. This process often relies on interactive negotiation and allows the parties to enter into a new mutually enriching relationship.

One of the essential requirements for the transformation of conflicts is effective communication and negotiation at both the elite and grassroots levels. If these sorts of bridge-building communication systems are in place, relations between the parties can improve and any peace agreements they reach will more likely be self-sustaining. A crucial component of such dialogue is future imaging, whereby parties form a vision of the commonly shared future they are trying to build. Conflicting parties often have more in common in terms of their visions of the future than they do in terms of their shared and violent past. The thought is that if they know where they are trying to go, it will be easier to get there.

Another way for the parties to build a future together is to pursue joint projects that are unrelated to the conflict’s core issues and centre on shared interests. This can benefit the parties’ relationship. Leaders who project a clear and hopeful vision of the future and the ways and means to get there can play a crucial role here.

Indeed, a crucial part of peace building is addressing past wrongdoing while at the same time promoting healing and rule of law. Part of repairing damaged relationships is responding to past human rights, violations and genocide through the establishment of truth commissions, fact-finding missions, and war crimes tribunals.

**The Personal Dimension of Peace Building**

The personal dimension of peace building centres on desired changes at the individual level. If individuals are not able to undergo a process of healing, there will be broader social political and economic repercussions. The destructive effects of social conflict must be minimised, and its potential for personal growth must be maximised. Reconstruction and peace building efforts must prioritise treating mental health problems and integrate these efforts into peace plans and rehabilitation efforts.

In traumatic situations, a person is rendered powerless and faces the threat of death and injury. Traumatic events might include a serious threat or harm to one’s family or friends, sudden destruction of one’s home or community, and a threat to one’s own physical being. Such events overwhelm an individual’s coping resources, making it difficult for the individual to function effectively in society. Typical emotional effects include depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

**Peace building Principles**

There are a number of different principles that underpin peace building in theory and practice. The five foundational principles, from which a series of other principles can be derived:

• **Locally owned**: Peace building, like development, is a people-oriented process; it is centred on those most affected by conflict and is rooted in local contexts. Peace building emphasises the need for strategies, approaches and interventions that are based on local needs, resources and capacities and that empower local populations to implement these strategies.

**• Inclusive**: Peace building focuses on the most vulnerable and the marginalised, recognising that violent conflict is most often rooted in discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation, particularly of minorities and women. Inclusion refers not only to identifying vulnerable groups, but also to enabling their participation in peace building and other political, social, economic and development processes through capacity-building and empowerment initiatives.

• **Long term**: Peace building, like development, is a long-term process, even if interventions themselves can be in the form of crisis-response measures. There is no “quick fix” or set blueprint for peace building processes. Long-term commitment, however, provides the space for peace building to empower individuals to build locally relevant sustainable institutions and practices that address root causes of conflict.

• **Human rights and justice-centered**: The roots of conflict can be found in the violation of basic political, civic, economic, social and cultural rights. Without addressing human rights-based violations, peace will note sustained, and development achievements will be precarious at best.

• **Comprehensive**: Peace building interventions are multidimensional in essence and strive towards coherency with other sect oral and disciplinary approaches. Peace building encompasses a broad range of activities throughout the entire span of a conflict – from preventative and early-warning actions to post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

**Conclusion**

A mixture of locally and internationally focused components is key to building a long term sustainable peace. Indigenous peace building practices arise from local communities; they are tailored to local context and culture in a way that generalized international peace building approaches are not. The tasks included in peace building vary depending on the situation and the agent of peace building. Successful peace building activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace; reconcile opponents; prevent conflict from restarting; integrate civil society; create rule of law mechanisms; and address underlying structural and societal issues.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AND CONFLICT**

Human rights can be described as the rights of man or fundamental freedoms. The recognition of these rights of citizenry is one of the hallmarks of democracy and indeed any good government.

These rights are legally recognized, protected and to secure for each individual the fullest and freest development of personality and spiritual, moral and other independence. These rights are seen as rights inherent in individual as rational free willing creatures not conferred by any law or capable of being abridged or abrogated by any positive law.

