RESEARCH ARTICLE

"THE IMPACT OF GENDER IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA".

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Manuscript Info	*Abstract*
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	The modern international system since her emergence in 1648 has been plagued by series of conflict and instability especially in the decolonized countries of Africa. Even though, there have been series of peacebuilding efforts and approaches to conflict resolution, it has been accused of excluding the paradigm of gender in her analysis and discourse. This paper sought to explain the important contributions of gender and her impact in conflict management in Africa. Through literatures and key informant interviews, the study was able to establish the nexus between gender and conflict, explain how the feminist paradigm challenged the mainstream theories of International Relations of neglecting the critical role of gender in the peace building process. From all these prism, the study has been able to discover that for any meaningful conflict resolution mechanism to be effective, the need for harmony and gender balance is not only necessary but is also key in guaranteeing the success of the peace building process.

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Introduction:-
The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia has been described by scholars within the spectrum of academia as the epoch event which gave rise to the modern international state system given the fact that it was able to lay the concrete foundation for the academic discipline or area which is referred to as international relations today. International relations as an academic area of study, has been defined by scholars as the study of "all interactions amongst states and other actors in the global system". (Fawole, 2003). In analyzing the nature and character of such interactions amongst states, the academic discipline has various lenses, prism and theoretical frameworks which tend to explain how this relationship takes place. These approaches have been categorized as mainstream or positivist paradigms and post-modern or post-positivist approach. The positivist approach (es) to the study of international relations has theories such as realism, liberalism, neo-liberalism and Marxism while the post-positivist approaches has theories such as critical school, constructivism, feminism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism. Most often than not, these mainstream approaches to the study of global politics came under severe criticism of excluding other key and important variants of international relations discourse in her unit of analysis one of such example of non-inclusion is the sensitive issue of "gender" in international relations discourse given the important role women play in the society today. This politics of exclusion by these mainstream theorists gave birth to this post-positivist approach of "Feminism" which is gradually becoming an important paradigm in analyzing global politics.

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Another paradox which also served as part and parcel of human society has been the paradox of conflict. Conflict has been described as an important element of human relations which most often than not arises due to clash of values, interests, and goals in which if not managed and resolved effectively could lead to violence, destruction of lives and properties in the society as it were. Since conflict is part and parcel of human relations, there have also been various measures taken by states, and other key actors such as IGOS, NGOS and religious groups in other to resolve or manage these conflicts from re-occurring. Most of the peace building and conflict resolution approaches today has also been accused of neglecting the important element of "gender" which happens to be one of the important arguments the feminist theory or approach to international relations tends to envisage. Therefore, it is in this light that this research paper will try to explain the significant role gender plays in conflict management and resolution in the society using Africa as its thrust of discourse.

Aim and objective of the paper:-
This research paper has only one research objective it aspires to achieve which is to explain the significant impact of gender in the resolution and management of conflicts in Africa.

Research question:-
This research paper seeks to ask this one single research question:
How relevant and significant is gender in conflict resolution in Africa?

Theoretical paradigm:-
As a theoretical prism or lens through which this theory seeks to explain the significant impact of gender in conflict resolution in Africa, the study adopts the feminist approach of international relations. This approach to the study of international relations or global politics emerged in the late 1980s where prominent post-positivist scholars like Cynthia Enloe et al were seen as the proponents. Griffiths, (2007) was able to observe that as an approach to the study of international politics, feminism tries to dwell its analysis on the social construction of roles and responsibilities of women particularly their "experiences, ideas, actions, thoughts and placement in the society thereby, treating them as subjects and not objects"[1]. Furthermore, he went on to buttress the fact that this international relations approach came to being as a form of critic of the traditional mainstream theories of global politics which most often than not tend to be gender-blind and insensitive in their analysis of the important contributions of women in the development of human society.[2]

Therefore, in order to critically examine the impact of gender in the conflict resolution nexus, this paper will focus on this approach.

