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The plight of women and children in Darfur: an assessment of the crisis between 2000 and 2013

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DECLARATION

I, Yvonne Mamolato Maqoboza, declare that this dissertation hereby submitted in fulfillment of the degree of Masters in International Relations at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus has not been submitted at this or any other university. I further declare that the materials used in the paper have been duly acknowledged and that this dissertation is my own work in design and execution.

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Abstract

The plight of women facing war and armed conflict remain a source of concern to Global leaders. Women and children are the most vulnerable group in these situations and they face varying degrees of harm and abuses in the hands of parties to the conflicts. They also become major victims of the consequences of armed conflict and wars. Consequently, women suffer escrutiately during and after the war. This research looks at the plight of women and children in Darfur conflict. The aim of the conflict is to undertake an assessment of the impact of Darfur crisis on women and children with respect to welfare and rights. To this end, this research adopted the Socialist Feminist Theory to capture and analyse the objectives of the study. The research used extent literature and personal experiences of the researcher to analyse issues the plight of women in the conflict under study. The study finds out that women and children are the most vulnerable group of people during armed conflicts and war especially in Darfur. It also found out that women were victims of displacement who were subjected to various forms of sexual abuses and victimization. The research recommended among other that women should be included in the peace making process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	11
1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY.....	11
1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	11
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	12
1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY.....	12
1.7 RATIONAL AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	12
1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	13

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION	14
2.2 WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICTS.....	14
2.3 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN IN CONFLICTS.....	20
2.4 THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN CONFLICTS.....	21
2.5 CHILDREN EXPERIENCES DURING CONFLICTS.....	25
2.6 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	26
2.6.1 FEMINIST THEORY.....	26
2.7 SUMMARY.....	29

CHAPTER THREE: DARFUR IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	30
3.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF DARFUR.....	30
3.3 THE ROOT CAUSES OF DARFUR CONFLICT.....	33

3.3.1 THE POLITICS OF RESOURCES	34
3.3.2 POLITICS WITHIN DARFUR.....	34
3.3.3 TRIBALISM.....	35
3.3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND SCARCITY OF RESOURCES.....	37
3.3.5 WATER RESOURCES AND VEGETATION.....	38
3.4 VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF DARFUR CONFLICT.....	39
3.4.1 THE LOCAL DIMENSION OF THE DARFUR CONFLICT.....	39
3.4.2 THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF THE DARFUR CONFLICT.....	40
3.4.3 THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE DARFUR CONFLICT.....	40
3.5 SUMMARY	41

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	42
4.2 STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.....	42
4.3 THE IMPACTS OF DARFUR CONFLICT ON WOMEN.....	43
4.3.1 RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.....	44
4.3.2 THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN REFUGEE CAMPS.....	45
4.3.3 EARLY MARRIAGES.....	46
4.3.4 POTENTIAL MILITARIZATION OF IDPs CAMPS.....	47
4.3.5 FOOD INSECURITY AMONG WOMEN IN DARFUR CONFLICT.....	47
4.4 THE IMPACTS OF CONFLICT ON CHILDREN.....	48
4.4.1 HEALTH EFFECTS.....	49
4.4.2 VULNERABILITY.....	50
4.4.3 DISPLACEMENT.....	51

4.4.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS.....	52
4.5 SUMMARY.....	53

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION.....	54
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	55
5.2.1 AFRICAN UNION.....	55
5.2.2 UN SECURITY COUNCIL.....	56
5.2.3 GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN.....	56
5.3 ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS.....	57
5.4 FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
REFERENCE	60

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The research topic for this study is “the plight of women and children in African conflicts: an assessment of the Darfur crisis between 2000 and 2013. Across the globe, women and children have suffered unimaginable levels of human abuses. In the African continent, the myriad of Intra-state wars and conflicts have created record of high humanitarian crisis and thus, have become a source of worry among various political, conflict resolution and civil society actors both within and outside the continent (Peltola 2012: 10). Within the Darfur region of Sudan, consistent intra-state wars and their implications for the security of civilians (largely of women and children), remain critical particularly between the period 2000 and 2013.

One of the greatest silences of war history remains war time sexual violence. As a consequence, rape during war time remain unavoidable myth considered a random acts of renegade soldiers. War implies lawlessness and disorder and as such the environment of rampant sexual abuses and violence subsist unchallenged. In such condition, local communities in the Darfur region remain flooded with small arms and light weapons. Consequently, different levels of sexual abuse on women and children, killings, looting and destruction of property continues on a daily basis. To this end, women and children are treated as the spoils of war and are raped and abused with impunity (Peltola 2012: 6).

According to Resolution 1820 of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted in June 2008, sexual violence is condemned and regarded as a tactic of war connected with the maintenance of international peace and security. It implies therefore that sexual violence, apart from having a long history as old as war itself, has been newly recognised as core security challenge of the present century. As such, this UNSC recognition provided a platform through which this emergency can be confronted. Owing to the fact that the least empowered, especially women and children, suffer most during conflicts and wars such as in Darfur, children and their mothers and those born in war time stand the risk of stigmatization, and economic exclusion. According to (Peltola 2012: 7), the protection of women and children against the sexual violence during wars and conflicts must be addressed through the UNSC resolution 1820.

The world population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) according to Deng (2008: 225) stood at over 2.5 million people and more than half of this population are from Africa. This report further indicated Sudan alone has approximately 1.5 million displaced people and over 2 million from the Darfur region by 2006 (ibid). The implication is that Africa has the largest number of IDPs or refugees with Sudan accounting for the largest number of displaced persons in the African continent. In other words, Sudan stands as the most affected country in Africa.

Apart from this unfortunate condition, Africa has been consistently ravaged by war and different types of conflict in the last forty five years especially from the period preceding the independence of most African countries in the 1960s (McGowan 2006). Before this period according to McGowan (2006) however, the 20th century Africa had experienced liberation related conflicts. As such, these conflicts form a part of the history of conflicts in the African continent. Besides, decolonization related conflict, African conflicts are caused by varying domestic and regional factors. Some of these factors are racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious related. Others are social stratification, poverty, gross inequality in the distribution of power, wealth and other resources across the entire population (Aremu 2010: 255-257). There are also some external causes. For instance, the operational aspects of the war involving the means acquisition of weapons and some financial support form part of the external factors to the conflict in Africa today (Reeves: 2013: 20).

In addition, Wassara (2010: 256) the conflict in Sudan stems from two angles; as a product of colonial history and colonial legacy, and as a history of political in independent Sudan. The origin of the latter is rooted in historical grievance and income disparities, incompatible public policies as well as wealth and power sharing related challenges. Others according to Wassara include the issue of national identity, ethnicity, and religion which are collectively linked to the challenge arising from ethno-geographic and cultural diversity of the country (ibid).

Sudan is a country that has been in crisis for some time now. The Darfur region in particular is the most devastated area of the country and as a consequence has been subjected to tremendous violence. The conflict in the Darfur region started through a rebel raid on the Sudanese military in 2004 and thereafter it has spread and affected the lives of four million people (UNICEF 2012: 1). Also, with the escalation of the conflict, thousands of lives of men, women and children have been lost while an estimated one million children have been displaced (ibid). Some of these

children have lost one or both of their parents and live in refugee camps in Sudan and Chad. Home to these children were either destroyed or burnt down completely. The 2014 UNICEF report on Darfur declared the situation as one of the worst humanitarian crises in history that has so badly affected vulnerable women and children. Some of the women and girls who were abducted by the rebels became victims of forced rape while the boys were forcefully as child soldiers for the rebels (ibid).

According to UNICEF report (2011: 9), Darfur region cover a landmass squaring about 500 00 kilometres. The report further has it that the region lies in the western part of Sudan and is bordered by Libya in the northwest and to Chad in the west as well as on the southern part by Central African Republic. Also the pre-conflict estimated population of Darfur was put at approximately six million people. Darfur is a large region as big as France and as such plays home to non-Arabized Muslim tribes. These group include the Zaghawa and Fur people. Though they are elusively joined to land ruled from Khartoum during the British rule which started in 1916 (ibid). Furthermore, South Sudan which was formerly known as Equatoria, had completely different religious, ethnic and geographical setting. Thus, the area was almost administered as a distinctive entity under the British rule as a consequence. As a result, the region was grafted for few years before independence.

Consequently, the Arabs in the northern Sudan had the privilege of getting more interaction with the colonial masters who educated them into believing in themselves as superior to others in the country. They has their best relationship with Egypt which was then regarded as the centre of British rule in the region that formed the base for the colonial rule at the time. Thus, the regarded themselves as Arabs because of their connection with the Arab bordering them in the North and West and this endeared them from looking south, and hardly ever west. This has continued to date with deadly consequences. The capital El-Fasher and Darfur are the country's last towns before Chad and they are few hundred miles beyond that (Reeves 2013:10).

According to the 2011 UNICEF report on Sudan conflict, the proliferation of regional conflicts, diffusion of small arms combined extended period of drought, increased competition dwindling resources, insufficient and asymmetric government investment heightened bloody and politicked conflict of Darfur. While this was viewed as marginalisation and isolation from the centre of

power in Khartoum, the loosely opposition groups and the rebels in Darfur mobilised and formed the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM), to fight against this perceived injustice.

Consequently, in April 2003, the armed group of the popular-based SLM attacked government installations in Darfur and the El-Fasher airport with surprising tactical victory (Reeves 2010: 12). There was another rebel group known as the Justice Equity Movement (JEM), which was also an Islamic opposition group in Darfur and had a connection with the SLM. They both carried out a loose co-ordinated attack. Unfortunately, government effort quell the conflict and their attempt to root out insurgent and confrontation rather escalated the conflict into a full scale war. The government aligned militia also known as the Janjaweed ferociously engaged in the attacks on what they considered as against to the cause of the rebels on the villages. It became a form of indiscriminate form of attack on villages which resulted not only in the deaths but also in injure of many civilians. It also resulted in the destruction of their houses, community services, wells and irrigation systems, fruits trees and infrastructures. Other properties such as cattle, which was the source of livelihood for many, were equally destroyed.

This forced the highly vulnerable; women and children, the traumatised people into a large scale movement into concentration camps where their survival depended completely on humanitarian aid. By May 2005, an estimated 2.74 million were already affected by the conflict, 1.88% of which were IDPs (UNICEF 2010: 10). One of the greatest challenges of the caps was security and it was a huge source of worry to UN.

As indicated earlier, women and children are the most affected in any conflict and the Darfur is not an exception. There has been an increase in the number of women and children casualties. The percentage has risen to 80% in contemporary wars (Human Rights Watch 2001). Furthermore, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2001, women and children are also the highest victims of landmines and this remains one of the most commonly used weapons in African conflicts and wars. In most cases, the rehabilitation processes are hugely male-centred and this was the case in Darfur where the interest was neglected and disregarded by the peacekeeping process. Because the approach was also male-centred, the peace process was equally fashioned along this line as well. Thus, resulting in the neglect of the plight of women and children in numerous circumstances.

Sexual violence and rape are used as war instruments and an outlet for the exhibition of sexual aggression by the combatants and as war booty or bonus for them. It could also be as an avenue for the spread of terror, loss of morale and an avenue to undermine women's ability to sustain their communities during war times. Women are often raped at certain strategic place; at their homes, at the borders while attempting to cross and at IDPs camps (HRW 2001).