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that human rights are inalienable rights that belongs to man by virtue of his humanity and therefore should be granted and guaranteed to everyone. While some of these rights have recognized by law, others are still ideals that are yet to be legalized.

According to one of the foremost –social contact philosopher, John Locke, argued that obedience to the government is based on the fact men join together in civil societies to form governments only for one reason: the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates which naturally belongs to all men simply because they are human beings.

He insists that whenever a government fails to preserve these rights and thereby ceases to serve the end for which it was created, the people have the right and even a duty to rebel and replace it.

The most widely known succinct and eloquent statement of liberal philosophy of the right of man began with the following declaration.

“We hold these truths to be self evident, *that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights That among these are life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, delivering their just powers from consent of the governed.*

 *That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness”*

Above is the American Declaration of independent drafted mainly by Thomas Jefferson and this is severally seen to have been inspired by the writings of John Locke.

Apart from the above declaration, these rights to which individuals are entitled to has been enshrined into other main human rights declaration such as the French Declaration of the Rights of man and citizens (1789) and the universal declaration of human rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948. Also in constitution of many countries, there are provisions for recognition, promotion and respect for human rights.

**Categorization Of Human Rights**

There are five (5) main categories of human rights, these are:

A Civil and political rights: These includes the rights to self-determination, the right to life, freedom from torture and inhuman treatment, freedom from slavery and forced labour, freedom of movement and choice of residence, the right to a fair trial, the right to privacy, freedom of thought and consciences and religion, freedom of opinion ands expression, right to assembly, freedom of association, the right to marry and found a family, the right to participate in one’s government either directly or through freely elected representatives, and the right to nationality and equality before the law.

B Economic social and cultural rights: There incorporated the right to work, the right to just conditions of work, the right to fair remuneration, the right to and adequate standard of living, the right to organize, form and join trade unions, the right to collective bargaining, the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to social security, the right to property, the right to education, the right to participate in cultural life and enjoy benefit of scientific progress.

**Instruments For Protection Of Human Rights**

Human rights are protected by both domestic and international laws. However, the domestic or national protection is obviously the most important because it is the first line of defense.

If one’s right is protected at the national or domestic level, there is no need for it to be done on the international level. International laws come into play when the domestic system has failed to provide the protection. The international systems are typically weaker than the national system. National systems (when they work well) rely on the binding decisions of courts, backed up by the use of force, e.g. by the police.

This is not to say that international system does not have any capacity to protect human rights, the fact is that international courts taking binding decision on human right issues are just being gradually established now and again complain with such decision largely depends on the political will of the member states. This is a pointer to the earlier fact the international law has a problem of enforcement.

Despite the problem of enforcement, international mechanisms can still play an important role in respect of states offering inadequate human rights protection and in development of human principles and precedent.

**The Domestic Protection Of Human Rights**

All the constitutions of African countries now recognized human rights in one way or another. This recognition ranges from the inclusion of extensive bill of rights that are fully justifiable by independent courts to the mere recognition of human rights in the preamble of the constitution. This is in addition to the important roles played by the parliaments, the courts and other human rights organizations and activists.

At the national level, government establishes Human rights commissions. This commission enjoys a certain level of independence, but whether this independence is real or not is important in determining whether a human rights commission is a “protector” or a “pretender”

Therefore, where such commission works well, it could fill an important gap in the protection of human rights. The human rights commission of Ghana, South Africa and Uganda are examples of effective institutions.

**The International Protection Of Human Right**

The international protection of human rights on the African countries has a number of dimensions.

At the international level, the United Nations is involved in human rights work. This they do through provision of relief work technical assistance and a number of other functions. For instance, the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Right has established Offices in a number of African countries.

At the international level, continental and world bodies or organizations have in an number of ways demonstrated their commitment to promotion and protection of human rights.

**These Include:**

1 Establishment of international criminal court or tribunal by UNO to try some political leaders who committed war crime and large scale human rights abuses. This is in addition to signing of charters on human rights with member states. For example, the international criminal tribunal for trial of those suspected to have been instrumental to the genocides in Rwanda. With the cooperation of Sierra Leonian authority, a special court was also constituted to try alleged war crimes and human rights abuses.

