

Niger Delta Women in Colonial Nigeria: Reflections on Their Economic and Political Roles

Dr. Beatrice E. Awortu

Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt

Abstract: *The paper examined the changing roles, operations and the functional relevance or otherwise of the Niger Delta women in the period of colonialism when Nigeria was under the political tutelage of the foreign power, Britain, against the independent precolonial period. The paper discussed several aspects of state policy and practice in colonial Niger Delta. As regards methodology, the paper used primary and secondary sources of data. The dynamic nature of gender studies also informed the adoption of interdisciplinary approach using knowledge from related disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences to complement the available historical sources. The paper viewed colonial Niger Delta as an integral component of the colonial Nigerian state with reference to the fact that we are not discussing women in the broader colonial Nigerian-State though they may share similar experiences. The paper argued that studies on gender inequality and discrimination as well as women roles and contributions have not addressed the issue of colonial state policy in the Niger Delta or problematized the state in relation to the specifics of women, there is the need to document the role Niger Delta women played during the colonial era towards the economic, political and socio-cultural development of the region. The paper revealed that Niger Delta women made positive contributions to the overall development of the region despite unfavourable colonial policies. The paper submitted that women should be given more economic, political and socio-cultural roles to enable them contribute their quota to the development of their communities in particular and the Niger Delta region at large. The paper, therefore, recommended that negative cultural practices, government policies and societal perception against women should be eliminated for greater and efficient women participation in developmental issues.*

Introduction

By 1906 Niger Delta colonial state had been established through treaties and amendable decrees. Two elements of the colonial project will be considered as examples of policies, which promoted changes that affected women. The first is the economic policy; the second element is the instructional arrangements for the administration of the area; specifically, the adoption of indirect rule and the establishment of a bureaucracy. However, at this juncture, it is important to do a definition of what colonialism is all about for a future comprehension of the dynamics of what we shall be talking about in this work.

The subject of colonialism and its operations have been discussed widely and elaborately by several scholars. In the context of this study we shall see colonialism as a style of government which assumes the rights of the group to impose its rule over another. This invariably leads to a situation of dominance, dependency and systematically subordinates those governed by it to the imported culture in social, economic and political life. The issue of colonial contracts has been thoroughly

examined in diverse climes and major theoretical formulations and positions with respect to impacts suggested and analysed. The major suggestions and analyses can be summed up into major considerations of broad representations. From these considerations, we present that the first school of thought holds that the impact of the contact between the west and the developing countries had produced essentially beneficial results, because it has transmitted “values” and techniques for “modernization” to backward and isolated societies, which would otherwise have had difficulty finding access to them.

An opposing view from another school of thought, obviously dominated by scholars from the dependencies (the former colonies) generally called the dependency scholars who tend to argue that the impact of the contact is essentially exploitative. Therefore continued contact can only increase servitude, and real growth and development in the developing countries which lies in the breaking of such colonial ties. Expectantly, there is the third school of thought with a middle-course contention that the impact of the contract of the relationship is deeply ambivalent. They present the mid-point argument that colonialism contains in-built features of exploitation and subjection; it also contains other features capable of utilizing certain positive achievements of the developed world for development of the less developed countries (Eke, 1983).

Therefore, the necessity for the examination of the nature of the socio-economic and political relations, which characterized the colonial system to usher in a good understanding of the dialectics, dynamics and impacts of colonialism on the women of the Niger Delta. There is little doubt that in the process of acculturation, women in the Niger Delta societies have adopted old ways to the new ways without abandoning the former. These include the introduction of Western colonial system of education, introduction of foreign religion (Christianity) and the introduction of a monetary system of economy. In doing a summation, it is not difficult, therefore, for a historical analyst of colonial tribulations to observe the grand process of foreign cultural diffusion, dependency, subordination, marginalisation and disarticulation (Tamuno, 2000).

Women In The Colonial Economy

It is plausible to offer that prior to the period when the Niger Delta came under direct colonial rule of Britain, centuries of trade and missionary contacts had been established along the coastal areas of the Niger Delta. In the different components of the Niger Delta, following the institution of colonial rule native administrations were set up for indigenous rulers, the Chiefs, under the overall supervision of the colonial state to operationalise indirect rule. These institutions were to perform such functions as the maintenance of law and order and law—making, for the regulation of many aspects of life in the areas under their jurisdiction. In addition to these executive and legislative powers, they were also responsible for the adjudication of disputes through the native courts which were supervised by the central colonial government through a hierarchy of courts. Native treasuries were also set up to take care of the financial aspects of native administration. The colonial state sought to, both control the chiefs and protect their ability to exercise authority over their subjects (Awe, 1984).

According to Dike (1956), for chiefs, the economic developments presented new opportunities for accumulation and also challenges to their hegemony. Their passage from independent traditional rulers to dependent colonial officials was not smooth. Apart from being undermined by their subjection to the colonial order, the rapid alienation of land, excessive demands for communal labour and imposition of taxes under their auspices further eroded their traditional authority. New influential groups, with the creation of the warrant chiefs' institution, soon challenged their primacy.

As the discussion below shows, there were gender differentials in the implications and outcomes (effects) of these processes and developments, which had implications on gender relations and situations of various categories of men and women. The history of the Niger Delta under colonial rule has been well documented comparatively and therefore presented a whole lot of available materials for reinterpretation. In addition, the site of the famous palm oil production and trade, was crucial to the colonial enterprise and fortunes of the colonial Nigerian state as a whole. Colonial economic policies were centered mainly on agricultural exports and trade. The construction of seaports and railways created new jobs. Persons who had access to the colonial education were able to take advantage of the job opportunities in the bureaucracy and construction companies (Irukwu, 1994).

Under colonial rule, education was largely managed by the missionaries although the colonial administrators ensured that mission schools produced the kind of recipients that were useful to them. The introduction of colonial education was seen by Britain as essential to the prosecution of their "civilizing" mission. Female education was perceived to be very necessary to enhance their role as mother and housewives. This, however, seemed to have met with some reactions as the colonial market of employment was directed at the educated male. Keeping women out of the bureaucracy was explicit colonial policy. Most of the few women who had access to colonial education were trained in home —making, thus disabling them from engaging in clerical and administrative works. Women were not among the labour recruited by chiefs. The colonial state right from the beginning had a direct relationship with the men through labour regimes, while women largely remained under the jurisdiction of the chiefs (Mba, 1982).