The study seeks to find out in what possible way does women and children's lives can be improved in Darfur. The paper further seeks to understand how women and children can best suit and adapt to social challenges brought about by the conflict and turn it to the better.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Conflicts in the African continent is mostly caused by greed and power hungry leadership of African states. The plight of women and children in African conflicts particularly Darfur has demanded focus of the African continent and the world at broader scale. Due to the Darfur conflict, women and children have been mostly affected by this said conflict. As a consequence, they face varying degree of challenges which affect their existence and inflict on their human right. The women and children become victims of displacements. They eventually end up becoming victims of rape, and other forms of sexual abuse and violence. Some of them have been raped for various reasons including for revenge purposes. They have also been victims of stigmatization and discrimination from family members and communities due to their unfortunate or rape. Some of these women had to live with the after effect of trauma. Therefore, this paper seeks to look at the causes that led to this conflict that is affecting women and children and wish to come up with direction on how this social turmoil can be prevented from expanding further.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

- To undertake an assessment of the impact of Darfur crisis on women and children with respect to welfare and rights.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the political and socio-economic of Darfur crisis on women and children.
- To assess the impact of the Darfur crisis on children

- To make a positive contribution in the literature on the Darfur crises.
- To make recommendations on how to resolve the impacts of Darfur crisis on women and children.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the causes of Darfur crisis?
- What are the socio-economic implications of the Darfur crisis on the lives of the women?
- What are the socio-economic impacts on the Darfur crisis on the lives of the children?
- What are the recommendations on how to resolve the impacts of Darfur crisis on women and children

1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of study will be limited to the Darfur region, and it also revolves around the Darfur conflict and particularly on how it has affected women and children between 2000 and 2013. In addition, the study will assess the implications that the conflict in Darfur has caused on women and children.

1.7 RATIONAL AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is clear as stated from the literature above that the situation at the Darfur region of Sudan is at the state of a crisis and that women and children are more vulnerable group out of the conflict situation. As a result, this study is significant in that there is currently a scientific literature gap as the Plight of women and children in Darfur is under researched. In the interest of trying to understand how the Darfur conflict erupted, the study deems it fit that it should only give special reference on women and children as they are the most affected casualties of the conflict between 2000 and 2013. This study is further significance because the findings and recommendations of this study in general may be applied in the broader scientific literature of the discipline of International relations by scholars. The Darfur conflict is one of the lengthy conflicts that have ever taken place in Africa. Hence the researcher deems it fit to conduct a study on it and come up with relevant solution to the problem of the conflict in Darfur.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is imperative in this study because it shows how the research design will be conducted. This is a social survey thus, data on the topic investigated will be collected through books, journals, newspaper, online accredited journal and other publications that are related to the study (Babbie, 2010:254). There are two main traditional methods of conducting research namely the qualitative and quantitative research methodology. On the one hand, the quantitative research methodology is concerned with dealing with numbers, hypothesis testing, graphs and questioners and scientific approaches of conducting research. On the other hand, the qualitative methods investigate the what, where, when, why and how of decision-making of states by other states, and person to person (ibid). The qualitative research methodology was applied for the purpose of this study. That is, in its case is used as a description and understanding of behaviour of states (Sudan and Darfur).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2006) qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour. The qualitative method further deals with collecting the information (data) from secondary sources such as books, journals, and newspapers. Qualitative research has its roots in social science and is more concerned with understanding of the implementations of the policies, knowledge, responsibility and action of states (Cresswell 2009). Cresswell argues that qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning of implications of multilateral agreements.

The methodology of this study is mostly a result of personal and direct observation of the events in the Darfur region during a national assignment within the period under study. Thus, the methodological tools and data for the study arises from my day-to-day experiences and visits to IDPs camps and periodic reports bulletins from organisations such as the UNICEF and Red Cross. Generally, the study made use of primary data collected from personal observation experience and secondary sources in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter one presented a general introduction and background to the study. The chapter also presented the statement of the problem, objectives and research questions as well as the significance and scope of the study. It also has the research methodology for the study. Chapter two will present the literature review and theoretical framework. The chapter will be divided into two. The first part will review literature on women and children in conflict and wars from a general perspective. The second part will present discussions on the theoretical framework used for the study.

2.2 WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICTS

The review of literature both primary and secondary is essential for this study because it shall involve the identification and analysis of documents containing information that is related to the research problem. That is, literature review is essential to determine what the method of investigating the question concerned in this study, which is the first step of an empirical study. A study of existing literature will be conducted systematically, methodologically and accurately performs this research without misuse of data collected.

This is what exists from an academic point of view towards a clear understanding of the nature and background of the problem identified. In this regard a review of existing literature in this area globally and in particular, the Darfur conflict will be highlighted and investigated. In investigating the Darfur conflict the research will be conducted through consulting secondary sources such as books, thesis, and dissertations, journals, conference papers and other papers presented on the subject, newspaper reports and other on-line media reports and other useful materials. The literature reviewed by the researcher attempts to give a clear structured analysis of the Darfur conflict.

Conflict is a result of normal interaction among people and thus, not limited or restricted to Africa alone. It remains a global issue that has taken centre stage and discussed among world

leaders in both the international and local political stages. It is difficult if not impossible to avoid conflict in every society.

In this manner, Lindsey (2001) clearly stated that women, girls, children and the elderly suffer most excruciatingly during wars. The author presented a general view on the plight of these most vulnerable group of people during wars but had her specific focus on women. More to the postulations of other authors, (Revees 2013; Petola 2012; Wassara 2010), Lindsey agrees that women are adversely affected globally in times of war. The author further stated that women are the only part of the vulnerable group who in most cases, are shouldered with the responsibility of taking care of the rest of the members of the group despite being exposed to the same numerous dangerous conditions of war. According to her, when families are displaced by wars and violent conflicts, women who eventually find themselves in improvised shelters such as IDP Camps are abandoned to the faith of fending and taking care of the remnant of her family members there with her. Sometimes too, this care giving may extend even to none family members who may be stranded and equally desolate.

Lindsey (2001) enumerated and discussed some the challenges women face during wars to include vulnerability as a result of armed conflict, arbitrary displacement, change in traditional roles, lack of personal safety, sexual violence, all forms of human rights abuses, lack of freedom of movement, shortage of food supplies, restricted access to means of food preparation materials and water, reduced agricultural sources of livelihood. Others include lack of shelter, clothing, health care services, poor hygiene and sanitation, access to education, information, distorted religious and sociocultural practices and access to effective remedy.

According to a study conducted by the United Nations Refugee Agency on the war in Syria in 2013 titled “Women Alone: The fight for survival by Syria’s refugee women”, women are the most hit by the effects of armed conflicts and wars across the globe. It was found in the study that women became vulnerable to all forms of challenges because of the conflict. One of the worrying challenges they discovered is that Syrian women became instant refugees in neighbouring Lebanon as a result of internal displacement brought about by the destruction of their home in Syria.

The report highlighted some other challenges faced by women to include, isolation from home, lack of access to health facilities, fending for their families, providing shelter, lack of funds and

means of raising it leading to inability to pay for house rents, sexual abuses from men who they request assistance from, having to cope with the challenges of new environment and home, among others. In the light of these elucidations, the United Nations Refugee Agency posits that the sociocultural status of the women and their children instantly changes with their advent into an utterly new country and environment. To this end, it implies that the woman will have to start learning how to live and survive in her new environment. Some of these women they interviewed expressed their devastation since leaving home. While expressing their suffering and the displeasure of their home, they however expressed their desire to return home as soon as the war is over.

The report of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) on the war in Syria titled “Detention of Women in Syria: A weapon of war and Terror”, published in 2015, shows that women were arbitrarily arrested and subjected to unlawful detention due to their vulnerability and used as a weapon of terror against opponents in Syria. Such women, according to the study, were tortured and sexually abused before being used as bargaining chip in hostage exchanges and extraction of false information. Some of the women also suffer other inhuman treatment in the hands of their captives including denial of access to basic sanitary and medical care, separation from families, sexual violence, torture, unfair prosecution and other financial matters in detention.

Findings of the report shows that opposition groups since 2013 have progressively resorted to the detention of women for political motives of obtaining bargaining supremacy in dialogues with Syrian government over the release of captured rebel fighters. This came in the wake of increasing wave of absence of fair prosecution processes for detainees precipitated by common practices of corruption, bribes and negotiation for to exchange prisoners. The research further indicated that not only the rebel fighters, but also Syrian government, on the other hand detain women to be used as bargaining chip in their negotiations with armed groups. Consequently, Syrian women became target of indiscriminate arrest and incarceration by most parties to the conflict who use them to gain weight in their negotiation on hostage exchange.

Regrettably, the women detained were dehumanized and subjected to routine abuse and appalling brutality by their captors despite being held in overcrowded cells without access to lawyers and food. The detained women were not exposed to the same kind of torture or

particular sexual violence in detention rather the report indicated that all the women interviewed were subjected to different and various kinds of sexual abuse. However, findings of the study show evidence of how women, at all stages of their detention, were exposed to daily ill treatment and specific pattern of humiliation and torture, including gender specific torture and treatment which affect their mental health.

According to the 2015 report of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) on the war in Syria, women suffer unbelievably after their release from detention. Upon their release, most of these women face various kinds of discrimination both from their families and communities. The general belief is that they have been subjected to one form of abuse or the other in detention, which has brought unacceptable disrepute to their families and communities. Consequently, many of these women were killed while some were ostracized and other seek refuge in other countries to avoid stigmatization. The study noted that this social behaviour has not only destroyed the fabrics of the society but also torn families apart. This is so because many relatives and people tend to stay away from detained women after their release.

According to Madzima-Bush (2013), women globally suffer most during wars and armed conflict because they have been known to receive the hard end of the stick. While focusing on the plight of women in African conflicts, she gave instances of women in conflicts of Rwanda and Somalia. The author posited that women constituted more than 40 percent of the millions victims of the Holocaust as well as good number of people slaughtered in the Rwanda genocide and the ongoing war in Somalia. Stressing further, the author streamlined the effects and consequences of these conflicts to surviving women victims. She agrees with Lindsey (2001) that most of women faced with the daunting task and challenges of keeping families together after displacement, providing food, clothing, shelter in what is in most instances, destroyed infrastructure, for their children and their families.

Explaining further on the abuses suffered by women facing war, Lindsey (2001) and Madzima-Bush (2013) opined that women become more vulnerable because of the devastation thronged on them by wars and armed conflicts. According to Madzima-Bush (2013), internally displaced women in camps in the Mogadishu the capital of Somalia, are suffering sexual violence in the form of gang rape and other forms of abuses. In the authors' opinion, this act is gruesome and degrading on the part of women. The author indicated that the effects of war on women continue

even after the war. This is because most of these women are widowed by these wars while others would unfortunately live with the tortuous memories of murdered families, children, and even rape for the rest of their lives. This exposes women to certain level of psychological trauma, depression, madness in some cases and could even led some to committing suicide. The author thus suggested that women should be protected and included in peace processes because of their position in crises situation.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has witnessed more than a decade of armed conflict and war. According to Latek (2014), women in this country has remained the major victims of the consequences of the armed conflict and war since its inception. They have suffered all forms of sexual abuse and like in the faith of women in the Syrian war, women in Congo have also been used as weapon of war but in a different form. According to Broun (2012) sex against captured wives and daughters of the opposition was used as a war weapon to inflict and dishonor the ego of opposition. To this end, Latek (2014) stated that women were subjected to because the chronic conflict that has overtaken the country exacerbated the situation. Rape and endemic sexual abuse heightened in the face of escalating armed conflict and its use as a tool of revenge. Latek explained that sexual violence is extremely serious in Congo today because of its scale, systematic nature and the number of victims. According to the author, more women have been sexually abused in that country more than in most of African war torn countries.

Specifically on Darfur, the conflict has raised essential strategic and functioning level of trials in the conversion of the developing ideas of global action in contradiction of states that fail and accept primary concern for the defence of civilian populations (Amnesty International 2006). The Amnesty International 2006 report further indicated complicity of the Government of Sudan (GoS) in the war of Darfur. The group accused the GoS of serious human rights abuse, crime against humanity, war crimes in the conflict which according to them has claimed the lives of thousands and left million others as refugees and IDPs. The study stressed that this alleged complicity and the level of humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur forced the UN to accept that Khartoum government failed in its responsibility to protect the citizens of Darfur (ibid).

Sudan and Darfur share same ethnic and linguistic multiplicity. For instance, out of about 90 tribes identified in the country, the Muslim population account for the majority (Reeves 2013: 20). Also, Darfur is as poor as Sudan because Darfur was neglected region during and after the

colonial era. As a result, the area is underdeveloped and lacking in basic infrastructures like good roads, hospitals, schools and many others (Peltola 2012: 15). The co-existence between the nomadic Arabs and sedentary non-Arabs was a symbiotic one in which nomads grazed their herds on non-Arab land at particular period of the year (ibid). The grazing was chosen for a particular when the animal droppings would be useful as fertilizer to the soil for farming purposes. At this period, settlement of disputes was the duty of the leaders of the parties involved in the dispute.

However, after the 1980s, following the reduction in arable land due to increased desertification of the region, thing began to change. Consequently, people migrated from surrounding nations into Darfur for greener pasture and brought in weapons with them thus, making it more available and accessible (Wassara 2010: 17). Following from this, a rebellion against the government started in the late 2002 and early 2003. It was a small rebellion which was started by few persons from three rebel non-Arab groups of the Fur, Zaghawa and Massalit (ibid). The rebellion attacked and destroyed military outpost and police station in and around Darfur demanding for an increased share of the nation's wealth (ibid).

As indicated earlier, the government formed militia group known as the Janjaweed, with the help of equipment hired and supplied them by the government, assisted the government to suppress the rebellion (Reeves 2013: 30). Unfortunately, this government effort succeeded in escalating the conflict and blowing it out of proportion as was the case in during the fight against rebels in the South. The fundamental reason behind the escalation was the massive attack by the government hired militia against civilians from the rebel areas who were not involved in the conflict (ibid).

The then Un Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Mr Jan Egeland was compelled by the level of carnage in Darfur to refer to it as the "worst in the world today" (UN 2004). It shows that the crisis in Darfur was beginning to receive attention from different quarters on a daily basis. The situation is becoming increasingly disturbing and Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 19) indicated that thousands of people have lost their lives to the conflict while hundreds of thousands more have escaped their homes into neighbouring countries such as Chad as refugees.

According to Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 22), the disaster in Darfur could be understood from two perspectives. One, from a historical perspective, the crisis was seen as a continuation of long existing plot by Successive Arab regimes to completely annihilate the black Africans from

their bi-racial nation. Two, from perspective that it is a conflict that has resulted into a serious humanitarian disaster. This is so because one of the colonial legacies in most African post-colonial countries of which Sudan is part of is the forced crucible. The forced crucible of Muslim Arabs and Black Africans in Sudan was also crucial to the conflict in Darfur. The effect is ethnic and religious division existing within the region.

Thus, the government supported nomadic Arabs in the Darfur province fought the native Black African peasant tribes thereby constituting the region into a site of extreme violence since February 2003 (Thaxton 2013: 15). This stands as the entrenched cause of the Darfur conflict between the Arab Muslims and African Black Christians existing at the foundation of the region for many decades. Apart from this historical causative factor, Thaxton further indicated that the other factors such as race, religion, tribe, culture, ethnicity, and bad leadership, also define the degree of the Arab-African conflict in Darfur. Huntington supported this assertion by stating that the loss of many lives and destruction of properties are examples confirming the level of impunity in what he termed the Arab-African conflict in Sudan. According to Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 25) focus on the root cause of the conflict in Darfur has shifted to a battle between groups of different civilizations from a traditional conflict between the sovereign states. Wassara (2010: 19) argues that whatever causes conflict is inherent foundational annals of Sudan and therefore a miniature or reflection of the Darfur conflict which has lasted for many years.

2.3 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN IN CONFLICTS

Women encounter a lot of problems during conflicts and wars. The conflict in Darfur is not an exception to this statement. In fact there is no doubt the debilitating effects of conflict on the most vulnerable members of the society, including women and children. Although armed conflicts occur throughout the world, the African continent appears to possess a particular background for civil and international wars.

In numerous circumstances, women's or children's concern have been ignored by the peace-making process and this has caused a male-centred attitude to peace and security in Africa. In modern wars, the number of civilian fatalities is normally about 80 percent and most of them are women and children. It is thus, observed that women and children who experience trauma due to this loss of family members and the disruption of normal lives are not regarded in the peace process and discussion on issues they are directly affected (Human Rights Watch 2007).

2.4 THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN CONFLICTS

Notwithstanding the difficult challenges displaced women face in their vulnerability during conflict, most women in Darfur experienced hell on earth because of the level of atrocious crime committed against their dignity and lives. War condition and its attendant repercussion impact negatively on women and children.

One of the impacts of the Darfur conflict on women is that the conflict compel women to see themselves as fighters in the crisis. According to (Reeves 2013: 28-32) women from the armed opposition groups regard themselves as complete members as well as fighters of the group. Notwithstanding the negative tag attached to women who belonged and fought for the rebel groups, these women continued in the fight because they wanted to protect themselves from further violation and abuse of the state and its actors (ibid). To this end, Wassara (2010: 18) continued to intimate that most girls and women who joined and fought for the opposition rebel groups did so because the government of Sudan failed to uphold its protective obligation under the International Human Rights and International Human Law.

This he further stated formed the primary motivation behind women joining and fighting on the side of the rebels against the government. Sadly, majority of these women became members and fighters of the opposition rebel groups as girls which they indicated was their final option with regard to their safety from abuse (ibid). The inference here is that young boys and girls are more vulnerable than the elderly and adults because they are the target in times of conflict (ibid). Wassara concludes by arguing that the primary reason behind women joining rebel groups is the result of lack of state protection. So by inference, women choose to take up arms to fight because they are defenceless and are putting up a defence for themselves by fighting on the side of the opposition. Thus, the spate of sexual violence perpetrated by state actors against civilian females remain the secondary and the key factor within that escalated the conflict (Salih 2005: 27).

According to American Jewish World Service 2013, there numerous obstruction of aid to the affected people. This is largely due to the state sponsored militia violent activities which had disrupted humanitarian strategies and prevented aid from entering and reaching people in need of it. The violent activities of state sponsored militia the report indicated, disrupted government aid strategy and weakened the movement of aid around and into Darfur. (Peltola 2012: 19) opined

that Internally Displace women and children refugees who have lived in camps for so many years became increasingly vulnerable to sexual abuse and attacks. They also lack comfortable and good living shelter, access to health facilities and good pipe borne drinking water. In addition, they are faced with other health challenges because they are exposed to infectious diseases and dysentery, which could easily reduce their immunity and drain their strength (ibid). Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 14) opined that reducing or preventing the rate of mortality in Darfur has defiled known conventional responses which are in gross inadequacy and will continue unless an action in the right direction is taken urgently to buttress the situation already inexistence on ground.

The American Jewish World Service report 2013, indicates that women become more vulnerable because they are predominantly farmers. They engage so much in farming activities that take them to the farms mostly on daily basis and they are exposed to attacks which could lead to their rape, being beaten or even death. The report stated further that the vulnerability is exacerbated when women in families leave their territories, towns and villages to fetch woods and water for cooking and also work in the fields and in doing so, they get exposed to daily danger of any form of abuse. This is so according to the report because there is a continued presence and violent activities the government sponsored militia; the Janjaweed in and around the area. Thus, sexual abuse continues on the increase daily. That is why the report argues that rape cases in Darfur are under reported despite the huge number recorded thus far. Apart from this argument, the report attributed the cause of under reporting of rape cases in Darfur to the fear of stigmatization that follows such incidence against the victims. In some instances the report indicated, victims are drawn into heavy social disgrace, ostracised sometimes by families themselves or even the communities (American Jewish World Service 2013).

Women and children make up the majority of the population in the camps. According to a report by the Amnesty International 2011, young widows who lost their husbands to the conflict and most single unmarried women are more particularly exposed to the dangers of abuse and violation irrespective of their location; in camps or nearby villages. The report stated that while children are most likely to suffer malnutrition, and less likely to receive education, the young daughters would most likely be forced into early marriage at a very tender ages. Some who are fortunate not to go into early marriages, the report goes on, will be unfortunately forced into

prostitution. Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 16) posit that the number of girls forced into early marriages have increased due to high level of displacements in the region. Glick explained that most families engage in this practice because they believe it gives a form of protection to their daughter against rape and other forms of sexual abuses and human violation against women.

In the hands of the Janjaweed militia group, women have also suffered untold abuse. Daudu (2010:241) recorded that women were raped by the Janjaweed from two front. From the first front, women who did not flee their home if fear that their husbands would be killed if they do were raped by the group. Also from the second front, women who refuses to disclose the whereabouts of their husband were raped to coerce them into divulging such information. Daudu further specified that such form of rape was also used as torture. The study indicated that most of the women who were raped under the later front were also subjected to other forms of torture which included forcing their faces between wooden sticks and pulling out their finger nails as well as breaking the legs of some stubborn women to prevent them from escaping.

To this end Kajee (2007: 30) argues that humanitarian efforts of the UN in the Darfur crisis is grossly inadequate. He opined that before such efforts by the UN could be said to be sufficient, it should be able to stop the killings, rape and other forms of abuse going on against women in the conflict. He further indicated that the UN should step up his humanitarian efforts particularly towards preventing the women and girls from being subjected to unnecessary inhuman treatment in the hands of the Janjaweed militia group.

Furthermore, the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) report 2013 identified another perspective to the plight of women, girls and children in Darfur. The report showed that victims of rape are also maltreated by the local communities where they belong. To this end the AJWS stated that some of the members of this group have faced forceful rejection from their local communities while some were even punished for getting pregnant illegally through rape. Such women according to the report become more vulnerable to attacks and rape because some of them remain homeless. The report indicated that aid is vital for such victims.

Unfortunately, the activities and the Janjaweed had continued unabated and thus, prevented the flow of aid to these unfortunate victims in dire need of it. Regrettably, many members of the Janjaweed have been recruited into the Sudanese police force and this has weakened the state apparatus against the activities of the group. Thus, the report conclude, that the plight of women

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2.6 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This part presents and discusses the theory used in this study. The study highlights the Feminist Theory as the theoretical perspective comprehensive enough to explain and analyse the plight of women and children- who the theory represent as the oppressed- in Darfur. The theory shows in essence how women suffer oppression in a male dominated world and the level of inequality created by uneven economic and cultural factors in a male dominated society.

2.6.1 FEMINIST THEORY

There have been a number of different types of feminism over the years- Socialist Feminism, Anarcha Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Materialist Feminism, Intersectionality -all varying in goals and strategies (Gordon, 2013). On the one hand, according to Adadevoh (2010:211), the male-controlled society has shaped the socio-political as well as the economic life of women in Africa to a very great extent. The capitalist –economic structure to which many countries subscribe, work to preserve this same economic sexism through diverse patriarchal indoctrination. She further believes that in reconsidering the experiences of women with particular inference to their empowerment, the focus of researchers should be on gender relation and the consequences of segregationist policies. This is irrespective of the fact that gender balance and good governance are highly sort after across the globe. This type of system according to her is problematic particularly when it is operated together with a socialist theory in which women are regarded as subordinates to their male counterparts. This is provided that there are bound to be reactions in the political institution tied to patriarchal sexist domination (ibid).

On the other hand, Byanyima (2008:317) maintains that “the end of the decade... Beijing Platform for Action presented an opportunity to evaluate progress made towards achieving general equality at the national, regional and international levels. The study further posit that the fundamental human rights principles including freedom, justice and dignity are recognised as important prerequisites for the development of human progress. Byanyima stressed that adhering to the principle of the 1963 Charter implies adhering to the 1948 United Nations (UN) Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also of 1948.

Ayers (2010: 165) believes that the foundation of gender equality is laid in the 1963 Charter and acknowledging such principles would accord some inalienable rights to women. As improved in the African Union (AU) constitutive Act 2000, the AU should function in accordance with the promotions of gender equality. Hale stated further that both in the advanced capitalist world and the Southern periphery, there are actions, struggles and debates from women and states that they are homogenous or universal.

Therefore, she concludes that “this suggest that the researchers of gender issues, more specifically social scientists and humanists, now have to pay close attention to what they bring to the field concerning women in particular.

2.6.2 The Socialist Feminist Theory:

Having presented a general perspective on the feminist theory, it becomes imperative to provide a more specific for the purpose of this research. The whole idea is to bring our theory as close to the case study as possible to enhance the clearer elucidations, arguments and findings of this research. In this sense, the Socialist Feminist Theory, as earlier indicated as one aspect of feminism, is apt for this study. The reason being that the theory captures the whole crux and underpinnings of the predicament of women in a male dominated world.

In the 1960's and 1970's when the theory rose, its fundamentals provided explicit concerns on women oppression and suppression, which in most cases, are predominantly supported by certain sociocultural inclinations existing within communities women find themselves. Socialist Feminist theorists (Gordon, 2016; Gordon, 2013; Adadevoh, 2010; Byanyima, 2008) relate their ideas to the material and historical conditions of gender oppression based on historical materialism and other cultural sources. The ideas were embedded on the interconnectivity that exist between patriarchy and capitalism, which tend to breed uneven balance in wealth. This condition unfortunately becomes a driving force of women's subjugation precipitate to men (Ayers, 2010).

In this sense, some socialist feminist theorists (Gordon, 2013; Adadevoh, 2010) argue that socialist feminist theory is two-pronged: “it broadens Marxist feminism's argument for the role of capitalism in the oppression of women and radical feminism's theory of the role of gender and the patriarchy”. (Gordon 2016: 341). The first objective addresses women's inequality or limited

roles in society, staying at home and raising a family as a major factor in their oppression. The second objective aims to show women's oppression experience in various ways including race, class, sexual orientation and education, among others (Gordon, 2013; Ayers, 2010).

Hence, Socialist Feminist Theory considers how sexism and gendered division of labour is determined by economic system (Gordon, 2013). By rejecting the Marxist's notion that class and class struggle are the only defining aspects of history and economic development, social feminism rather postulates that class and gender relationship create distinct forms of oppression and privilege for women and men of each class (Gordon, 2013). Thus, in most cultural settings, a woman is decided, derived or defined by the status of the man she marries. In other words, a woman's class status is generally derivative of her husband's class or occupational status (Gordon, 2016).

Apart from exposing the interconnectivity between economic and cultural sources of women oppression, the theory's major focus is on how the women can be liberated from the shackles of gender oppression and domination and how they can assess equality within the societies they find themselves. While rejecting the fundamental claims of radical feminism's theory that patriarchy is the only or primary source of women oppression, socialist feminists assert that women are unable to be free due to financial dependence on males (Gordon, 2013). Socialist feminists further argue that liberation of women can only be achieved when the economic and cultural sources of women oppression are worked on and eliminated (Adadevoh, 2010). They thus opined that women liberation is a necessary part of their quest for social, economic and political justice.

It could be deduced from the above elucidations the plight of women in a male dominated world. The theory clearly points out that certain cultural and economic conditions work together to perpetuate women oppression in the society. In war times, such as in Darfur, the issue of gender expose women to various forms of oppression ranging from all sorts of Human Rights abuses and violations. Therefore, this study adopts the Socialist Feminist Theory to outline, discuss, analyse and determine the causes of the plight of women and children in the Darfur crises between 2000 and 2013.

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. The literature reviewed exposed the vulnerability of women and children in conflicts and wars globally. The review demonstrated that women and children suffer most during conflicts and wars across the globe. The review also illustrated that women and girls become increasingly vulnerable and are violently abused sexually during conflicts and wars. It also shows that vulnerability of children increases their chances of malnutrition and educational underdevelopment. Furthermore, the review shows that infant mortality increases during conflicts and wars as a result of lack of unavailability of health facilities and services and as a consequence, children are exposed to certain health challenges that could lead to permanent disabilities. The study also adopted the Socialist Feminist Theory as an aspect of the Feminist Theory to explain the plight of women and children in conflict and war times with particular focus on the Darfur conflict.

CHAPTER THREE

DARFUR IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this chapter are to explore the brief history of Darfur and further examine the causes of conflict by taking a closer look at resources, politics, tribalism, environmental degradation and lastly water resources and human factors contributed in increasing tribal and religious divides between the acclaimed Arabs and Africans in Darfur. It also highlights how these factors brought fear and distrusts between the Arab and African Sudanese resulting into a struggle for resource control which degenerated into serious conflicts and war. This historical background is necessary for a better understanding to the conflict in Darfur which has significant negative impacts on women and children.

3.2. BRIEF HISTORY OF DARFUR

According to Ayers (2010: 158-160), the Darfur region of Sudan is larger than Iraq and is home to millions of people. Darfur is made up of three provinces in the northwest area of Sudan. Boarded by Central African Republic, Chad, and Libya. Before the conflict, the estimated population of Darfur was approximately 6 million people, which are largely divided into two main groups, Arab and non-Arab (ibid). Some of these people claim to be Africans and other to be Arabs. The Arabs tend to be nomadic or semi-nomadic herders while the non-Arabs; also frequently referred to as black Africans, tend to be sedentary farmers (ibid).

Although they are partially separated by religion, ethnic and political interests created fundamentally division lines between these people. Irrespective of the fact that both ethnic groups are of African origin, the Arabs claim to practice Arab religion (Islam) while the other claim to practice African religion. This precipitated a complicated situation similar to what obtains across many African countries today.

At independence in 1956, Darfur was a stronghold of Umma party because the leader was both a bastion of the Mahdist religious movement and Darfur a stronghold of its political wing that provided their support at that time (Arenu 2010: 551). Thus, the leader of Umma part Sadiq Al-

Mahdi rose to power in Sudan twice in 1968 and 1986 through the absolute support and bulk vote of Umma voters. In 1955, 1972, 1983, and 2003, around 40% and 60% of members of the northern troops who fought against the southern rebels are from various Darfur African Islamic ethnic groups. By implication, Islamic religion remain the stronger identity factor dividing Darfur other than race and culture. Ayers (2010: 159) stressed that this is so because large number of southern blacks converted to Islam in their huge number while quite a few number remained as traditional African religious or become Christian converts.

Broadly, the fight in the Darfur conflict squares between the Khartoum government and its local agents known as the Arab militia against the black African insurgents (CWP 2004). While the root cause of the crisis is tied to the colonial legacy of feeling of superiority and cultural elitism imbibed by the Arabs, there is also the aspect of perceived oppression, neglect and feeling of resentment among the Africans (Aremu 2010: 553). Despite providing enormous support and loyalty to the Khartoum government in the north, the Muslims acknowledged the fact that Darfur is lacking in basic infrastructural facilities, neglect of education and economic underdevelopment. This southern part is largely habited by the black Christians and African traditionalists (Aremu 2010: 551, Ayres 2010: 151, CWP 2004). The population of Darfur is predominantly Muslim however, they are ethnically mixed with over 30 other ethnic groups (Ayers 2010: 161). But broadly as indicate earlier, these groups can be divided into two basic groups of Arabs and Africans. Ahmed (2006: 2) explains that this reason has continually represented itself as one of the dividing factors in Sudan since independence in 1956.

Along this divide, the Arab north has held onto political and military power for years while the black Africans were excluded from government. This according Aremu (2010: 556) left the south politically excluded, militarily repressed, enslaved and economically exploited. Thus, few years after independence, the south rose and started to protest against these injustices. This situation compelled the President Omar Bashir led government and his fundamentalist Islamic government to declare a holy war against the black African groups of the south (ibid). This group is made up of many black African tribes such as the Dinka, the Nuba and the Neur ethnic tribes.

More than two million people were decimated, millions more were internally displaced and hordes were exiled. The arid north occupied by the Arabs is more barren than the south which is arable with vast oil deposits that Khartoum craves for and desperately needs. In the west of

Darfur, many Arabs Muslims escaping from the scourge of spreading desert, kill and displaced black Africans to acquire more productive farmland. Unfortunately, the government in Khartoum has been incapable defeat Africans military activities in the south. (Smiles, 2005: 63). According to Adadevoh (2010: 213) the government in Khartoum had been unable to protect black Africans from Arabs attacks. Since independence in 1956, the policies of the government of Sudan has remained pro-Arab. Thus the policy of genocide and ethnic cleansing propagated by the government stood firm. To this end, the feeling of segregation between African and Arab tribes became very conspicuous under the current government. Despite that, many of the government policies and security posts were occupied by Arabs (CAFOD 2004).

When Sudan divided into two on 9 July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan, the world's newest nation was born (Peace Building Bulletin (PBB) 2011). The birth of this new nation, South Sudan was the final stage of 6 years peace agreement terminating decades of civil war in the former Sudan. However, with the South attaining statehood, certain critical concerns such as border demarcation, sharing of debt, and oil revenues as well as the use of the North pipeline, remained unsettled. Fighting in the South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei regions threatened the peace and stability of the area. There is also serious ongoing tensions and violence on both sides of the border of the Sudan and South Sudan (ibid).

Unfortunately, both Sudan and South Sudan have deep internal conflicts bedeviling them. These challenges were not only prone along their borders but spread across the countries (Adadevoh 2010: 215). Dixon explains that the lack of medical care and infrastructure, acute shortage of water and rising food prices, and poor economy challenge both countries (Smiles, 2005: 63). This Adadevoh argues endanger the lives of their citizens and encourages desperate and dangerous behaviours capable of triggering conflict. In fact, the north-south civil war started based on the fundamentals of this principles irrespective of an existing peace agreement at the time (PBB 2011).

Ironically, conflict form part of human existence. Since the earth is a combination of people living together, conflict is inevitable. Daudu (2010: 240) opined that for as long as people with diverse socio-political and cultural background cohabit the earth, conflict cannot be avoided among them. Consequently, depending on how these people handle their disagreements, war and conflict are however avoidable if disagreements are handled properly by the people. Properly

addressing prevents war and conflict because the causative factors behind the eruption of wars and conflicts must have been addressed (Aremu 2010: 554). Regrettably, according to report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) of 1999, "Africa is the most conflict ridden region of the world and is the only region in which armed conflict is on the increase".

The history of Darfur war apart from the local colonial legacy had its escalating tendencies tied to readily available arm proliferated into the country through porous borders by government suppliers to the Janjaweed. Apart from seeking refuge among the Chadians because they share most ethnic characteristics, fleeing Darfur refugees equally seek refuge in other neighbouring Central African Republic villages and camps. Unfortunately, the Darfur conflict had spread into some of these areas destroying economic and political ties between Sudan and these countries (Kajee 2007: 25)

3.3 THE ROOT CAUSES OF DARFUR CONFLICT

There are a number of different factors that caused the conflict in Darfur. Just as in most conflicts, the causes of conflicts are a function of combination of numerous factors. This makes it very difficult to identify, categorise and highlight these factors. It also makes it difficult to outline which of these factors are the dominant and less dominant causes of conflict. In the case of Darfur conflict, many factors have been recognized as the original causes of the conflict.

However, identifying the root causes of the Darfur conflict remain entrenched in contradictions squaring between the sedimentary farmers (Negrods) and pastoralist (Arabs) (Ahmed 2006: 63). The causes of the Darfur conflict can largely be classified under a limited number of headings. The most prominent among them are; the land disputes, the issue of politics, religious, ethnic and cultural differences, and the distribution and use of resources (Kajee 2007: 27). While the focus on examining the causes should not be only on the above listed factors, other complex emergencies such as the international influence, local and personal factors should be considered vital as well (Ayers 2010: 167, Kajee 2007: 25).

Apart from the identifying the foundational causes of the Darfur conflict, there is also the wing which focuses on what factors aided the escalation of the conflict. The proliferation of small arms, porous border and the surge on the influx of foreigners into the region. Kajee (2007: 27)

insisted that the porous Sudan border which allowed huge influx of foreigners into Darfur increased the proliferation of arms in the region. This Kajee argues, provided ready fuel for the conflict to escalate and degenerate into full war when the situation became deplorable. The inference here is that the readily available weapons brought in by foreigners easily fed the growing appetite for both the Janjaweed and rebel groups in Darfur and escalated the conflict.

3.3.1 THE POLITICS OF RESOURCES

The politics surrounding natural resources has been at the crux of most conflicts ravaged African countries. External international interest of countries attracted by the natural resources have continued to prove problematic. The political underpinnings of the Darfur conflict remain shrouded in this politics of external or international interest on its natural resources. Sudan is a well oil endowed nation and as such remain strategic to other countries of the world who are interested in the oil. Large oil reserves in Sudan and neighbouring Chad makes them vulnerable to external influence and manipulation from countries like United States of America and China who are interested in their oil (Aremu 2010: 551) Other countries such as Russia, France, Malaysia, India and the UK all have interests in oil sector of Sudan. The Muglad Basin in Sudan alone reportedly contains three billion barrels of crude (Kajee 2007: 25). Ironically, Sudan have purchased arms to sustain the conflict in Darfur from the oil proceeds (ibid). In addition to oil, Sudan also has gold reserves and arable land suitable for commercial agricultural exploration (Adadevoh 2010: 215).

Again, Darfur has undisclosed quantity of uranium reserves, bauxite as well as copper (Kajee 2007: 24) and this explains why the intense and sustained global interest in Darfur over the past few years (Ayres 2010: 156). It also answers the question why the Darfur conflict has received continued international media coverage and broadcast more than the similar situation in Uganda and Central African Republic (Kajee 2007: 25). The politics of international interest in oil and other vital natural resources in Darfur engineered the multilateral intervention which mobilised advocacy from celebrities and every other sphere of life (ibid).

3.3.2 POLITICS WITHIN DARFUR

The politics within the Darfur region to a huge extent helped in sustaining the conflict in the region. The conflict in Darfur is continuing due to some politics of division between and among

the rebel groups who control activities within the region. It is also as a result of disagreement and division along ethnic lines.

Consequently, the continued war in Darfur resulted in the split of the central rebel group the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) into two (Jaspars and O'Callaghan 2010: 22). The cause of the division was mainly ethnic oriented. The SLM before the split was one rebel group fighting for the development of the region. Following the division, two new rebel leaders emerged each leading a faction of the group. One of the group was led by Abel Wahid Al-Nur and the other by Minni Minnawi (ibid). For the fact that the Fur tribe comprise more than a quarter of the population of Darfur, the rebel faction led by Wahid, who hails from the region, controlled activities there (Salih 2005: 24). As a result, he was popular and became part of the Abuja peace accord. His signatory to the peace accord forced the Minnawi led faction to pitch tent with him to ensure they receive proper recognition in the government at the end of the peace process.

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) is the third largest rebel group in the region and it is led by Khalil Ibrahim (Daudu 2010: 240). The JEM equally did not take part in the Abuja peace agreement. Therefore, they also joined another SLM group that were also not part of the Abuja agreement to form a new rebel group known as the National Redemption Front (NRF) (Salih 2005: 21). This new group continued its fight against the government even when the peace agreement was signed. It means that the Abuja peace agreement failed to end the conflict in Darfur but rather exacerbated it by igniting the spring of new rebel groups. Others became fortified, stronger and more formidable through coalitions which ironically intensified the conflict further (Smiles 2008: 59).

3.3.3 TRIBALISM

Tribalism is one of the oldest known cause of division in Sudan especially between the Arabs and Africans. This has resulted to serious ethnic divisions and led to many tribal wars in Sudan in the past. Ethnic wars according to Ahmed (2006: 155) between 1970s and 1980s, tribalism was the root cause of most tribal war fought during this period. These wars was mostly between the black African Darfurians and the Sunni Muslims.

The tribal wars of the 70s and 80s was also between farmers who were predominantly black Africans and cattle herders who are also mainly Arab Muslims. While the cattle herders migrated

in search of pasture and water for their cattle due to increasing drought and desertification, the indigenous farmers defend their farms from encroachment and destruction of their agricultural farmlands (Jaspars and O'Callaghan 2010: 31). This group of people migrated from Chad, Libya, Eritrea and other neighbouring countries into the region and Sudan. This had usually led to series of conflict and wars in the region in particular and Sudan in general. In fact, this factor has aggravated inter-tribal wars and conflict and had encouraged the emergence of tribal militia groups in the region and across Sudan (Ahmed 2006: 154).

Another deep rooted dividing issue in the Darfur conflict is tribalism or ethnicity. This concept has created deep division among the rebel groups who operate within the region. The SLM was a leading rebel group because its leader is from Fur, the largest populated area in the region. As a result, it exercise more domineering power over other rebel groups operating in the region. Adadevoh (2010: 215) stated that one of the fundamental reasons why other rebel groups did not take part in the Abuja agreement process was tribalism, he indicated that the smaller rebel groups were side-lined by SLM during the peace talk because their tribe control the region population wise, and compelled them into joining them afterwards.

Furthermore, the conflict in Darfur is also deeply rooted in the division between Arab Muslims and African Christians and African traditional religious. Some authors (Adadevoh 2010: 217, Ahmed 2006: 157, Aremu 2010: 555, Ayers 2010: 165) refer to this as racism, other called it ethnicity or tribalism (Salih 2005: 24). This singular factor remain a very serious determinant of the level or intensity of conflict between the Sudanese Arabs and the Africans. Thus, the principal cause of the Darfur conflict had experienced a fundamental paradigm shift toward form a conflict of sovereignty to a conflict of groups of different civilizations (Salih 2005: 10). The inference here is that the Darfur conflict has transformed and could be referred to as a manifestation of tension between the Arabs and the Africans tribal groups. This implies that the conflict in Darfur is a true representation of deep socio-cultural division between two tribal groups (ibid).

In addition, various tribes who believed that the government has failed to defend them against other tribes and armed criminal gangs who possess more dangerous and sophisticated weapons, led many of these nomadic tribes into forming their own defence groups to defend themselves. Consequently, the region was opened for arm market thus, attracting arms dealers who smuggle

all sorts of weapons such as small arms, heavy and light artillery, RPG launchers, and including armoured vehicles into the region (Ahmed 2006: 156).

3.3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND SCARCITY OF RESOURCES

Another determinant factor of the Darfur conflict has to do with environmental degradation. The impacts and effects of the Darfur conflict has left huge environmental devastation in the region. This has destroyed the means of livelihood of millions of Darfur indigenes. As a result, for so many years while the war lasted human subsistence became very difficult for the people of Darfur (Bromwich 2010: 325). The implication of this is that environmental drivers of conflict have worsened as a result of the current crisis. To this end, several discussions regarding the environment in Darfur shows the environmental challenges and complexities caused by impacts of the conflict.

Arguably, the conflict in Darfur have weakened the traditional rules of environmental management and it has led to increased scarcity of means of livelihood and survival of the people (Ahmed 2006: 155). The continuation of this deplorable situation increased fight for the control of resources in the region leading to the escalation of the conflict and war (ibid). The local conflicts over resources expanded and become a dimension of the wider conflict between Darfur and central Sudan (Thaxton 2013: 27). This is in relation to long-term issues of political and economic marginalisation.

In addition, according to Bromwich (2010: 324), scarcity of resources is not entirely responsible for tribal conflicts in Darfur however; it stood as a major driver of the conflict. At all levels of the Darfur conflict, the non-availability or complete lack of certain natural resources help to worsen and deepen the conflict. This is so because there is an interaction between survival, the means of livelihood and resources (Thaxton 2013: 25). It implies that there is an interaction between resources, livelihood and conflict. To sustain resources during conflict is very difficult and require high level of management from the community given the fact that different resources are used to solve different demands of livelihood (Ahmed 2006: 157). Thus, the environmental aspect of the Darfur is directly connected to livelihood and survival of the people in the region (Bromwich 2010: 325).

3.3.5 WATER RESOURCES AND VEGETATION

These two factors were also vital in escalating the conflict in Darfur. With a range of less than 50mm of low and variable rainfall in the northern desert and about 200mm in the El Fasher area as well as approximately 300-500mm rainfall in El-Geneina and Nyala and more than 800mm in the south and Jebel Mara area, Darfur has a huge reserve of water and vegetable resources (Salih 2005: 10). Unfortunately, the level of rainfall has dwindled in recent times thereby increasing the years of dryness than it was in previously years (ibid). This situation saw to the dwindle in the rainfall from the normal four months of rain and a year leading to huge variation of available vegetation to less number of months of rainfall in most years (Williams 2009: 68). The limited storage available at the Basement Complex geology worsened water shortage in Darfur (Bromwich 2010: 325). Following the dissection of the basement Complex rocks by the wadi river, the areas became better for agriculture than other high land areas lying at the Basement Complex (Salih 2005: 15).

The Basement Complex rocks are dissected by wadi valleys with alluvial deposits that are comparatively water – rich. Typical well yield in basement complex geology are 0.1 to 1.0 litres per second, as against 1-20 litres per second for alluvial areas (ibid). This makes the wadi areas good for agriculture, in contrast to the wide rangeland on higher ground, which lies on Basement Complex (Bromwich 2010: 327). Quite a number of rules guide the management of vegetation in this region. However, these rules are often not adhered to during the dry season when herders migrate to the wadi region for pasture and water for their flock. During this period, huge numbers of livestock migrate off the rangeland to the wadi areas. But because of the timing of different shepherding rulers and malfunctioning dispute resolution, the management of long distance grazing routes are overlooked by the herders (Ahmed 2006: 157). In most cases, farms are destroyed in the process leading to disagreements and conflicts. This situation requires very high level of cooperation between members of the farming communities and the transhumant herders (Salih 2005: 22). This will help finding solutions on how best to protect the farms from the grazing animals (ibid).

In some of the arid regions where rainfall is a core determinant of the amount of vegetation, poor underground storage of water reflects variation and spatial vegetation decreases in Darfur. As the increased variation persists between dry and wet seasons, it distorts farming period and reduces

output thus, making subsistent livelihood more uncertain and difficult in the Darfur region (Bromwich 2010: 328). By implication, it becomes conclusive that human and natural factors also had deep connections to the aggravation of conflict in Darfur.

3.4 VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF DARFUR CONFLICT

What this study discussed so far under the section: causes of Darfur conflict, are mainly the factors, which touted clearly at the local dimension of the conflict. According to Hassan 2010 (22-24), there are three dimensions to the Darfur conflict- the local, regional and international dimensions. The study further provided distinctive but robust discussions on these dimensions.

3.4.1 THE LOCAL DIMENSION OF THE DARFUR CONFLICT

The local factors that led to the conflict in Darfur are very vast. However, the environment and competition over scarce resources remain at the nexus of the cause of the conflict. Detailed discussion on these factors are presented in 3.3. However, it is also imperative to elucidate further on these issues from a divergent perspective to draw more clarity into this study and also to increase reader understanding of the ideas the study intend to convey.

The perspective expressed by Hassan holistically portrayed these as the local or internal factors which strands the local dimension of the Darfur conflict. Though his views agrees that some of these factors squared as causative issues to the conflict, on the contrast, however, the contention of his approach, presented them as a holistic part representing the local dimension of the conflict.

Consequently, according to Hassan (2010: 23), the scarcity of resources deepened tribal frictions and led to increased conflict over land and resources particularly of increased need for pasture and water by Darfurians. Thus, the Darfur conflict is shaped along local tribal lines of Africans and Arabs also known as the settled and nomadic tribe respectively. Thus, the Darfur conflict becomes a confrontation squaring mostly between the nomadic and settled peoples of Darfur region. In other words, the conflict could be linked to tribal differentiation between the traditional black Africans and the Arabs (Attaelmanan *et al* 2014: 699). It also connotes a situation of tribal dominance as well as an avenue of entrenching ethnic integration and the expression tribal sentiments (ibid)

3.4.2 THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF THE DARFUR CONFLICT

This is an entirely new dimension to the conflict in Darfur. Hassan (2010: 24) went further to explain that at the regional level, wars and conflicts taking place in some neighbouring countries fuelled the conflict in Darfur to some extent. The influences of these conflicts and wars became that regional elements which made it possible for easy access to weapons and fighters are trained to fight and how to use the weapons (ibid). The armed militia in neighbouring Chad for instance, has maintained and supplied troops to Darfur rebel groups. They have in addition, supplied them with shelter and weapons to sustain the fight (ibid). Another example is the conflict in CAR that has hugely contributed to the ease with which arms and weapons penetrate the boundaries of Sudan into Darfur (Attaelmanan *et al* 2014: 702).

Furthermore, because of the sensitive nature of the conflict in Darfur, the involvement and contributions of some African countries were supports objectively tailored along these trajectory. According to (Hassan 2010: 25), Nigeria, Libya, Egypt and Eretria have all made serious financial, social, political and military contributions to end the conflict in Darfur for many years. Hassan explains that Nigeria has supplied Eretria with necessary logistics and material support in their bid to bring all warring parties to the conflict to a round table discussion leading to peace. He further explains that the contributions of Libya and Egypt are fairly biased because it typifies their support for Arabs and depict the position of the Arab League in the conflict. Finally, even though the African Union (AU) has expressed consistent concerns over the Darfur conflict, there efforts at ending it has yielded little or no significant results. The inference here is that some sort of biasness has played out at the regional level which is mitigating peace process efforts of the regional body towards ending the conflict.

3.4.3 THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE DARFUR CONFLICT

In furtherance, Hassan's (2010) study reveals that the international community has different interests, objectives and perspectives about the conflict in Darfur. To this end, he explains that the international politics surrounding the Darfur conflict has made its ending so far, unachievable. The international community has expressed diverse levels of bias in their settlement discourse regarding the venue, the intellectual and ideological inclinations and management of the conflict (ibid). Unfortunately, the conflict has persisted under the watchful eyes of the international community to date. Consequently, world civil society organisations and

human rights associations, have termed the conflict in Darfur differently as an “expression of organised ethnic cleansing” by the Sudanese government against the black Africans. The West views the Darfur conflict as a conflict between Arabs and African and thus, it is a systematically organised avenue for ethnic cleansing (Attaelmanan *et al* 2014: 700). Further in some quarters, the conflict is viewed as an extension or continuation of clash between the West and Islam (Hassan 2010:27). It is also viewed as an Islamic fight against the greed of the Western imperialism in the region (ibid).

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter gave a robust historical discussion on Darfur. The historical discussions outlined how the Darfur conflict connects to the colonial legacy of superiority of the Arab Muslims over the black African Christians. The chapter further presented detailed discussion on the root causes of the Darfur conflict. The chapter identified certain factors such as tribalism, politics within Darfur, politics of resources, water resources and vegetation, environmental degradation and scarcity of resources as the principal causes of the Darfur conflict. The discussions on these sub-headings clearly linked each of these factors as causative agent to the Darfur conflict. The chapter also provided a robust discussion on the three dimensions of the conflict according to the study conducted by Hassan. The dimensions considered a number of factors as the local, regional and international dimensions of the Darfur conflict.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPACTS OF THE CRISES ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter of this research tried to outline some of the major issues that contributed to the causes of conflict in Darfur. This chapter will focus on the effects of conflict on women and children. It will provide an overview of the levels of impacts or effects of war on the vulnerability of women and children in Darfur area of western Sudan. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will discuss the impacts of the Darfur conflict on women while the second part will present a discussion of the impacts of the conflict on children. The first section will further present the discussion of the impact of the Darfur conflict on women under certain sub-headings. The second section will equally discuss the impacts of the conflict on children following similar structuring.

The conflict has killed at least 50 000.00 people and displaced more than 1.2. Million others mostly, including women and children to refugee camps in Darfur and neighbouring countries such as Chad (Thaxton 2013: 26). More so, others displaced joined rebel groups to fight the Arab militias while the rest migrated elsewhere to look for work (Ahmed 2006: 154). But the crises in Darfur threatens the lives of millions more women and children as they are exposed to severe malnutrition and starvations, sickness among other war related conditions. Darfur clearly demonstrates how vulnerable women and children could be to food insecurity and other negative war related effects. The next section discusses these war related conditions and there impacts or effects on women and children in the Darfur conflict.

4.2 STRUGGLES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The wake of the attacks in Sudan left the Darfurain women desolate and lonely. They were confined to their natural duty of taking care of their children. The conflict also compelled some of them to also take care of their relatives as well as the van strangers who migrated as a result of the conflict (Thaxton 2013: 30). Women make up about 90 percent of the adult population of Darfur because most men are either joined local rebel groups or have been killed in the conflict. Others too have fled the region in fear into other neighbouring countries (ibid). Owing to this reason, women struggle to feed their families. They stress to feed because there is lack of food.

They also find it difficult to produce breast milk to feed their babies because of severe dehydration from unavailability of drinking water (Aremu 2010: 550). The situation has contributed to the malnourishment and excessive starvation of the most vulnerable group living among the refugee camp population. According to a survey by the U. S centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2009, 4 out of every 10 Sudanese refugee children, who are younger than 5 years old, in Chadian camps, are acutely malnourished. Out of this number, 3 children exposed such early malnutrition will probably die or fail to develop fully its physical and mental potentials (Thaxton 2013: 30).

4.3 THE IMPACTS OF DARFUR CONFLICT ON WOMEN

The impacts of conflicts and wars on women cannot be overemphasised. The truth lies in the fact that women represent that aspect of humanity which is fundamental to procreation and life. That natural position a woman occupies in human existence portray women as vital to the continuity of every society. Because of this position, women most likely to suffer the effects of conflicts and wars since in most cases they cannot flee without their children and family.

During wars or conflicts, women are exposed to various kinds of maltreatment by all parties in armed conflict. The friendly and enemy forces and the civilian and military personnel, jointly perpetrate unfair treatments on women (Thaxton 2013: 33). Even the United Nations peacekeeping forces, who are entrusted with the task of protecting women have been accused of sometimes indulging in maltreating women within or outside their care (ibid). The physical and psychology consequences of this wide spread abuse in armed conflict is devastating, for the women in particular and the entire society to which the women are part of (Adadevoh 2010: 216). Undoubtedly, this is one of the most widespread and pervasive effects of armed conflict on women in all cultured and in all conflicts (Wassara 2010: 18).

During most conflicts and wars, women and children are not usually marked as targets however, they become victim in most cases. For instance, the acts of genocide during World War II was targeting men, as well as on the women and children (ibid).in clear terms women are targets during conflicts and wars for numerous reason which include; their gender and sexuality, their ethnic and racial or religious groups, their social position and their specific skills (ibid).

Other reasons according to a report by Amnesty International (2006: 13), women can be singled-out by virtue of their professions especially in scarce areas such as teaching, medicine, law, journalism, and their level of involvement in political activities. Some also who are community leaders and activists, particularly those of them who are perceived as feminist sympathisers who are challenging established gender roles, are frequently assassinated during conflicts and armed unrest (Wassars 2010: 24). Women are equally get killed, injured or toured due to the political activities of their male relations or associates (Amnesty International 2013: 14).

In other instances, when humans are used as shield, women and children often make up majority of the number constituting the human shield (ibid). If we take the example of the Sri Lankan war where women and children are used as human shield in what was termed “common fodder” by the friendly forces, it demonstrated that women and children are most vulnerable. Although women are not used as such in the case of Darfur conflict, they were however, held captive and kept in rebel camps where they are exposed to danger of attacked similar to when they are used as human shield (Wassara 2010: 27).

4.3.1 RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Rape and sexual violence are two of the most dominant issues in any general discussion on gender and conflict. This is spread through the integral state conflict in the region. Rape and sexual violence has dare consequences both on the health and emotions, and socio-economic future of women. Thus, it is no longer in doubt that women and girls are the major victims of sexual violence during conflicts and wars such as in Darfur.

Since conflicts and wars signifies breakdown of law and order, rape is perpetrated with impunity and uncontrolled. According to Salih (2005: 32), women as perceived as symbolic representation of cultural heritage of their societies and communities. Thus, defiling a woman through is equally perceived as defiling the entire society and community they represent. Therefore, rape and sexual violence against women became a weapon of destruction against the enemy.

Until recently, the issue of rape was not considered a serious offence during conflicts. Then, Government and militia in conflicts considered rape as an inevitable adjunct of conflict (ibid). Nowadays, rape and other sexual violent act against women during conflicts and wars is becoming increasingly more rampant. Thus, it was forced to be recognised as an instrument of

crime against humanity, means of torture, genocide and a serious crime of conflicts and wars (Daudu, 2010:245). Just like in the case of Darfur conflict, rape was wildly used in Rwanda during the genocide as there was hardly any woman alive who had not been raped or sexually violated. Also in Sierra Leon, a survey done conducted on war-related sexual violence committed by rebels demonstrated that rape was widely perpetrated against the human rights of women and girls populations (Salih 2005:31).

Women who grieve from rape and or other forms of sexual abuse suffer two fold torments. First, the pains and trauma through the process of rape, and second, the stigmatization that follows the act in their communities. In most cases, family and community members reject these women while in some other cases, the women are ostracised (Daudu 2010:242). Yet in other cases, the women are forced to commit suicide to restore the damaged image of the family (ibid). The fear of these stigmatization compel victims of rape to remain caught-up in their pain and guilt (ibid). Despite the trials displaced persons face in general, the vulnerability of women, girls and the young population, expose them to extra challenge arising from conflict and wars. (Daudu 2010: 246).

As reported during the 2003 International Day of No Violence against Women and children by the World Health Organisation in 2005, women and girls suffer enormous magnitudes of violent abuses committed against them during conflicts and wars globally. The United Nations reports shows that the consistent sexual violation of women and girls during conflicts and wars compelled the global community to refer and recognise it as a weapon of war. It is thus used as a tool for women and girls to change their demographics and even forced a population of them to flee (Pillay 2006: 3). Sexual violation is also used as an instrument to break the resistance of the enemy. More devastating however, is the fact that sexual violence is used to forcibly impregnate women who thereafter face unimaginable victimisation from their families and communities (ibid). This in essence more complex and devastating than direct infliction of injuries.

4.3.2 THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN REFUGEE CAMPS.

Women's commission for Refugees and children staff on a mission in Chad says that the condition of refugees camps in Sudan is deteriorating by the day. There is acute shortage of basic needs of people and as such there was lack of food, shortage of water and shelter. According to the women's commission director on a visit to the camp the "international agencies that poised to

respond are facing a virtual blockade due to lack of resources on the ground". "The situation is dexterous". The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCT), also indicated that the lack the necessary fuel and transportation to move refugees from the border town of Tine in Chad. They stressed that the refugees need urgent assistance because they have been struggling in the baking sun without access to food and water, except for little generosity they received from the very poor coal community. Arfaouri (2007: 124) that although the refugees were reluctant to leave the border areas because they were close to their home, the lack of food and shortage of water forced them to accept to move to where there basic need are available.

Life in the camps was not easy for women especially in Tine, the Chadian border town. There, refugee women pull their resources to sustain their families. These women fetch firewood, pluck seeds from trees and boil them to sustain the family daily. To find scare goods, refugees women frequently cross back over the unsafe boundary to Sagan to fetch water and gather firewood for cooking (Daudu 2010: 244). Sometimes these women trek up to eight hours just to fetch water to cook for the family (Thaxton 2013: 7). Many refugees die while struggling to cross the closed Sudan border in search of water and firewood. Fleeing Sudanese hide in wades reverbed in Darfur until they are prepared to across the border at the risk of their lives (ibid). Those fleeing make up to 5-6 attempts daily to cross the border. Each time, the Arab militia, the Janjaweed, kill many young women as they escaped (Arfaouri 2007: 127). It should be noted that women and children refugees are always the majority in these circumstances and they consist of an overwhelming majority of the refugee populace in Chad.

4.3.3 EARLY MARRIAGES

An early marriage is one of the challenges facing women and girls residing in camps. In IDPs camps, parents feel that they may not be able to "control" their daughters, and so seek to marry them off at a very young age. This is not only a violation of the basic human rights of the girls and women, it is also an outright damage to the fabrics of their existence (ibid). Irrespective of the fact that marriage are building blocks and cements to bound families and build alliances, hastily arranged, the intended social ties normally built through this process often wobble and not strong. This is because traditional practices that are used to strengthen family ties within the community no longer work (Aremu 2010: 554). Thus, the community begins to collapse and wean.

Survival at IDPs camps require the efforts of every member of the family. The death of the man in most cases leaves the woman alone with the children and in this situation such women get exposed to the risks attached to surviving in IDP camps. At this point, the functions of cueing for food, looking after the children, engaging in income generating activities, will solely lie on her shoulders. A mother who finds herself under these conditions would not have the time to do all these necessary tasks all by herself. As a consequence, female headed households become more susceptible to food insecurity and often lack of even the most rudimentary necessities of existence (Amnesty International 2013).

4.3.4 POTENTIAL MILITARIZATION OF IDP CAMPS.

IDP camps can be breeding ground for military impulses. The Darfur conflict has continued unabated for some time now while the government, the opposition and rebel forces are unable to reach peace agreement, displaced men may find the peace process less viable option. This may instigate the idea of militarization in some of them who have lost hope of returning to a normal life after so many years of conflict. The comment by an elderly man in the IDPs camp in Chad as reported by Amnesty International in 2013 aptly captures the potentiality of militarization in the IDPs camps. The man admonished younger men to:

“stop sitting around here and just eat. You are young and you are idles and useless to the world to give us arms, so we can protect ourselves and our territory. We are sorry for what happened in the south. But now, we need the help of our brother from the south. Women are put in even greater damage in these situations. They may be forced to give up their young boys to the war, to supply food and shelter for the soldiers or provide sensitive militia information. Because of these things women are views by the militias and government troops as enemies or security risk” (Amnesty International 2013).

This statement shows that there is a possibility of militarization among displaced men in IDPs camps. It shows there is potential danger as long as peace is far and the men remain in IDPs

4.3.5 FOOD INSECURITY AMONG WOMEN IN DARFUR CONFLICT

Food insecurity is one of the major challenges women and their children suffer during conflicts in the world over. The case of women in the Darfur conflict is not an exception in this regard. In

Darfur conflict, women and children suffer the scourge of food insecurity particularly in the IDPs. This is equally the case in many African conflict ravaged developing countries where more than 800 million people in these countries are chronically hungry (Amnesty International 2013). This population include women and children in larger numbers. This causes malnutrition and acute and prolonged diseases among this group of people. According to Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), women are defined as “access for all people at all time to enough food for an active, healthy life”. This definition brings out the importance of women in agriculture and food production. In this sense, women are vital in food production and are actually indispensable to achievement of food security in the world. Women actually produce more than half of the food grown worldwide with a whopping 80 percent contribution to the total agricultural production in the Sub-Saharan African countries (Thaxton 2013: 35). Women in Darfur are equally high contributors to food production in the region. However, this has dwindled over time due to the consistent ravaging war in the region.

The bulk of farm work in developing countries of Africa such as Sudan is done by women. Weeding, watering, harvesting, and processing are some of the farm duties performed by women in addition to their natural household management task (Pillay 2006: 4). Irrespective of the fact that men also perform majority of these farm functions, they are left to be done by women particularly during conflicts and wars such as in Darfur when most men are engaged in combat (ibid). Women also engage in other house management activities such as gathering firewood, fetching water, preparing and cooking food, cleaning, caring for children and livestock, and engaging in marketing and other business activities (Thaxton 2013: 39). Ironically, providing food for the family in peace time could be daunting for the women in developing countries but more overwhelming during conflicts and war such as in Darfur (ibid).

4.4 THE IMPACTS OF CONFLICT ON CHILDREN

The previous section discussed the impacts of the Darfur conflict on women. The next section will discuss the impacts of Darfur conflict on children. Children in this study will include male and female or boy and girl children. Thus, children may be used to mean male or female child in this study. Therefore, both sexes are not distinctively categorised or classified for the purpose of this study. The section will present discussion focusing on various issues that impact on children

during the Darfur conflict. The section will discuss the impacts of Darfur conflict on children under the following sub-headings; health effects, vulnerability, and displacement.

4.4.1 HEALTH EFFECTS

One of the pronounced health issues challenging children during conflicts and wars is malnutrition. Across the war ravaged countries of the world today, malnutrition stand prominent among the various health challenges children face in war and conflict situations. The conflict situation in Iraq, Yemen and Syria aggravated malnutrition among children. There is an existing situation of malnutrition among children in these countries as a result of war. In many conflict and war stricken African countries such as Darfur, the situation is dire. The subsisting nutritional standard has gone down to a level of under nutrition. In fact, hunger ravaged the Waat, Ayod and Kongor regions of Southern Sudan that gave them the name the “hunger triangle” communities. Even in the 1992 Somali war, malnutrition was rife in Baidoa as well as the Gome area in the Zaire conflict of 1994. The most affected by malnutrition and under nutrition in these conflicts and wars unfortunately, are the children.

Malnutrition is deadly. It remains the main source of severe weight loss among affected children and could lead to diseases and sometime disability especially when the consumption of micronutrients required in the body are miserly consumed or not consumed at all. Micronutrients deficiencies are usually connected to poverty and circumstances in which people have become impoverished. This situation is no doubt worsened by situations of conflicts and wars in many countries. Conflict create IDPs who live in camps solely dependent on humanitarianism assistance for their daily food consumption. In recent times in Sudan, nutrition related diseases such as scurvy (the deficiency or lack of vitamin c in the body), and pellagra (the deficiency or lack of niacin in the body) among children was reported by the WHO in 1991 (Salih 2005: 10).

Another challenge faced by children as a result of malnutrition is the deficiency of Vitamin A. This problem is increased during conflict situation and has very serious consequences on children. The lack of Vitamin A could cause hazardous diseases such as measles which could lead to permanent disabilities like blindness in children (ibid). North chronic and acute malnourishment decreases children’s resistance to common prevalent sicknesses and this increases the rate of morbidity, physical disparity, and mortality among them. It also effect growth and development in children, malnutrition also retard children’s capacity to be educated.

These factors put together, have serious adverse effects on the social and economic wellbeing development and future of these children (Agriculture and Consume Protection, 1996).

Children also suffer from what Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 20) termed "misplacement of priority" by the government. They argued that government spend so much money on the welfare of children but ironically neglecting their health. They argue that government should prioritise the provision of health services, sanitation, education and food production to ensure proper nourishment of children in conflict ravaged countries in general and Darfur in particular. According to Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 29), the underlying causes for malnutrition among children at household level in Darfur and IDPs camps are: inadequate food security, an unhealthy environment and unavailability of health facilities and lack of access proper health services; inadequate maternal and child care facilities and services.

Achieving satisfactory nutritional status for children in Darfur essentially will require ensuring consistent supply of variety of safe and affordable food as well as clean drinking water to the IDPs camps. According to FAO (2002), ensuring consistent supply of nutritional food to the IDPs will lead to the consumption of balanced diet among children thus, increasing food security and reducing malnutrition among children (ibid). The insisted that the food distribution method should improve so that targeted children are reached. This is in addition to providing adequate health care facilities and good services should be paramount if the plight of children is taken seriously.

4.4.2 VULNERABILITY

Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010: 9) defines the vulnerable group in terms of who are at risk of malnutrition. This group of people he classified as children who are less than five years of age, pregnant and lactating mothers, and the elderly people. This group of people in human nutrition are regarded as the vulnerable group. In the relief setting, the vulnerable are classified according to two groups; those who are medical cases and those who are emergencies. While the former include: those under treatment as a result of various diseases, severe malnutrition or disability, the later represent people categorised as the elderly, the single women, the orphans and the unaccompanied minors (ibid).

According to Thaxton (2013: 35), once a household, community loses the ability to respond to occurring within or around due to conflict or war, such a household or community could be said to be vulnerable. Meaning that vulnerability results from situation of inability of a household or community to control what happens within or around it as a consequence of conflict or war. To this end, Thaxton explains that vulnerability emanates from two perspective; the physical deprivation and the material poverty. The organizational setting of a community sometimes determine how such community react, respond or cope with the situation around it. It means society reacting, responding or coping with external influences or the effects of the environment determine the level of vulnerability of that society to a large extent.

There is the need to distinguish between needs and vulnerability because both arise from situation of conflict but differ in context. Salih (2005: 15) stated that increase in needs arise as one of the impacts of armed conflict. They maintained that while needs refer to the immediate requirements necessary for survival from calamities of conflict, vulnerability comes before disaster or conflict. They further indicated that vulnerability contributes to severity, while needs on the other hand often arise out of the conflict situation. Needs are also very short term with its lifespan usually terminating with the end of the conflict. Most disaster relief efforts tend to concentrate on meeting immediate needs, rather than on addressing and lessening vulnerabilities (ibid). The term vulnerability exists in societies around the globe. However, according to Mourey (1994: 80), vulnerability is regarded differently by each society or community in terms of the level of malnutrition and the group it affect most. Thus, vulnerability increases the level of its negative implications on the children, the displaced and the malnourished people especially in Darfur

4.4.3 DISPLACEMENT

Another very disturbing product of conflict is displacement. It is one of the worse impacts of conflict in the Darfur conflict in particular and the Sudan war in general. Displacement in the Darfur conflict remains one of the worse displacement conflicts in the world (Sandole 1993:25, Thaxton 2013: 37). The conflict is regarded as one of the world's largest number of people left homeless. The number of IDPs in Darfur is estimated at millions which included women and children (Sandole 1993:25, Amnesty International 2013).

Displacement is a product of conflicts and wars. Therefore, displacement are not directly part of other unconventional armed activities like terrorism, gagster related crimes, hijacking, drug trafficking, religious violence, kidnapping and organised crimes (Amnesty International 2013). The impacts of these types of conflict are felt more on the economic and socio-political facet of affected individuals and societies rather than direct displacement (ibid). Although in some cases, these conflicts could lead to displacement, (Thaxton 2013: 39) argues that such displacement are short lived and therefore cannot be equated with the displacement suffered during conventional wars and conflicts such as the Darfur conflict. It becomes important therefore to indicate that conflicts are more violent and destructive in conventional conflicts and wars such as regional civil strife and international wars (Sandole 1993:27).

As a major product of conflict, widespread displacement results in large groups of people becoming vulnerable to diseases, malnutrition and social disruption (Amnesty International 2013). Displacement could be internal or external on the affected groups. Displacement is internal when people are displaced within their own countries. Such people may live in camps within their countries or migrate to urban cites (United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHR) 2013). External displacement is when the affected groups live in camps outside their own countries. An example is the camp in Chad which plays host to most Darfurian women and children (ibid). Displacement in conventional conflict usually affect the availability and disrupt access to food thus reducing consumption and increasing the chances of malnutrition. It also reduces the ability of individuals to support themselves and their families thus increasing the stress and trauma levels within the communities, among families and individuals. In many cases, these have adverse effects on the health and lives of children within this environment.

4.4.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS

Psychological impacts of conflicts and wars according to Attaelmanan *et al* (2014: 698) include the nervousness and stress of war suffered by children during conflicts and wars across the globe. The Psychological impacts of conflicts, in most cases, could lead to psychological and mental illnesses or become the source and cause of madness, hallucination and schizopfhrenia in children (ibid). It also leaves bitter memories which could equally lead to personal or collective revenge mission later in the lives of these children. For instance, children who watched as their caregivers and loved once, such as, fathers or mothers, sisters brothers and relatives and friends are

slaughtered, are most predictive of post-traumatic conditions that could lead to mental health challenges among such children (ibid). In essence, the distortion of the social order by conflicts and wars creates a condition within which mental disorder could easily thrive.

Another aspect of the conflict that could lead to mental health challenge in children during conflicts and wars is social discrimination and rejection. According to Hassan (2010: 26), the experiences on child soldiers in the Darfur conflict affected the psychic of some of these children and this has informed new locally unacceptable behavioural and characteristics among these children. Thus, most of them are discriminated against while others face outright rejection by their own people (Tamashiro 2011: 9). Others whose behaviours are not abnormal, still face these conditions on account of their unacceptable activities, including killing and raping of women, while they functioned as child soldiers (ibid).

Furthermore, according to a report conducted by the UNICEF in 2012, many women suffer varying degrees of psychological disorder due to rape. As discussed earlier, rape is contemporarily used as an instrument of war therefore, women are targeted and raped daily during conflicts and wars globally. These often leaves serious psychological and post-traumatic consequences that could endanger the lives of these girls. As children, most of these girls who eventually get pregnant from rape in Darfur, according to the report, are stigmatised against. In most cases, the report further indicated, such girls are consistently withdrawn and afraid of mixing up with peers. Some too develop some sort of mental disorder as a result of the effects and coping with the consequences of rape.

4.5 SUMMARY

The discussion of this chapter focused on the impacts of the Darfur conflict on women and children. The chapter demonstrated that women become increasingly vulnerable under certain circumstances of war such as lives in IDPs camps, sexual violation and abuses, early marriages, and increased food insecurity. Under the impacts of the Darfur conflict on children, the chapter also illustrated that health challenges, increased vulnerability and displacement are some of the worse impacts of the Darfur conflict on children. The discussions also shows that women and children bear the largest brunt of conflicts and wars including the Darfur conflict. Further discussions also demonstrated that the sociocultural, political and economic lives and future of women and children are most times distorted or completely destroyed as consequences of lack or insufficiency of daily subsistence requirements brought about by the Darfur conflict.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

The plight of women and children in Darfur seem to be neglected and they are the most vulnerable. They are being used as weapon of war to destroy a particular group. Women face huge challenge and trauma which trapped them as long as the Darfur conflict subsists. It is thus difficult for an average Darfur woman to survive in the situation of conflict where she is raped in the presence of her husband and children. In some cases, the husbands are brutally murdered and children are also raped and abducted while the women watched helplessly. This is pain that one cannot bear, witnessing your family, neighbours and community being terrorised in that manner.

There is a need for more intervention from the international and regional community on the conflict in Darfur. As a researcher who had the opportunity of being part of the peacekeeping mission in Darfur deployed by the South African Police Service, a lot need to be done to protect the violation of human rights of women and children. Considering the rate at which the crime of violent sexual abuse is committed on daily bases in Darfur, it appears committing this crime meant nothing to the rebels and the government. In the first half of 2011, an estimated 70, 000 people were newly displaced by a wave of fighting which involved ethnically targeted attacks by government forces and newly formed government supported militias, including unselective aerial bombardments, the clearing and burning of communities in eastern region of Darfur. North and West Darfur also experienced frequent aerial bombardments of civilian areas (Amnesty International Publications, 2012).

While substantial advancement has been made to plan comprehensive human rights architecture in Africa, there is the need to build on the suppression of the crime to provide ways to both prevent as well address this violence against women and children in conflicts. Gross violations include sexual violence, displacement, loss of life and livelihood and these have remained widespread particularly in the Darfur conflict. Notwithstanding the adoption of several resolutions and legal documents on sexual violence on women and girls, the impunity of the violations remains widespread. Unfortunately, this has complicated by the marginalization and

neglect of women in peace processes and in the discussion of matters directly concerning them. This issue also plays out in the post-conflict reconstruction programmes for the Darfur conflict.

The shift from ratification to domestication and the implementation of programmes to realise the rights of the African woman and child, remain a major challenge of international and regional agreements (African Union Peace and Security Council 2010). There are a lot of challenges confronting the implementation of the AU's human rights programme. There are number of clear challenges faced on the confinement which implementation of the AU's human rights architecture.

First, commitment to the democratic principle regression in the continent. This is particularly confirmed in the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of Governments in some African countries, while electoral and political violence and tensions which have lately disrupted many elections in the continent, pose new challenges. These many times have been accompanied by prevalent gender based violence. Second, the failure to address the ongoing conflicts in some regions, which have occasioned organized violations committed against women and children. Third, the effects of global economics crises have rooted poverty and increased the exposures of women and children to the impacts and effects of the Darfur conflict. These have huge impacted on funding which remained under resourced (African Union Peace and Security Council, 2010).

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 AFRICAN UNION

- Ensure the African Charter is expanded to address the role of non- state actors in the violation of children's rights during armed conflicts;
- Appoint AU special Representatives on Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children:
- Address the gender dimension of violence against children by urging member states to address the specific needs of girls as part of a comprehensive violence –prevention strategy.
- Prioritise prevention by identifying the causes of the vulnerabilities of women and children and respond with recommendations to mitigate risk' and.

- Ensure accountability and end impunity by prosecuting perpetrators of violence against women and children at the national and regional level (African Union Peace and Security Council, 2010).

5.2.2 UN SECURITY COUNCIL

- Immediately expand the current UN arms embargo to cover the whole of Sudan. In order to stop military related supplies reaching all parties to the conflict in Darfur. This embargo should continue to be monitored by an adequately resourced UN
- Panel of experts which reports regularly to the UN Security Council's Sanctions committee. The Panel of Experts should carry out investigations internationally and should regularly monitor the main ports of entry to Sudan to ensure that the embargo is respected'
- Demand that the government of Sudan complies with the existing UN arms embargo on Darfur, including by stopping all offensive military flights and seeking prior authorization from the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee to move military equipment and supplies into Darfur.

5.2.3 GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN

- Cease all attacks in violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in Darfur, including deliberate attacks on civilians and indiscriminate aerial bombardments'
- Cease all offensive military in and over the Darfur region and seek prior authorization from the UN Security council sanctions committee to move military equipment and supplies into Darfur in line with UN Security Council resolution 1591;
- Ensure all allegations of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, both past and present, are promptly and thoroughly investigated, removing any immunities under domestic law for security forces' and where there is sufficient admissible evidence, brings suspects to justice in proceedings that conform to internal fair trial standards; and without recourse to the death penalty.

5.3 ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Take concrete steps to ensure fighters respects international humanitarian law and in particular refrain from all attacks on civilians objects remove anyone suspected of violations of international humanitarian law from positions where they can continues to committee abuses.

Analysis in humanitarian programming in Darfur needs to make stronger linkages between conflict, protection, livelihoods and environment. Impact assessments in each area need to refer to the others. A major programme to reverse the rate of deforestation in Sudan is needed at national level. This must include the increased use of alternative construction and energy technologies in order to slow deforestation in Darfur and other marginal areas (Brendan Bromwich, 2008).

Effective laws and policies must be designed to protect children born of rape, such as laws that forbid prejudicial naming. Recognizing such children as citizens is not only a human rights matter; it undercuts the motivation for forced pregnancy campaigns, namely to alter/ fracture the composition and cohesion of a group, rape victim face specific obstacles to accessing justice, police/ investigative teams are predominantly male ; the process often humiliates and traumatises; confidentiality and security are not granted, reparations are rare. These are practical steps by which parliaments can counter the culture of impunity for sexual violence. They can exercise oversight with regard to security secret reform; budgetary allocations can include reparations/ trust funds for victims' sex-disaggregated data can include sexual violence and embrace a victim- centric/ service- delivery model of data- collection' women's /child rights treaties should be ratified without reservation; support for peace processes could be conditioned on women's participation and the exclusion of sexual violence form amnesty provisions (Major General Patrick Cammaert 2008).

5.4 FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the recommendations provided above, there are some aspects of the impacts of the Darfur conflict that were not mentioned. Thus, this section will present further recommendations to cover some of the areas that have not been previously addressed by this study.

Women should be integrated into the decision and peace making process to ensure that their contributions on issues concerning them are well articulated and properly addressed. In other

words, general information on the plight of women and their children should be extracted from the women, particularly those who have had first-hand experiences in the Darfur conflict. This view is supported by Tamashiro (2011: 15) who opined that the plight of women and how to address them is relegated to the background in the peace process. Hence, the general welfare and issues concerning women and children remain neglected thereby increasing the hardship these vulnerable group face and continue to face in the Darfur conflict.

Furthermore, women, girls and children who had suffered sexual violence in one way or the other should be undergo trauma counselling sections, rehabilitation and reintegration into the system and the community that have rejected them. By so doing, the over-bearing effects and consequences of rape as well as the pressure of rejection and discrimination will be reduced. More so, providing such rehabilitation program or process will help chat a new beginning for them and improve on their economic well-being. Thus, the plight is alleviated making way for a bright future and purposeful living.

Similarly, further special training should be given to women and children who have dropped out of school due to the conflict on certain specific trade. They also should be empowered by the government and UN. That will not only make them relevant but also create a future for them. To this end, Attaelmanan *et al* (2014: 699), suggest that building skill acquisition centres even in IDPs camps will go a long way in remoulding and reshaping a new future for women and girls who are victims of the negative consequences of the Darfur conflict. Through skills acquisition, these women girls would become independent and stable enough to take care of the children and other domestic responsibilities. In other words, educational and rehabilitation intervention is key to improving the mental health functionality of women and children who had in numerous ways experienced conflict related trauma.

In addition, government, care-giving and donor agencies should prioritise not only the provision of health care facilities but also to improve access to them. With specific attention to children. This will reduce infant mortality among this most vulnerable group of people in the face of the Darfur conflict. It will also improve the health standards of the children and women of Darfur reasonably if not up to international best standards.

Security should also be beefed up within and around the IDPs camps to reduce or completely prevent potential militarization and incessant attacks on women and children by armed militia.

This will provide reasonable level of guarantee against incessant attacks and child abduction form within the IDPs camps. The responsibility should be the government of Sudan and the international peacekeeping agencies present in the region. Taking such measures will also help in reducing rape and other forms of violent violation and abuses against women and children residing in IDPs camps.

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