2 At the continental level, the constitutive Act of the AU of 2000 has the protection of human rights as central objective. Earlier in 1981, the defunct OAU adopted the Africa charter on Human and people’s Rights. (Also called the Banjul charter) which created the African commission on Human and people rights? Interestingly, all member states of AU have ratified the charter.

Similarly, the African charter on the Rights and welfare of the child was adopted in 1990 and entered into force in 1999.

Finally, the new partnership for African’s Development (NEPAD), has created the Africa Peer Review Mechanism which has the mandate to review not only economic and political governance but also human rights issues.

**Limitation Of Human Rights**

Exercise of right of any person cannot and should not constitute a breach on the right of another. It goes with the saying that where one’s right stops or ends is the beginning of another’s.

Again, the rights of individuals, such as freedom of movement can be trampled upon during emergency situations like during crisis or violent conflicts.

There are also other constitutional provisions that limits or guides the exercise of one’s rights, for example, one’s right of freedom of expression does not empower anybody to make spurious allegations or accusation with a view to causing damage to another’s reputation falsely. Such person can be sued for slender. Also courts of competent jurisdiction can revoke or deny an accused person some of his rights in line with provisions of the law. For example, a court can condemn one to death or order the person’s detention thereby denying such person’s right to life and freedom of movement respectively.

**Human Right Civil Society Organizations**

Civil society can be defined as the set of institutions, organization and behaviours situated between the state, the business world and the family. Specifically, it includes the voluntary and non-profit organizations of many different kinds, philanthropist institution social and political movements, other forms of social participation and engagement.

Examples of civil society organizations includes non-governmental organization (NGOs), private voluntary organization (PVOs) peoples organizations, community based organizations, civic clubs, trade unions, gender organizations, cultural and religious groups, charities, social and sports clubs cooperatives, environmental groups, professional association, the academia, the media etc.

Civil society organizations are often misconstrued by critics and activists.

Civil Society Organizations act as effective check on the state power. This has been recognized by the successive governments since independence. However, these organizations have been considerably weakened and politicized over the years by the government, mainly through patronage and repression and these make it easier to suffocate democracy. For instance when some leaders of the CSO or Trade Union have been offered lucrative jobs in government, this tends to silence the dissenting voice of CSOs in protesting against government actions and abuses even some known professional bodies like the Nigerian Bar Association, medical and dental Association are not free from these influences too as they maintained silence sometimes in the face of glaring corrupt practice of government and its agencies engage in large scale economic mismanagement.

**Functions/Role Of Civil Society Organizations**

1. promotion of good governance and accountability
2. poverty alleviation
3. promotion and defence of human rights
4. peace-building and conflict prevention
5. Enlightenment of the populace on the policy of government.

Some notable Civil Society Organization in West-Africa with interest in peace and conflict resolutions.

1. Manu River Union Peace Network- (MARWOPNET)
2. The women in Peace building network (WIPNET), the
3. West African Network for Peace Building (WANET)
4. International Alert, West Africa Network on Small Arms (WANSA)

**GENDER, PEACE AND CONFLICT IN NIGERIA**

**Introduction**

 A strong case is made for gender equity on the continent especially in the peace and conflict resolution sector. This is because the vast majority of those affected by any armed conflict, including refugees and internally displaced person (IDPs), are women and children. Besides, women represent more than half of the world population. Factoring in women talent and insights would lead to response to peace and conflict resolution issues that are more people-centered and therefore more sustainable.

 Conflict resolution, peace keeping and peace building do not only concern those participating directly in war or armed conflicts who are mostly men. Yet, the presence of women at peace negotiation tables has always been, and continues to be marginal. Women contribute important skills, perspectives and insights into conflicts resolution and peace building activities. Therefore, their direct participation in decision making is necessary.