Nevertheless, concerted efforts were made by the colonial government to address the imbalanced inherent in the educational policy. Thus, to encourage female education, there was the reduction of school fees, low pass marks for girls, granting scholarships and establishing schools for girls alone. The beneficiaries did not only return home to teach others but also serve as teachers, nurses, midwives, prison wardresses, secretaries, dispensers to mention but a few.

Faseke (2001:p. 39) brilliantly adds:

It is thus clear that while colonialism certainly eroded some areas of women activities such as reducing their industrial capability, eroding their economic

power, it definitely had the benefit of educating the girl-child, albeit reluctantly, and giving women the challenge to want to excel like the males. Colonialism showed that women had potentials which when harnessed could be of great benefit to the women themselves and the communities they live. Colonialism stimulated new line of activities and engagements among women. One of such activities was western education which though had been introduced by the Christian missionaries since the sixteenth century was complemented and nurtured by colonialism.

The colonial period witnessed the massive importation of alien and transported ideologies and values that did havoc and great disservice to the social, economic and political relations in the Niger Delta. Such as the conception of woman as housewife, this was imported from Victorian England. The assumption of domestic subservience as the appropriate status of woman automatically subverted and undermined African realities to the detriment of the women folk. Women have always laboured in all areas of production and commerce prior to the imposition of colonial rule. Under colonial rule and occupation, women were denied formal employment and their productive work in agriculture, trade and industry was at first over — looked, and then marginalized and devalued (Ijere, 1991). This heralded the process of marginalisation of the womenfolk economically and their simultaneous exclusion from political and public life which they continue to suffer till today.

Ejitiwu (1991) opined that the Niger Delta, like many other societies, has a long history of colonial rule which imposes laws and social structures particularly harmful to women, among these are inheritance laws, legislation on land ownership and transfer, and social restrictions on women, which seriously limit their activities and aspirations. These patterns occurred extensively and functioned to alter the place of women as well as reducing their power. Inheritance laws and communal rights to land which once allowed access by women have been replaced by title-deed systems which, by law or customs, restrict land ownership to individual men. Colonialism brought with it an ideology of chastity and dependence which has dominated women's lives. In the Niger Delta communities where market organization of women traders once allowed women political and economic power, and where sister/brother inheritance and kin co-operation patterns allowed women an alternative to dependence on a husband, European patriarchy came and undermined both.

These same colonial developments also fostered the growth of industrial centres, which drew men away from rural communities, removing their labour from the subsistence economy. The increasing migration of men to the cities, to mines, and to export agriculture, or to work abroad has caused the number of female headed households to rise dramatically virtually transferring the entire responsibility for feeding,

clothing and housing children to the women. This is closely related to what is called the feminisation of agricultural labour force.

Bryson (1981: 38) affirms that “wide movement into new roles, which involved absence from the village helped to ensure that women would continue to dominate food production both to guarantee food supply and to protect family rights in accordance with inheritance and land tenure”. As a matter of fact, the influx of men and husbands into urban centers weakened the traditional sexual division of labour. Most Niger Delta women took over the cultivation of yams which was the men’s exclusive preserve (Julius, 2012). There is no doubt that the women’s journey into the production of yams helped to prevent food scarcity in the region. In rare occasions when rural women do participate in the wage labour economy, they face discrimination and low wage rates. Where women remain in subsistence agriculture, their central position is ignored, even by development professionals (Ejitiwu & Gabriel, 2003).

Historical studies on the Niger Delta communities have shown that both men and women were involved in harvesting, processing and transportation of palm-oil to the coast for export. By the 1870s, organized production of agricultural produce, particularly palm-oil in the Niger Delta had begun. Largely because of palm-oil production, changes in land relations gathered pace. There was increasing commoditisation of land, especially agricultural land, which was also subjected to several tenancy agreements. The problems of high rents on agricultural land proved to be intractable. Colonial state officials would send warning circulars to chiefs and fixed land rents to no avail. The resulting indebtedness of scores of peasant cultivators was particularly significant in this context because, owing to their status, female labour and reproductive capacities became popular as pawns for the settlement of debts (Okorobia, 1999).

In the oil palm production areas, farmlands came to replace persons in the settlement of debts and were pledged for long periods. Thus, for the peasantry, palm oil production was a new source of income, and also a growing source of stratification. Class differences emerged based on creditor/debtor relations and new labour arrangements. A complicated network of farm owners, tenants and various grades of labourers came to characterize oil palm production.

There were also striking gender divisions in the oil palm and colonial economy, and this affected kinship. For the conjugal family, for example, these developments were to have important consequences because oil palm cultivation and production required more labour than subsistence production. The conjugal family, therefore, was an important source of labour. The labour of wives and children which customary law accorded a man on marriage was put to use in the production of oil palm for market. The practice of polygamy ensured an important source for labour production (Anabraba, 1984).

Women in the Niger Delta communities that were in oil palm production were not allowed to own farms because wives did not have reciprocal rights to their husband’s labour, and had fewer resources. Therefore, women had difficulty in recruiting both paid

and unpaid labour. In addition, customary rules about land inheritance and marital resident patterns worked against women, both as wives and as lineage members. Also, the colonial state's policy of directing agricultural training and extension services at male producers ensured male dominance in palm oil production.

These developments in the palm oil sector affected lineage and conjugal relations. It produced penetrating tensions between women's dual roles: as lineage members who were required to provide labour for their husbands without necessarily gaining any resources. However, even lineage membership was not gender neutral in its implications for access to resources. For example, in many Niger Delta communities there was dichotomy between women's and men's property. Deceased persons were ordinarily succeeded by persons of the same gender. Therefore, self-acquired property of significant value passed through males, even in matrilineal communities.

These developments, in part, particularly during the great depressions of the 1930s, caused an increased in female migrations to the urban areas for trading and other service sector work resulting in male anxiety about the resulting disruption, especially the loss of female labour. Accusations about the connection between migrant women, prostitution, witchcraft and venereal diseases, which had become prevalent, were rife. The chiefs responded with by-laws to restrict the movement of women, to combat prostitution and restabilise marriage. This legislative drive, aimed at reducing the movement of the women folk caused profound diminution to their status.

With the imposition of colonialism, there were a whole lot of significant changes in women experiences. To Mazrui, (1991) colonialism and westernization have solved some problems and created others. The question is, what is the differential degree of the solution-oriented colonialism is it problematic? The argument is that the colonial order discouraged homosexuality but encouraged homoracality, which is enforced racial endogamy, love-making within the same racial group. There is no doubt colonialism affected women position and their contribution to society.