Methodology:-
In doing this, the research work will opt for "Mixed-Research" methods which will be a combination of secondary sources of data collection in which books, articles, journals and reports will be utilized and secondly, through "Key Informant Interviews" with certain experts in the area of "Gender and Conflict Resolution" so as to further strengthen, corroborate or disprove the findings of the secondary data used by the researcher.

Clarifying terms and concepts:-
Before delving into the nitty-gritties of this discourse clarifying certain concepts will go a long way in helping the researcher to have a clearer understanding of the issues he is trying to investigate. In doing this, the study seeks an understanding of the following terms:

Conflict:-
Conflict according to the Foundation Coalition (2009) is seen as one quintessential part of human existence which involves a form of struggle between people, groups and communities with differing or opposing opinions, ideas, values, needs, goals and interests which could either be violent or non-violent depending on how the parties involved manage it[3]. While the term according to Mohammed (2010), connotes a form of expressed struggles

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[1] Griffith, (2007), International Relations Theories of the Twenty First Century: An Introduction, Routledge, New York.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Foundation Coalition, (2009), "Understanding Conflict and Conflict Management", available at: http://www.foundationcoalition.org/publications/brochures/conflict.pdf accessed: 26th April, 2016.

between two or more parties who are purportedly and perceived to be pursuing incompatible goals, competing over scarce resource and face some degree of interference from achieving their goals. [4] From the definitions given, one can be apt to say that conflict is part and parcel of human society which involves clash of interests and values by individual members of such society with the aim of achieving their set objectives.

Conflict Resolution:-
According to Gambo (2007), conflict resolution is defined as the "micro-management of conflict in the society using various approaches such as mediation, reconciliation, negotiation preventing it from degenerating into violence". Miller (2003) and Best (2005) saw the term as series of approaches aimed at terminating the conflict especially when the deep and remote causes and issues which led to the conflict are addressed and resolved by the parties involved.[5] Therefore, for conflict to be resolved, their most be a concerted effort and willingness by the actors involved to ensure that the various conflict resolution mechanisms they will adopt will be able to see the light of day.

Gender:-
There is no universally acceptable definition of what the term "Gender" actually entails given the fact that it has been given various meanings, narratives and interpretations by scholars and public commentators from various vantage points. According to Anifowose and Enemuo, (1999), the term Gender is seen as a form of narrative which seeks to explain the unequal roles and responsibilities the society assign to both men and women which are culturally predetermined.[6] Another definition by Best, (2005), sees the term gender as the socially and culturally roles, features and behaviours ascribed for both sexes which the society deemed fit to appropriate.[7] While Miller, (2001), sees the term gender as a form of division of labour and responsibilities based on sex.[8] Another definition as captured by the United Nations Development Programme UNDP, in its (1986) report, looked at the term gender to "denote the qualities associated with men and women that are socially and culturally, and biologically determined. Gender includes the way in which society differentiates appropriate behaviour and access to power for women and men. Although the details vary from society to society and change over time, gender relations tend to include a strong element of inequality between women and men and are strongly influenced by ideology"[9]. Mutunga, (2006), in her submission, sees gender as social attributes which are acquired during the process of socialization in which defined roles, responsibilities and needs are linked to one being either male or female and not to one's biological or physiological make-up often associated with masculinity and feminity as it were.[10]. Looking critically at all these definitions, one can say that the term does not literally mean the biological differences that exist between male and female but rather, it is a socially and culturally constructed identity whereby roles are assigned to the different sexes at different levels which can be changed also by circumstances such as conflict in the society.[11].

Gender Bias:-
The Cambridge online dictionary sees the term 'Gender-Bias' as a form of unfair difference in the manner and ways women and men are treated.[12] While in another definition by Machadevappa, (2012), sees the term as a pattern of

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[4] Mohammed, A.H. (2010), "Reflection on the Types of Conflict", North Central University, available at: https://www.academia.edu/5245663/Conflict_Definition_and_Types accessed: 28th April, 2016.

[5] Definition of Conflict Resolution in Best, (2005), The Methods of Conflict Resolution and Transformation, in Best, Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa.