 ***“Any peace process that ignores the need and rules of women is unnatural, and therefore inherently unstable. During post-conflict transition, the empowerment of women is crucial to re-launching social and economic development. Women, like men, are victims and actors in wars and armed conflicts but usually in different ways and different fields. During wars, women participate in new activities and assume new roles, often taking on more responsibilities. Despite those changes, women are often marginalized in post-conflict peace-building, both in the societies emerging from conflict, and in the formulation and implementation of peace-building strategies by international peace operatives” (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2001).***

 Sustainable peace is achievable only when men and women working together, are involved at every stage of conflict resolution and peace building.

 ***The term gender denotes the qualities associated with men and women that are socially and culturally, than biologically determined. Gender includes the way in which society differentiates appropriate behaviors and access to power for men and women. Although the details vary from society to society and change over time, gender relations tend to include a strong element of inequality between women and men and are strongly influenced by ideology. (United Nations Development report, 1986: 258)***

Gender is often seen as loosely synonymous with sex and lazily synonymous with women. However, following the arguments of Joan Scott (1986) we see gender not only as a “constitutive element of social relationships base on perceived differences between the sexes” but also a “a primary way of signifying relationships of power”

There are two major perspectives that cannot be ignored, feminist theory and *gender studies*. Feminist theory could be defined as theorizations of women’s oppression and gender studies could be defined as investigations into the ways that sex and sexuality become power relations in society. Here, sex means male and female and sexuality as in sexual behavior. No doubt these are somewhat idiosyncratic and less than completely informative definitions. They are nonetheless useful.

Social differentiation by gender is, in many respects, similar to other types of cultural forms of categorization. In other words, being male or female is merely a cultural division that is universally accepted. However, the divisions are so distinct that through the growing years an individual is given the socialization that suits the role that is expected by culture and society. In this regard, the division in gender is distinct from biological division between male and female which is based on one’s physiological make up. Gender is socially constructed based on the assumed power and position that a group of humans should possess, whereas sex is a biological division (Eagle and Steffen, 1984). Power, in this sense, is a broad concept describing the ability or freedom of individuals to make decisions and behave as they choose; but their choice patterns are underlined by society’s dictates. Societies, through the decision-makers or the tagged power group backed by cultural beliefs, define what an individual can and cannot do. This brings to the fore the features that distinguish gender from sex. Gender can change if there is a major social change in the value system; it varies from society to society. But unfortunately, it has persisted through history.

In common parlance of recent times, gender has also become a euphemism for sex, i.e. male or female, man or woman, as biologically, socially and legally defined. These definitions are hardly ambiguous. In doctrines of femininity, parenthood and personal dignity, considerations of individual preference and social functionality begin to cross-cut the common place stereotyping on which our elaboration of the two supposedly opposite, yet co-requisite sexes are based. Perceiving gender as being synonymous with sex seems a step backward, or at least it portends a kind of inertia.

Gender differentiation is well pronounced in patriarchal societies where a group of individuals have been tagged and groomed to be the decision makers for another group considered inferior, weak and subordinate (Gauley, 1987). The invocation of cultural beliefs, values and the maintenance of the status quo keep the decision-making group at the top. Unfortunately, in many societies, women are considered weak, while the men are the decision-makers.

**African Approaches to Gender Issues**

In many African societies, women believe that if society has to make decisions that would have serious bearing on their lives, they have the rights to be consulted.

From the earliest times in Africa society, the roles of the male and female have been complimentary. This is what determined their perspectives as regard the relationship between the sexes. Abundant evidence exists both in history and the oral tradition of the Yoruba people that though women were never seen as equals to men, they were never treated as “a rib or appendage”, or an “after thought to man” (Sertima, 1989).

Ancient Yoruba sages were convinced that neither the male nor the female was a perfect being. What many of these proverbs stress that male and female are complimentary partners in progress. A riddle among the Podo people, a Yoruba enclave in Togo, goes thus:

 Question: How many people are in the village?

 Answer: Two – male and female.

 The implication of this is that in Africa society, there is no ambiguity about the number of genders – there are only two - male and female.