In certain respects, it alleviated the conditions of women by removing some of the obnoxious social customs and practices, such as widowhood rites, to which women were subjected. For women in the Niger Delta who were exposed to the influences of colonialism and the female heads of houses grew richer. A few took advantage of the limited educational opportunities to join the emerging educated elites. But for other women, colonialism meant the loss of livelihood as the colonial administration came with the introduction of mechanized means of palm oil production (Alagoa, 1971).

The colonial alienation of the women from the fundamental benefits of its educational policy had a far-reaching impact on the women population. They were gradually marginalized and subordinated. The resultant effect is that the incorporation of the Nigerian economy into the world capitalist system through the apparatus of colonialism included the upsetting of the traditional complementarity role of the womenfolk. In this way, it caused the separation of the men's field from the women's field: the men's field was rapidly mechanized, monetised, and linked to the capitalist

sector while the women's field continued to be farmed with hoe, its produce kept for the feeding of the domestic group (Awe, 1984).

However, it is important to note that since the women began to take the traditional responsibility of the men (by taking care of the welfare of the family), they had started to play a major role in the development of the entire society and contributing in no small measure to develop the human resource factor upon which the development of the society depends. Again, without the subordinate- supportive complementary roles of the women in the rural economy of the Niger Delta communities, the "Substantive" and "Principal" of the men in the urban capitalist oriented economy of the colonial centers would have been desperately affected and served. The implication is that without the supportive role of the women, the Niger Delta communities would have been worse and degenerated more than experienced during the long period of colonial nightmare.

Also, on a general note, the colonial capitalist economy would not have been smooth without the supportive mechanism of the rural subsistence economy dominated by the women. Evidence from the field showed that women increasingly made more production and marketing decisions and contributed more physical labour as far as the rural/urban, subsistence/capitalist economic relations are concerned. In furtherance thereof, Jaja (1986) argued that due to the young age of the men in the urban centers, it was not possible to raise enough income to feed themselves and their families in the urban industrial work situations. Yet they were permanently withdrawn from the rural settings and unable to contribute to agricultural and related economic activities. Wives, very young and very old relatives were left to do most of the work of feeding themselves and supplementing the food needs of the urban components of the rural families with no group support necessary for them to operate efficiently. With time, this trend escalated, precipitating economic and social disparities between men and women, between rural and urban components of family units, between rural and urban centers in general.

The productivity gap, worsened by growing gap in education, scientific knowledge and skills essential for increase scientific production, has been linked to greater demands for male labour and time in urban-based capitalist economy. Consequently, there was a growing marginalisation of women's roles as urban wives tend to lose their economically productive roles, and subsequently became confined to the home front for the maintenance of the home and got glued to child-rearing roles. This unpalatable trend resulted in a situation where the emerging upper and middle class women in the urban centers ultimately became increasingly dependent on male wage earners for food and households supplies (Gerald, 1982).

In the rural as in the urban areas, land and other resources for production increasingly became monetised to the extent that individual ownership became correspondingly encouraged at the detriment of usufructuary rights (the right of using the property of another person and drawn the profits therefrom without wasting the substances). In the light of this colonial practice, the consequence was a great jeopardy to the women. Increasingly, the position of women, particularly of the landless, single women (unmarried, widowed, divorced) category became jeopardized and more

insecure as access to this vital means of production became more difficult and in some cases inaccessible. Coupled with the initial colonial skewing of educational opportunities against women in favour of men, the concomitant growth of economic gap between the two genders was supported by gap in skills acquisition, knowledge and culture that were essential and important for surviving in and coping with the capacity changing economies (Orugbani, 1991).

Colonial and “development” policies further aggravated and exacerbated the already impoverished situation and condition of women. So much of it, the introduction of various credit inputs, scientific information, knowledge, experience and know-how increased the productivity of the men and caused severe havoc to the productivity of the women counterpart in the capitalist linked and integrated economy (Nwosu, 1996). This further created the dichotomy between male wage labour and female domestic labour roles, which has continued into the post-independent neo-colonial Niger Delta. This dichotomy was perfected through many channels but the most prominent one was the extension services and credit inputs aimed at increasing productivity and facilitate production and exchange. Since women dominated the rural economy and this continued use of traditional methods in the cultivation process in the rural non-capitalist sector of the economy and thus got much less out of their efforts, the gap in labour productivity between the sexes continued to deepen (Mba, 1982). The best that was available to many women out of the elaborate extension services were new recipes for preparing meals and dishes and other domestic chores. Thus only a small fraction of their many and conflicting roles managed to be positively affected by colonialism.

However, in situation where the man’s (husband’s) income was insufficient to maintain the family; or purchasing power eroded by inflation; or where the man (husband) was not existent; or non-productive either because of handicap, old age, divorce, death; or where the woman is unmarried and therefore no man to depend on, woman automatically became the sole managers and providers to the extent that the impact of the family nutrition, survival and well-being on economic enfranchisement of women became obvious. Colonialism and its introduction of the capitalist (monetized) economy introduced sexual dualism in farm labour such that women were increasingly looked upon as sole cultivators of food crops as well as the unpaid family labour, while men became increasingly identified with cash crop farming and production, or identified with wage employment.

Women’s contribution to the family’s budget became crystal clear and great with their participation in long distance trade. In the pre-colonial era, women never served as “brokers” in the economy and enterprise of long distance trade and staple trade. This was not because they lacked “entrepreneurial dynamism” but mainly due to their lack of access to credit, control over transport systems and effective labour (Hargreaves, 1987; Wariboko, 2007). With the imposition of *Fax Britannica*, the construction and maintenance of good roads, relaxation of traditional restriction on women, outlaw of the tradition of seizing women and maintenance of peace, Niger Delta women had the opportunity to venture into long distance trade. The policy of *Fax Britannica* actually ensured the safety of travelers, free movement of people and goods across frontiers as

Niger Delta communities were taught the lesson of reporting their grievances to government. Sorgwe (1989: 132) has this to say:

The fear of being punished by the colonial authority helped to reduce intercommunity feuds. Incidents of violent intercommunity clashes were reduced during the colonial period. Communities learned to complain to the colonial authorities for redress instead of waging wars against their neighbours who offended them.

Julius (2012,: 431) gives the graphic illustration of the Esan women thus:

Many women were attracted to trade. The colonial situation provided the needed conducive atmosphere for Esan women to venture into long distance trade. Indeed, from the 1920s, market trade become one of the major employment opportunities open to women in sub-urban towns such as Ekpoma, Ewu, Igueben, Irrua, Ubaija and Uromi. Their trading activities were important in providing the rising working class with necessities and new commercial goods, which became popular in the colonial era.