[6] Anifowose & Enemuo, (1999), Elements of Politics, Lagos: San Iroanusi Publications.

[7] Best, (2005), Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa, Ibadan, Spectrum Books.

[8] Miller, (2001), Gender, Power, and Politics: An Alternative Perspective, International Peach Research Institute, Sage.

[9] United Nations Development Global Report on Gender Equality in Public Administration, available at: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Women-s%20Empowerment/GEPA%20Global%20Report%20May%202014.pdf accessed: 30th April, 2016.

[10] Mutunga, E. (2005), Gender and Peace Process in Africa, Africa Peace Forum (APFO).

[11] Best S.G., (2006), Conflict Analysis, in Best: Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa, Spectrum Books, Ibadan.

[12] Meaning of Gender-Biases according to Cambridge Online English Dictionary available at: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/gender-bias accessed: 29th April, 2016.

prejudice which seeks to showcase the separation of gender in a way and manner which prefers one sex over another preferably, male over female.[13]

Gender Mainstreaming:-
The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women defined Gender Mainstreaming as a globally accepted strategy and approach of achieving gender equality through series of concerted efforts and activities such as research, advocacy, dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, planning, implementation and effective monitoring.[14]

The Role of Gender In Traditional African Society:-
In tracing the role played by women in traditional African societies, many scholars would argue that women were hitherto seen as major contributors to the development and advancement of such communities given by the important role they play in complimenting their husbands in the management of the home. This position was clearly supported by Sofola (1996) who observed that traditionally, African women were highly revered in the society first of all because of the role they play as 'home-makers and managers', they also serve as custodians of our traditions which they help in passing it from generation to generation and when it comes to giving wise counsels to their husbands, traditional African women were seen to be the best which made it possible for them to be consulted in major decision making in the society.[15] This argument was further supported by Ajodo, (2013), when she noted that in pre-colonial African society especially in Nigeria where we have the Ibo community, the Yoruba community, and the Hausa community alongside other micro-communities scattered across the country, women were seen as playing quite a significant role in the society. She said, for example in the "Yoruba traditional setting, women were said to have held sensitive political offices such as Iyalode (The Women Political Leader), the Erelu (Female Spiritual Leader), and Iyaloja (Head of Market Revenue) in which all these responsibilities cuts across the various communities that make up the traditional Nigerian setting.[16]

In a counter argument to Sofola's position, Seritima (2002) was apt to say that there has been enough ontological and archaeological evidence which seeks to explain that there was never a time in the history of African society where women are seen as equals of men or playing a complementary role to the man but rather; they are said to be 'objects' owned by the man, and behave according to his own whims and caprices'[17]. Again, Ajodo (2013), was also of the view that traditionally, the African woman cannot be said to be equal in any way to the man, in fact, their role as 'home-makers or managers' is seen as a great minus to them because it makes it very easy for them to be schemed out in critical decision making process in the society in which conflict resolution happens to be one area out of many where women were seen to be excluded in the society.[18]

From all these arguments and counter arguments from the scholars who believed that the traditional African society has a place for women or gender in decision making and those who believed that the traditional African woman has little or no say in the way and manner societal decisions are formulated and implemented. One will say that even though women, were seen as assisting or complementing their husbands in traditional African society, all these traditional cultural practices and value systems changed as a result of the transition of the human society from a peasant, agrarian and communitarian based to a more developed, technologically advanced and cosmopolitan as a result of the series of events such as colonialism and industrialization leading to globalization ultimately, given rise to western-centric values, which totally displaced the hitherto traditional and communal based African system. With all this transition from traditional to modern day society, it has further displaced and excluded women from contributing meaningfully in international relations discourse which seems to be one of the rationale behind the emergence of the feminist theory of international relations in order to deal with these dialectics of global, social, cultural injustice and domination by bringing "gender" into the international agenda or global disco

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[13] Mahadevappa, T.C. (2012), Gender Bias and Social Justice, Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (JHSS), Vol. 4, Iss. 2, pp. 42 -44.