In many traditional African societies, women were initiators of the verbal arts, business tycoons, traditional healers and leader of political arms of palace councils. For example, every council of obas (Kings) has a member of *iyalode (*female political leader). Her counterpart in the judicial arm of government (known in some societies as Ogboni or Osugbo), is the Erelu. In each of these cases, the council cannot operate if the female representative is not present. The leader of all businesses carried out in the market place is, as a rule, a woman – *the iyaloja* (mother of the market). In all these significant positions held by women, they settle dispute amicably in collaboration with men.

While discussing gender, it was inevitable for us to touch on the concept of feminism. If feminist theory explores the dialectics of women’s oppression, then feminism, a related concept, is more encompassing. Following the line of reasoning, we can say that there is African feminism. What exactly do we mean by this?

**African Feminism and conflict**

The new African-feminist approach differs radically from the western forms of feminism with which we have become familiar since the 1960s. African feminism owes its origin to dynamics, which are different from those that generated western feminism. African’s women resistance to western hegemony and its legacy within African culture have largely shaped this brand of feminism. Clearly, it does not grow out of bourgeois individualism, as is the case in Western capitalist societies. As a result of the social structure in countries like the United States and Britain, there emerged concern about female control over reproduction and choice within human sexuality.

What then does it mean to be an African woman? An African woman differs radically from the increasingly anti-naturist conception of women in industrialized western countries. We have mentioned earlier that gender studies are usually inaccurately equated to women’s studies. In almost all societies, least of all African countries, the female gender is usually referred to as the other gender or weaker gender. On the basis of this classification, women have been given the crumbs from the master’s tables.

Women and gender relations would be examined under three broad categories-social, psychological, economics and political. Physical security in post-conflict societies is a critical issue for women. Formal peace agreements end overt hostilities between combatants but to do little to contain the overflow of violence into communities. Women are especially vulnerable to low-level violence during their early stage of post conflict transition. Fear of violence and sexual abuse trap women in their homes and prevent them from engaging in important economic activities. This stress exacerbates the trauma experienced by women during the conflicts.

Recent conflicts have highlighted the use of rape as a tool of welfare. In Rwanda, women were raped as a means of ethnic cleansing, serving not only to terrorize individual victims but also to inflict collective terror on an ethnic group. In some countries, such as Angola and Mozambique, combatants kidnapped women to use as sex slaves - a tactic for terrorism and dehumanizing young women from particular ethnic groups. The social and psychological impacts of conflict have transformed gender relations both during and after conflicts. In the face of extreme hardship, traditional roles are adapted to meet the new realities imposed by conflicts. Women assume greater economic responsibilities as heads of households.

Women take on the responsibility of caring for the many children left orphaned or abandoned during conflicts. Domestic violence against women increases as a result of stress, trauma, and social disorder that emerge during and after conflicts. Ethnically mixed families experience especially difficult problems as ethnic cleansing force people to make untenable choices for survival. The economic impact of intrastate conflicts on women is severe. Compounding the general poverty and hardship caused by war is women’s lack of access to the means of production, particularly land. In Rwanda, for example, women have no rights to the land owned by their dead husbands or parents. In countries where women do have access to land, they often lack the resources needed to farm them.

In many countries, women’s participation in the labour force increased during the course of conflicts. However, when ex-combatants return home to their communities, women are often the first to lose their jobs during the post-conflicts transition. The consequence of the post-conflicts economic collapse is predictably worse for women; given the cultural, social, and economic context of gender relations, especially in Africa. Women’s nutritional status declines disproportionately, as to girls’ health and education levels. Women-headed households, women refuge returnees, and socially vulnerable women all experience marked economic decline during the post conflict transition.

The political impact of conflicts many times actually creates opportunities for women to increase their public roles and responsibilities, in the absence of men, women takes no leadership roles in both civic and political institutions. Women take on exceptionally active and visible roles in peace processes and reconciliation efforts. Following brief periods of disenfranchisement after the signing of the peace accords, women dramatically increase their participation in the post conflicts political arena. In many African countries, the number of women parliamentarians increased, along with the number of women holding positions in national ministries.