As we have noted somewhere else in our study, the male dominated rural-urban migratory movement drastically affected and changed the household formulation in the Niger Delta. Consequently, women metamorphosed to add to their roles and became family and household major producers of material needs and the primary reproducers of labour as in socializing, teaching of basic skills and often paying of school fees (Sandy, 1981). One can imagine the effect of this on the general trend towards development.

Also, the impact of colonialism on the roles and contributions of Niger Delta women was very grave and disastrous. Their contributions to the Niger Delta economy, as noted by Jaja (2003:230), was disrupted as colonial demand for palm oil (cash crop production) resulted in the neglect and near abandonment of fishing and other resourceful economic activities that were thriving in the Niger Delta and which were dominated by the womenfolk (Okorobia, 1999). Some of the women even went to seek for employment in the Bulk Oil Plant (BOP) industries established along the coast when their former prospective industries established along the coast was disrupted. Other women became kernel crackers and yet some others attempted to produce palm oil locally. The arts and craft practised by the Niger Delta women during the precolonial era were neglected by the colonial officials which affected the industry (Nzenwunwa, 1980). The effect was that people sought alternatives in the acquisition of the “cheaper” and “better” goods from Europe. This wholesome attitude contributed immensely to the underdevelopment of the indigenous sector of the economy as they refused to introduced extension services and loans to encourage it (Alagoa, 1972).

The colonial economy, which has its underpinning logic in the twin objectives in the production of new materials to service industries in Great Britain and the sourcing of markets for finished goods, emphasized and promoted the production of cash crops and therefore necessitated the active involvement of women in the production of palm oil and kernels. They also contributed immensely to transport the palm oil and kernels to the ports which evacuation as they helped in paddling the canoes from the creeks linking the hinterlands (the source of goods) and the ports (points of evacuation). Sorgwe (2003) asserted that the women were very useful in the colonial economy and constituted the main labour force that provided the food-crops for constituted the main labour force that provided the food-crops for the entire society while the men concentrated on the production of palm produce for business.

Women essentially bore the burden of the oil palm processing also. To stimulate and promote the production of raw materials needed for the metropole, using the indigenous technology poked out the nuts and squeezed the oil from the pericarp with their hands. The same process was applied to the manufacturing of oil palm. Yet, they were neglected and excluded from gaining access to loan, and development while the men greatly benefitted. Citing Denzor (1988), Abasiatai (1991, : 574-573) lucidly informs:

In the new cash economy women suffered more than men from being denied access to mechanisms of capital accumulation, loans, and exclusion from development projects. Thus, while women's labour accumulated for a majority of subsistence crop production and for the distribution of produce and commodities, most were not able to enter into the new business created by colonial rule or take advantage of opportunities offered by cash crop production. By and large, men controlled cash crop farming, while women were relegated to the much less remunerative subsistence farming.

What is more, the British liberation policy of importation of British liberalization policy of importation of British manufacture also depreciated and affected the women's source of livelihood. In Niger Delta, cottage industries such as salt and pottery productions were the pleasure of women. The industries were areas of potentially profitable and viable human endeavor. Almost all seaside in Niger Delta communities were involved in the salt making while those notable for pottery indigenous industries were Ogu and Ogoloma in Okrika, Ke and Ilelema in the Kalabari area; Kono-Boue, Buan, Luubara and Kwakwa of Ogoni area; Omukwu and finally Egbede as well as in Ikwerre land. The colonial situation with all its paraphernalia forced Niger Delta women to de-emphasize these local industries and moved rapidly to embrace the new order. Infact, the formal western style of education provided viable economic opportunities more than the traditional salt and ceramics making. Added to this was the massive importation of the European technologically advanced goods such as ceramic, plates,

spoons, metal pots, iron and plastic buckets and so, made the locally produced less attractive.

Faseke (2001, :38) shed illuminating light on this score:

Colonialism de-industrialized the women. Salt production and weaving gradually declined because traditional industries had difficulty in competing with the mass outputs of the western industrialized economy. Salt production was only able to survive in areas where it could cater for local preferences. Local textiles survived where they catered for special markets ... Pottery declined as local pots and calabashes became superseded by imported enamel ware. Soap making declined as Nigerians bought the soap made from Nigerians' exported palm oil (Oil Palm).

On his own part, Derefaka (2002, :229) states:

The reason for the decline of this important industry is the introduction of western education, culture and alternative, cheaper and more durable receptacles and utensils from the period of European contact ... With the emphasis on western education for girls and the availability of paid employment and easier economic ventures, daughters became relevant, if not unwilling to learn the trade from their mothers and so the manufacture of ceramic products has virtually cease in most communities ..., which were famous for ceramics production in the past.

Women In The Colonial Political History Of The Niger Delta

The reference here to the role of women in the political history concerns the political activities of the women folk during the colonial period of Nigerian history. In this case, it is limited to the Niger Delta women and their experiences. During the colonial period, much of the political experiences of the Niger Delta women were that of expulsion and consequent resistance and opposition to the nature of and character of the colonial administration. Colonialism constituted a whole strand of thinking and way of life which can be broken down into a number of systems to include administrative, economic, educational, legal and religious. Of a major consideration is the fact that none of these systems operated independently with one another but collectively to affect the roles of Niger Delta women.

Understandably, the British colonial administrators in Nigeria were the products of the Victorian society wherein the women were separated from the men, excluded

from public life and given a reserved place at home and to function and see to the successful management of the home front away from public participation in the day to day running of the society. Indeed, it was construed that it was the women's duty to preserve the home and man's duty to insulate the women from the pressures of life. Therein lies the conception that a man should protect the woman. Women were considered unsuitable for the rigors of public life; hence they were not allowed to vote, to contest elections, to sit in parliament, or to be employed in the civil service.

Colonialism was an agent of change and an instrument of coercion. It came with a bang, enforcing rules that warranted the abandonment of the old traditional roles and encouraged the observation of new rules, adaptation and adoption of the newly imposed rules and ways of life. The introduction of the warrant chiefs system of indirect rule in the Southern Provinces, that covered the Niger Delta, also came with peculiarly new dynamics to which the people of the area, particularly the women, had to adjust to. Under warrant chief system, the traditional title societies and age grades lost their mystique as well as their executive and judicial responsibilities, which were absorbed by the warrant chiefs and the native courts.