[14] UN Women Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women analysis of what "Gender-mainstreaming" connotes available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm accessed: 28th April, 2016.

[15] Sofola, .Z. (1996), 'Women and Literature' in Odejide A., Women and the Media in Nigeria, Lagos.

[16] Ajodo, A.A. (2013), Gender and Conflict Resolution in Africa, An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies, Vol. 2 No. 1. pp. 1- 20.

[17] Seritimi I.V. (2002), Black Women in Antiquity, Brunswick, U.S.A., Transaction Books.

[18] Ajodo, A.A. (2013), Gender and Conflict Resolution in Africa…….

Feminism and Conflict: A Critique Of Mainstream International Relations Discourse:-
The Feminist theory or approach to the study of International Relations (IR) emerged in the late 1980s as a form of critic to the mainstream theories of IR due to her inability to bring the paradigm of 'gender' into global analysis and intellectual discourse. Mainstream IR theories such as Realism, Neo-Realism, Liberalism and to an extend Marxism are said to be guilty of such exclusion.[19] According to Thompson, (2006), not only are women excluded in the key decision making process of states, their views, expressions, opinions and suggestions are not included whenever critical issues are discussed in the international fora.[20] This position was also supported by Brooke et al (2006), noting that the Feminist discourse regarding issues such as conflict, war, security and peace are rooted in the works of renown feminist scholars such as Cynthia Enloe, Christine Sylvester, Ann Tickner, and Spike Petterson who presumably challenged the mainstream IR theories specifically "neo-realism" of having a partial and bias interpretation of "War and Conflict" as a "Man's" thing, making them the sole participants of war as well as managers of conflict. Again, the mainstream discourse of International relations, were also of the view that men were seen to be the main victims of collateral damage as a result of conflict. This assumption, totally neglect the important place of women in conflict; an argument which the feminist theory seeks to totally challenge and criticize. Cockburn in Sylvester (2006), further suggests that the 'state-centric' narrative of conflict by these mainstream IR theories were used as a tool to further popularize the "Masculine and Gender bias' towards women making it very difficult for them to actually change this negative assumption that they play an insignificant role in the conflict discourse.[21]

Therefore, it is pertinent for us to know that the Feminist discourse on conflict, war, peace and violence was a reaction to challenge the static assumption that women are literally "objects" whose views and opinions are totally inconsequential on issues especially the ones bordering on security, peace and conflict in the international system.

Conflicts in Africa: Effects & Consequences (From A Gendered Perspective):-
Since the decolonization period more than four to five decades ago, the continent of Africa has had more years of conflict and instability than peace. In fact Ajodo (2013) and Agbalajobi (2014), were of the view that conflict has ravaged many African states which has resulted in her underdevelopment, displacement, destruction of both systemic and infrastructural fabric of the society and not forgetting the millions of people who have lost their lives and means of livelihood as a result of these conflicts. Recent data made available by the ACLED- Armed conflict location and even data from 1997 – 2015 has over 2million fatality rates of victims of armed conflict in Africa.[22] Just as Ajodo who also submits that from the period 1960 to 1998, there were over 32 conflicts in Africa which had claimed over seven million lives and over nine million people displaced.[23] In Nigeria for example, since the emergence of the Boko-Haram insurgency in 2009, according to the recent data published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) which showcased the Global Terrorism Index in her recent 2015 report, the radical insurgent group has claimed over 6644 lives compared to ISIS which recorded 6073 fatality rate making her the most deadliest radical and terrorist organization in the world.[24]

With these alarming statistics one will not be out of place to argue that the effect and consequences of conflict and violence is a global conundrum which should not be treated with levity because it has become increasingly difficult for the continent to achieve positive economic growth and development, political stability, access to social and other basic human rights needs and ultimately gender equality. As a consequent of the impact of conflict from a gendered perspective, which Agbajaloba further noted that not only is the consequences of conflict differ in scope, nature, magnitude and colossal effect on human lives, from a gendered perspective women are said to be the highest

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[19] Brooke et al (2006), Feminist Methodologies for International Relations, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
[20] Thompson, M. (2006), Women, Gender and Conflict: Making the Connections, Development in Practice, Vol. 16 No. 3 pp. 342 – 53.
[21] Sylvester, C. (2004), Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Business, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,
[22] Raleigh, Clionadh, Andrew Linke, Harvard Hegre and Joakim Karlsen, (2010). Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data. **Journal of Peace Research** 47(5), 1-10.
[23] Ajodo, A.A. (2013), Gender and Conflict Resolution in Africa………., & Agbalajobi, D.T. (2014), The Role of Women in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution: The Case of Burundi, Journal of Political Science and Public Administration, Redeemers University.
[24] Global Institute for Economic and Peace (IEP), Global Terrorism Index available at: http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/our-gti-findings accessed: 29th April, 2016.

casualties of such skirmishes, making them susceptible to all manner of torture, violence and abuse with a much more physiological and long-term psychological effect.

The United Nations (2005) resolution suggests also that most conflicts when they occur, 80% of casualties are women and children because most times, they are un-armed, un-trained as combatants and less protected from the security apparatus of the state making them easy targets for abuse. Even when displaced as a result of such conflicts, they further become victims of all manner of abuse which subsequently affects them socially, emotionally, physically and psychologically even in the post-conflict reconstruction phase.[25] This argument was also supported by scholars like Abama & Kwaja (2009) who were also of the view that whenever there is conflict in the society; women and children tend to be the greatest victims of such violence facing all manner of abuse ranging from rape, physical torture, emotional torture etc. Again, as a form of tactics, whenever such conflicts occur women were seen as easy targets for ethnic cleansing or genocide based on the fact that they play a crucial role in procreation and gate-keepers of children from generation to generation thus, eliminating them is the surest way of ending any ancestral leanings or heritage of members of the society.[26]

In an interview with Mr. Santos Larab, a Cross-cultural Negotiator and also an expert in Conflict Management, he also corroborated what was said by scholars who were of the view that women and children tend to be the ones worst hit whenever conflict occurs in the society. In his submission, he said that whenever conflicts takes place, the group with the highest victims of such carnage is the group which comprises women and children because of the negative caveats associated with conflict. He noted that first of all, apart from the danger of women and children been exposed to all manner of sexual violence and abuse, they constitute majority of the people displaced making them vulnerable to torture, extreme poverty, hunger and diseases. He concluded his argument that the consequential effect of conflict does not only affect the human aspect of security but also poses a serious threat to the socio-cultural and economic development of any society which should not be encouraged to degenerate in the first place.[27]

From all these submissions, we can see clearly that the consequences and effect of conflict tends to be devastating to all groups and members of the society especially the vulnerable group which comprise of women and children who not only become victims of all forms of abuse ranging from physical, emotional and psychological but socially the conflict automatically places them to assume roles which was traditionally and essentially not meant for them because their husbands were either maimed or become totally incapacitated as a result of such conflicts. Therefore, conflict no matter its degree of intensity should be totally discouraged in the society.

Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Need For Gender Mainstreaming:-
Conflict resolution has been described by scholars and commentators to mean the processes and steps which seek to discover, identify and ensure that the root causes of such conflicts are resolved and managed so as to avoid any future re-occurrence considering the effect and consequences it has in the socio-cultural cum political and economic development of any society. We have seen that in post-conflict societies, there have been series of peace-building and confidence building efforts organized by both governments and non-governmental organizations to ensure that issues leading to such conflicts were discussed in which various ways and resolutions adopted as measures of ensuring that such conflicts were not witnessed again.

It has been argued by the Feminists scholars that despite the fact that we have series of conflict management and resolution methods, there has been one challenge of gender-bias in the manner in which these peace building processes are carried out. Therefore, this part of the paper seeks to discover the need for "Gender-Mainstreaming" in conflict resolution, management, and confidence building process in the society.

According to Larab (2016), the need for gender mainstreaming on variants of issues in our society today, was first of all burnt out of the insensitivity, gender-bias and stereotypical worldview that women play a marginal and

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[25] United Nations 2005 Millennium Declaration A/RES/SS/2 available at: http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm accessed: 1st May, 2016.
[26] Abama, E. & Kwaja, M.A.C. (2009), Violence against Women in Nigeria: The Role of MDGS in addressing the challenge, Journal of Pan African Studies, Vol. 3 No. 3 pp. 17 – 23.
[27] Oral Interview with Mr. Santos A. Larab, a Lecturer with the Department of History and International Studies, University of Jos Nigeria.

insignificant role in the society.[28] This perception became one of the core thrust of the Feminist theory which seeks to totally challenge all the pre-existing mainstream approaches to global politics by arguing effectively that women not only play a crucial role in the society, their views, feelings and ideas should also be integrated in any societal discourse. Larab, further argued again that neglecting women who were seen as the highest casualties and victims of violence is totally inimical and insensitive because no one can actually explain the level of emotional, physical, psychological, social and cultural torture they face except them, and the best way to effectively ensure a balanced discussion on issues bothering on conflict resolution, the "gender-question" must first of all be answered honestly.

In another argument as to why gender should be mainstreamed in the conflict resolution process, Kusa (2005) and Mutunga (2006) both argued that the fact that conflict has a high level of impact on the lives of both women and children, it is totally insensitive and disheartening to note that they are not fully included and integrated in the peace building effort given the fact that the society has socially and constructed the negative narrative that women should be overtly subservient to men. Thus, making it very difficult for them to effectively participate and contribute meaningfully to anything that will lead to peace in the society. Hence, for us to have an honest conversation in conflict resolution there should be an equal playing field for both genders to participate in the peace building process[29]. In an interview with Mz. Grace Yusuf an expert in gender studies and also a lecturer with Bingham University Nigeria, she was also of the opinion that for conflict resolution to actually achieve her set out objectives it must first of all, answer the gender-question because without the inclusion of gender into the agenda, whatever roundtable discussions, communique and outcome of the peace building process, it is nothing but hogwash. Therefore, the only plausible panacea for conflict resolution to actually achieve her goal gender should be mainstreamed.[30]

The Norwegian Institute for International Affairs in an article published in 2001, also suggests that any peace process that totally neglects the role of women is totally unnatural because in most post-conflict societies, women are not only seen as victims of such conflicts, but they are also seen as actors whose views are crucial in the reconstruction of such conflict torn societies. Again, as a result of the consequences of such conflicts, it is natural for them to assume new responsibilities which were hitherto handled by men thus, the need for them to be incorporated is not only necessary but expedient while neglecting them, is totally against the laws of natural justice.[31]

The United Nations (UN) publication in (1997) seeks to further express the dire need of gender to be included in the international agenda and discussions which it clearly quote "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"[32]. (UN, Publication, ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, 1997/2). The United Nations Security Council Resolution, 2122 in 2013 further recognized and approved that women play a vital role in the peace process of every society and their views, opinions and ideas will be useful in areas of conflict management, prevention, resolution, security and peace enforcement.[33]

Therefore, mainstreaming gender implies that both men and women are involved not only in conflict resolution, but also in other critical areas of the society as well.

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[28] Larab (2016), Interview………

[29] Oluyemi, K. (2005), Gender, Peace and Conflict, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja, Nigeria. & Mutunga, E. (2005), Gender and Peace Process in Africa, Africa Peace Forum (APFO).

[30] Oral Interview with Mz. Grace Yusuf, , a Lecturer with the Department of Political Science, Bingham University, Abuja, Nigeria.

[31] Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, (2001), Gendering Human Security: From Marginalization to the Integration of Women in Peace Building.

[32] United Nations, (1997), Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System, available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/main.htm accessed: 3rd May, 2016.

[33] United Nations Security Council, (2000), Security Council adopts Resolution 2122 (2013), aiming to strengthen women's   Role   in   all   stages   of   Conflict   Prevention,   Resolution,   available   at: https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sc11149.doc.htm accessed: 4th May, 2016.

Impact of Gender in the Resolution of Conflict: The African Experience:-
Alli (2004), noted that the important role played by women in conflict management cannot be overemphasized even though, those who actively participated in the war-front were mostly men, it is sacrosanct for us to include women in the peace-building process given the fact that they have a lot to bring into the negotiation table especially their role in keeping the family intact when the men were at the battle ground, therefore, their contribution and insights will also bring a fresh paradigm on issues involving conflict management, peace building and conflict resolution.[34] Again Grace (2016) believed also that the emergence of the Feminist theory has demystified the way and manner issues are analyzed and debated transnationally especially when it comes to conflict resolution gender has played a very significant role in raising the debate and conversation higher by critically pointing out some of the salient and sensitive issues which were neglected in international discussions. Secondly, gender plays a critical role in conflict management in the society especially with the establishment and activities of Non-Governmental Organizations and other civil society institutions that seeks to conduct research, embark on massive advocacy and awareness campaigns, organizing trainings and workshops all geared towards entrenching the basic tenets of confidence building and conflict management. In Nigeria for example, NGOs and CSOs such as National Council for Women Society, League for Human Rights, Institute of Governance and Social Research, etc. have contributed immensely in proffering solutions to governments on how conflicts can be managed in the society.[35] Another position offered by Nzomo, (2002) who believed that the role played by NGOs such as the Sudanese Women Association in Sudan, the Federation of Muslim's Women in Sierra Leone, and the Ukambani Women for Peace initiative in Kenya have not only helped in the management of cultural and religious differences amongst the various African communities, but through their series of enlightenment and advocacy campaigns had further created the platform and for a for various African communities to forget about their differences, negative stereotypes and ethnicity but to uphold virtues that can only lead to peace, growth and development of the society.[36]

In terms of community building and mobilization which constitutes an integral part of the peace building effort, women have become increasingly involved in such practices despite their low visibility in both the political and public arena. This is done through the role women play either as doctors, nurses, educators, community health workers, traders, farmers, mothers and even policy makers they still contribute positively in shaping societies and inter-communal exchanges.[37] It was further observed by Ajodo (2013), that as mobilizers and community builders the important role played by women in Africa cannot be overemphasized especially during post-conflict reconstruction process citing example with certain African women and organizations in various African countries. For example she noted that in Eritrea the popular "Asmara protest" which contributed to the end of the 14 years conflict was first of all initiated by the various women civil society groups who saw the need for dialogue between the various warring factions as the best plausible way in ending the conflict. Again during the "Arusha- Peace" process in Rwanda and Burundi, various women organizations such as the Women Network for Peace (NEP), Women Association for Peace(WAP) among other non-violent groups   contributed immensely to ensure that the dreaded genocide came to an end but also canvased for more participation of women in politics going by the critical role they played during the conflict; as a result we have now seen 30% representation of women in the governance process in Rwanda a percentage that no other country in the world has been able to surpass.[38] This argument was further supported by Grace, when she noted that with the 30% threshold of women participants in governance in Rwanda, it has further allowed other countries in Africa as well as other continents of the world to see the need to allow women participate actively in the governance process of their countries based on the fact that when it comes to nation building, community building, peace building and mobilization, neglecting the important role of women will make a complete mockery of the peace process as it were.[39]

Another major impact of gender in conflict resolution as observed by Larab, is the fact that women have played a critical role in the management of diversities in our society today. Looking at the cosmopolitan nature of the Nigerian society for example, which has been balkanized along regional, ethnic and religious lines which has been

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[34] Alli, W.O., (2004), The Impact of Globalization on Conflict in Africa, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA).
[35] Oral Interview with Mz. Grace Yusuf…….
[36] Nzomo, M. (2002), Gender, Governance and Conflict in Africa, Dakar, Senegal.
[37] Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, (2003), Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria, available at: http://www.ipcr.gov.ng/pdf/SCA.pdf accessed: 28th April, 2016.
[38] Ajodo, A. (2013), Gender and Conflict Resolution….
[39] Grace, (2016), Oral Interview…..

seen as the root causes of conflict in the country, the women institution in the society has proven beyond doubt that they are out for the unity, progress and development of the society, they are the key ingredients if we are to achieve this mantra of unity and diversity in our society therefore, which is seen as a true measure of confidence building in the society. [40] He further argued that as part of their role in diversity management he was able to cite a good example with the role played by the 'Christian Women Fellowship of Nigeria and the Jassawa Women Initiative for Peace' when they came together to organize the 'Joint Quranic and Bible Recitation Competition' which brings together all members of the society cutting across the various socio-religious and cultural divides of the society to come together and learn from each other, inter-phase as well as interact irrespective of their cultural and religious differences. He further noted that this socio-cultural and religious exchange has not only contributed to a peaceful and harmonious relationship between members of the society, it has also dampened the heightened tension and mistrust amongst the communities, which the success of such initiatives has been attributed to this two women organizations in Nigeria.[41]

Another impact of women in post-conflict reconstruction period in Africa has been seen in the area of constitutional reform as a medium to further enhance the feminist discourse in the process of policy formulation as well as the governance process in the region which hitherto, was said to be grossly lacking based on the patriarchal and misogynistic nature of the African state; which totally makes women to be further subservient to men. This position was captured by Nzomo (2002), who noted that as part of the post conflict peace process in Africa, the need to further include women in the agenda of policy formulation and governance process is very important going by the role they play in the society especially during the conflict process. He was able to look at how the various political parties in Africa haven't seen the important role played by women especially during the conflict or liberation struggle as it were. For example, the African National Congress in South Africa after the Apartheid regime acknowledged the critical role played by women in the liberation struggle in her party manifesto was able to lobby for more women participation in the governance process through constitutional reform, again in Uganda the same initiative was adopted by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) as part of her campaign promise was to reform the constitution to further allow greater participation of women in the governance process citing the critical role they play during liberation struggle that led to the ouster of the dictatorial regime of Idi Amin.[42] Larab, further noted that increasingly we have seen how the state acknowledged the critical role played by women in the peace process of very society in which states that were seen as hostile towards the inclusion of women in are beginning to see the need for them to reform their constitutions so as to be in tandem with the general global practices as it were, even though this processes are actually not perfect but they are signs of positive steps in the right direction as well.

Conclusion:-
In conclusion, this research paper seeks to study the important place of gender in conflict resolution in Africa. From the analysis of this paper, the study was able to discover that conflict is part and parcel of human society and no society is totally immutable to it but it can effectively be managed from degenerating into violence leading to wanton destruction of lives and properties in the society. From the discourse of the paper, it observed that since the emergence of the modern international system anchored by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia as well as the discipline of International relations, most of the mainstream theories of global politics tend to neglect the important role of gender in the management of conflict; a perspective the feminist approach totally kicks against. The feminist paradigm to international relations seeks the involvement of gender into the agenda global discourse given the meaningful role it plays in the society.

As a result of this poverty of gender bias and non-inclusion of gender in international relations discourse, that gave rise to the emergence of the feminist theory of international relations to actually challenge these mainstream theories of negligence and also to contribute the important role of gender in global analysis. Using these perspective, the study has been able to point the critical role gender plays in conflict management which includes: effective advocacy, trainings, campaigns, agents of change, unity and diversity management as well as their roles as care-givers in our society therefore, gender should be mainstreamed if we are to have a balanced discourse in conflict resolution in our society and all the negative stereotypes and bias against gender should be discouraged just as the popular Nigerian proverb which says: 'If a man sights a snake, and a woman kills it, all is well as long as the snake does not escape'. And so, for Africa and Nigeria to achieve meaningful growth and development, there should be a

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[40] Larab, (2016), Oral Interview…….

[41] Ibid…..

[42] Nzomo, M. (2002), Gender, Governance and Conflict……..

form of positive synergy between men and women especially when they work together in every sphere of the society including conflict resolution and peace building.

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