In spite of the fact that conflicts has a high level of impact on the lives of women, it is disheartening to note that they are not fully involved in the peace-building process because the plain field is not level for both genders. Something then needs to be done to rectify this anomaly in favor of the female gender.

There are four key point put forth in support of the increased participation of women in the amelioration of conflict. **First**, across the world, women’s experiences of conflict are very difficult from those of men. In their needs and concerns, pains and suffering, they often have more in common with women from opposing side, than with the men in their own society. Increasingly, women feel that their perspectives should have equal weight in the conflict resolution process, which is an important part of the peace building process. There is a shared notion that women as over 50% of the electorate have an overwhelming claim to the participation in the decision making, not in terms of their racial, ethnic, political or communal identities, but in terms of their gender.

**Second**, despite of their low visibilities in the political and public arena, women are nevertheless extremely influential in the society. The Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria, SCA notes that women have been very active in traditional method of conflict resolution from the earliest times. As educators, Nurses, and community workers, farmers and parliamentarians, mothers, wives and sisters- as individuals- they play a crucial role in shaping society. Moreover, in most war-torn regions, women are not only involved in protecting families and communities; they are also active in grassroots peace-making processes and inter-community exchanges.

**Third,** they are extremely effective in mobilizing other women and building consensus for cooperation and partnership in peace-building. Ignoring their voices and overlooking their experiences could mean that practical and successful peace-making strategies and key ingredients necessary for long term peace building are omitted from the process.

**Lastly**, time and again, on the African continent, women, who themselves have been victims of sexual abuse and violence, who have suffered the loss of sons and relatives, have nevertheless taken up the struggle to bring peace. They risk their lives, their homes and families. They face the threats and abuses from their own communities in order to reach out and create space for dialogue and cooperation. This determination and perseverance should not be underestimated. It follows therefore, that for peace to be durable and sustainable, it is essential for women to reach out beyond their usual humanitarian activities, to draw attention to the structural and root causes of conflict and to engage in formal political processes. How can women effectively do this? African women need to be more involved in the political process. Specifically, more women need to become politicians because it is by being involved that they can contribute directly to decisions in the areas of conflict prevention, management and resolutions.

**STRATEGIES FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

The strategy in the peace sector should ideally include gender mainstreaming to increase female involvement in peace negotiation and promote equity. Gender discrimination is one of the major causes of conflict in work organizations. Here we are dealing with conflict and the peace process, which permeates all sectors. If the lack of involvement of women in the various social and economic sectors causes conflict, then how do you deal with the non-involvement of women in the area of conflict management itself? It is logical to say that such a lack of gender sensitivity could generate “conflict of untold proportion.” In order to develop gender equity plan that would be appropriate to the peace sector, the following major activities are necessary:

1. Gender situation analysis
2. Consultative meetings
3. Expert working group review

**CONCLUSION**

It should be noted that since men and women are involved in peace and conflict issues, they should be equally represented in its making and implementation. A situation where there is a preponderance of men in the policy making hierarchy leaves much to be desired. It is therefore advocated that affirmative action in favor of women in the peace and conflict resolution sector of all African countries. The strategies for achieving the goal of gender equity have been fairly enumerated. It is, however, important that the political will to actualize the goal of the gender equity is present in each African country. This would be possible if more women are involved in politics.

The anticipated benefits of the gender equity plan and not just an increase in the number of women involved in the peace process especially those participating in decision making. The proposed gender mainstreaming should encourage participatory management of the peace process, gender- conscious budgeting, accountability and transparency and better understanding of gender issues as they relate to peace and conflict. Bridges should also be built between men and women. Other forms of equity would also be addressed in the process. Gender part is part of a board social justice agenda. Its analysis should draw attention to inequalities due to the age, ethnicity, class and race. The entire process of gender equity is the peace sector should open up other areas of the society for change to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Also the new input into the peace process as a result of the envisaged gender sensitive should encourage gender equity, utilizations of women’s full potentials and the removal of all stereotyped image of men and women. Gender discrimination could then be attacked at its root. Government and other decision makers should promote the gender for the peace process in Africa.