Afigbo (1991) viewed that contrary to the pre-colonial times when women enjoyed same rights and participated in the political administration of their areas, the colonial period was different. The warrant chiefs were chosen arbitrarily without the guide of any traditional criteria, and worse of all, no woman was appointed a warrant chief. Similarly, no woman ever served as a staff or member of the native courts, or made a court clerk, interpreter, court messenger, police or army recruit. These positions were limited to the men who had some level of education or some wealth and those who were able to make themselves conspicuous.

Understandably, women were not only excluded from participation in the colonial administration but also from time to time, the courts interfered with their traditional judicial responsibilities and roles. In many cases, the traditional methods and customary practices involved in exercising disciplinary measures by women against offenders were replaced with colonial rules and laws and thereby weakening the traditional requirements that constitute the achievements that ensure the cohesion of the society. Under the warrant chief system, a warrant chief tended to bear the features of the Lord Manor and execute colonial policies and programmes without consultation with the men of the village, let alone their women counterparts (Afigbo, 1991).

Colonialism yielded the negative impact on the women. There was the demonstration of the fact that colonial patriarchal ideologies combined with indigenous patriarchal ideologies to reinforce women's subordination, exploitation and oppression. The few elite women were progressively marginalised as they lost their political power and control over trading and manufacturing activities. However, even in the face of the intimidating impacts of colonialism, some women took advantage of the expanding petty commodity markets (Ali, 1991), or sought to retain their autonomy by migrating to the rapidly growing colonial towns and cities where they often engaged in trading activities, beer brewing, domestic service and sometimes prostitution.

The area that women featured prominently and which, also, has attracted by far the most attention is that of women resistance to colonial rule and their involvements in the national liberation struggles as well as participation in nationalist movements. The most popular of the series of women's resistance to colonial rule was the Niger Delta Women War of 1929. However; there were many other instances of such resistance movements originating from the women all over the Niger Delta. They include, among others, women involvement in the Akassa War of 1895, the Epie Women Demonstration of 1958, the Udekama Women's War of 1925 (Gabriel, 2003). Field investigations have shown that besides these numerous instances of women resistance to colonial rule, which have been documented, there were cases of women's involvements in labour movements and struggles.

The field investigations conducted on the Akassa War revealed that there was the feminine or women factor in the Akassa War of 1895. It was discovered that some women got themselves involved in burning down the trading post of the Royal Niger Company. On its part, it has been the Niger Delta Women War of 1929 came as a result of the resolve of the Eastern Niger Delta women to protest the obnoxious colonial government had excluded them from the "benefits" of the colonial rule. He also recorded that there was a similar anti-tax riot in Ekeremor in 1928 which caused the destruction of their Native Court building and went further to question the logic and legitimacy of alien rule in their land (Okorobia, 1999).

The aftermath of the Niger Delta Women War became far-reaching and attracted the attention of the Colonial Office in London who were taken aback by the behaviour of the women. Regarding the numerous effects of the war, one of the most fundamental changes was the sudden decision of the colonial government to conduct a study of the culture of specific ethnic groups before embarking on the administration of such groups. This marked the beginning of the series of colonial intelligence reports on the various ethnic groups and tribes in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Another instance where the women of the Niger Delta Region protested the policies of the colonial administration was the February 1958 Epie women protest against the administration's withdrawal of free education policy earlier embarked upon, which tend to afford the people, particularly the women, an opportunity to acquire the much needed education. It was on record that the introduction of the policy of free education revolutionized the educational sector and prompted a phenomenal increase in the enrolment of pupils. It is significant also to note that parents preference of males' education was also affected as the introduction of free education warranted the enrolment of about sixteen girls into Epie Primary School. However, after a brief period the government decided to do a modification of the free education policy in the Eastern Region while the government of the Western Region, which introduced the free education policy earlier, still continued. Therefore, Eastern Regional Government's intended Modification Scheme came as a rude shock to the people and was interpreted as an obstacle to the positive aspirations and plans for their children (Sorgwe, 2003).

Historical record bears testimonies that the introduction of the free education policy necessitated a spontaneous increase enrolment of the number of pupils from a total of sixty-three in 1956 to a hundred and seventeen in 1958. But the withdrawal of free education caused a sharp fall in the enrolment of pupils. The consequence was that there were only about forty-six pupils who enrolled at the beginning of the school year in 1958. The headmaster of the school while commenting on this sharp fall in the enrolment of pupils, as quoted in Sasime (2003) noted that “the cause of this appalling fewness is the re-introduction of enrolment and school fees. One can, therefore, appreciate how the people’s euphoria generated by the free primary education programme was turned to frustration and bitterness”. This succinctly shows how the people felt the impact of the withdrawal of the free primary education programme of the Eastern Regional Government. The paradox of the whole situation is that rather than the men taking up arms and confront the situation it was the women who decided to do it. Therefore, faced with this uncanny situation, a rude challenge and frustration, the women took up arms and confronted this unwarranted challenge. In the process and with a radical determination decided to register their protest by marching to the Primary School and ordered the headmaster to close down the school immediately, which he obeyed.

Subscribing to the above, Sorgwe (2003) opined that after the symbolic closure of the primary school at Edepie, the women protesters decided to return to their respective homes on the agreement that they would reassemble at Edepie the next day for a continuous crusade against obnoxious colonial policies. With profound determination to launch a full scale opposition to colonial policies, the women reassembled again the next day at Edepie though without the Igbogene women, which constituted the cradle of the crusade. Unperturbed and with determined vigour and undaunted, the women protesters traveled to all the nook and crannies of Epieland and were enthusiastically joined by the women of each village they visited. On reaching Biogbolo, the character of the protest became dramatic and they started destroying every physical instrument, representations and agencies of the colonial government. Such infrastructures as school buildings, Native Courts, official quarters of colonial officers and agents were damaged. The women became more militant thereafter. All schools and all institutions that were associated with government became targets for vandalism, an approach which they calculated that would attract government attention more dramatically to their cause for possible positive solutions.

However, as the demonstrating women marched on in the process and sought to cross the bridge to get to the primary school at Yenegoa-Ede, they were surprisingly met with staunch opposition from the men of the area who were bent on protecting their school from destruction. Sasime (2003) noted that in order to frustrate the attempt the demonstrators from crossing over to Yenegoa-Ede, the men in their hundreds hurled all sorts of missiles at the protesting women. Thus the women could no longer move and later retired to their various homes with the conviction that they had successfully and effectively conveyed their unalloyed disenchantment with retrogressive policies of the government. They had demonstrated a social consciousness that might have baffled the

government when they stole the thunder and rage from the men who rather chose to protect the government.

Furthermore, in attestation of the fact that the women of Niger Delta demonstrated their functional relevance and played a prominent role in redirecting colonial administration, Gabriel rightly noted that Nigerian history is replete with examples of women's resentment of social, political and economic adjustments of the colonial system. Often times, their reactions led them into varying degrees and kinds of ant-colonial activity. While analyzing the Udekama Women's War of 1925, Gabriel (2003) demonstrated how nursing mothers of Udekama engaged colonial officials in a fight against what they considered as the colonial violation of tradition of the people. It was a fight between colonial prison warders and nursing mothers of Udekama.

It is traditional that after child birth women were confined in the house for at least three months to recuperate and in the early hours of each new day would gather at a particular designated place before proceeding to bathe in the river. On one fateful morning while the nursing mothers were going for their routine bathe, they met prisoners (supervised by warders) cutting the Okaka tree (a big tree of religious and economic significance) without the consent of the Chiefs and elders, branches of which were pinned at shrines for identification "possibly for subsequent destruction". Consequently, the nursing mothers retreated home, gathered the men, reported and pleaded with them not to attack the prisoners and warders for fear of being arrested and imprisoned. Meanwhile the women (only nursing mothers) mobilized themselves, laid siege for the prisoners and warders and attacked them. In the usual colonial tradition, when they were to be foreclosed the initial intention to arrest and imprison the women who were later cautioned to desist from the acts that would breach the peace of the community. What is deductively apparent here is that even when the women of Niger Delta were officially and directly excluded from active participation in politics and administration of the area, the outcomes of their activities tend to affect and bear heavily on the colonial policies of their times.

It is, therefore, important to note that the new colonial policies had severe influences on the sex role definition among the people as the colonial administrators introduced policies of the Victorian background, which had detrimental effects on the role of women. It is understandable that much of these policies contrasted with the pre-colonial traditional concept of the place and role of women. The colonial government did not recognize or appreciate the important contributions of the women and their sense of independence in certain matters and failed to give due recognition to the women's traditional important participation in the public affairs of the society. Different writers have at different times attested to the fact that in traditional Niger Delta societies, political powers were diffused and feminine agents participated fully (Alagoa, 1971).

Furthermore, Uchendu (1993) clearly noted that women lost most politically under colonial administration as the dual political system, which involved both men and women in politics were vehemently abandoned and substituted by the single-sex political system, which left women out of public affairs completely. When the women

discovered it was a loss of their natural right, which must be fought for, it was profoundly resented as demonstrated in the various protests embarked upon by Niger Delta women. These protests have been given several interpretations While Afigbo sees the protests as an anti-colonial movement aimed at the destruction of the warrant- chief system and ultimately colonial rule, Coleman (1986) sees it as traditional nationalism, which was important in the development of nationalist movement (Afigbo, 1991). It can therefore be collectively argued that the most important contribution of Niger Delta women to the development of the society was in their constant protest against colonial policies, which were unfavourable to their well-being.

Moreso, the various women protests against obnoxious colonial ordinances and policies can be assessed as a means of political participation for women since they were not represented in government and had no other effective means of political nationalism. Of a significant note in these series of agitation movements was the organizing abilities of the women in handling public and delicate matters. The capacity to plan and conspiratorially execute effectively, taking the government by storm, emphasized the leadership role of women, their unity of purpose whenever necessary, their dexterity, determination and the power of women's collective action. These protests did a lot to discomfiture the colonial government and make it more sensitive, not only to the problem of women, but also to the general issue of well-being. Thus, by their agitation, women contributed greatly to the nationalist movements, and the eventual rise of the Niger Delta society and the Nigerian nation at large.

However, Niger Delta, women's role in the political development of colonial Nigeria was not confined to participation in adhoc political agitation or what Afigbo (1991) called "nativistic agitation" but also participated in the formation of modern pressure group and political parties, though few in number. They helped to bring women's and welfare matters in an organized manner to the enlightened public. They thus sensitized the enlightened public about the problems of women, suggested solutions and agitated for their implementation.

Conclusion

It is a well-known fact that women are versatile in the area of economic development of any society. Therefore, it is common place to observe that though palm oil production dominated the colonial economy, women also engaged in many other aspects of economic endeavours to give sustenance to the subsistence economy and economic stabilisation in the family. However, it is clear from our analysis above that though colonialism affected the most of traditional economy and particularly put paid to craft production, which was dominated by the women, the colonial economy was not hijacked by the men but was also a collective venture as women also featured visibly in all ramifications in the development of the colonial economy.

The hypothesis for this paper is that historical interruption and analysis of any kind may be generated by the attempt to resolve the dialectic between colonialism as an albatross to the status of women and their capabilities to play their roles in the

development of societies. As a framework for analysis, we are compelled to contend that colonialism, as an albatross became the core engine in the domination of patriarchy to the Niger Delta. It follows therefore, that women in much of the Niger Delta lack support for fundamental functions of human life. They became more vulnerable to physical violence and sexual abuse. They were much less literate and still less provided with professional and technical education and therefore face greater and severe obstacles when they attempt to get employment. Similarly, they faced obstacles which often times impeded their effective participation in political life. Consequently, they lost their property rights, the rights of association, mobility, religious liberty, and lack opportunities to play and for the cultivation of their imaginative and cognitive faculties. All these unequal social and political circumstances originating from colonialism collectively gave women the background of unequal human capabilities.

Therefore, there is the compulsion to sum all these up by saying that colonialism did not treat women as ends in their own right (persons with dignity that deserves respect from law and institution). Instead, colonialism treated women as mere instruments of the ends of others — reproducers, caregivers, sexual outlets, agents of a family's general prosperity. Gender inequality is strongly correlated with poverty. When poverty combines with gender inequality, the result is acute failure of central human capabilities. There is a sense in which we can argue that there is a process of "feminisation" of poverty. Colonialism and the treatment of women as supporters of the ends of others, rather than as ends in their own rights, as a principle constituted a particularly critical force in the future of women lives and thus affected fundamentally the overall development of human society. However, there is a note of caution. In the face of these political, social, economic, administrative, and legal experiences, the women put up strong contention and challenged such colonial policies they considered obnoxious and in that contributed radically and fundamentally to a redirection of colonial administration as well as the overall development of their various societies.

References

- Abarn I. (1983), Women and Community Development in CR8" Nigerian Chronicle, 2:9:1982.
- Adebiyi B. (1971). "I'm Still Rehabilitating, says Ex-Woman MP Mrs. Ekpo" Daily Times, 10:7:1971, 12-13
- Adeleke, H. E. (1994) Significance and Relevance of Gender Studies to History.
- Adenyinka O. (1999)., "Problems and Constrains Facing Nigerian Women Industrialists: A Review" *Journal Of The Institute Of African Studies*, U. Special Issue, No. 4.
- Aderinwale, A. (1997) (ed), Empowering Women for the 21st Century: The Challenges of Politics, Business, Development and Leadership, Ota; A & F, Publishers.
- Aderinwale, A. (2001) (ed), *African Women's Forum: Women and Conflict Management in Africa*, Ota: A & F Publishers.
- Afigbo, A. E, (1991) "Women in Nigerian History" In Martin O. Ijere (ed) *Women In Nigerian Economy*. Enugu: Acena Publishers, 22-53

- Agawal, B. (1986) *Cold Heart and barren Slopes: the Wood-fuel Crisis in the Third World*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers and Institute of Economic Growth.
- Agowike, A, (1992) "Growth of Nigerian Womanhood: 31 years after" *Daily Times*. 17:02.
- Akande, J, (1995) "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" Women, Law & Development Centre.
- Alagoa, E. J (1992) "Queen Kambasa of Bonny" in Bolanle Awe's *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*. Lagos: HEB
- Alagoa, E. J. (1964) *The Brave City-State: A History of Nembe-Brass in the Niger Delta*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Alagoa, E. J. (1971) "The Niger Delta States and their Neighbours, 1600 — 1800" In J. F. Ade Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds); *History of West Africa* vol. 1. London: Longman.
- Alagoa, E. J. (1972) *A History of the Niger Delta*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Alagoa, E. J. (1984) "Towards a History of African Historiography" a paper presented at the 30th Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Nigeria Nsukka, March 26th - 29th.
- Alagoa, E. J. and Tamuno, T N. (1980) *Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State*. Ibadan: H. E. B.
- Alele-Williams, G. (1988) "Towards Greater Understanding of Women in Management" *The Reporter*. Dec. 22.
- Ali, A. M. (1991) "The Black Woman and the Problem of Gender: trails, triumph and Challenges" *The Guardian Lectures Series*.
- Amangala, G. I. (1945) *A Short History of the Ijaw with Appendix*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma pub.
- Appah, E. W. (1968) *Administrative Divisions of Rivers State*. Port Harcourt: Ernest Pub.
- Awe, B (1992) (ed) *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*. Lagos: Sankore Publishers and Bookcraft Ltd.
- Awe, B (2002) "Dr. Nina Mba 24th April 1944 — 14th Jan. 2002" A Publication of the African Gender Institute Issue I.
- Awe, B (2002) "Writing Women into History": International Perspectives. London.
- Awe, B, (1984) "Nigerian Women and Development in Retrospect" in J. L. Parpart (ed) *Women and Development in Africa*, New York: Larham, University Press of America.
- Awoniyi, T. A. (1974) "Place of Women in Post-military Nigeria" *Daily Sketch*, 21:5.
- Awortu, B.E & Michael, T.B. (2019). Politics in Pre-Colonial Niger Delta Reflections on the role and contribution of women. *KIV Journal of Humanities* 4 (4) 19-29.
- Awortu, B.E. (2018). Analysing the role. Of women in early Niger Delta economy. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanities and social sciences* 5 (1).
- Ayres, R. (1995) (ed), *Development Studies: An Introduction Through Selected Readings*. Kent: Greenwich University Press.
- Babangida, M, (1992) "Democracy and the imperatives of Women Participation in Politics" in J. A. A. Ayoada, Elone J. Nwabuzor and Adesina Sambo (ed) *Women and Politics in Nigeria*. 38-47.

- Bakan, D. (1966) *the Duality of Human Existence: Isolation and Communion in Western Man*. Boston. Rudledge Pub.
- Boserup, E. (1970) *Women's Role in Economic Development*. New York: Oxford Pub.
- Bryson, J.O. (1981). *Women and agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implication for development*. An exploratory study in Niki Nelson (Ed.) *African Women in the Development Process*. England: Francan.
- Coleman, S.C. (1986). *Nigeria: Background to nationalism*. Benin City: Boburg Wistrom.f
- Dankelman, I. and J. Davidson, (1988) *Women and Environment in the Third World*. London: Alliance for the Future.
- Derefaka, A.A. (2002). Indigenous technology in E.J. Alagoa & A.A. Derefaka (Eds.) *The Land and People of Rivers State: Eastern Niger Delta*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications.
- Dike, K. O. (1956) *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta: 1830-1885*. Oxford: Claredon Press.
- Djebah, O, (1998) "Izon Women, Monarch Speak on the Niger Delta Crisis" *The Guardian*. 16/11/1998, page 5.
- Dolphyne, F. A. (1991) *The Emancipation of Women: An African Perspective*. Accra: Unity Press.
- Dominic, L and Kelechi, O, (1999) "Politics and the Nigerian Woman" *The Punch*, 1:09.
- Ejiogu, M, (1997) "Women in Transition" *The Vanguard*, 15:5.
- Ejituwu, N. C. (1991) *A History of Obolo (Andoni) in Niger Delta*. Oron: Marson Publishing Co.
- Ejituwu, N. C. (1998) (ed) *The Multi-Disciplinary Approach to African History: Essays in Honour of Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Ejituwu, N. C. and A. O. I. Gabriel, (2003) (Eds), *Women in Nigerian History: The Rivers and Bayelsa States Experience*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research.
- Eyo, B. E, (1986) "Women in Constitutional and Political Development", a paper presented at the 1986 Media Women Seminar, MSS .Calabar, 27 — 28, Nov. Pg. 1-4.
- Faseke, M. (2001). *The Nigerian Woman, Her economic and socio-political status in time perspective*. Ibadan: Agare Publications.
- Gabriel, A. O. I. (1994) *Matriliney and the status of Women in Degema Land*" A paper presented at the 38th Congress of the Historical Association of Nigeria held at the A. B. U. Zaria, Kaduna State. 29th June.
- Gabriel, A. O. I. (1994). "The Changing Role of Women in Rivers State: 1967-1993" A paper presented at the workshop of Women in Nigerian History: The Rivers State experience, organised by the Historical Society of Nigeria, Rivers State Branch at the University of Port Harcourt. 27th — 29th April, 1994.
- Garba, P. K., Bola, A and Ifeoma, I.A (2001) (eds), *Women and Economic Reforms in Nigeria*. Ibadan: WORDOC.
- Gerald, N. G. (1982) "Women in History" *Interpretations of American History*, vol. 11 Canada, Macmillan Press, 79.

- Gogo, S (1975) "Madam Erinwo Wojowhor of Ibaa" In Tamuno T. N, and Alagoa E. J. (eds). *Eminent Nigerians of the Rivers State*. Lagos: Heinemann Educational Books, Nig. Ltd.
- Hargreaves, S.M. (1987). *The Political economy of nineteenth century Bonny: A study of power, authority, legitimacy and ideology in Delta trading community from 1790-1914*. A Ph.D thesis, University of Birmingham.
- Horton R. (1975) "Ekinebo: A Forgotten Myth" *In Odum*,.
- Houston, P. (1985) *Third World Women Speak out, Asian Women's Action and Research*. New York: Network Davao City.
- Ijere, M. O. (1991) (ed), *Women in Nigerian Economy*. Enugu: Acena Publishers.
- Ikpeme, B, (2003) "Are Nigerian Women Really in Politics?" *Women Public Life*, Vol. 5 Nos. 7 — 9.
- Imam, A., Mama, A., and Sow, F., (1991) (eds), *Engendering African Social Sciences*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Jaja S. O. (1986) "Women and the Rise of Nigerian Nationalism" a paper presented at the 1986 Media Women Seminar, MSS. Calabar, 27-28, Nov. Pg. 8-9.
- James, N. O, (1998) "Historiography" in the Teaching of History" In N.C. Ejituwu (ed), *The Multi-Disciplinary Approach to African History*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Jones G. I, (1963) *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers*. Cambridge: University press.
- Julius, O.U. (2012). Colonialism and the Liberation of Women in Esanland, Edo State, Nigeria in J. Mangut & T. Wuam (Eds.) *Colonialism and the Transition to Modernity in Africa*. Ibadan: Sam-Adex Printers.
- Juschka, D. M. (2001) (ed). *Feminism in the study of Religion: A reader Continuum*. New York: Cambridge University press.
- Karoye, S. and N. C. Anyadike, (2004) (eds), *Women in the Academy: Festschrift for Professor Hellen Chukwuma*. Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers.
- Kauffman, L. (1989). *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism*. Oxford Blackwell.
- Kinsley, M, (1999) *West African Studies*. London: University Press.
- Kolawole, M. M. (1998) "*Gender Perceptions and Developments in Nigeria*". Lagos: Arrabon Academic Publishers.
- Ladipo, P, (1981) "Developing Women's Cooperatives: An Experiment in Rural Nigeria" *African Women In The Development Process*. Nici Nelson (ed) Port Harcourt: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.
- Lee, R. B. and Devere, I (1977). *Kalahari Hunter Gathered*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lee, R. B. and Devere, I. (1968). *Man the Hunter*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Leith-Rose, S. (1939) *African Women*. London: University Press.
- Leonard, A. G. (1906) *The Lower Niger and its Tribes*. London: University Press.
- Lfeorna, I and Bola, U, "Bolanle Awe: Portrait of an Academic and Activist" WORDOC: U..
- Irukwu, E. E., (1994) *Footprints — The Evolution of Nigerian Women*. Lagos: Talkback Publishers.
- Isichei, E, (1983) *A History of Nigeria*. London: Essex.

- Mana, A, (1996) "Concepts and Methods for Gender and Women's Studies in Nigeria" Report of a workshop held at Kongo Conference Hotel, Zaria. Nov, 3.
- Margaret, E: (1996) *A Political Biography by Women in Nigeria (Win)*.
- Mba, N. E. (1982) *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Menka E, (2004) "Its No Way To Reward Women In Politics African Woman, February, Issue 18.
- Nwabuzor E. J. (1992) "Profile of Women in Nigerian Politics during the Transition" In J. A. A. Ayoada, Elone J. Nwabuzor and Adesina Sambo (ed) *Women and Politics in Nigeria*. Lagos: Pearl Pub.
- Nwosu, A, (1996) "Gender Equality" A paper presented at the International Federation of Women Lawyer (FIDA) Enugu State Branch, Annual Conference.
- Nzenwunwa N. (1980) the Niger Delta Prehistoric Economy and Culture. Cambridge: Monographs in African Archaeology 1, BAR International Series.
- Odejide, A. (1996) (ed), *Women and the Media in Nigeria*, WORDOC, Institute of African Studies, Ibadan.
- Odom. I. (1982) "Nigerian Women and Politics in the 80s" *Nigerian Chronicle* 25:8.
- Okoye, C. U. and Ijere, M. O. (1991) "Role of Better Life Programme in National Development, In Martin O. Ijere (ed) *Women In Nigerian Economy*. Enugu: Acena Publishers pp.175— 183.
- Oputa, C, (1989) "Women and Children as Dis-empowered Groups" Federal Ministry of Justice Law Review.
- Orugbani, A. (1985) "Sacrificial Lambs or Heroines: Rivers Women's Place in the Events of 1929", (Proceedings of a National Symposium to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Women's Uprisings in South-Eastern Nigeria, edited by P. Chike Dike. (N. G.A. Lagos), Pg. 117—129.
- Orugbani, A. (1991) "Women in Development: The Task Ahead" in S.O. Jaja, B. E. Ndem and Kate (eds.) *Women in Development: Cross River Experience*. Calabar: Mosaic pub. , Pg. 111—123.
- Pepple, A, (1992) "Women in the Nigerian Legislature" In J. A. A. Ayoada, Elone J. Nwabuzor and Adesina Sambo (eds) *Women and Politics in Nigeria*. Lagos: New world pub.
- Plumwood, V. (1992). "Feminism and Eco-feminism: Beyond the Dualistic Assumption of Women, Men and Nature", *The Ecologist*, Vol. 22, No. 1.
- Sandy, P. R. (1981). *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Sorgwe, C.M. (1989). The impact of colonial rule in E.J. Alagoa & T.N. Tamuno (Eds.) *Land and People of Nigeria: Rivers State*. Port Harcourt: Rivers Side Communications.
- SPDC Briefing Notes, "Promoting Women Development in the Niger Delta" *Shell Women Journal*. Nov. 2002.
- Tamuno, T. (2000) *The Niger Delta Question*. Port Harcourt: Riverside Communications.
- Uchendu, P. K. (1993) *The Role of Nigerian Women in Politics: Past and present*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Unyo J, (1997). "Women in Politics" *The Guardian*, 3:30:, page 35
- Wariboko, N. (2007). *Pattern of Institutions in the Niger Delta: Economic and Ethological Interpretations of History and Culture*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications.