THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE COLONIAL ECONOMY OF NSUKKA DIVISION, 1912-1960

BY

EZEMA WALTER OGUGUA
P15ARHS8013

SUPERVISORS
DR. HANATU A. ALAHIRA
DR. JOHN O. AGI

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JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

This dissertation titled; "**The Role of Women in the Colonial Economy of Nsukka Division 1912-1960"**is the product of my own efforts and has not been presented for the award of a degree or certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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EZEMA WALTER OGUGUA **SIGN/DATE**

CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation entitled, "The Role of Women in the Colonial Economy of Nsukka Division 1912-1960, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts (MA) Degree in History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

DR. HANATU A. ALAHIRA	……	..……
SUPERVISOR I	Signature	Date
DR. J.O AGI	……..	…….
SUPERVISOR II	Signature	Date
PROF. SULE MOHAMMED	……	……
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	Signature	Date
PROF. SADIQ Z. ABUBAKAR	……	……..
DEAN, SCHOOL OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES	Signature	Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Lady J. U. Ezema and to Mrs. Anthonia Chinenye Ezema, and to the memory of my former colleague in the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria,late Shangevzua Clement Malu whose assistance made this research possible.

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My profound gratitude goes to my siblings, Ngozi, Pa Vic, Nkechi, Chukwuma (Asambodo), Ebere (Nwoyoko), Ifeoma, Oluchi and Kacee whose financial support paved the way for this study.

Many individuals contributed to the success of this study. They include first and foremost my supervisors, Dr. Hanatu Alahira and Dr. J.O. Agi. I am immensely grateful and indebted to you for your patience. May the good Lord reward you according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I also wish to thank the entire staff (both academic and non-academic) for the conducive academic environment which made this undertaking a rewarding one. And to my course mates whose assistance one cannot evaluate, I say may God reward you all. I appreciate your encouragement and constructive criticisms throughout our course work. Your contributions and criticisms in our departmental seminars helped to sharpen my focus on the study of history. I also wish to thank Professor Onwuka Njoku who made phone calls to enable me obtain some materials which enriched this dissertation. May the good Lord pay you back a thousand fold.

Above all, my gratitude and thanks, praise and adoration is to God Almighty for his divine providence, loving kindness and blessings upon me and my family. God started this work and remained faithful till the end.

ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is the role of Women in the Colonial Economy of Nsukka Division from 1912-1960. The work is an analysis of the role which women played in the household economy and by extension the Colonial Economy. The work examined the culture and traditions of the people to be able to understand the roles the genders played before and during colonialism. The work is of the view that Colonialism was exploitative in all ramifications. It argues that women bore the burden of sustaining their families during the period under study as many of the economic policies were harsh leading to migrations of able bodied young men, leaving the responsibility of sustaining the families on the shoulders of women. The period saw an unprecedented division of labour in the household economy as men abandoned food crop production for trading. Most local industries suffered as they could not compete favourably with the cheap finished products of Europe and the West. Only very few industries survived the economic onslaught of western capitalism. The period also witnessed the invasion of the economic space which hitherto was the exclusive preserve of women by the men. Food crop production was abandoned by men who migrated to different parts of Nigeria in search of paid employment. The study concluded that women were the unsung heroines of the colonial economy in this period bestriding it as a colossus. The study uses historical research method. Primary, secondary and tertiary sources such as oral interviews, archival materials, journals, mimeographs, published and unpublished texts, were used as means of data collection for the historical reconstruction of the study.

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GLOSSARY

ENGLISH	IGBO
Farmland	Agu
Trap with large teeth	Agugba
Witness	Ahuta
Land	Ale
Village square	Ama (Otobo)
Freeborn	Amadi
Junior title	Amaulor
Sun	Anyanwu
Traditional Prime Minister	Asogwa, Onogwu, Attah, Aruma
Priest of the god of the land	Attama Ale
High priest	Attama Ma
Personal god	Chi
Diviner, herbalist	Dibia
Four native days of the Igbos, Also four markets positioned at different villages	Eke, Orie, Afor, Nkwo
Manure	Epe
Clay pots collected in a place for storing water	Ezoro
Traditional marriage ceremony	Igba nkwu
Farmer's co-operative	Igba ohu
Trapping system	Igbudu
Making inquiries for marriage	Iju ese
Cloth weaving	Ikwe akwa
Senior title	Ishiama
Titled man	Ishiwu
Title for women	Lolo anyi, Ogbu anyinya
Women titles	Lolo anyi, oyima, omerubo
Strangers	Ndi ugbo
Goat pen	Nkwu Ewe
Male sitting room	Obu
An insignia of office made from the tail of a buffalo	Odu atu
Lion killer	Ogbu agu
Women's war	Ogu umunwanyi
Slave	Ohu
Eldest man of a kindred	Onyishi
Yam title	Otu ji
Wives of the kindred	Otu Inyomdi
A title	Ozo
Daughters of the kindred	Umuada
Sons of the kindred	Umunna

ABBREVIATIONS

ADO	Assistant District Officer
CKC	Christ the King College
CMS	Church Missionary Society
HRH	His Royal Highness
L.G.A.	Local Government Area
POM	Pioneer Oil Mills
PWD	Public Works Department
QRC	Queen of the Rosary College
TTC	Teachers' Training College
WACB	West African Currency Board
WAPCB	West African Produce Control Board

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CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Over the years, historical discourse and historical studies in Africa and elsewhere have dwelt largely on the exploits done by men in history and development. Historical discourse and writings therefore have been gender blind and gender insensitive. Thus, historical events were narrated portraying women not only as victims but in most cases as non-existent[1]. Only recently have historians made concerted attempts to correct the biases, prejudices and distortion of African history as a result of the exclusion of women from the historical process by scholars. Consequently, enormous energy and resources have been invested by African scholars to reconstruct African history thereby giving Africa its pride of place in world history. In spite of this, there have been arguments that there is no need for a gendered history. [2] According to this school of thought, historical actors were presented in non-gendered terms which include men and women. Others have questioned the usefulness of gender as a category in historical analysis.[3]

Nevertheless, from the1970's the study of African women in history has received historical interest. This has been fostered by the international women movements and the general developments in African history since the Second World War (WW II). The problem of African development led to studies of women in the society, economy and politics to achieve equitable and sustainable development and change. The aim was to show that African women contributed to society and development in order to

[1] B. I. Eno, "Feminism, Gender Studies and Historical Interpretation" in *Women and Power in Africa in the 20th and 21th Centuries,* Fragrance Publishers, Lagos, 2009, p. 18.
[2]Ibid.
[3]See S. Joan, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" in, *American Historical Review, 91, No. 5,* 1985.

counterearlier assumptions of African women as passive, docile and dependent. [4] In Nigeria, like elsewhere in Africa there was a search for great women whose histories could be approximated to that of great men of history.These were histories of outstanding women such as Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwara, Fumilayo Ransom Kuti, and Margaret Ekpo, among others. However, this approach had its disadvantages asit sidelined and ignored the lives of the majority of women who were the masses in historical writings. The need to include such women resulted in the proper understanding of the role of women in the pre-colonial and colonial African societies as well as their role in the fight against colonialism.

The colonial period saw a comparative decline of the fortunes of African women especially in South Eastern Nigeria which eroded the complementary dual-sex political and economic system that was practiced in the pre-colonial period that empowered women and accorded them higher status in the society. The colonial period saw the loss of autonomy and control over agricultural production and trade resulting in the masculinization of commerce and the economy. Even though colonialism eroded the already existing economic independence of women as witnessed during the pre-colonial period, women did not sit to bemoan their loses, rather, they took the bull by the horn fighting gallantly as Amazons to sustain their families and by extension the colonial economy.

[4]B. I. Eno, *Feminism, Gender Studies and Historical Interpretation*, pp. 18-19.

The integration of the household economy into the international capitalist economy from the first decade of the 20th century witnessed a widening of the gap between classes and gender which greatly increased sexual inequalities.[5]However, as we shall see in this study, Nsukka women were conspicuous in agriculture, trade and commerce, manufacturing and processing and even in the arts and crafts. Their impact on the colonial economy in spite of the absence of men who were engrossed with the exploitative colonial service and forced labour of the colonial administration cannot be overemphasized. Nsukka women made sure there was food for the family as co-bread winners with the men. They were also responsible for the harvesting and processing of cash crops such as palm produce which was very important to the colonial economy and industrial development in the metropolis. Thus, women's contribution helped to sustain the colonial economy. Women played indispensable roles in the sustenance of the colonial economy and the colonial state. They filled the vacuum that was created as men abandoned agriculture especially food production for white collar jobs and business opportunities. This break down in traditional socio-economic and family structure left a fractured community in which women were left to bear the socio-economic burden of maintaining and subsidizing the family economy by their increased roles in subsistent agricultural production.

The study highlights the contributions of women to agriculture, trade and industry and how they strove to sustain the local and colonial economy, through their petty trading, long distant trade and agricultural activities. Other areas of importance in which women directly impacted on the colonial economy were identified, like in the area of

[5]H. Alahira, "The Role of Women in the Colonial Economy of Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of the Berom of the Jos Plateau, 1900-1960", Ph.D Thesis, ABU, Zaria, 2002, p. 9.

craft, pottery making, weaving and textile and even in manufacturing where some of their products competed favorably with foreign manufactures. Colonial policies that impacted positively or negatively on Nsukka women with its attendant socio-economic and political consequences were also examined.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

During the period under study (1912 – 1960) the economic, political and social institutions of the people of Nsukka Division were affected drastically. The principal factor affecting the development of the economy under British rule was the imposition of the colonial economy. The economy underwent dramatic changes in several respects including the role of women, with far reaching consequences. The colonial state was characterised by high level of changes in economic roles which affected the traditional division of labour. This study is an attempt to analyse the role of women under these changes.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to historicise the role of women in the colonial economy of Nsukka. The study set out to contribute to the existing body of literature on the role of women in the colonial economy. The objective of this study is informed by the fact that women studies in the historiography of Africa and Nigerian history is a neglected area. The work took a look at lessons to be learned from the past, which could be useful in shaping attitudes, practices and policies to help in achieving equitable development and harmony between the genders and by extension the society. The study is expected to serve as a source material for the teaching of gender studies and other

related courses and will also provide research materials to students of gender studies. The work will serve as a document which will help us to further understand and appreciate the role that women played in the colonial economy.

1.4. Scope of the Study

Nsukka occupies the northernmost portion of South Eastern Nigeria.[6] It is located on the fringes of the rain forest zone of Eastern Nigeria, lying on latitude 7^0 and 8^0 east and longitude 7^0 and 8^0 north of the River Niger.[7] The work covered the area which was referred to as Nsukka Division during the period under study but which now covers Nsukka, Igbo-Eze North, Igbo-Eze South, Igbo-Etiti, Isi-Uzo, Udenu and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas. Nsukka is a frontier Igbo cultural group between the Igbo to the southeast, the Idoma to the northeast and the Igala to the north and northwest.[8] It occupies a strategic position in the South East region as it served as a meeting point between traders from the North and from the rain forest zone of South Eastern Nigeria.[9] The setting provided us with an opportunity to analyze the role of women in the key sectors of the colonial economy, such as palm produce production, agriculture, trade and commerce and the impact of colonial rule on women.

The year 1912 has been selected as the starting point of the research study as it marks the establishment of provincial and divisional administration in Igboland generally and Nsukka in particular by the British imperialists as it was also elsewhere in the Nigeria area. The scope of the study then runs through the struggles of the women

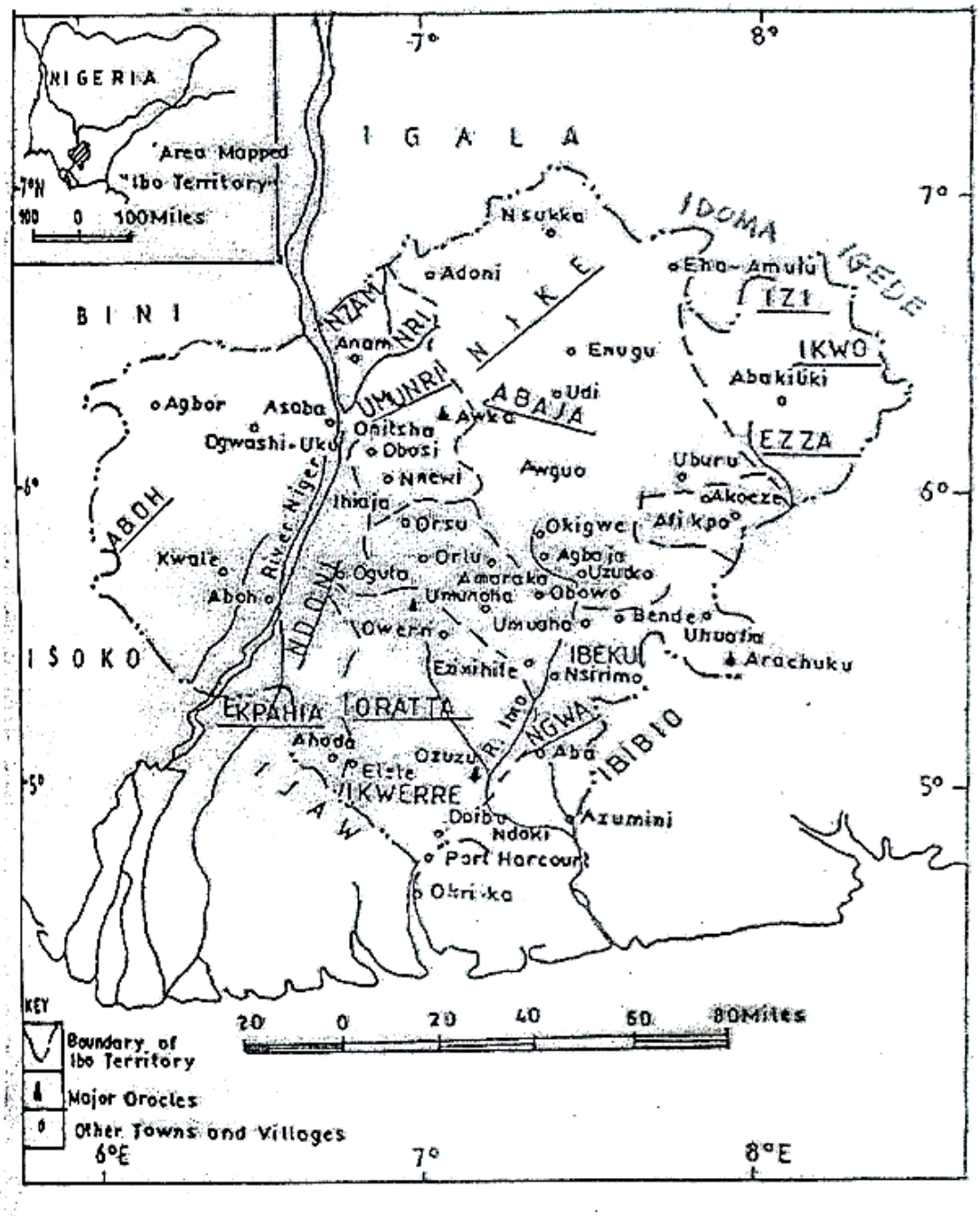
[6]A.E. Afigbo, *Ropes of sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture*, University Press Limited, Nsukka, 1981, p. 69.
[7]Ibid.
[8]Ibid.
[9]A. E. Afigbo, "Nsukka From Earliest Times to 1951", A Seminar Paper Presented to the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in, *Nsukka: The Problems of Change and Continuity*, 6th - 11th February, 1972.

beginning in the periods of the amalgamation in 1914, the first world war from that year to 1918, the inter-war years, 1919-1939, the second world war, 1939-1945, the eras of militant nationalism in Nigeria, 1944-1951, internal self-government in 1957, and finally the attainment of political independence in 1960, which has also provided the raison d'etre for the terminal year of the study.

However there were limitations which hampered the research work. Firstly and most importantly, the National Archives at Enugu is virtually empty of materials relating to the colonial period. Most of the materials were removed to Ibadan during the Nigerian Civil War and were yet to be returned. The few works available were photocopies provided by early historians of Igbo extraction. These materials cannot easily be accessed even at Ibadan. This did not help matters in accessing data for a proper analysis of the research topic.

Secondly was the issue of gender studies which is still at its embryonic stage. Hence to obtain data for a proper reconstruction of the role of women in the colonial economy was a herculean task.Finally and also important, the issue of funding was problematic. The researcher required to travel to Nsukka to conduct oral interviews, and very often, the fund for transportation was not readily available. There was also the issue of the informants not willing to divulge certain information because they were afraid that the researcher was an agent of government and was therefore sent to spy on them.

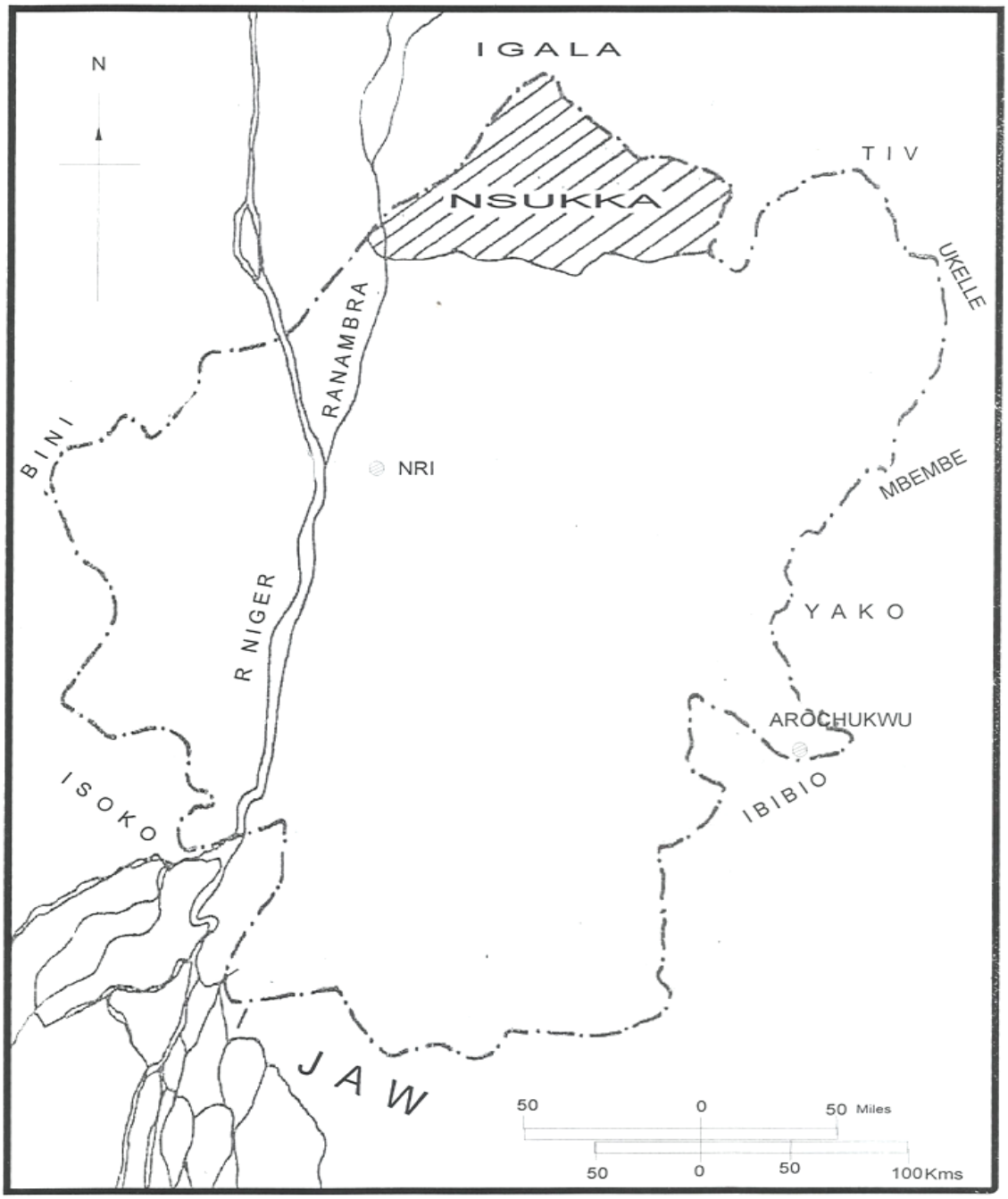
MAP OF IGBO TERRITORY c.1920



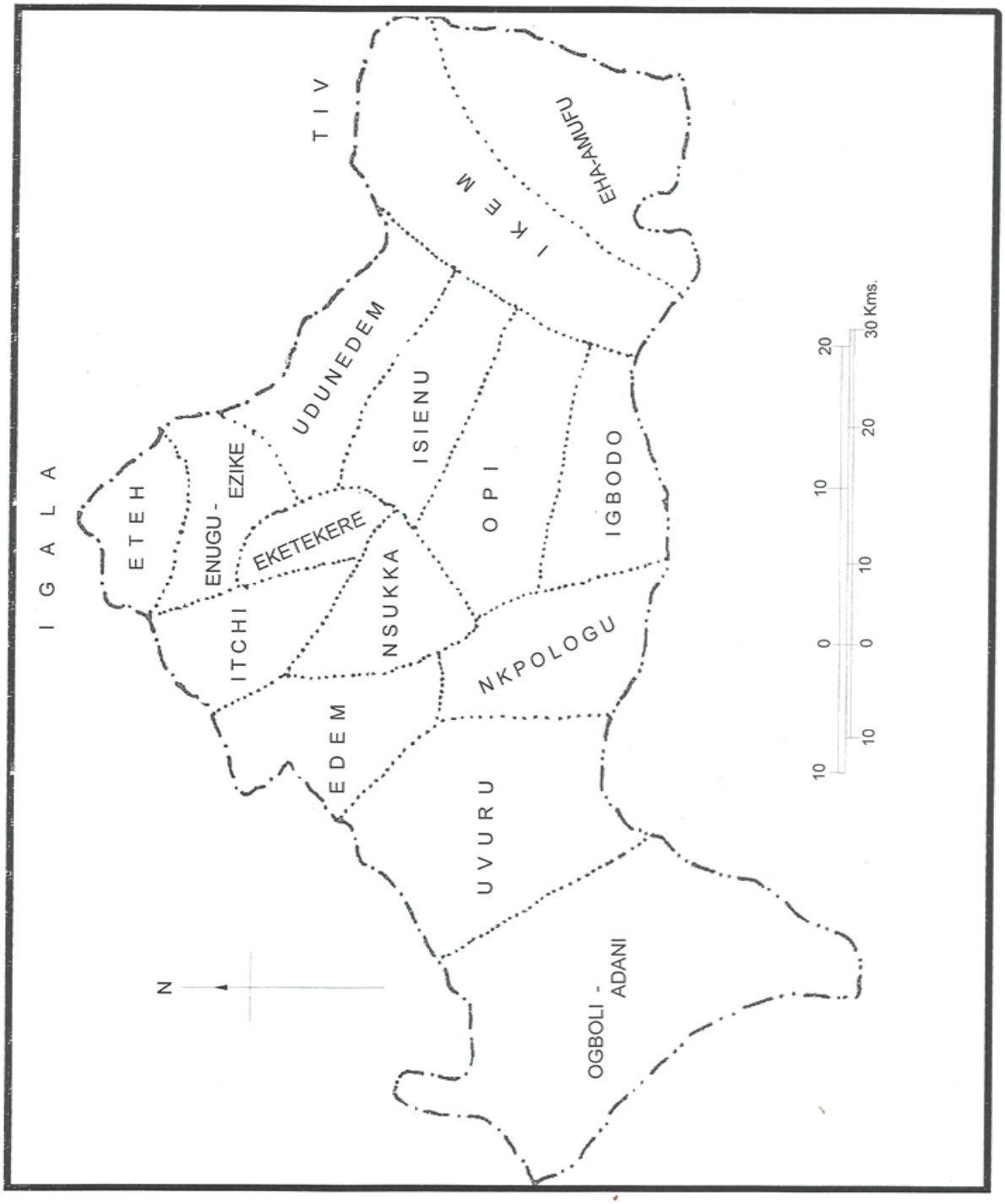
Adapted from Ilogu Edmond, Christianity and Igbo Culture: A Study in the Interaction of Christianity and Igbo Culture, Nok publishers, 1974, p. xviii

MAP OF IGBOLAND SHOWING:

I. NSUKKA AREA
II. THE HOLY CITY OF NRI
III. AROCHUKWU



Adapted from A.E. Afigbo, Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture, University Press Ltd. Nsukka, 1991.



Adapted from A.E. Afigbo, Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture, University Press Ltd. Nsukka, 1991

1.5. Relevance of the Study

Gender as a category of interrogation has become important in all fields of academic studies.[10] The study of the role of women in the colonial economy is of paramount importance because it will help in shedding light on gender roles and gender relations in this period. This study examined the response of women to these relations and how they survived in spite of all hindrances and obstacles to their effective participation in development processes. Women have been regarded as the unsung heroines of the colonial period in Nigeria. Studies in gender roles in the colonial economy will help us to understand how women with every wind to the contrary sustained the colonial economy and ensured the survival of their families.

This research is important because it revealed how Nsukka women bore the burden of their families with the integration of the household economy into the international capitalist economy. The study also sought to shed light on distortions by both African and Western Eurocentric scholars who used western models in analyzing the African gender relations, resulting in the distortion of the role of African women in development. Such distortions have arisen from scholars who hold patriarchal ideologies as well.

1.6. Methodology

A research of this nature entails the use of variety of sources which can be classified as primary, secondary and tertiary sources. The sources provided us with a body of facts and empirical data for an objective historical reconstruction. Theinterdisciplinary approach was adopted that helped us to have a more holistic

[10] Ikpe, *Feminism, Gender Studies and Historical Interpretation*, p. vii.

perspective of the role of women in the colonial economy. The study made intensive and extensive use of primary and secondary sources. Oral interviews also constituted a major source of data for this study. Adults between the ages of 60-100 years were interviewed. Archival materials constituted an important primary source material as well which was largely used in the conduct of this research.

Both published and unpublished materials that are relevant to the topic and area of study were used such as seminar papers, theses, dissertations, books, professional journals, mimeographs, magazines and other publications were also used. Archival materials from the National Archives, Enugu, and the Aka Ikenga Centre for Historical Documentation wereextensively used. Materials from the Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and all other areas that made data available for an objective reconstruction of this historical work, were also used. Internet materials were extensively sourced out taking cognizance of the fact that the internet contains a lot of unverifiable materials and sources that needs critical analysis. The method of data presentation was descriptive, analytical and statistical.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework indicates the most appropriate perspective, ideology or theory that will elucidate and explain facts, data and the historical process under study. Theories as framework of analysis helps a researcher to better explain situations and conditions, especially their dealings, relationships and roles performed by groups of people or individuals. Since this study focuses on gender, the gender perspective is

adopted which is a holistic approach that looks at gender as a socially defined concept which is dynamic. The perspective looks at gender as what is socially constructed and generally accepted as the distinguishing factors between males and females. It implies the social characteristics of maleness and femaleness which goes beyond mere differences in the biological make up of males and females. It views women as a group socially defined by societal values such as traditions, norms, cultures, and religious beliefs that defines the parameter for their participation in socio-economic and political affairs of the society. It provides us with a means of having a proper understanding of the status and position of women and men in the society and also takes into account the impact of development on men and women.

1.8. Justification of the Study

The study has brought out the response of women to these gender relations and how they survived in spite of all manipulations. Studies of gender roles during the colonial period have helped in understanding how women sustained the colonial economy and how they sustained their families through the economic hardship of the colonialperiod following the integration of the household economy into the international capitalist economy. The study also sheds light on distortions and bias by Western and Eurocentric writers who used Western models in analysing African gender relations. The study also examined the roles of women in the different sectors of the colonial economy and brought out factors that either limited or enhanced women`s abilities to participate in societal development. Thus, it serves as a major contribution to the study of the role of women and gender relations in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

1.9. Review of Relevant Literature

There exists quite a significant number of literature published and unpublished in relation to women in the colonial economy of Nigeria and Igboland in particular. Most of the works written by western feminists and Eurocentric writers were biased. They were written from European perspective using European models as basis for their analysis. Other works exist which tried to portray the African woman as oppressed, subjugated, marginalized, isolated and therefore weak and docile. These works painted a picture of women's docility and helplessness under the whims and caprices of the men. But on the contrary, the African woman has strength, ambitions, and abilities, and very motivated, industrious and capable of taking initiatives. She could organize and mobilize as we saw in the "Nigeria women's war" of 1929-1930. African women have been capable of surmounting all obstacles to achieve their own success. The colonial period like any other period subjected them to a lot of difficulties, but the women were able to adapt to changes under colonialism.

One scholarly work that contributed to this study is the work of Hannatu S. Alahira, a Ph.D thesis submitted to the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, on "The Role of Women in the Colonial Economy of Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of the Berom of Jos Plateau, 1900-1960". It is a well researched work, highly analytical with a very powerful use of the English language. The work based on the Berom in the tin mining area of Jos Plateau brought out the complementary role of women with men in the lineage household economy in the pre-colonial period. The work showed how the integration of the household economy into the international capitalist

economy created a division of labour between the genders thereby widening the gap between the women and the men. Because the work was based on women in Northern Nigeria and in tin mining area the empirical evidence will be of relevance to the area of study situated in Eastern Nigeria in the Oil palm belt. Nevertheless, the theoretical perspective of the work will greatly enrich our study.

Another work that contributed to this study is a Ph.D Thesis presented to the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria,by G.T. Emeagwali titled, "Model-Building Explanation and History: The Marxian Pre-capitalist Model and the Pre-capitalist Socio-Economic Formations in Igboland before 1900 and the Changing Nature of Dependent Relations, the Slaves, the Osu and Women".[11] The work used the Marxian theory in the analysis of social-relationships in the pre-capitalist Igbo society. However the author did not bring out the role of women in the pre-capitalist economy and how the incorporation of the economy into the international capitalist economy during the colonial period impacted on this role as that was not the real focus of the study. However, the work was of great use in our understanding of the pre-colonial Igbo economic relations.

Another work that was of great use to this study is the work edited by E. B. Ikpe titled,Women and Power in Africa in the 20th and 21st Centuries. It is a collection of essays contributing to the on-going debate on the current issues of gender relations between genders in Africa. It discussed the significance of gender as an analytical category in historical reconstruction. The book identified areas of oppression against women and concluded that present economic structures are highly inequitable as women

[11]G.T. Emeagwali**,** "Model-Building, Explanation and History: The Marxian Pre-Capitalist Model and the Pre-Capitalist Socio-Economic Formations in Igboland", Ph.DThesis, ABU Zaria. 1984

were denied access to economic resources and active participation in the economy.[12] The book defined the concepts and theoretical assumptions on which gender studies is anchored. The work dwelt extensively on issues of oppression, marginalization and subordination of women. The contributors not being their focal point of analysis however,did not bring out the contributions of women in the colonial economy which is the main thesis of our study. However, the book was of great assistance with regard to the theoretical perspectives,especially relating to gender issues.

Another book that assisted in this research work was edited by A. Sesay and A. Odebiyi, Nigeria Women in Society and Development. The book looks at various sectors in which women played their roles and revealed the constraints to gender equity and full participation of women as participants and beneficiaries of the various sectors of economic development. Though dated in the post colonial era, it was good for comparative purposes.

A Ph.D Thesis presented to the Faculty of Graduate Theological Foundation, Indiana and Fordham University, New York by R. N.Uchem was also of great assistance. The work entitled "Overcoming Women Subordination: An Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women" examines the problem of women's cultural subordination within the context of African History and United Nations global facts and statistics on women. It focused on the subtle biblical and cultural myths by which women were manipulated to accept their own oppression, to co-operate in maintaining it and to resist their liberation[13]. The work identified those cultural and religious myths which elude the attention of many advocate of women's right.The

[12]Ikpe, *Women and Power*, p vii.
[13] Uchen, N.R. *Overcoming Women's Subordination*, An Igbo African and Christian Perspective www.Dissertation.com/library/1121334a.htm

existence of such myths and all its manipulations is acknowledged, but it should be stressed that the African woman has shown strength and resistance to them. The African woman has not sat to bemoan her oppression, marginalization, subjugation, among others, but has participated actively in the sustenance of her family, oftentimes as bread winners, and also in the colonial economy. And the colonial period could be said to be the period when the political and economic importance of women was made manifest with the 1929-1930 "Nigeria women's war", otherwise known as Aba Women Riots, which was aimed at denouncing and revolting the obnoxious British colonial taxation and other colonial exploitative measures meted on the women and the society.

The book by Professor Onwuka Njoku, Economic History of Nigeria,the 19th and 20thCenturies[14]was also of immense assistance. The book is an incisive and a critical analysis of the Nigerian economy, as a coherent and spatial process. The book is thematic and chronological, and its analysis is anchored on the internal dynamics of the economy along with their external conjectures. The key sectors of agriculture, manufacturing and distribution are the pivots around which the author's discussion revolves. But like most works on history of Africa and Nigeria in particular, no place was given by the author to demonstrate the contributions of Nigerian women to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy which will have been of great application to understanding the role of women in Nsukka Division in the colonial period. Therefore, this study is an attempt to bridge the gap, to show the contributions of women in the key sectors of the colonial economy of Nsukka Division and how their contribution impactedon the colonial economy.

[14]Onwuka Njoku, *Economic History of Nigeria, the 19th and 20thCenturies,* Magnet Business enterprise, Enugu, 2001

Another book, Topics in Igbo History, edited by Onwuka Njoku and Obi Iwuagwu consist of chapters which vary in theme, time and perspective and addressed the all-important issue of Igbo food economy and shows not just the centrality of food farming in the life and culture of the people, but that agriculture provided the basis for the development of other non-agricultural pursuits. The technological, organizational and cultural basis of the people's agricultural practices was discussed with unusual insight. However, the essayists were entirely silent on the contributions of women to the development of agriculture and food production and other sectors of the Igbo economy. This research is therefore, a major contribution to fill the gender gap.

Finally, TheHistory of Igboland in the 19th and 20th Centuries by R. A. O. Ikenga, a Professor of History at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, reveals the impact of Colonial domination on Igboland in the 20th Centuries. It examined the major military expeditions and administrative reforms introduced by the British Colonial State. The book also examined Igbo economy in the 20th century: agriculture and industrial production, trade and commerce. It also discussed the currency revolution and the development of Igbo society. Apart from two pages devoted to the women war (Aba women Riot) of 1929 and 1930, the role of women in the development of Eastern Nigeria was not fully discussed. Even the consequences of the riot on the colonial economy were conspicuously absent. This studyon Nsukka women showed how Igbo women through their active participation in agriculture, trade and commerce, industry and the crafts contributed to the development of the local economy as well as the colonial economy.

1.10. Summary

The introduction to this dissertation tried to provide the basis for the reconstruction of the role of women in the colonial economy of Nsukka Division from 1912-1960. The major questions that the dissertation set out to address have been presented. The need to expand knowledge on Nigeria's colonial history as it affected gender roles formed the aims and objectives of the study. In addition, this chapter outlined the scope, methodology, and theoretical framework under which the research work has been written as well as the relevant literature and materials necessary for its consummation. The chapter also discussed the major limitations of the dissertation and the efforts and measures undertaken to ensure its reconstruction and validity.

CHAPTER TWO

A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NSUKKA DIVISION TO 1912

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the geographical and historical background of Nsukka Division before 1912. It discusses the location, climate and vegetation, relief and the history of origin of Nsukka people.

Location

Nsukka Division occupies the northernmost portion of Igboland which ethnographers have traditionally associated with Elugu (Elugwu) sub-cultural group of theNorthernIgbo[1]. To the northeast they are bordered by the Idoma and to the north and northwest by the Igala. They have two main distinguishing characteristics; firstly, unlike many other Igbo groups to the south, southeast and southwest, they have low social integration at the clan level. In the Nsukka area, the village group, generally small in territorial and population size, was not only the largest unit of political integration as in other portions of Igbo land, but it rarely, if at all, had any strong or well-articulated tradition of common descent with neighboring groups[2].

The second common characteristic, which they share with the communities of the Nri-Awka sub-cultural group of the Northern Igbo, is the strong evidence of Igala cultural impact. The extent and character of this and how it came about is one of the controversial

[1]A.E. Afigbo, *Ropes of the Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture,* University Press Limited, Nsukka, 1981, p.60
[2]Ibid.

aspects of the history of these communities[3]. On the basis of the criterion of functional co-operation, especially alliances for offensive and defensive, usually traced to the 19th century, ethnographers have grouped them into fourteen associations of villages. These are Ogboli-Adani, Itchi, Enugu-Ezike, Edem, Nsukka, Eketekere, Udunedem, Uvuru, Nkpologu, Opi, Igbodo, Isienu, Ikem and Eha-Amufu[4].

The communities of the Nsukka area came to acquire a measure of political consciousness as a single group under colonial domination, though not immediately at the onset of the colonial era. Between 1906 and 1908 they were attached precariously to the administrative sub-district of Awka to the southwest. Between 1908 and 1919, they were attached to the administrative Division of Okpoga in Idoma land. By the third decade of the 20th Century, however, they were detached from Okpoga and reconstituted into, first, the Obollo, and then the Nsukka Division. It was at Nsukka that this amorphous group of villages came to achieve a distinct identity as Nsukka in recent Nigeria history and politics.[5]

2.1. Climate and Vegetation

According to Thornthwait's 1948 classification, Nsukka had a humid (forest) mega thermal climate.[6] It experienced a seasonal drought from November to March, when soil moisture storage was at zero level. Consequently, the climate was of the tropical Savanna wet and dry type in which 89% of the annual rainfall of 1680mm for Nsukka town fall in

[3]Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand,* pp. 67-69.
[4] D. Forde and G.I Jones, *The Ibo and the Ibibio-Speaking Peoples of Southeastern Nigeri*a, London,1950,pp.33-34.
[5] Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand,* p. 71.
[6]Cited from G.E.K. Ofomata, "The Physical Background of Nsukka Area", A Seminar Paper Presented on "Nsukka, The Problems of Change and Continuity," Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1972, p.3.

the months of April to October[7]. Its average mean daily minimum temperature was about 69.8^{o}F, while its average mean monthly maximum was about 71.5^{0}F. Its average daily maximum was about 85°F. But the mean daily range varied from about 10^{0} to 19^{0}F.[8] The rains come in the form of torrential downpours, which not only aided the incidence of soil erosion but also made it possible for large amounts of water to be retained on the surface of the ground for a long period of time, often for the duration of the rain. Temperature was universally high[9]. Geographically, Nsukka belongs to the upper coal measure, which succeeds the false bedded land-stone. The land slopes to the east and west.

Relief

In terms of relief, the area belongs to the Nsukka – Okigwe cuesta. As for her drainage, the area falls into the Udi-Nsukka Plateau. The plateau has a low density of drainage and is characterized by sand-filled valleys attributed to the influence of lithology. Nsukka falls within the Eastern Sedimentary Basin and is underlain by rock, which according to Nwachukwu ranges in age from Conaician to Paleocene. Some of the sediments are of considerable economic significance because they contain reserves of coal, natural gas, glass sands and considerable prospects of liquid hydrocarbon[10]. Oformata argued that Nsukka area falls into four geomorphic divisions, each of which relates closely to one or the other of the geological formations outlined below. There is a western low land and plateau zone; an escarpment zone and eastern lowland. Every

[7]Ibid, p 3.
[8] See *Monthly Agro Meteorological Bulletin*, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nigerian Meteorological Service, Lagos, (Various Issues).
[9] G.E.K. Ofomata, "The Physical Background of Nsukka Area," 1972, pp. 3-4.
[10] S.O. Nwachukwu, "The Geology of Nsukka Area" in G.E.K. Ofomata (ed). *The Nsukka Environment*, Fourth Dimension Publishers Limited., Enugu, 1978, p. 98.

human activity is influenced by climate. One of the most directly influenced in Nsukka is agriculture. Its influence on agriculture here as elsewhere, is spatial and temporal. The timing of agricultural activities in Nsukka area was closely related to fluctuations in its climatic conditions. A farmer therefore, must be fairly certain of the time of the onset of rain, to get a good harvest. Cassava may be planted with the early rains with hardly any hazardous effect but yam and maize may not do well in the absence of rain within one month of cultivation.

The southern and southwestern parts of Nsukka area in particular, i.e., Ogboli-Adani, Nkporogu, Eha-Amufu and Ikem, start farming earlier than the northern sections such as Nsukka, Itchi, and Enugu-Ezike. There are frequent fluctuations in the moisture supply in Nsukka area. The fluctuations in moisture supply creates in-built drought which has caused many hazards to the people as can be observed in their agricultural and other practices.[11]The prevalent dry conditions within the Nsukka area prevent the regeneration of true forest vegetation, and only fire-resistant trees and shrubs can survive the annual bush burning which characterizes agricultural activities in the area[12].As a result, only patches of moist forest remain within an area that is predominantly covered by grass, giving rise to a vegetation complex described as derived guinea savanna[13].

[11] P.E.B. Inyang "Climate and Change in Nsukka", Seminar on *Nsukka: The Problems of Change and Continuity*, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1972, p.1.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

2.2. History of Origin of Nsukka People

The history of the origin of the people of Nsukka area belongs to the larger problem of the origin of the Igbo speaking peoples and how they came to occupy the portion of Southern Nigeria where they are now located. This is an issue that cannot be concluded until more evidence is provided by linguistic, archaeological findings and concrete historical research. Those who have attempted to deal with this problem of the origin of the Igbo in its relation to the Nsukka area would appear to have been misled by certain traditions of origin found in the region. Such traditions take Nri and Idah as the homelands of certain communities in the area[14]. Reviewing these traditions, Samson O. Ukpabi[15]came to the conclusion that many of these communities were founded by populations which moved into the area from Nri and Igalaland. According to him, these events took place in the 17th century in consequence of the expansion of Benin towards the Niger which he said forced many people to move eastwards.[16] The non-Igbo populations of the Nsukka area he regarded as remnants of Igala invading armies who settled in the 18th century and were later augmented by refugees fleeing south in the wake of the Fulani wars of the 19th century.[17]

However, Afigbo thinks otherwise. He argued that the peopling of Nsukka took place in remote antiquity and cannot be accounted for by the events which occurred in the 17th century[18]. He believes that the key to understanding these traditions lies in the fact that Nri and Idah were two important centres from which various aspects of culture

[14] Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand.* P. 61.
[15] S.C. Ukpabi, *Nsukka before the Establishment of British Administration,* Odu New Series, No. 6, 1971
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Afigbo, p. 31.

diffused to the communities of the Anambra basin and the northern portion of the Nsukka-Udi highlands. He concluded that these traditions merely indicated sources of cultural influence and that the so-called ancestors refers to innovators who first imbibed and introduced into these communities specific aspects of these cultures, that they are best regarded as culture heroes rather than as genealogical fathers.[19] Criticizing the view that the different clans of the Igbo came from Nri, D. M.W. Jeffreys wrote in 1930 that "in the past it had been advanced by scholars that all the Igbo were descended from this group (the Nri), but this statement confuses the origin of a culture with the origin of a people".[20] He is of the view that the Nri spread their culture to most of Igboland rather than founded all Igbo communities.

Among the Nsukka people, there is a tradition which claims descent from Igala. According to the tradition,a man named Asadu Ideke Arumona, who was an Igala prince and heir apparent, had to leave Igalaland after having been denied to occupiedthe throne. He migrated southwards with his family and retinue of followers. He was believed to have settled at Eha-Arumona from where his sons dispersed to found Nsukka, Obukpa and Okpuje. Another tradition claims that certain Igala warrior, a giant with six fingers and six toes, Onoja Oboni, having fallen out with the Attah left Idah Kingdom and migrated southwards where he conquered the Nsukka area and finally established his headquarters at Iga in Ogurugu. He was believed to have ruled the entire Nsukka area from there.

However, linguistic and archaeological evidence would appear to indicate that the Nsukka area was peopled very early in the history of the Igbo-speaking peoples by the

[19] Ibid.
[20] EP 8766 Awka Division, Intelligence Report, by M.D.W Jefferys, Para 7,

Igbo. From linguistic evidence, the Igbo language would appear to be about 6,000 years old. At least that estimate would give some idea of when it started emerging as a distinct form of speech[21]. Even the little archaeological evidence available seems to point in the direction of earlier settlement of the Nsukka area. A site at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka agricultural farm which was excavated and tested by Professor D.D Hartle of the Department of History and Archaeology, yielded evidence of human presence in the nature of potsherds. The Carbon dating indicated the date of 2555BC±130,[22]an indication that the site had been under occupation for more than 4,500 years. An analysis of the potsherds associated with the site showed that these were unfired clay vessels much like the unfired clay vessels used in the Nsukka area today.[23]Hartle also pointed out that the Nsukka area of about the third millennium BC had attained the stage of "well developed Neolithic".[24]

A Rock shelter at Ibagwa also yielded ancient pottery and stone tools. Afigbo, therefore, asserted that it is possible to postulate that they had attained a level of social and economic stability as would enable them to perpetuate their kind over the surrounding area unless brought under overwhelming pressure.[25]There is yet any evidence of this pressure either from Igala or the Nri. One can therefore conclude from the foregoing that there has been a degree of ethnographic continuity as would tempt one to suggest that there has been continuous occupation by the same cultural group ever since.

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[21] Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand,* p 62.
[22] D.D Hartle, "Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria," *Nigeria Magazine, No. 93,* June, 1967, pp. 136 – 137.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Afigbo A.E,*Ropes of Sand.*

2.3. Culture

A critical analysis of Nsukka traditions, social institutions and level of social integration would seem to reveal that the Nsukka area had been in economic and other contacts with Igalaland to the North and the Nri and Aro to the South. This multi-dimensional contact left its mark on their material culture and on their dialect which incorporated Igala words that describe familiar Igbo institutions. Whether the Nsukka borrowed any cultural institutions from the Igala, is still to be firmly established. For the purpose of this discourse, we will seek to understand Nsukka culture by taking a look at their belief system, marriage, kinship system and political institutions.

2.3.1. Religion and Belief System

Nsukka religion follows the essential principles that govern Igbo religion. Their concept of life is mirrored in their idea about God, Spirit, Ghost and Witches. Their notion of God and deities has material rather than abstract theological or metaphysical connotations[26]. This is so because their conception of ecology and other material aspects of their life determine their notions of god and deities[27]. For Nsukka people, the relationship between religion and social structure is identified by the fact that there are cults that belong to the entire community, for example the 'Ale' cult, which define the territorial area of the town. There are alsoAlecults identified with the village and also with the segments of the village. There are also the ancestral cults of the village or a

[26]I. Nzimiro, "Nsukka: Social Structure and Social Change," Seminar Paper Presented on Nsukka: The Problems of Change and Continuity, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 6th – 11th February, 1972.
[27]Ibid.

lineage. There are individual cults such as the chi cult and the Anyanwu(sun) cult and the ancestral cult of a deceased father.

Varieties of these cults indicate varieties of sacrifices and priests who officiated during the sacrifices. The most distinguished of the priests is the Attama Ale – the priest of the earth deity. He was surrounded by a magnitude of taboos such as not eating food in another person's home or food cooked by a menstruating woman. In some cases, the Ishiwu of a lineage performed these sacrifices as he was the custodian of the lineage Oracle. He was the most important because land was the life of the people as an agricultural community. He performed all rituals and sacrifices before every farming season. He was also responsible for cleansing the land if any taboo was broken. He interceded on behalf of the community for rain, good harvest and protection from the ancestors and the gods.

In the case of personal gods like chi and Anyanwu, the individuals or heads of families performed the sacrifices on behalf of the family. Sacrifices could be personal or collective. Objectives of the sacrifices were in most cases determined by customs and tradition or defined by a diviner, a dibia (medicine man) or by the Attama Ma (priest).[28]The nature of the sacrifice determined the objects, of the sacrifice. Like most African societies, Nsukka had varieties of occasions when sacrifices were offered. These included when a man was sick; an abomination was committed; barrenness; sometimes the birth of first male child; funeral ceremonies; homicides;settlement of feuds; ceremonies in honor of spirits of dead ancestors; war expedition; or when a person's property was struck by lightning; plagues or famine; big hunting enterprise; at the end of

[28] Sir Ezenmaja Chukwuma, Interview conducted on the 29th of October 2011 at his residence No. 7, Chukwuma Ezema Close, Odenigbo Nsukka.

a harvest period; when a ghost was troublesome; e.t.c.[29] Thus, sacrifices were done before or during important socio-economic and political activities of the people.

2.3.2. Marriage System

Nsukka marriage system was governed by the same principles that governed marriage in Igboland. To the Igbo, marriage was a step to adulthood and an accession to a higher status and rank in society. It was planned and organized by both Kin groups of the couples concerned. It was conducted in stages which included exchange of gifts like yams, cocoyam, items of clothing and sometimes, domestic animals and money payments as a form of contract.

Among the Nsukka people, the rule of exogamy and endogamy was applicable. Marriage was permissible among major lineages of the village, but marriage within ones lineage group was a taboo. Every lineage was believed to have a common ancestral descent. Therefore, marriage within ones lineage group was a taboo, as well as incest. Village endogamy operated within Nsukka area, but within the village, exogamous rule applied to members of a major linage descent group. Marriage was permitted only between a male and a female who could trace their descents to the fourth generation but not within one Onyishi. Where marriage occurred between persons whose genealogical lines were less than four generations, the elders of the village slaughtered a goat known as ewu otubo and offered sacrifices to the ancestors to appease the ancestors for breaking the marriage taboo.The ewu-otubo was a cleansing exercise to appease the gods and ancestors against any wrath. The age of betrothal was not definite, but the general age was about 18years. Child betrothal was permissible if the parents gave their consent

[29] F. Arinze, *Sacrifices in Igbo Religion,* Ibadan University Press, 1970.

because females were scarce, or a father wanted to reciprocate a kind gesture to an obedient son.

The first stage of marriage was the Ahuta, i.e., getting the person who will act as a witness, who may not be a member of both families. The next stage was the Oju ese. This was the period the interested family will go to the family of the girl to make enquiries to find out if she was engaged to another or if the door was open for them to enter. If the family of the girl gave consent, then formal introduction was made. After this the bride wealth was fixed and paid and the final stage, the wine carrying ceremony popularly known as Igba Nkwu, followed. It involved a lot of dinning and wining. Both families invited friends, and well-wishers to witness the occasion. The bride wealth amongst the Igbo included the bride price or dowry and gifts brought by the family of the groom to which might include, among other things, items of clothing, agricultural produce, e.t.c.

Divorce was permissible, for instance, if a woman discovered that her husband was impotent or a man found out that his wife was barren, divorce might be allowed. It could also be permitted if either of the spouses was lazy and not willing to contain the other. Divorce was also permitted if either of the couples was accused of witchcraft or infidelity, the grounds being defined by customs and traditions. The rights and duties of both couples were defined by standards of existing practices in the society. The right of a man to marry more than one wife was permissible. Widow inheritance as a form of protecting the widow and her children was an accepted norm[30]. The brother of a dead man might decide to inherit the wife and children of his deceased brother, to protect the

[30] O. Mzo, *Family and Kinship in Iboland: A Study in Acculturation Process,* Cologne, 1963.

widow and the children from molestation. This was also done to stop the widow from producing children outside the family to forestall strange blood in the family.

2.3.3. Political System

Igbo political system has become the subject of recent inquiry and evidence now indicate that the generalization that Igbo political system is atomistic, acephalous and therefore has no government is false.[31] The notion that only those with states have centralized government has been discarded because government is a process. Every society has a government.[32]

Among the Nsukka people, the lineage (umunna) was the pivot of political organization. The political unit was localized within the lineage corporate group. The Onyishi was the head of each political unit and the male adults that were in each corporate political unit were entitled to participate in the political deliberations of the lineage. They represented the minor lineage segments each with quasi-autonomy in certain matters.[33] Decision-making took place in a council of these commonly local units and the areas of deliberation cover such matters like- rituals, land allocation, inheritance, marriage, title taking and festivals. The enforcement of laws made at any level of the political system was the concern of the entire members. Two methods of law enforcement were very effective. First was the fear of the anger and punishment by ancestral spirit, if the law of the land was violated. The second was the fear of being socially ostracized which include denial of association with members of the lineage group. The activities of government

[31] Nzimiro, "Nsukka: Social Structure and Social Change" p. 7.
[32] M.G. Smith, *Government in Zauzau*, Oxford University Press, London, 1960.
[33] Ibid.

were entrusted first to the Onyishi, who were the chosen elders of the lineages and the Asogwa. Their functions were elaborately described by Meek:

> In both the quarter and the town the Asogwa are active agents of the law. They summon elders to meetings by ringing their bells. They were sent by the Onyishi to stop quarrels between kindred's or quarters, to inspect and report on land under dispute, to trace kidnapped children, and to collect fines. They were directly responsible for the control of markets on each market day.[34]

The Asogwa or Onogwu was the traditional Prime Minister of his community who enforced the law. The Onyishi were supposed to be elderly and surrounded by taboos. Many an Asogwa have usurped even the power of the village head, and became despotic. Many of them were accused of taking sides at the settlement of land disputes. They were also accused of amassing land, for themselves, their children and close associates, It has also been stated that when land was commercialized, it was the Asogwathat gave out large chunks of land to the missionaries for the building of schools, churches, dispensaries, personages and collected money from them without the knowledge of the communities. Many were known to have falsely accused widows concerning the land of their husbands. Even men who opposed them were falsely accused and were fined or even excommunicated.

2.3.4. Social organization

As in most African societies, Kinship system in Nsukka was patriarchal. The rules of descent and inheritance were patrilineal and patrilocal. The rules that governed residence was patrilineal in which the core of the lineage males related through a common

[34] Ibid.

ancestor[35] inhabited a given area with their families. The first male child was the head of the family –Ishiwu,- and holds the family land in trust. He was the chief priest of the Oracle of the Umunna (lineage). Young men were expected to settle down with their close paternal seniors. Among the Nsukka, like in all Igbo societies the woman was considered to be an outsider. She was first a daughter under her father, then a wife under her husband, a mother under her son. At the payment of the bride wealth, the productive and reproductive rights were transferred from her kins to her husband. In Nsukka, the woman had no rights over lands and even over her children because they belonged to the husband.

In Nsukka, the household was an economic unit and the capacity of a household to produce for subsistence was dependent upon the size of the family. In pre-colonial and colonial Igboland and Nsukka in particular, a man could marry as many wives as possible to increase the number of children in order to have enough hands in the farms. Because every household formed its economic unit, the people of Nsukka placed a lot of value on large families. Women and children were therefore social and economic assets to adult males[36]. The social institution of family, kinship and marriage provided services and amenities and security for individuals and the community. Caring for one another was the essence of living while mutual reciprocity, interpersonal contacts, functional independence and co-operation marked the Kin-group. Sickness, poverty, ill-fortune, accident, old age and death were not only the concerns of the individual but also those of the family and the Kin-group[37].

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[35]Adesola Akin-Alade, "Patriarchy and Women in Three Nigerian Societies: Yoruba, Fulani and Eastern Delta Ibo," in, *Women and Power in the 20th and 21st Centuries,* Fragrance Publishers, Lagos, 2009.
[36]Ibid.
[37] Ikenga R.A. Ozigbo, *A History of Igboland in the 20th Century,* Snaap Press Ltd,

There were two classes among the Igbo of Nsukka, the freeborn, the Amadi and the slave, the Ohu. While the freeborn can aspire to a higher status in the society, the slave was denied such right except within people of his class, i.e., fellow slaves. A slave was interdicted from marrying a freeborn and vice versa. However, the Ohu can acquire wealth and become influential in the community but not to the extent of taking a title.

Social groups in Nsukka included the Umunna- sons of the lineage, the Umuada- the daughter of the lineage and the Otu Inyomd-wives of the lineage. The age grade system was apparently non-existent among the Nsukka Igbo.[38]Like stated elsewhere in this work, by examining such aspects of Igbo society as the economic structure, value and kinship systems, it can be argued that Igbo society and Nsukka in particular respected and provided for social mobility for all classes irrespective of gender. Because agriculture was the mainstay of the Igbo economy, every individual irrespective of class either freeborn or slave could aspired to the Otu-Ji (yam title) which was what recognized a man that harvested up to one thousand tubers of yam in a given year and tied it to his barn. He invited the community to a feast at his home where pounded yam was served to the satisfaction of everybody. Thereafter, he was greeted in the streets with Otu-ji which had no political significance but carried the respect of one who had arrived financially.

A woman who was successful in her economic pursuit could also take the title of Lolo-Anyi, Oyima or Omerubo. The Oyima was regarded as a man and could appear in such areas reserved strictly for men, for example, where a masquerade was prepared for outing. She could also sit at the council of elders meeting but as an observer. Around the Nsukka area, the Omorubo was the most common way for a woman to enhance her status

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Enugu, 1991, p. 117.

[38] Emeagwali, "Model-Building, Explanation and History", p. 218.

in the society. Although these titles did not go with high political status, in the community, they were given preferential treatment. These titles gave chances for male and female social mobility and status enhancement.[39]Social mobility within the Igbo society was achieved and not inherited. Even titles that went with enormous political power were not inherited in Igbo land and Nsukka in particular.

2.4. Settlement Pattern

Traditionally, the Igbo people of Nsukka Division lived in dispersed settlements. Family compounds consisted of a collection of clay-walled and thatch-roofed houses often fenced with either a clay wall or fence made from palm fronds. A number of such closely clustered compounds formed the village and several villages constituted large villages or towns. Most traditional towns were not large except in the Enugu-Ezike[40] area, which had several thousands of inhabitants[41]. The family compound was divided into two sections; the outer section houses, the Obu,where the family head slept and received his visitors. Every other visitor to the family must first pass through the Obu before entering the family compound. The inner section contained the huts of the wives and their kitchens. Behind their house was the ezoro, where water was stored on round clay pots. This section of the family compound also contained the Nkwu ewu where the goats, rams and sometimes pigswere kept or tied to stakes to stop them from roaming outside the compound and destroying crops planted around the homestead. Around the homestead were cultivated farms in which such crops like pepper, vegetables, maize, water yam, bananas, plantain, cocoyam, cassava and palm trees were planted mostly by women.

[39] Oyimaja, pp. 23-27.
[40] Afigbo, p. 75.
[41]Ikenga, p.116.

Around the Nsukka area, houses were built on one side of a footpath that ran straight to the village square (Ama) which continued either to a stream or to another village. Most homesteads were made up of families who lay claim to a common ancestor and therefore could not intermarry. These homesteads or compounds whose occupants were members of various lineages, all of which did not claim common descent made up a village. The village was therefore, a geographical unit that provided considerable solidarity for offensive wars and defense of the people rightly pointed out by Afigbo. The other side of the footpath was the farmland around the homestead where such crops like cocoyam, cassava and the palm groves were planted mostly by women. Also, every member of the village went there to defecate as toilets were alien in those parts in the early period.

Because marriage was consummated mostly at inter-village level, this enhanced inter-village socio-economic and political relationships. It was therefore common to see a grandson from another village migrate to the village of his maternal uncles and settle to carry out whatever enterprise he so wished with all freedom. Often very strong young able-bodied men did migrate to other villages especially during the farming season to sell their labour, but they often returned home at the end of the season. The most common migrants were those who climbed the palm trees to cut down the palm nuts. They often settled in villages not their own, marry and have children. At the third or fourth generation, the children will begin to lay claim to the village as place of origin. The Adukwus and Audus of Amufie in Enugu–Ezike and Ihe-Owerre Nsukka are perfect examples. Their parents were road overseers during the early days of colonialism that migrated from Nupe (in today's Niger state) to Nsukka and came to be regarded as

Nsukka sons and daughters. They got married to Nsukka children and are now participating in all Nsukka social activities. They have lost contact with Nupe land.

Young women never migrated, except as a result of marriage. They were allowed to visit their matrilineal villages but expected to return after a while except where they got married. As a result of division of labour, it was common to see women travelling from village to village with their wares on their heads to sell at the market of another village. For four days which constituted the Igbo native week, women travelled from Eke, to Orie, Afor and Nkwomarketsbuying and selling wares. Each market which was situated at a particular village was known for particular products for which it had comparative advantage which attracted people from other villages to it.

2.5. Political Organisation

The Igbo of Nsukka have had long standing cultural influences from Nri, the Igala and Aro, leading to a significant transformation in the political institutions of the area over time. Just as stated elsewhere in this research, the extent and character of this influence and how it came about is one of the controversial aspects of these communities' history.[42]This led to modifications in the political institutions of the Nsukka area in such a way that Igbo political institutions bear Igala appellations. Hence, such names like Ishiwu, Attama Asogwa, Atta and Aruma. The Ishiwuwas the lineage head and had executive, legislative and spiritual powers. But as a result of interaction with the Igala of Idah this system came to be modified. This modification took place around the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when Igala kingdom was the dominant power in the

[42] A.E Afigbo, p. 60

Anambra valley and Nsukka leading to several recessions of Nri influence.[43] Afigbo has classified Nsukka title system into eight grades or stages each of which was obtained after appropriate fees had been paid by the subscriber to the council of Ozoand the prescribed ritual acts performed.[44] But Chukwuma Ezemaja has classified the titles into two, namely; the titles that were recognized throughout the village group such asIshiama or Ama as distinct from those he considered junior titles which gave status only within the village of lineage group commonly called Amaulo. Both titles were indigenous to the Igbo.

Mr. G.I Jones had also noted that the Ndiama titles were graded into lesser and greater titles. He noted that the lesser was recognized within the village or lineage, not outside it, but that the senior or greater title-holders were recognized throughout the community and in neighbouring village groups as well.[45]D.C. Ugwu in his book,This is Nsukka, noted that Ama referred to titles which gave not only social status but also political power. The Amaulo only conferred social recognition. He further stated that in certain areas, the Amaulo were called Ozo. He also pointed out that in some areas, Ama and Ozo were synonymous hence the use of Ishiama and amaulo. Sir Ezemaja classifies these Ama titles as Atta, Onogwu Aruma, Asogwa and Ozioko. Each village group disposes of the right to what nomenclature that suits them. This body of title holders serves as 'messengers' to the Ishiwu (Onyishi). They enforced laws made by the general assembly of the village group and also punished offenders. Their official insignia is the Odu Atu -

[43]A.E. Afigbo, 'Nsukka from Earliest Times to 1951: A Political History" Seminar Paper Presented on Nsukka: The Problems of Change and Continuity, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 6th – 11th February, 1972.
[44] A.E. Afigbo, pp. 60-63.
[45] G.I. Jones, Report on the Position, Status and Influence of Chiefs and Traditional Rulers in Eastern Region of Nigeria, Enugu, Para. 87.

the tail of a buffalo, usually reinforced with a metal rod or stick, impregnated with Ogwu (magical preparation) and used as a whisk which was used for driving off flies and evil spirits. Later as the buffalos became scarce, resulting from increased population and recession of forests, Odu anyinya- the tail of a horse - replaced it. It must be stated here that the Ishiama titles were taken by men who had achieved success in agriculture and trade and also in hunting. Thus, in remote eras of Nsukka history, before the commoditization of the economy which made it possible for the accumulation of wealth and capital with which people acquired titles, the lineage heads were firmly in control of political authority.

The transformation in the economy and of Nri-Awka influence brought about political transformation and the introduction of the Ama titles. The Ama titles holders represented their villages in the Ama ala council. They served as eyes and mouth of their villages. They reported proceedings and decisions to the Ishiwu (Onyishi) who then communicated same to the village Assembly. And since the village-group council had no law enforcement agencies of its own, and depended on each village agreeing to and enforcing decisions agreed upon at that level, this meant that the position of the Onyishi remained largely unimpaired[46]. This arrangement continued under British domination. In fact, by tradition, anyone who wanted to purchase an Ishiama title had to obtain the consent of his Ishiwu(Onyishi) whose duty was to present him to the group concerned as a candidate for the title.The lineage heads earned their position by age. Because the functions were largely ritual and religious, they observed certain taboo's relating to food and travel. Because of the taboos surrounding the village-lineage head, the Onyishi was not the ideal man to represent his unit in the village-group. This highly ritualized office

[46]Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand*, p. 87

was of ancient origin. The Ama title system was a later development evolved to meet the new contingencies created by the amalgamation of villages and to carry those social and political burdens which the Ishiwu (Onyishi) was ill-qualified to carry[47].

Women played no role in this arrangement except as village daughters or kindred daughters – Umuada. A very powerful organ whose influence one cannot underrate but at one's peril. Their sanction over any person in the village was sacrosanct no matter the political status of the person involved. They were often invited to village or lineage general assemblies especially when very difficult matters were to be settled. They punished erring wives and husbands. Individually, women were not as powerful as they were collectively as Umuada – kindred daughters or as Otu-Inyomdi – Association of kindred wives.

2.6. Conclusion

Over the centuries Nsukka society appeared to be fairly dynamic, thanks to the influence of external stimulus from Nri, Igala, and latter the British. While Nri hegemony probably had the greatest influence, in determining the basic character of Nsukka social and political life, Igala ascendancy probably inspired contradictory developments.As a border community, Nsukka has been greatly influenced by its non-Igbo neighbor, the Igala, and to a much lesser extent by the Idoma. In spite of this, Nsukka culture remained predominantly Igbo. This is seen in its language and its marriage customs, in its religion and world-view and its kinship system and political organization.

Afigbo argues that the Igalacisation of aspects of Nsukka culture, i.e., Igbo titles bearing Igala names was brought about not by Igala conquest and rule as some scholars have

[47] Ibid.

erroneously surmised, or by Igala raids and trade contact, but by centuries of Igbo encroachment on land formerly occupied by Igala element[48]. The imposition of British rule tended to bring about a harsh break with the past. However, beneath the often misleading superficial changes, there has been a basic continuity of institutions, principles and practices. Hence till date, issues which touch the people closely are still administered in the village and village-groups by people whose claim to leadership remains largely traditional. Till date, it is still out of place for an Nsukka man from the same village to take another Nsukka man to the police talk less of the court of justice. The highest court of Justice among the Nsukka was the village council or the Town Union. The reason behind this is to avoid infiltration of the people by those they refer to as 'ndi ugbo' outsiders or stranger elements. The Ama title holders still play their roles with the Onogwu or Asogwa as a very powerful figure especially in matters concerning land. However, even though these structures are still in place, many have started ignoring them because of their corrupt practices.

[48] A.E. Afigbo,*Ropes of Sand*, pp. 38-46.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN AND THE PRE-COLONIAL ECONOMY OF NSUKKA FROM 1500

3.1. Introduction

Only recently have women and the role of women began to feature in the histories of Nigerian peoples in general and southeastern Nigeria, in particular. The pre-colonial history of the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria has been dominated by histories of origins and migrations, wars and conquests and of the origins and evolution of cultures and traditions. And in each of these cases, women were rarely mentioned. Therefore, to reconstruct the historical role of women in the pre-colonial economy of Igboland generally and Nsukka in particular will be a herculean task. The negligence of women in the historical reconstruction of the pre-colonial history of Igboland and Nsukka in particular is the focus of this chapter, which grappled with two questions. First is what was the economic bases of pre-colonial Nsukka society and how did it affect Women? Secondly, what role, if any, did the women play in the economic development of Nsukka during the period?

3.2. Agriculture

Agriculture was the primary economic occupation of Nsukka people in pre-colonial times. Within Nsukka area, agriculture embraced three broad production types: Crop production, animal rearing and hunting.[1] Food crop production was the dominant type. The overwhelming majority of Nsukka people were engaged in agriculture. It accounted

[1]Onwuka Njoku, *Economic History of Nigeria 19th and 20th centuries*, Magnet business Enterprises, Enugu, 2001, p. 9.

for the largest share of the volume and values of goods and services produced. Afigbo asserted that in pre-colonial Igbo society, agriculture was the most important economic activity with regard to the number of people engaged in it either on full or part time basis and the prestige it carried.[2] According to him, every Igbo man was a farmer and most families produced enough to last them a year. The surplus produced was preserved for the next farming season or exchanged at the local markets to providefor the family needs. The basic unit of production was the family. The labour resources of individual families were effectively mobilized for agricultural purposes. On the whole, labour was sourced from extended family, age-grades and immigrants[3] from other villages. To this end, it was common for men to marry more than one wife or even marry early as a way to increase the size of the family in order to meet their labour requirements as discussed earlier. Men's priority largely depended on large families and this meant many wives and children[4].

In the communities that make up Nsukka Division, polygamy persisted over the years mainly for agricultural purposes. Early colonial officers were impressed by the prodigy of the Igbo in farming and surprised at their efficient application of manure made from leaves, crop remains, animal dung and night soil[5]. Agricultural practice was mainly dictated by climatic and environmental factors. Because Nsukka was located in an area with annual heavy rainfall, they farmed root and tree crops. The crops included yams, cocoyam, sweet potatoes, cassava, oil palm and various families of leafy plants, legumes

[2]A.E. Afigbo, "Economic Foundations of Pre-Colonial Igbo society," in, I.A. Akinjogbin and S.O. Osoba, (eds), *Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History,* Ile-Ife, University Press, 1980, p. 2.
[3]Obi Iwuagwu "Igbo Food Economy up to 1990," in, Onwuka Njoku and Obi Iwuagwu, (eds), *Topics in Igbo Economic History,* First Academy Publishers, Lagos, 2008, p. 12.
[4]M.N. Amuchie, "*The Economic Transformation of Mbaise Society, 1941-1989"*, B.A. History Project, University of Calabar, 1990, p.16.
[5] Onwuka Njoku, p. 67.

such as pepper, pumpkin, okras, beans and vegetables. Because of the forest-savanna interface, crops characteristic of either belt were cultivated for instance groundnuts, tomatoes, and potatoes.

Yam was considered as the king of crops among Nsukka people in particular and the Igbo generally. Other crops were regarded and indeed, treated as inferior or women's crops and their cultivation was subjected to the rhythm of yam cultivation[6]. Yam was always the first crop to be planted and the most fertile land was usually reserved for planting yam. The planting method allows for intercropping in which women were allowed to plant such crops like maize, okra, cassava, etc. in between yam mounts. The farming tools were simple and were produced locally by blacksmiths. These included machetes, diggers and hoes. Machetes were used in clearing the forest for cultivation, diggers to dig up the yams. Small blade hoes were used by women for weeding yam mounds.

As was common among communities in south-eastern Nigeria, farm labour was exchanged. Commonly referred to in Nsukka as Igba Ohu, it involved rotation of labour among farming groups which were formed according to gender based on the different roles played by men and women. At the end of the farming season, such groups were maintained as social organizations helping one another in time of need. Domestic slaves were also another important source of labour. Slaves both male and females were used in farm work alongside free born. It was as a result of this that trade in slaves became attractive during the period[7]. There is also the issue of gender roles in agriculture in the Nsukka area. This ranges from the duties they performed in the farms to the crops they cultivated.

[6] Ibid.
[7] Obi Iwuagwu, p. 14.

Morgan[8] has observed that men planted and tended crops and trees that needed most attention, such as yam, leaving the other food crop production to women. Crops that were predominantly produced by men included yams, oil palm, coconut palms, plantains, banana, oranges, African pear (Ube) kola, and Oil bean, while women's crops included cassava, maize, cocoyam, beans, groundnuts, pumpkins, melons, okra, chilies and pepper. It is evident that what has determined gender roles was primarily the labour involved in production of such crops and the distance of the farm from the homestead. The men produced yams which were planted in long distance farms while women produced cassava, cocoyam and vegetables which were planted around the homesteads. Secondly, custom made it a taboo for a woman to climb such tree crops like oil palm, orange and oil bean trees. Nsukka was a patriarchal society where women were absolved from some responsibilities which require a lot of energy.

3.2.1. Land Tenure System

Agriculture being the most dominant form of economic activity in Nsukka Division offers employment to about 94% of the working population according to the 1953 census[9]. To this end therefore, land was very important. Darryl Forde has noted that among the Igbo the village Community was composed of major land-holding groups of patrilineal Kinsmen[10]. Each group that claimed ancestral descent had collective rights to a delineated dwelling area and to a number of farming lands which has been opened up and

[8]W.B. Morgan, "Farming Practice, Settlement Pattern and Population Density in South Eastern Nigeria," in, *The Geographical Journal,cxxi, Part 3,* September, 1955, p. 320
[9]Census Office, Lagos, "Population Census of Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1953," *Bulletin No 1,* C.M.S. Niger Press, Port Harcourt, March, 1954, p. 11, Table D.
[10]D. Ford, *The Native Economies of Nigeria,* Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1945, p. 46.

cleared by earlier generations. Individuals acquire permanent usufruct in particular plots by inheritance and by taking over unclaimed areas subject to the approval of the elders of the group[11]. Forde asserted that the Kinship basis of land right did not completely circumscribe the opportunities of the individual. Land was not bought or sold, but there was a great emphasis on the correct forms of procedure and an open recognition of favour. The control of land within the framework of Kinship rights depended on continuous use or abandonment and according to individual and collective need.[12]

Among the people of Nsukka, land was held in trust by the Onyishi for the Kinsmen. He distributed the land to each family according to need. Inheritance was patrilineal where every male member of the Kinship had equal rights to land. Thus,two main principles under-governed indigenous land tenure. These were: (a) land was owned communally (b) It could not be sold or alienated permanently. The highest level of political control – usually the village or village group – was often the highest regulatory authority over land. In addition to the village, various lower levels of the socio-political hierarchy possessed their own land[13]. Women had no land rights among the Nsukka. They could not inherit any land because they were married outside the kin group. But unmarried women had rights to farm their father's land and if married she had rights to her husband's land. This greatly affected women's economic status because they did not own land.They were dependent on their fathers, brothers or husbands and most of the products such as palm oil kernel, e.t.c. Even though at this period land could not be alienated but held within the patrilineal group, it was not common for a woman to demand for land for cultivation.

[11]Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Onwuka Njoku, p. 33.

3.2.2. Farming Methods

The Igbo produce root crops such crops as yam, cocoyam and cassava. Maize, plantain, melons and pumpkin were also cultivated as subsidiary crops. As stated elsewhere in the study, yam was considered the king of crops (oke –oru) and as such it occupied a prominent place in the social and economic life of the people. This has greatly influenced the farming methods of the people. In Nsukka, the farming cycles began in January and February each year with the clearing of the bush by the men and the collection of stakes for staking yam. Actual tilling and planting began in March or early April with the first rains. The men prepare the yam mounds, plant the seed yams and tend the yam vines. Following the cultivation of yams, the women planted such crops as maize, melons, pumpkins, cocoyam which the Nsukka people referred to as 'anwunya oru' or 'inferior crop' is planted in May when there was enough rain[14]. Cassava was an all-time crop so long as there was water on the ground. These crops were not regarded as inferior because they were produced by women but because firstly, they were crops that were introduced into Igbo land at a latter period and secondly, their cultivation was not as tasking and time consuming like yam and finally because it had very low economic value at that time due to low patronage by the people and consequently their consumption.[15]

Initially, Nsukka people practiced forest fallow cultivation in which part of the forest was cleared cropped for a few years and then left fallow for some ten to fifteen years as yields declined. More frequent cultivation following increase in population, replaced this system of farming. The use of fire for clearing and hunting resulted in the replacement of the

[14]Sir Ezemaja Chukwuma, See also P.A. Oguagha, "The Igbo People," in, Bassey W. Andah and A. Ikechukwu Okpoko (eds), *Some Nigerian Peoples*, in, *West African Journal of Archaeology, Supplement to Volume 18,* 1988, p. 131.
[15]Ibid.

secondary forest by bush in which some economic trees like Oil palm, Irvingia species (Ogbono tree), oil bean and kola trees would be spared. Further increase in population led to more frequent cropping; bush fallowing gave way to grass fallowing or short fallow cultivation in which land rests for a few years sometimes not more than five years[16]. Two major zones of cultivation may be recognized: the compound land or farmland immediately surrounding the compound or the settlement area. Outside this zone lied the outer farmland. The farmland immediately surrounding the homestead is extensively cultivated, using farm–yard manure to maintain fertility. The crops planted in this zone vary considerably from garden crops like pepper, vegetables, maize, beans, bananas, plantain, cocoyam and cassava, may be found growing under dense cover of oil palm, oranges, irvingia species and oil bean trees. This zone was mostly cultivated by women, who, for reasons of distance and need, planted these crops around the compound to serve their immediate need in the kitchen.

The outer area may be referred to as the farmland. Locally, it was referred to as Agu literally meaning outer farmland. Due to more woody growth, it might be cleared and burnt by use of hoe and machete by men. The main food crops such as yam, cassava, cocoyam, rice, guinea corn and pigeon pea were grown depending on geographical location[17]. Land use on the Agu was extensive. Increased distance of the Agu from the farm house increased the cost of supplying them with farm-yard manure most of which was dumped a few hundred yards from the source. Various forms of fallowing were therefore used to maintain the fertility of the soil.

[16]L.C Uzozie, "Agricultural Land Use in Nsukka Division," Seminar Paper Presented on Nsukka: The Problems of Change and Continuity, Institute of African studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 6th-11th February, 1972.
[17]Ibid.

The pattern just described was in a continuous process of change. Increase in population and the need to produce more food led to modifications and an invasion of the outer farmland–Agu–by settlements. This led people settle nearer the Agu, or in the Agu leading to such settlements as Egu – Echara in Nkpunano Nsukka, Eha-Ndiagu, Opi-Agu, Oboll-Eke, e.t.c., founded by farmers from Nsukka Eha-Alumona, Opi and Obollo-Afor, resulting to increased participation of women in the farms. This led to frequent cultivation of crops like cocoyam, cassava, plantains, oranges, irvingia species, oil palm and oil bean trees on the outer farmlands.

Nsukka has been divided into five (5) agricultural zones on the basis of the major crop produced:

1. Rice/Maize/yams/cassava with some Coconut and Oil palm –
2. Yams/maize/cassava/pigeon pea with some oil palm
3. Cassava/Cocoyam/Maize/ pigeon pea with dense cover of oil palm and irvengia species
4. Cassava/pigeon pea with some oil palm and parkia species.
5. Yams/Maize/Cassava/pigeon pea/oil palm[18].

The first group was produced in communities like Adani, Omaku, Omo, Ogurugu, Ifite-Ogwari, Igga, Umumbo and Omasi. In the second group were such communities as Okpuje, Opanda and Ukpabi - Nimbo. In the third group were Enugu-Ezike and the Eketekere communities of the present day Igbo-Eze South L.G.A. In the fourth group were communities within the Isi-Uzo area and finally, in the fifth group falls such communities as Nsukka, Eha-Alumona, Opi, Obukpa etc. Throughout Nsukka, the oil

[18]J.C. Weaver, "Crop Combination Regions in the Middle West," *Geographical Review, Vol. 44,* April 1944, pp.115-200

palm and irvengia species dominate the tree crop economy. Other tree crops that were found in abundance include plantain, banana, kola- nut, Pigeon pea, and oil bean trees. In most areas like Imilike and Obollo-Afor, kolanuts and oil palm, were produced on the family compound. Around Aku, Lejja and Nkpologu, banana and plantain dominated.[19] In most cases, in Igboland and Nsukka in particular these tree crops were planted by women. Where they grow wild, it was the women that tended them tomaturity. Oftentimes, the men cut down the wild palms on grounds that they prevented sunshine for the crops that were grown. This was always an area of friction and misunderstanding between men and women. The women saw the tree crops as economic trees, and also it served them in the homes and they did everything within their power to protect them.[20] Young maidens were known to have planted tree crops in their father's land which they harvested and sold until they were given out in marriage and then the trees were turned over to the mother. Women also inherited some palm trees, Irvingia species, oil bean trees, e.t.c., from their mother in-laws. Theywere required by tradition to give about twenty percent of her production to the mother-in-law while the rest were kept for them.[21]

3.3. Crops and Farming Season

Just as stated earlier, Nsukka, because of its vantage geographical location and long term human settlement, has derived savanna vegetation. As such, it was common to see savanna-like and tropical rain forest crops growing side by side. Within Nsukka

[19] Uzozie, L.C. p. 8.
[20] Oyimaja Obayi.
[21] Lady Ezema Uchenna C., 75 years, interview at her residence at No. 7, Sir Ezema Close, Odenigbo, Nsukka, 2011.

Division paddy rice was grown at Adani, Umulokpa, Umumbo, Ogurugu and the Ifite Ogwuari area. Paddy rice was also grown at Eha-Amufu. Yam, like it has already been stated was the king of crops and as such was widely grown in Isi-Uzo, Uzo-uwani and Okpuje because of soil fertility. Cassava also was also widely grown. Cocoyam, other species of yam like the Discorea Alata (Ji abala) or water yam, Triofiliate yam, (Ji Una) or Discorea dumentorum were commonly found[22].

Other food crops such as maize (Oka)zea mays, beans (Agwa)vigna Unguiculata, guinea corn, (Ikapkoro) sorghum species, were also grown. Vegetables such as fluted pumpkin (ugu) telfairia ocidentalis; camwood (Oha), Pterocarpus spyanxii, bitter leaf (Olugbu), venonia amygdalina; green, Peper guineensis; African pepper (Uda), xylopia aethicpicum; vegetable jute (Ahihari) cochoru olitorius; fever plant (nchuanwa), ocinum viridis; Melon (egwusi), cucunus melo; african mango (Ogbono) Irvengia gabonensis; utazi, gomphrena spp; okazi, gnetum africana, water leaf (mgbolodi), talinum rangulare and ogiri-ishi, ricinus communis. There was also Okra which was commonly seen in every farmland and African egg-plant (pentclethra macrophylla (anara ofe), solanium melongena[23]. These vegetables were planted by women mostly. There was also the pepper (ose), caspicum annum, which until recently was farmed by women.

The oil palm (nkwu), elaesis guineensis; oil bean (ukapka or ugba); Raffia palm were also commonly found[24]. They all grew wild but with the exception of the raffia palm, they were tended by women, harvested by the men and processed by the women. Among the fruits that were commonly planted in the Nsukka area included, pawpaw (okwuru bekee) carica papaya; orange (orome) citrus sinensis; coconut (aki bekee) cocos

[22]O. Iwagwu, P. 27.
[23]Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

nucifera; kolanut (oji igbo)cola acuminata; native pear (ube oji) daryodes edulis; plantain (ji-oko) musaparadisiacal; banana (ogede) musa sapientum; (umimi), dennetia tripetal; conophor (ukpa) tetracarpedium conophorum; bitter kola (aki ilu) gacinia kola; star apple (udara) chrysophylum albidum; groundnut (opapa) arachis hypogea;and african breadfruit (ukwa) tresculia aricana.[25] Uzozie had observed that the most interesting feature of Igbo agriculture was that crops grown for food consumption claimed over 76% by value of the total crop production[26].

Food crops particularly yam, cocoyam, cassava, maize and rice dominated and constituted a major aspect of the people's economic life[27]. In pre-colonial Igbo societies, and Nsukka in particular men dominated the planting of root crops while women planted the vegetable and the tree crops. Women were also responsible for weeding the farm and selling the excess in the village market. They were also responsible for the processing of the oil palm and the extraction of oil and kernel. Because agriculture was labour intensive, tradition emphasized the virtue of hard-work while deprecating indolence. The young and the old, male and female were all engrossed in farm-work, thus the western concept of a full-time housewife devoted only to house care was largely unknown.

Farming seasons in Igboland did not differ from one area to another. The period from December to April was devoted to bush clearing and farm preparation. It was also a period of harvesting the crops planted the previous season. Agriculturally, the area was tied to the Cross River Basin. The time of planting, system of cultivation and crop mixture and the environmental setting were different. On the heavy soils of Ikem, Neke,

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[25] Ibid.
[26] L.C. Uzozie, "The Relative Importance of Yam and Cassava in the Staple Food Economies of Eastern Nigeria," M.A. Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1966, p. 31.
[27] Obi Iwuagwu, p. 38.

Obollo-Eke and Eha-Amufu, the making of mounds and planting start as early as November. Elsewhere in Nsukka, planting was delayed until the arrival of the rains[28] in March or April. Farm work in Igboland started as early as the second crow of the cock. Women woke up to heat the food that will be eaten at the first break of farm work. The journey to the farm takes about an hour. While the men tilled the soil, women cleared the land for them and planted such crops like maize, okra, fluted pumpkin, melon, e.t.c. Women also prepared the mid-day food (lunch) in the farm. At the end of the day's farm work, while the men rested under the shade of a tree, women gathered firewood which they used to cook dinner when they got home. While the day's work had finished for the men, it was just beginning for the women. On getting home, if there was no water, women had to go to the stream to fetch water both for cooking and bathing. At home finally, she cooked food, served it and cleared up the compound. Then she would bathe the children before bathing herself and then preparing for bed.

3.4. Animal Husbandry

In pre-colonial Igboland and Nsukka Division in particular, crop production so dominated the agricultural landscape that animals seldom came into the picture. Around the Igbodo area, Lejja, Ede and Obimo some men and women owned cows,[29] the tropical short horned humpless cow. Cattle rearing were rare. Families kept between 10-15 birds (cocks and chickens) which were often consumed on ceremonial days or killed for sacrifices. Goats were also kept, especially, the West African dwarf. They were often tied to the stake to stop them from destroying crops in the farmlands around the homesteads

[28] L.C. Uzozie, pp. 39-42.
[29] D.C. Ugwu, *This is Nsukka,* Nigerian National Press limited, Lagos, 1959, p. 11.

and also for fear of thieves. In those remote periods, animals and men shared the same hut. The building of separate huts for livestock was alien. Poultry traditionally slept under revised platforms on which the man or woman slept at night. Women could also keep goats or sheep. Often a brother or sister gave a goat to either brother or sister for keeping. The offspring's were shared among both equally. In this way, many had enlarged the livestock in their fold. An uncle or aunty often gave to his or her nephew or niece a goat or sheep. The proceeds were shared between the mother of the child and whoever gave it. This system of sharing among the Igbos had helped in maintaining mutual relationship between relatives[30]. Goats, sheep and even pigs were kept inside the same hut at night for fear of thieves. These animals had little or no economic value[31].

The main utility of the small livestock was the manure (epe) they produced for intensive compound- type farming both in the farm around the homestead and the outer farmlands.[32] The essence of these domestic animals lay mainly in the fact that they were used to complement the food requirements of the people and boost the status of man in the society. In pre-colonial Nsukka society, wealth was measured by the number of goats, sheep, pigs, fowls, wives, and children as well as the length of a man's yam barn[33]. The larger animals like the cows were rare due to the prevalence of tsetse- flies and the spread of trypanosomiasis.[34] But a few wealthy men kept it to be slaughtered on special occasions, and it was accorded more value by the people than the more common cattle found merely in Abakiliki, Okigwe, Ngwa and Owerri areas.[35]Around the area, in those

[30] Oyimaja, pp. 30-42.
[31]Ibid, p. 38.
[32] Obi Iwuagwu, *Topics in Igbo History*, p. 56.
[33]E. Isichei, *Igbo Worlds: An Anthology of Oral Histories and Historical Descriptions,* Macmillan, London, 1977, p. 84.
[34]B. Floyd, *Eastern Nigeria: A geographical Review,* Macmillan, London, 1969, p. 171.
[35]Obi Iwuagwu, pp. 57-60.

remote periods, men and women kept and tended the animals together. The goat and sheep especially were kept by men as they had to go to the bush to cut fodder while the women kept and tended the chickens.

3.5. Hunting

Although the agricultural economy of Igboland in the pre-colonial time was highly developed and the society firmly established, the primordial pursuits of hunting, gathering and fishing continued to play significant roles. These were part and parcel of the agricultural economy. Households supplemented their farm products with wild foods.[36]Various genres of animals – big and small, dangerous and harmless – abounded and were hunted in both the forest and the Savanna belts. Among the animals hunted in those remote days included leopards, tigers, bush hogs, buffalos and elephants, birds, rodents and snakes such as pythons.[37] Hunting was a part-time occupation. It was pursued more intensively during the dry seasons. During this period, farm work was very much reduced. Forest cover which reduced the limited sources of water exposed animals to the hunters. Around the Nsukka area, any hunter who killed such animal like the leopard, tiger, hyenas, elephants and buffalos was greeted with the appropriate praise-names such as Lion killer - Ogbu agu. Women never took part in hunting as it was considered a dangerous enterprise. However, when the men came back with their game, the women processed and preserved them by roasting them. It was also the women that had the responsibility of marketing the meat but returned the proceeds to the men.

[36] Onwuka Njoku, p. 29.
[37]Ibid.

The technique used for hunting differed in areas. In some areas like Uzo-Uwani, deep four squared holes were dug and covered with dry leaves. The hunting group will then position themselves a distance around the hole often with their hunting dogs. They stayed very close to each other to prevent the animal from escaping. They beat together metal instruments to scare the wild animal toward the deep hole. In such way while the animal ran around in confusion it fell into the hole. If a big animal was caught like a buffalo, lion or elephant, a feast was often made in the village as the meat goes round every family in the village. Some adopt the trap system. Traps also differed. In Uzo-Uwani area like in Isi-Uzo, the Igbudu trap system was adopted. A shelter was built on four post wooden stand that was buried on a shallow hole. A boulder is kept on top of the cross-bar. A bait object was kept underneath with a rope attached to the trap. Any animal that went for the object will bring the boulder falling down on it. When the hunter arrived the following day, the animal was killed if it was not yet dead. In some areas, the agugba trap was used. It was a metal trap with big strong fang-like teeth used for such animals like bush hogs, antelopes, etc. Most of the hunting weapons employed by hunters were rudimentary and the techniques indigenous. Machetes, spears, bows and arrows were the common weapons used. A few used guns, especially the flint lock or percussion cap guns.[38] However, as Basden observed, the flint – lock gun was often a source of danger to the owner, as it might cause some severe and ghastly accidents, as a result of bullets bursting.[39]

Among the different communities that made up Nsukka, hunting was strictly a male dominated activity. This was because of the risk and danger associated with it. However,

[38] Ibid.
[39]Ibid.

on their return from hunting, men handed off the game to the women who smoked, preserved and sold the meat in the village market where necessary. Oyimaja believes that hunting was a high risk and dangerous activity that no sane man worth his salt can allow his wife to partake in it. She stressed that from childhood, women were prepared for domestic roles in the house, and to weed and tend vegetables and not to participate in such dangerous and strenuous activity like hunting. She said that hunting was strictly a male affair. Ezemaja Chukwuma affirms that women at that period were not exposed to such hunting implements like bows and arrows and the gun and therefore could not use them. He said that the traps were very hard and tricky to set and manipulate. He says that some of the animals hunted were wild like the bush dog, and requires a lot of skill and strength to handle even after it has been caught by the trap.

3.6. Trade

In Igboland like in all African societies, exchange of goods was a common phenomenon. Trade was dominated by women as most of the wares traded were for domestic use. Though agriculture was the most important economic activity with regard to the number of people engaged in it, there existed also among the people an exchange economy as the surplus from the farms had to be sold to acquire what could not be produced. The agricultural sector generated surpluses and these surpluses had to be disposed of. This explains why trade and commerce formed a part of Nsukka indigenous economy. Another reason for this exchange was that no Igbo or Nsukka community was self-sufficient in its internal economy. Farmers, toolmakers and other professionals had to

enter into symbiotic relationships with one another to meet their need even though the professions were mostly done on part time basis except farming.[40]

Eze Stresses that the principle of market exchange within the Nsukka area in pre-colonial times implies the existence of highly developed system of trade, linking a number of regional economic communities and involving inter-regional currency exchange. Though in southern Nigeria, this system was not recent in origin, but it appears to have been developed over centuries of slow but partially impeded growth.[41] Eze stresses that the trading centre (market) was a node in the network of communications and, like the Greek agora, was more than a commercial center because it was the focus of the social, cultural, political and religious life of the community[42]. He maintains that the indigenous towns and villages were the foci of trade and, except for export trade, this activity was carried out in the market place of each center. He identified three main categories of market trading in Nsukka Division, namely; local trade, regional or centralized trade and inter-regional trade.[43]

Local trade was carried out in every town or village especially within the village square. It was either a daily morning or evening market, or the four day periodic market. The evening markets were common among the Igbodo community of Igbo-Etiti especially at Ukehe.[44] Many of the villages with a local four – day market also possessed one or more outlying neighbourhood daily markets where according to Eze, quantities of

[40]M. Paul, "Trade and Commerce in Pre-Colonial Mbaise Society," in, N. Onwuka, and O. Iwuagwu, (eds), *Topics in Igbo Economic History,* First Academy Publishers, Lagos, 2008, p. 126.
[41]J.O.N. Eze and C. Okonjo, "Trade and Transport in Nsukka Division," being a Seminar Paper Presented on Nsukka: The Problem of Change and Continuity, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 6th – 11th February, 1972, p. 3.
[42]Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44]A.C. Ezema.

produce bought by women in the four-day markets were retailed to "thriftless or improvident women who failed to supply themselves with the week's provision."[45]As stated above, these neighbourhood markets were always attended by women. Very little quantities of goods exchanged hands, and they were mainly perishable goods like meat and vegetables, spices, salt, e.t.c. These markets, unlike the weekly markets, were never attended by strangers. Men rarely go to the market to buy or sell, as most of the items on sale were food condiments. Whenever they did, it was to drink palm wine and discuss the latest issues in town.

There were markets which served the regional and inter-regional trade networks. Some of the goods involved in these trade networks were often specialized because the nature of markets they created attracted traders from many Igbo and non-Igbo communities around Nsukka. This was particularly so because in addition to local agricultural and craft products, services of priests and medical specialists were offered. The complex nature of exchange in these markets attracted immigrants from Aro, Awka, Nri and Igalaland. These immigrants enhanced exchange and the relevance of the markets.[46]The location of these markets was of advantage. Though they were held every four days, they were attended by many professional traders sometimes within a radius of thirty miles and over. The traders especially women traveled in groups early in the morning and returned home late in the evening if the distance of the markets from them was not far. In the case where the distance was much, they often had around them young men as guides to protect them

[45]J. N. Eze, p. 4.
[46]Ibid.

from slave raiders and highway robbers.[47] Examples of such markets were to be found at Orba, Obollo-Afor, Ibagwa Nkwo, Eha-Amufu, Nimbo, Opanda and Aku.

Another category of long distant trade was the trade conducted over greater distances between Nsukka and other communities within or outside Igboland. Hence, it was trade between culturally different peoples and also between ecologically different regions such as the Niger Delta area and the states north of Igboland such as the Igalaland. The goods of exchange were the specialized food stuffs of the different categories such ascotton wool, yam, maize and rice;the specialized product from local industry such asiron-ore, metal wares, cotton cloth, pottery and baskets. Luxury products for religious and cultural celebrations like horses, slaves and copper wares were also traded, imported from the north through Igalaland. The traders were stimulated by differentials in the distribution of raw materials and specialized skills. The Igbo-Ukwu Bronzes were made from Iron-Ore from the Nsukka plateau and lead from Abakiliki. Available evidence suggests that horse trading at Ibagwa and Oboll-Afor were at least five centuries old.[48] Nkwo Ibagwa and Orie Orba were the principal Inter-regional markets in the division till date.

3.7. Indigenous Industries

The centrality of agriculture to the pre-colonial economy of Igboland and Nsukka Division in particular, has been indicated. It has also been made clear that a range of non-agricultural activities were pursued too. These included pottery, cloth weaving, basketweaving, mat making, e.t.c. It is important to emphasize the linkage between the agricultural and the non-agricultural sectors as the development of one impacted on the other. The economy was self-reliant and the various sectors were integrated in a

[47]J.N. Eze, p. 4.
[48]J.N. Eze, p. 5.

symbiotic way based on gender division of labour.[49] Agriculture provided the raw materials such as cotton for industrial production in the textile industry. The industrial sector on the other hand provided agricultural implements such as iron materials for farming, baskets and sacks for harvesting, transportation and storage, and other wares such as pots for domestic use, for example, cooking and storage.

3.7.1. Pottery making

This was one of the most ancient crafts of humankind, pre-dating the Neolithic Revolution.[50]It is too fragile to travel with, yet too permanent to disappear. Archaeological evidence in Nsukka has revealed that pottery tradition in the area dates back several millennia[51]. Given its economic relevance, pottery was of great value to the cottage industry and important for domestic use. Thus, the industry was entirely dominated by the women. Men's labour was sometimes employed when there was need to dig out clay for pot making. It was widely produced, preserved and diffused by women in pre-colonial Nsukka.

In pre-colonial Nsukka, pottery making was popular around Nrobo, Eha- Ndiagu, Opi and Ikem. These areas had large clay deposits. But Nrobo achieved the widest distribution range and recognition beyond the immediate production area. The circulation was only limited by the difficulties of transportation.[52] Nsukka potters exhibited nimbleness of the fingers, artistic verve and creative imagination. The tools and techniques of production were simple. Traditional pottery involved processes most of

[49]Onwuka Njoku, pp. 71-74.
[50]Ibid.
[51]D.D Hartle, "Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria," in, Nigerian Magazine 99, 1967, pp. 136-137.
[52]Ekette Ezea, 78years, Interview Conducted at her residence, Ikeagwu Isakpu, Nsukka L.G.A on the 26th of November 2011.

which were delicate and demanded enormous patience and manual dexterity, while others were grueling and even dangerous. Because these localities were lateritic, the job was exacting, and local diggers were employed to dig up the clay. In low lying areas like Ikem and Opi, clay was won from shallow pits but in hilly areas like in Nrobo, the job involved tunneling. In such cases, the prospectors had to crawl into the tunnel in all fours. Collapse of the tunnel could be fatal to the prospector.[53] A lot of taboos and rituals were hedged around the production of pottery. For example, a menstruating woman was not permitted to go into a clay pit to win the raw material nor was she allowed to mould a ware[54]. While firing earthen wares, a potter needed to be circumspect in answering greetings and in greeting people for fear of attracting evil forces which could cause the firing to fail[55]. Around Nrobo, the chief raw material, clay, was treated as a deity with a woman as the priestess.

When clay had been won, it was dried then pounded, slated, tempered and kneaded. Grog was prepared from roasted clay or broken pots. It was then sieved and then mixed with the fresh clay. Moulding was done by coiling and building, the pot being built up from rough sausages of clay, pulled upward and thinned by beating and scrapping, then decorated, polished and put away to get thoroughly dry[56]. After this, it was fired. This was done collectively by a group of potters each of whom brought their wares for the purpose. Firing took place in an open space inside a circle of stones or earth blocks. Then the raw pots were placed, neck downwards on each other, smaller pieces going inside larger ones or in between. The entire clamp was then covered with thick

[53] Onwuka, *Economic History of Nigeria*, pp. 72-77.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

layers of grass and dry palm fronds which served as fuel. It was then set on fire. It was explained that because the firing was done in the open, the temperature attained were relatively low. The next day, after the pots were completely cooled, it was pulled out and the women sorted out their wares. The pots from Nrobo weresold as far away as Idah in Igalaland by head potterage first to Ibagwa Nkwo, from where traders from Idah bought and transported the wares to Idah. The large mouthed types were used for storing water and soaking cassava tubers. Some were used for cooking,serving dishes and ritual functions. Musical pots ‘udu’ were used widely by various communities for entertainment.

Both at Nrobo, Opi and Ikem, the industry occupied an important place in the traditional economy. Even till date at Nrobo, pottery is said to be the mainstay of the people’s economy. Here, almost every woman practiced the craft. It was and still is a major source of finance and wealth to the women. How much they made could not be ascertained as the proceeds were used to purchase the immediate need of the family. At Nrobo, before a girl attains the age of puberty, the intricacies of the craft would have been inculcated into her by experts especially her mother or elder sisters.

3.7.2. Basket Making

In pre-colonial Igboland and Nsukka in particular basket making was one of the most widespread crafts and like pottery it was an ancient craft. Around Nsukka though basket making was dominated by men and young boys, women also participated in its production. Made from by-products of palm, it was a general purpose product that was used in the house, farm and market places. It was a utility product for women who used it as container for carrying goods to the market. It was also used as farm equipment for the purpose of carrying seedlings and harvested crops. It was also used as fishing equipment around Isi-Uzo area especially at Eha-Amufu and around Uzo-Uwani area at the Adada River. Women also used it to carry harvested palm nuts from the groves to the house. It was also used in rituals but unlike the pottery, there were no taboos attached to its production.

3.7.3. Textile production

Before the discovery of cotton, other products such as raffia and the bark of trees were used for cloth production. However, cotton technology soon revolutionized the weaving industry and it spread. Afigbo made reference to Equiano's account of his people's mode of dressing in the 18th century pre-colonial Africa. According to Equiano "the dresses of both sexes were the same. It generally consisted of a long piece of Calico, or muslin, wrapped loosely round the body. This was usually dyed blue, which was the favourite colour"[57]. In his analysis, Afigbo pointed out that there were villages in the Nsukka area which traditionally manufactured cloth dyed blue which they exported to Uburu, in Ohaozara, in exchange for salt. The cloth was popular in the rest of

[57] See O. Equiano, "Interesting Narratives," quoted in, A.E Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand,* University Press Limited, Owerri, 1981, p. 54.

Igbolandand known as Akwa Uburu (Uburu cloth).[58]Till date, the local textile industry still thrives at Nsukka but only practiced by aged women. Among the Igbos, textile manufacture was an important and widely practiced craft. It was largely practiced by women. The raw material was locally obtained from locally grown cotton and a little imported from Northern neighbours such as the Igala and the Idoma. Afigbo noted that the Nsukka Igbo as well as the southern Igbo town of Akwete were notable centers of textile production.[59] At Ibagwa-Ani and Edem cloth produced by women were intricately woven and designed, with attractive indigo colours[60].

Raw cotton was passed through a series of processes before it was turned into cloth. These include ginning, carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving which were done by women. Each of these stages, especially spinning and weaving called for considerable skill. The antiquity and beginning of the industry have been lost to oral memory. The production of cotton cloth was not just an economic pursuit for Nsukka women; it was also a way of life. Young girls were taught by elderly women how to spin cotton into a yarn. By the time a girl was ready for marriage, she would have mastered all the skills in the industry by sitting beside her mother and watching her on the loom and by doing some simple routine jobs for her[61]. The cloth industry was a major source of wealth for Nsukka women.

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[58]Ibid.

[59]A.E. Afigbo, "Trade and Trade Routes in 19th Century Nsukka", in, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. 7, 11973,* pp. 82 -83.

[60]O. Njoku, "Women in Traditional Igbo Economy," in, E.J. Otagburuagu and A.E. Afigbo (eds), *New Brides More Hopes,* Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, 2008, p. 115.

[61] Ibid.

3.7.4. Mat Making

Certain Igbo Communities such as Ihube, Okigwe, Uturu, Ohuhu and Afikpo were blessed with a profession of the pandamus palm (Ute).[62] In these communities, women practiced various types of Mat weaving. Nsukka area however lacked the type of palm for mat making and therefore did not have the necessary skills required for the production of Mats. However, Uburu people traded these products with clothes woven by Nsukka women at the Nkwo market at Ibagwa. Mats were used for sleeping,ceiling, and burials. Mat making was an important economic activity like farming that was practiced as a means of livelihood, rather than as a hobby by women[63]. It was an important article of trade between the mat making communities of Igboland with Nsukka which was notable for pot production.

3.8. Conclusion

The economy of pre-colonial Igbo society in general and Nsukka in particular, rested on three legs – agriculture, trade and industry. Agriculture dominated economic activities, with trade and industry as subsidiaries. The products of agriculture and industry were distributed and marketed through trade. The industrial sector also supplied the technological base of the society as well as the items necessary for use in the society.[64] Evidence has shown that trade and industry grew in importance in the pre-colonial period. There was no strict division of labour as both sexes complimented the other even though some economic activities were dominated by one of the genders like in

[62] Ibid.
[63]Ibid.
[64]C.O. Udagha, "A Study of 19th Century Trade and Trade Routes in Okigwe Area," M.A. Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1982, p. 33.

pottery and textile making where women were dominant. The involvement of women in the domestic economy, agriculture, local industries and trade meant that they carried heavy work load in the pre-colonial period compared to men.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND NATURE OF THECOLONIAL ECONOMY IN NSUKKA DIVISION, 1912-1960

4.1. Introduction

Colonialism was parasitic and exploitative. It was the destruction of a people, their culture, language and tradition. It involved the expropriation of the natural resources of the weak by the strong. It was economic domination. No matter how much European writers have tried to paint colonialism with a human face, it still was a crime against humanity. It was also a stage in the development of capitalism. Some scholars in an attempt to explain colonialism emphasized national pride and diplomatic rivalries between European powers, and some, strategic and even humanitarian or civilizing reasons.

The economic explanation was first proffered by J.A. Hobson and V.I. Lenin, but on a wrong premise.[1] Hobson sees it as excess capital which could not find profitable investment at home that drove the European powers to acquire new territories for political control where they could commit excess capital with a guarantee of security and supper profit. On the other hand Lenin perceives of it as western imperialism, inherently exploitative which leads to the proletarianization of labour.[2]

But Njoku flawed these two theses, he argued that during the time in question, the imperial powers of Europe invested more in the more industrialized world, than in theless

[1]O. Njoku, *Economic History of Nigeria, 19th& 20th Centuries*, Magnet Business Enterprises, Enugu, 2001, p. 134.
[2]See W. Ofonagoro, "Trade and Imperialism," J. Ihonwbere and T. Falola, "Introduction: Colonialism and Exploitation," in, T. Falola (ed), *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development*, London and New Jersey, 1987, pp. 1-31.

technologically and industrially developed countries or colonies. He also argued that most of the European firms in Africa were lacking in sufficient financial base and finally that Lenin's prediction that capitalism would be toppled "by its own weight" appears forlorn.[3] He further argued that the economic forces that motivated European imperial powers to colonize Africa included among others, the source of cheap raw agricultural and mineral resources for European industries and an assured and protected market for European manufacturers.[4] Hence the reason for the establishment of a colonial economy in Nsukka does not in any way differ from other regions that make up South Eastern Nigeria in particular and Nigeria generally.

4.2. The Conquest and Colonization of South Eastern Nigeria.

The conquest of Igboland was in the main, accomplished through warfare. The treaties of "protection" through which British consular agents sought to overthrow the authority and independence of some Igbo communities were largely farcical[5] when the hypocrisy of the theory of protection was exposed and the Igbo have refused to be protected in their own land by aliens. The British adopted the paradoxical policy of according protection by force of arms. The colonial interest of the British imperialists was paramount and they were determined to colonize the area. The easiest and most economical way of doing so was through war and they decided on war to subdue the Igbo.[6]

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[3] O. Njoku, p. 135.
[4] O. Njoku, "Export Production Drive in Nigeria During the 2nd World War", in, *Trans African Journal of History,10, 12,* 1981, pp. 11-22.
[5] R.A.O. Ikenga, *A History of Igboland in the 20th Century*, Snaap Press Ltd, Enugu, 1999, p. 33.
[6] Ibid.

Since the 16th Century, European traders had been on the Atlantic coast. They were the fomenters and buyers of the hundreds of thousands of Igbo slaves who were exported to the Americas from the Delta and Cross River ports.[7] By the last decade of the 19th century after the abolition of slave trade and introduction of "legitimate" trade, the Liverpool and Manchester traders in palm oil and kernel were eager to eliminate the Delta middlemen, and pressed the British Government to secure control of Igboland in the Delta hinterland.[8] This created a new vent for surplus for the much needed forest products of the region. As Walter Ofonogoro rightly noted, the ultimate beneficiaries of British imperialism in Southern Nigeria were the British merchants.[9]

Afigbo noted that the eastern provinces became part of the British colonial empire on 5thJune, 1885 when the London Gazette announced to the world that her Britannic Majesty had placed "the Niger Districts" under her "gracious protection[10]". He however opined that in terms of actual rule, which is to be understood as the successful establishment of a regular machinery of government which seeks and is able, to administer the public life of the people, the historian has to think of a later date than even 1891 when sir Claude MacDonald was sent to establish a regular administration in the Oil Rivers.[11] He observed that from 1891, it still required about two decades of unbroken war and fox-like cunning before British rule was effectively imposed in the area especially in the hinterlands.[12]

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9]W. Ofonogoro, p. 27.
[10]A. E. Afigbo, "The Eastern Provinces under Colonial Rule," in, Obaro Ikimi, (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books, (Nigeria), Ibadan, 2004, p. 420.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Ibid.

Afigbo and Anene argued that the "overthrow of indigenous authority" falls into two phases. The first phase Anene regards, as the period between 1849-1891 when the coastal peoples lost the right to trade on any item of their choice, including slaves, and the right to exclude foreigners from the trade of the interior. He further argued that by 1891, the back bone of their resistance to the European intruders be they administrators, traders or missionaries, had been broken. He refers to the Akassa crisis of 1895 as the last serious episode in the bid of the coastal people to retain their independence.[13]

The second phase in the overthrow of indigenous authority and the imposition of British rule, Afigbo argues, started with MacDonald's administration in1891. Macdonald seeing that the Igbo and the Ibibio of the interior were still in a position to fight for their sovereign independence and cultural identity built up a power base that necessitated the militaristic policy of Sir Ralph Moore his predecessor. Two features are worthy of note in the conquest and colonization of South Eastern Nigeria. The first was the part played by the coastal people in the assault on the sovereign independence of their hinterland neighbours. According to Afigbo, by late 1890's, the educated or literate coastal middlemen were indispensable to the British aggressors who enabled them realize their colonial dreams against the people of the hinterland. The first generation of the coastal educated elite occupied the junior position in the colonial administration. They served as court messengers, civil police, court and office clerks, interpreters and political agents.[14] These formed the spearhead of the British assault against the Igbo and Ibibio in the hinterland. Some of them not only collected military and political intelligence for the British authorities but on most occasions, with the encouragement of the British, led

[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

campaigns against the interior peoples of Igboland. They also served as an indispensable force in the consolidation of new territories they controlled. Because British officers were few and far between, it was part of the business of these political subalterns of the imperial power to make the interior peoples realize that the old order had given place to a new one and that the British had come to stay.[15] Like E.A Ayandele has rightly observed, they played the role, consciously or unconsciously of torch bearers in the propagation of British influence in South Eastern Nigeria.[16]

The other notable feature was the nature and military character of the conquest. According to Afigbo, British rule was to be imposed by negotiation and diplomacy. This meant that the people were to be persuaded and military force was to be used only where the people proved to be unresponsive to peaceful overtures. Eventually, force or the use of it constituted the chief means by which British rule was imposed[17]. This was because peaceful negotiation could only be achieved on mutual trust which did not exist. The political configuration of the interior did not help matters. None of the peoples in the interior came under the sway of a paramount authority with which the British could negotiate and make meaningful and far-reaching treaties. They were fragmented into numerous autonomous village communities each of which had to be dealt with separately and in turns. This made the business of conquest through treaty very difficult. It did not make military conquest any easier. Whether by peace or by war, each tiny village had to be dealt with in turn. Sometimes villages that had been conquered had to be re-conquered a second time.[18]

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[15] Ibid.
[16] E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914*, London, 1962.
[17] A. E. Afigbo, p. 412.
[18] Ibid.

By 1895, the British authorities had started a number of expeditions to searchvarious parts of Igboland. The famous Aro expedition which had been projected by the British as the war to end all wars in the Igbo interior soon proved to be only the beginning. The Aro expedition ended in March 1902. By 1903, the colonialists were fighting against Afikpo and in 1905, the Grand Onitsha Hinterland Expedition and the Akwete Patrol was executed by the British.[19] In the same year they fought the Ezza, the Onicha and Ahiara. The years 1908-1924 saw scores of military units fighting and subduing villages and settlements which still regarded themselves as independent of the British.[20]

Regarding the Nsukka area, Afigbo contended that the occupation of the area by British aggressors was slow and gradual.[21] It was devoid of any dramatic or historic event in the nature of a major campaign marking the conquest and subjugation of Nsukka people. Afigbo believes that the political fragmentation and mutual suspicion which existed among the people did not allow for any co-operation for an organized resistance. But Sir Ezema Chukwuma[22] argued that Nsukka was one of the last areas in South Eastern Nigeria to be penetrated by the British imperialists. He believed that Nsukka people must have heard of heroic attempts by other Igbo communities and how their resistance was crushed. This will probably help to explain why the area was as a British political official later put it, "prudently submissive.[23]

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[19]J. C. Anene, 'The Southern Nigerian Protectorate and the Aros, 1900-1902,' in, *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria,Vol 1*, December 1956.
[20] A. E Afigbo, p. 413.
[21]A. E. Afigbo, "Nsukka from Earliest Times to 1951: A Political History" Paper Presented on Nsukka: The Problems of Change and Continuity, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Feb 1972.
[22]Sir Ezema Chukwuma, c88years. Interview at his residence, No 6 Ezema Chukwuma Lane, Odenigbo Nsukka.
[23]NAE, E.P 1175 Intelligence Report on Villages of Nsukka, Ibagwani, Ero, etc.

In all, the conquest and colonization of southeastern Nigeria was more or less accomplished by 1914. A viable colonial administration which went hand in hand with the military conquest was established. The greatest need of the British was how to maintain law and order to ensure a most effective exploitation of the natural resources which they believed abounded in the area. Like we stated earlier, the establishment of a regular administration in South Eastern Nigeria began with the appointment of Sir Claude Macdonald as Consul-General in 1891 but was not consolidated until 1914.

4.3. The Establishment of Colonial Administration and Economy in Nsukka Division

Colonialism was another phase of imperialism. Its motives were entirely economic as discussed earlier. European nations needed a steady supply of cheap raw agricultural and mineral resources for their industries and an assured and protected market for their manufactured products. In South Eastern Nigeria as elsewhere in Nigeria, the colonialists put in place the necessary infrastructures required for the proper exploitation of the people. They set up coercive administrative instruments intended to get the obedience and submission of the people. Under the indirect rule system, local authorities were conferred with legislative, judicial and executive control over their communities. The colonialists made laws regulating the conduct of affairs in their areas of jurisdiction, adjudicated cases and performed administrative functions, all aimed at maintaining law and order and general development in their domains.[24]

[24] Onwuka, *Economic History of Nigeria*, p.137.

The chief instruments of coercion were the colonial army, the police, the judiciary and the prison services. The army they used in the subjugation of the local people while the police served to quell civil disobedience and maintain the British system of law and order. The police force was notorious for its highhandedness in dealing with the local people. They used live ammunition with reckless inconsideration on defenseless civilian protesters as exemplified during the Aba Women's demonstration of 1929 and the Enugu colliery shooting incident of 1948.It was against this backdrop that other necessary infrastructures which had no linkage with the growth and development of the people were put in place. These included the development of a transport system for easy movement of goods from the interior to the ports, and the establishment of a currency and banking system.

4.3.1. Transportation

The colonial authorities realized early, the need for a transport system that would sustain and promote an expanding market economy. They saw the traditional means of transportation as inefficient and costly. Lugard articulated the opinion of the administration when he said that "the material development of Africa may be summed up in one word- that is transport".[25] Thus, the British needed an effective modern means of transportation to stimulate and handle the rapidly increasing export and import volumes and also to facilitate administrative control of the colony by easing the movement of colonial troops from place to place.[26] The inland water ways which were the main means of transportation between the coasts and the hinterland served as the starting point. Because of the difficulties posed by the silts and the slag at the mouth of the Creeks,

[25] F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, London, 1975, p. 5.
[26] Ibid.

government started to tackle the water navigation problems[27]. Every dry season of the first decade of colonial rule, work parties were dispatched armed with explosives, dynamites and other equipment to clear the inland water-ways of obstruction for traffic.

In 1903, Roads and Rivers Ordinance was promulgated that made it mandatory for community heads to ensure that land routes and waterways within their domain were kept in satisfactory condition. It was also mandatory for every able-bodied person between 15 and 55 years of age to provide 24 days of unpaid labour until the introduction of taxation in 1928.[28] These waterways eventually became the highways through which European firms moved inland to establish beaches at Onitsha, Asaba, Ogwurugwu, Anambra,and other areas. These stations became focal points of daily trade between foreign and Nigerian traders and export producers. It attracted to itself attendance from neighbouring communities and stimulated export production. On the other hand, the railway which was described as the "white hope of the 19th century" had demonstrated in Europe and America its capacity to transform traditional economies and societies. The British colonialists believed thatthe railway system would perform the magic which water transportation had failed to do. Under the pressure of the British mercantile communities both in Lagos and Liverpool, the British government approved the construction of a railway to run from Lagos to the Yoruba hinterland. Other lines had been built elsewhere from Lagos to Kano.

In 1912, Lugard as governor of Northern Nigeria had initiated a line from Zungeru to Kaduna. In the East, the proposal to build a line was rejected for lack of funds. But with

[27]Ibid.
[28]A. E Afigbo, "Sir Ralph Moor and the Economic Development of Southern Nigeria, 1896-1903," in, *JHSN 5, 3 1970,* and, O.N. Njoku, "Roads and Road Transport Development in South Eastern Nigeria, 1903-39," in, *Journal of African Studies 5, 4,* 1978, pp. 471-97.

the discovery of coal at the Udi hills in 1909, the decision was reversed.[29] As a result of its strategic and economic importance: the only source of such power in West Africa and the military conflict in Europe (World War 1), it became increasingly eminent and necessary to build a line to evacuate coal to the sea port. A search for a deep sea harbour from where a rail way line would carry the coal deposits ended at what is known as Port Harcourt today.[30] The line, whose construction started in 1913, proceeded at feverish pace and reached the coal mines by 1916. After the First World War, the line resumed northwards to Makurdi through Eha-Amufu in Nsukka Division and joined the western line at Kaduna in 1926.[31]

The impact of the railway on the political economy of South Eastern Nigeria was revolutionary. It magnetized European firms from the coast to the hinterland and resulted in the establishment of chains of firms and trading depots along the railway lines. Such depots appeared at Port Harcourt, Aba, Umuahia, Uzuakoli, Enugu and Eha-Amufu. These locations became immediately the focal points of trade and frontiers of economic opportunities, attracting local traders from immediate and more distant communities. It shall be noted that most urban centers which emerged during the colonial period grew along the railways. In spite of its transformative role on the colonial economy, the railway had its limitations. Firstly, its rigidity in routing circumscribed its spatial reach to the areas within reasonable distances to the line. Secondly, vast areas remained outside the orbit of the emerging trade nexus. Thirdly, the tracks which were constructed were single and had a narrow gauge; they often had sharp curvatures, making the trains to be

[29]Onwuka, p. 140.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

very slow[32]. A flexible and more pervasive form of transport was needed to make good the short comings of the railway.

Road transportation filled the gap. By 1915, the management of the railway lines had established motor transport services as feeders to the railways. However, these vehicular transportations were predicated on availability of good roads.Under the Roads and Rivers Ordinance, colonial administrators in the East used local communities to build several miles of roads mostly of earth surface. A Public Works Department (PWD) which assumed responsibility for building and maintaining roads was established. Besides this, local people on their own initiatives built roads to make their communities accessible to road transportation. By the 1920's, government had classified roads into A, B and C grades. The grade A roads were supposed to be tarred with bituminous surface, grade B, lateritic surface, while grace C were compacted with earth.[33] To the colonial administration, road construction was far less demanding than railway in terms of cost and technical skill required. District officers and even village communities built roads without the aid of engineers. By the end of the Second World War and the economic boom that came with it, over 27,007 vehicles had been imported into Nigeria.[34] Road transport offered to passengers more flexibility. It challenged the railway for both passengers and freight. By the late 1940's, it had overtaken the railway, in spite of government's earlier attempt to make it ancillary to the railway. Areas which were beyond the orbit of modern trade got connected. It led to increased urbanization, the

[32]Ibid.
[33]See G. Walker, *Traffic and Transport in Nigeria*, London, 1998.
[34] R. O. Ekandere ,*An Economic History of Nigeria*, London, 1972, pp. 103, 329.

fastest growing urban centres being those located at rail-road intersections such as Eungu, Aba and Port Harcourt.

It is important to note that the various means of transportation were developed basically to serve the economic interests of the colonizing power. The railways and the trunk roads ran from the centres of production and exports to the ports of exit and entry.[35] Areas which did not produce for exports were neglected, even if they were productive of domestic staples. The Middle Belt and Abakaliki in Igboland were typical examples. Onwuka Njoku saw this as the domestic inception of the development of under-development and disjointedness in the colonial economy[36]. Nkrumah saw it as the fussion of industrial capital with finance capital.He maintained that as the capitalist producer turned his profit-seeking eyes to the colonies and dependent territories, thrusting capital loan upon them for financing the construction of railways, harbours and other means of transportation and communication in so far as these constructions cater for his profits and safeguard his capital,[37] but to the neglect of the domestic economy that was necessary for the indigenous population.

4.3.2. Monetization of the economy

Another area of the colonial economy that was in dire need of reforms was the non-monetized economy. One aim of the fiscal policy of the colonial administration in Nigeria was to monetize the economy so as to integrate it into the imperial capitalist economy.[38] A new currency was needed to replace the different currencies circulating in various parts of Nigeria, most of which were cumbersome and incapable of sustaining an

[35] Onwuka, p. 144.
[36] Ibid.
[37] K. Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom*, Panaf Books Limited, London, 1973, p. 12.
[38] Onwuka, p. 145.

expanding market economy. On the basis of this, government introduced a uniform portable currency to de-monetize the existing ones. The manilla demonstrated a resilience that surprised the authorities.[39] The administration had to resort to a forceful withdrawal and the Nigeria legislative assembly gave authority to that effect in 1948. By 1912, the West African Currency Board (WACB) had been established. Its chief function was the conversion of the local currency to the metropolitan one.[40]

This facilitated the penetration of the colonial economy by British and the integration of the economy to the metropolitan capitalist system. It must be noted however, that this fiscal policy of the Board was not designed to stimulate growth of the local economy for the benefit of the native people, which rather had a retrogressive impact on them to the benefit of the British. The amount of money injected into any colony was determined strictly by the colony's foreign exchange earnings. Thus increased foreign exchange earnings attracted corresponding injection of money by the Board into the economy and vice versa. The fiscal policy of the Board was in tune with the overall fiscal policy of the colonial government, i.e., the policy of colonial self-sufficiency. This meant that each colony like Nigeria had to generate the funds it needed to bear the cost of administration and development.[41] The imperial government thus absolved itself from all financial responsibility to the colony.

With regard to financial institutions, it should be stressed that the expansion and monetization of the Nigerian economy necessitated the establishment of banks. The first bank to emerge was the British Bank of West Africa, established in 1894 by Alfred Jones, a shipping magnet. Though a commercial bank, it served as the bank of sole issue

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

of British currency circulating in Nigeria. It was also the official bank of the colonial government. Other commercial banks followed but many of them quickly collapsed. Inexperience in banking and possibly, the subtle machinations by the expatriate banks ensured the demise of most of the banks. By the end of World War II, many indigenous banks sprang up like the African Continental Bank in the East. Most of the banks were encouraged by the agricultural boom that started at the end of the Second World War.[42]

4.3.3. Colonial Land Policies

Changing political economy in the late 19th century had started to alter the indigenous land tenure system in many parts of Nigeria. Commercial alienation of land and moves towards private property had started to develop well before 1900[43]. The expansion of international trade and increasing incorporation of the interior of Nigeria into the international capitalist economy, growing urbanization, and increasing population pressures created conditions for commoditization of land particularly in the newly developing urban centers. In Onitsha in South Eastern Nigeria, as international trade expanded along the River Niger corridor, many commercial firms, individual traders, and missionaries moved into town from the coast, requesting and obtaining land from Onitsha land-owning families.[44]

Initially the land was given to them free. But as commerce and population expanded and grew, the demand for land, particularly on the waterside district escalated[45]. As pressure for land increased, land acquired commercial value, leading to the emergence of a real

[42]Ekundare, p. 132-134.
[43]P. Mbajekwe, "Debating Land Policy in Colonial Nigeria," in, Falola (ed), *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development*, London, New Jersey,1987, p 257.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

estate market. By the 1870s, European merchants and missionaries began to request for complete and permanent alienation of lands to them, in exchange of cash or goods. As some of the immigrants started to sell the lands they obtained free from Onitsha families, the people realized that land transactions could bring a fortune. By the end of the 19th century, commercial alienation, privatization and commoditization of land were well underway in many parts of Southern Nigeria.[46]

This trend was encouraged by the general British policy in West Africa. It was the assumption of the British at the early stages of colonialism that there will be a speedy transition to private property which will lead to individual land ownership which was desirable for trade, cash crop production, and capitalist progress.[47] This policy was also tied to the labour question. Colonial officials believed that a free labour market could never be realized as long as the African indigenous land tenure system guaranteed Africans access to land. Since development of land and labour went hand in hand, it was assumed that to ensure regular supply of free labour, the pre-colonial African land tenure system had to be destroyed.

Privatization of land offered one strategy for the dispossession of agricultural producers and their transformation into landless labourers available for the capitalist employers for exploitation. In both land and labour policies, capitalist relations were considered as the way towards progress.[48] However, by the beginning of the 20th century, the colonial administration had dramatically reversed its land policy. It retreated from the policy of promoting private ownership and land capitalism and adopted the dream of a thriving peasantry. The new land policy encouraged communal land ownership and free hold was

[46] Ibid.
[47] A. Phillips, *The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa*, James Curry, London, 1989, p. 59.
[48] P. Mbajekwe, p. 264.

discouraged. They argued that communal land ownership will "prevent reckless alienation of land, discourage absentee landlordism, and halt the formation of landless rabble[49]". Lugard, one of the architects of colonialism in West Africa, preached what he referred to as patient progress in the development of Southern Nigeria. He argued that even if privatization of land would ultimately be good, it had to be accomplished in a gradual, evolutionary manner. He resented the alienation of land from Africans by European settlers.

When the protectorate of Southern Nigeria was created, the newly appointed High Commissioner, Sir Ralph Moore asserted that all land in the protectorate was tribal property which cannot be alienated.[50] Measures to check the alienation of lands from Africans to foreigners in Southern Nigeria were put in place. In 1900, the Native Lands Acquisition Proclamations provided that foreigners should no longer acquire any interest in land within Southern Nigeria without the written permission and approval of the high Commissioner. The proclamation invalidated absolute transfers of land from Africans to foreigners, approving only leaseholds of up to ninety-nine years. Violations of the proclamation could result in fines and prison terms.[51]But why was the policy reversed in the 20th century?

Anne Phillips considers the failure of radical capitalist ideologies and an acceptance of the limits of colonial power as two key reasons for the policy reversal. She argued that the reversal was dramatic and the ultimate cause was the colonial state's inability to create a free labour market.[52] The colonial administration was also increasingly

[49]F.L., Lugard, *Political Memoranda*, Frank Cass, London, 1970, p. 343.
[50] C. O, 520/10, Moor to Colonial Office, No. 418, December 13, 1901.
[51] P. Mbajekwe, p. 264.
[52] A. Phillips, p. 72.

dependent on using African chiefs for ruling. It was thought that the chiefs could be used to guarantee the supply of the needed African labour. For them therefore, strengthening the power and positions of the chiefs, through the communal system of land tenure had to be emphasized. The twin paradigm of communal ownership of land and the role of the chief as the trustee for land was given legal endorsement by the privy-council.[53] Privatization was all loudly condemned. Africans were treated as a people who had yet to evolve the institution of private property. Thus, the communal land tenure was endorsed as the way to go and the recognized "customary" land tenure for Nigerians. By the Land Registration Ordinance of 1915, the colonial state freely appropriated any land it wanted, compensating Africans only for the value of economic trees and houses, but not the value of the land. Government turned itself into a Monopolist landlord, acquiring land, and selling or leasing it for profit, behaving like a real estate speculator. It also appropriated all mineral rights in Nigeria.

Clifford's criticism of Lugard's land policy in Nigeria as, "monopolistic, entitled to make whatever it can out of its monopoly,"[54] did not go down well with his superiors in London. He condemned the government for using land as a primary source of revenue by charging and collecting high rent on land for both commercial and residential purposes, and also granting short-term leases. He argued that instead of government making itself a commercial land speculator which he called a "narrow criterion of the balance sheet," government should concentrate on a broader long-term goal of development by giving

[53] See C. I. Meek, *Land Law and Customs in the Colonies*, Oxford University Press, London, 1946 & 1968, p. 10.
[54] CO, 583/78, Clifford to Milner, October 31 1919: "Land Policy in Nigeria".

investors attractive terms to land and real estate, and by "granting them the fullest measure of security (of tenure) that the government had in its power to give.[55]

In 1925,a new Department of Lands with a Commissioner was created, charged with the highly important assignment of land reforms in the country, and the control of the chaotic, incoherent and inconsistent land policies existing in the country. The new officer was responsible for creating a comprehensive and definite policy for Nigeria.[56] With all the committees and study groups that were set up, no comprehensive or definite policy on land was made up till the eve of the departure of the colonialists from Nigeria. Most of the reports and surveys lacked visionary radical policy recommendations for land. Some couched their policy recommendation in such vague concepts as the evolution of native law, flexibility, and gradual change.[57] L.T. Chubb, who prepared the study on the land tenure among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, concluded with recommendations for 'steps that should be taken to control changes which are occurring today as a result of both natural and artificial influences and to induce evolution on planned lines"[58], whatever that meant. C.K.Meek, in his study argued that because of the peculiarly "varied and complex" problems of land holding and land administration in Nigeria, "it is clearly impossible to provide legislation for every situation". Legislation he argued "may destroy the flexibility which the rapidly changing conditions demand." And the "evolution of customary forms of land-holding in Nigeria should be left to the automatic pressures of economic factors with as little interference as possible by the central government.[59] He

[55] Ibid.
[56]CO, 583/139/1190, Kingdom to the Chief Secretary, Nigeria, June 16, 1925: "Memorandum on the Commissioner of Lands".
[57] Patrick Mbajekwe, p. 275.
[58] L. T. Chubb, *Ibo Land Tenure*, 1948, p. 93.
[59]C. K. Meek, *Land Tenure and Land Administration in Nigeria and the Cameroons*, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1957.

continued that should interference be necessary, "it should be carried out with the minimum degree of social disturbance and, the minimum infringement of existing rights."[60] The conclusions of these clearly illustrates the British colonial land policy on Nigeria as vague, ad hoc, inconsistent, incoherent, truncated, cautious delay and makeshift arrangements.[61]

This confused state of land debate compounded the land question, particularly the urban land situation in Nigeria. Rapid economic and social changes were taking place all over the country, especially in the urban centres, developments which colonial administrators chose to ignore because of their obsession with indirect rule.[62]

4.3.4. Colonial Agricultural Policies

In the agricultural sector, the Agricultural Department threw the bulk of its effort into the development of such crops like palm trees and cassava that would benefit the British home industries. Government's attitude to economic policy were largely influenced by widespread prejudices, that assumed Nigerian "backwardness", that assumed Nigeria's role to be that of a provider of raw materials and a market for British goods, that assumed Nigeria's need for technical rather than other forms of education, that assumed the main source of innovation and efficiency in Nigeria's economy to be the government and European directed enterprise.[63] Legislation was passed in 1934 imposing import quotas on non-British goods. The object was to exclude cheap Japanese textiles.[64]

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[60] Ibid.
[61] P. Mbajekwe, p. 275.
[62] Ibid.
[63] R. J. Gavin and W. Oyemakinde, "Economic Development in Nigeria Since 1800," in, Obaro Ikimi, (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books, Ibadan, 2004, p. 512.
[64] Ibid.

The operations of the Produce Marketing Board during the immediate past war years from the First World War had even more serious consequences. Apart from holding produce price at a low level and accumulation of surpluses which were invested in low-yielding and rapidly depreciating British stock, the Boards offered their produce at market rates which were designed to safeguard the interest of consumers in Britain than producers in Nigeria.[65]

The government intervention in the colonial economic sphere with a whole array of controls was witnessed in the control of produce marketing and food prices. The areas in which free Nigerian enterprise could operate profitably was restricted as never before and entrepreneurs were given the strongest encouragement to look to the state to maintain their competitive position by agitating for licenses and other favours.[66] The greatest possible single contribution of the government was the building of motor roads which made possible the evacuation of valuable farm products for eventual shipment. It should be noted that the efforts of the Agricultural Department in distributing insecticides and fungicides had yielded great dividends both to the natives and government.

4.3.5. Colonial Policies on Labour

> "Before the arrival of the Europeans we used to help the chief on his farm, if he needs our help… He may give them native beer or even food in appreciation…. But when the Europeans came, they carried people by force to work for them, wash their clothes cook for them and even some to carry their loads on their head when they are traveling."[67]

The quotation above aptly describes labour relations in Nigeria and south Eastern Nigeria throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century before the introduction of

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] See E. Isichie, *A History of Nigeria*, Longman, London, 1983, p. 386.

taxation. In the earlier years of colonialism, forced labour was common. The railways were built partly through voluntary and partly through forced labour. Many were conscripted to work in the railway lines outside their areas. In South Eastern Nigeria, the Enugu-Port Harcourt rail line was started in 1913 and by 1916 it had reached the coal mine at Enugu. These rail lines were built with unpaid labour sometimes forcefully recruited. When coal was discovered at Enugu in 1909, unlike in Tin mining, it was exploited by the government itself because of its strategic importance.[68] Like mining everywhere, the actual job was grueling, physically exhausting and dangerous. The miners were herded into squalid and overcrowded camps consisting of unduly constructed grass-thatched huts. Frustration, drudgery and melancholy drove the miners to drunkenness and sexual promiscuity. Venereal diseases were rampant. Because the miners were predominantly unskilled and illiterate, government hid under their ignorance and docility to deny them basic rights, such as adequate medical attention. Poor diet and lack of medical attention took heavy tolls on the lives of the miners. It was symptomatic of the inhumanity in the industry that peasants sometimes had to bribe their chiefs to avoid conscription into the mines[69]. By 1925 before the rail line reached Enugu, 7000 tons of coal had been mined. The early equipment used was simple picks, shovels and locally made baskets. The first coals mined were transported by head porter-age to the port at Onitsha on the Niger, almost a hundred miles away.[70] It was a very grueling undertaking.

[68] Onwuka, p. 171.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

Recruitment of labour into the mines was problematic until the late1920's when direct taxation was introduced. Until 1928 there was no direct taxation in Eastern Nigeria to drive peasants to the mines. The World War I and the influenza pandemic had taken heavy tolls on the population and also depleted the labour force at the mines. In the circumstance, the authorities resorted to forcible coercion through the instrumentality of warrant chiefs. Attractive wages were not considered a possible option; however, they were given peanuts as salaries. In the 1920s, the British authorities kept the mines supplied with labour through the retainer-ship of chiefs who received between £400 and £500 a year for their efforts.[71] Retainer-ship was a source of oppression, gross injustice and corruption. Njoku argued that the Warrant chiefs hiding under the Roads and Rivers ordinance press-ganged their young men into the mines, forcing some to bribe the chiefs to be exempted from conscription. Some retainers were in the habit of dismissing miners under their charge just before the end of the month and then drew and pocketed their salaries[72]. Carrier service was very unpopular. It was not uncommon for carriers to die of exhaustion[73]. They were supposed to provide their own food, but on journeys lasting some days it was impossible for them to preserve it. Sometimes, they were put in prison so that they could not run away, and many made extra income by granting exemption's from this work. A British official once wrote:

> I have evidence that in the past, men have almost invaluably been compelled to serve as carriers….. These messengers used to enter private homes and I am assured extort money from persons either ill or incapacitated. On all sides I hear charges of extortion and oppression…. To me, the system of forced labour is repugnant. To compel a free man, by fine or imprisonment, to carry a tent or a hammock

[71] E. Isichie, *A History of the Igbo People*, London, 1976, p. 203.
[72] Onwuka, p. 172.
[73] E. Isichei, p. 138.

> is I submit… illegal. The system is I think, vicious and cowardly, since it operates only against a certain class- the most illiterate portion of the community.[74]

In the first two decades of colonialism in south Eastern Nigeria, forced labour was a daily occurrence. It brought about violence and exploitation though deeply felt but vividly remembered. In most of the resident camps, men out-numbered women and this encouraged rampant prostitution and drunkenness along with easy spread of venereal diseases. The colliery shooting incident was a result of decades of exploitation and injustice which triggered an open labour-management impasse in which twenty-one unarmed miners were shot death by the police and fifty one were wounded.[75] The incident sparked off general labour and political unrest throughout the country and invited the wrath of Nnamdi Azikiwe's newspapers. Despite this poor treatment of labour, the story of coal production remained one of steadily increasing output over the years. This policy grossly affected labour needs in the farm thereby affecting food production. Male labour was reduced considerably and women had to bear most of the burden of the farm.

4.3.6. Colonial Policy on Cash Crop Production

The primary reason for colonialism was economic. So to all intent and purposes, the colonialists' interest was to protect their source of primary products and market for

[74] NAE CSE, 5/10/52 (C202/15), Duncombe, Commissioner, Ondo, to Secretary Southern Provinces, 4th December, 1915.
[75] A Akpala, "Background to the Enugu Colliery Shooting incident in 1949," *JHSN*, 1965.

finished goods. Therefore to obtain an adequate supply of the preferred commodities, they discouraged the production of some other commodities including even local staples. The colonialist cared less about the implications of encouraging or discouraging the production of food crop products. The colonial policy on cash crop production was akin to the developments of railways. Colonial capitalism was interested only in the most profitable primary commodities. They assumed that what was good for international capital was good for the colony[76].

More often than not, the colonialists used persuasion or force to compel a concentration of effort on the production of particular export crops such as palm products. This upset the balance of the traditional economy. This sort of change led to disequilibrium, for instance, shortages in the supply of traditional food crops, changes in land use and land tenure, the shift from old farming methods, demand for new farming skills, displacement of people and shifts in population, the uneven development of different regions, the dependence of the economy on few export crops and associated with this, profoundly unbalanced economic growth.[77]

As was stated above, colonization as opposed to the previous commercial contacts was to a large extent the effect of the rivalry between European countries and the struggle to secure markets for manufactured goods as well as the supply of raw material. This aim could not be accomplished without control of the economy, particularly the control of what to produce, how, when and in what quantities. It also meant control of the structure of demand in the colony as well as the growth of the economy. The colonialists took an interest in the development of an infrastructure, at least to the extent that it would serve

[76]A. Claude, *A Political Economy of Africa,* Longman Nigeria Publishers, Lagos, 2008, p. 45.
[77]Ibid.

their interest. They invested in primary production, exercised controls over production and effected changes in the social structure which necessarily correlated to the type of economic development they wanted.[78]

The colonial government initiated coercive and persuasive measures to get the peasant farmers produce more for export. Government and some expatriate firms like the Niger Company and the British Cotton Growers Association (BCGA) established nursery plants or green houses from where improved seedlings were distributed to farmers at subsidized prices or even free[79]. Experimental and research stations were established for various crops and livestock at such places as Umuahia, Zaria, Benin, Vom, Ibadan, Samaru and Kano, during the 1920s and 1930s.

Taxation was a coercive instrument which the colonialist adopted to drive peasant farmers to produce primary products for export market and others to sell their labour to toil in the mines. The railways also manipulated major space in favour of export produce at the expense of local staples thereby restricting the market for the later. During the Second World War, administrative fiats were used to restrict domestic trade in foodstuffs while export production drive coerced peasants to produce more for export.[80]The colonial authorities and expatriate firms imported mechanical devices to increase volume and improve quality of the exports. These included palm oil hand presses and mills and nut crackers in south Eastern Nigeria and the oil palm belts. Produce inspection was introduced early in the colonial era along with price differentials according to quality grades of export produce.

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[78]Ibid.
[79]Onwuka, p. 153.
[80] Onwuka, "Export Production Drive in Nigeria during the 2nd World War," *Trans African Journal of History, 10,12,*1981, pp. 11-22.

It can be said without fear of contradiction that colonial policy on cash crop production centered squarely on production for export. Because the peasant had a capacity to supply the export requirement of government and the expatriate firms, little was done to improve the technology of production. The only investment government made with regard to cash crop production was the establishment of research centers for improved seedlings.

4.3.7. Colonial Policy on Trade

Trade simply means the exchange of goods and services. It was a dominant feature of the colonial economy. In fact, the colonial government strove successfully to turn Nigeria into a mercantilist economy, producing agricultural produce and minerals for export in return for a range of imported manufactured goods. Two genres of trade existed namely domestic and external. The two were parts of a continuum, and did not exist in separate compartments. The former was internal at the service of the latter, the external. Farmers produced both for family consumption as well as for the domestic and external markets. The health of one segment impacted positively or negatively on the other. Trade in colonial Nigeria experienced steady growth throughout the period. In spite of the down-swings in international trade between the period 1914-1920 and the late 1920s and 1930s, and during the two world wars, Nigerian foreign trade increased from £386.6 million in 1960.[81]

A combination of factors accounted for this increase which include among others: the imposition of colonial rule which put to an end inter-group wars thereby channeling manpower to production, the introduction of a modern transport and a portable uniform currency which widened the frontiers of trade, increased the volume and frequency of

[81]Ekundare, *An Economic History of Nigeria,* pp 103, 329.

exchange and provided vent for surplus production to local farmers. Also the influx of European trading firms into the mainland displaying an array of exotic manufacture whetted the appetite of the local people and prodded them to produce more and more for the market. Finally, growing urbanization and occupational specialization-outcomes of colonial presence meant a steady move away from subsistence production to production for the market.[82] Certain features characterized the colonial trade policy which induced the laissez-faire in which Britain at the early hours of colonialism flirted with the idea of a free trade policy in Nigeria. This idea was advanced by the colonialists to justify the elimination of Nigerian coastal middle men such as King Kosoko of Lagos, Jaja of Opobo and Nana Olomu[83] of Itsekiriland. Onwuka Njoku argues that laissez-faire was conspicuous more in its breach than faithful application. Britain allowed free trade only when she honoured earlier agreement she contracted before formal colonial rule in Nigeria and secondly, when the policy worked to the advantage of British firms.

From the mid 1940s, the colonial government had begun to systematically curtail the existing trend of free trade in Nigeria. In 1910 when Governor Bell discovered to his disaffection that German goods dominated those of Britain and that Germany and United States of America (USA) were major importers of Nigerian Palm Kernel and Palm oil, he took steps to reverse the situation and began to channel Nigerian trade to Britain.[84] By 1917, he had imposed a ban on export of palm oil from Nigeria except to Britain. Between 1919 and 1922, discriminatory duties were imposed on palm oil, Kernel and tin ore to countries other than Britain[85]. More protectionist measures were adopted during

[82]Onwuka, *Economic History of Nigeria,* pp. 186-187.
[83]Ibid.
[84] See Olukoju, "Slamming the Door," pp. 13-28.
[85] Onwuka, p. 191.

the great depression to Nigeria's external trade which include among others the slamming of a severe quota on Japanese textile and galvanized roofing sheets, cements, paints, boots and singlet. Imports from Holland and Germany were subjected to similar discriminations. All these were in accordance with Joseph chamberlain's philosophy in which British colonies in Africa were perceived as "imperial estates"[86].

The final knell on any vestige of free trade in Nigeria came during the Second World Warfollowing severe shortage of raw materials to British industries, especially with Japan's closure of the Far East to the allies, the British Ministry of Food in 1939 appropriated to itself the sole right of purchase of primary exports of British West African colonies. A West African Produce Control Board (WAPCB) was set up in 1942 to execute the mandate of the ministry. Expatriate firms were appointed by the Board to buy produce from local farmers at a price fixed by it. The prices were much lower than what prevailed in the international market. It was an official monopoly in which Nigerian export farmers and produce traders had no escape route[87].

The WAPCB died with WWII and was replaced by the Produce Marketing Board which like its predecessor monopolized the export of major agricultural products from Nigeria. Under the guise of price stabilization, they fixed prices which they paid for produce far below the prevailing prices in the world markets. Some scholars argue that at this period, Nigerian farmers received only 60% of the values of their produce[88]. The Exchange Control Ordinance which London enacted in 1950 empowered the British government to apply currency control and exchange restrictions in order to force its "dependencies" to

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[86] Ibid.

[87] C. Ehrlich, "Building and Caretaking: Economic Policy in British Tropical Africa, 1890-1960*", Economic HistoryReview,26,* 1973, p. 649-61.

[88] A. Olukuju, "Confronting the Combines: Producers' and Traders' Militancy in Western Nigeria, 1934-39", *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 9,1,* 2000, pp. 46-69.

trade only within British currency zone and to surrender any bullion and foreign currencies they earned. The idea behind this was to build up financial support for the metropolitan economy during post war reconstruction.[89]Colonialism was not merely a system of exploitation, but whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profits to the so called "mother country". This meant from the African point of view, the consistent repatriation of surplus produced by African labour out of African resources meant the development of Europe as part of the same dialectical process in which Africa was underdeveloped[90].

In the final analysis, it is noteworthy to state that with all the protectionist policy of the colonial administration, the expatriate firms could not do without the services and co-operation of African middlemen, who performed two broad functions. Firstly, they sought out export produce from the remote hamlets of production and made same available to European trading depots which were strategically located in centers accessible to modern transport. Secondly, they contributed significantly to the distribution of imports to the remotest hamlets and this considerably stimulated the export production drive of the people[91]. Important to this role was that the bargaining power of the middlemen against the expatriate firms was minimal. No Nigerian business person had the financial muscle, accumulated experience and international connection to compete against the combines.

Despite the discriminatory environment under which Nigeria produce traders operated, some, including women, attained a substantial level of wealth and influence. Omu Okwei,

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[89]Onwuka, p. 192.
[90]R. Walter, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Panaf Publishing Limited, Abuja, 2009, p. 177.
[91]Onwuka, pp. 195-6.

the "Merchant Queen of Ossomari" (1872-1943) was one produce trader that excelled, building a business empire that included urban properties, fleet of vehicles and trade canoes. At her death, she left a fortune including 24 houses in Onitsha and about £5, 000 in her bank account[92].

Other successful stories in south Eastern Nigerian included Sir Louis Odumegwu Ojukwu who by 1934 was an agent to John Holt. By 1937 he had gone into business with a second hand Lorry and within a short time had built up a fleet of 50 Lorries. He had properties in major cities in Nigeria and at his death in 1966 was chairman to major businesses and public corporations[93]. Messer's Mark Odua from Atani near Onitsha and Francis Olie were two outstanding agents of John Holt within the Nsukka area who also made fortune from palm produce sales. They invested in real estate and transport[94]. Nigerian middlemen numbered in tens of thousands the vast silent majority which ended with no marked improvement in the condition of their lives, despite their industrious endeavours.

4.3.8. Taxation

With the failure of the Native court system in the Eastern provinces which the colonialist claimed derived in some measures from the fact that the native authorities lacked funds for local development, direct taxation was the next option. Even by 1914, Lugard had been pressing for direct taxation in the southern provinces. With the Native Revenue Ordinance of 1917, direct taxation was introduced in Western Nigeria with the exception of Warri province. The colonial government argued that taxation was necessary in

[92]F.I. Elizabeth, *A History of Nigeria,* p. 431.
[93]E. Isichei, *A History of Nigeria,* p. 431.
[94]Interview with Pa Ezugwuomada Chukwuma, (82) of Umuagwene Echara Nsukka, he Worked with Odua and Olie respectively, 07/04/2012.

Eastern Nigeria if the practice of forced labour was to end. The taxation was to be a capitation tax on adult males only and was to be collected by the warrant chiefs, who were generally acknowledged to be corrupt, inefficient and unpopular[95]. On the assumption of office of Governor Thomson in 1926, arrangements were made for the imposition of direct taxation on Eastern Nigeria. Native Treasuries were established on October 1, 1927. Head count of adult males was made in each village and the economic wealth of each district was also roughly ascertained[96].

The Roads and Rivers Ordinance was then replaced by the new Tax Ordinance which came into effect on April 1, 1928. All these measures were in accordance with the regulations of the Native Revenue Ordinance which were already in existent in the Northern provinces.[97] The people were hostile and skeptical to the measures. They questioned the wisdom behind both the head count and the census of their livestock, palm trees and yam mounds. They protested against the measurement of their farmlands believing it was going to be seized by government. Inspite of sustained propaganda, they could not see how taxation made the census necessary since they saw the latter as a sinister move that could have untold consequences for them. They could not understand how the British who minted the money they used could not simply mint more if the government was in need of funds[98].

The 1928 tax collection was made in relative quiet except in such places like Abakaliki, (Ezza, Ezzi) and Achi where people refused to pay and had to be coerced to do so[99]. By

[95]Ikenga, R. A. Ozigbo, *A History of Igboland in the 20th Century*, p. 53.
[96]Ibid.
[97]A. E. Afigbo, "The Eastern Provinces Under Colonial Rule," in, Obaro Ikimi, (ed), *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, Heinemann, Ibadan, 2004, p. 420.
[98] Ibid.
[99] R. A O. Ikenga, p. 54.

the time the second collection was being made, the economic situation had worsened, people had practical experience of what direct taxation meant to their purses and there was a rumuor that women were going to the taxed along with men. At this time, the strain became too much for the people to bear and the immediate upshot was the women's war of 1929-1930 which took the colonial government by surprise and brought the warrant chieftaincy system to ruin[100]. Taxation it was, that catapulted the people into the cash economy. What was grievous is that it took much and gave nothing in return. By the close of the 1928 tax year, about £365, 000 was collected out of which the native courts kept back 50% of the proceeds[101], with nothing to show for it. Taxation forced men to work in the mines for a pittance, often in circumstances of great hardship. The need to pay tax put the peasant, at the mercy of the vagaries of the international economy.[102]

4.4. Women's Reaction to the Taxation Policy of Exploitation

As noted above, the year 1929 witnessed developments that had dire consequences both for the colonial authority and the peasants. One was the increment in import duties resulting in the rise of prices paid for imported materials such as calico, tobacco, and so on, which had become daily necessities. The second was the fall in the price of palm produce which had become the people's main means of earning money.[103] All these were the effect of a global depression of which the colonial economy was part of. The

[100]A.E Afigbo, p. 421.
[101]R.A. Ozigbo, p. 54.
[102]E. Isichei, p. 387.
[103]A.E. Afigbo, p. 421.

negative effect of the depression, the fall in the price of palm produce and the increase in the price of imported product and the direct taxation of the men fell directly on women who bore the brunt of taking care of the family from their increased roles in farming, trading and crafts.

In November 1929, an Assistant District Officer (A.D.O) had instructed the warrant chief at Oloko in Bende Division of Owerri province to carry out a recount of all adult males in their villages for a fresh tax census register. Rumor began to spread that the recount was for the eventual taxation of women. Chief Okugo had employed the service of a school teacher (Emeruwa) to do the enumeration for him. In his attempt to obtain information from a woman about her husband, a disagreement ensured which attracted the attention of hundreds of women from the village and beyond who demanded the head of chief Okugo and teacher Emeruwa the enumerator. News of the incident had spread like wild fire arousing thousands of women of Eastern Nigeria. The rumor about the eventual taxation of women aggravated the situation and gingered the women to assemble, plan and organize themselves. Delegations were sent out to Aba, Port Harcourt, Onitsha and Calaber appraising women of events in Oloko and Bende.

Owerri and Calabar provinces became the eventual theaters of what came to be referred to as Ogu-Umunwanyi (the women war of 1929-1930). At Owerri, the revolt was better managed with a few losses of lives while in the Calabar province it was very violent with over thirty lives lost. In both provinces women trouped out to the streets in their thousands wearing old and torn clothes and leaves on their heads, waists, and legs. Most of them carried sticks on their hands while a few carried matches. They sang and danced as they marched. Native courts were burnt, prisoners released from prisons and

mercantile houses were looted at Aba.[104] Government response to this revolt was to say the least barbaric. The British employed force to stop the revolt. The army was ordered to fire at unarmed and harmless women. Over fifty five women died and countless wounded[105]. The colonial government took stringent measures to prevent a reoccurrence, imposing fines on towns where government sustained losses or damages to its properties. The women's war had effectively undermined the colonial belief in the viability of the warrant chief system leading to the reorganization of the local government system in the Eastern provinces of Nigeria. The colonial administration came to face the hard fact that no group in the Eastern provinces had evolved a political system based on chiefly autocracy[106].

4.5. Conclusion

As stated from the beginning, the reason for colonialism was economic. It was exploitative to the detriment of the colonies. While the colonies were deprived of natural resources, the metropolis enjoyed an upward economic, infrastructural and human development. Surplus was drawn from the colonies to develop the metropolis. To achieve this, land and labour was to be exploited. The colonial economy which was established in Nigeria and south Eastern Nigeria was a disorientated economy of which there was neither a forward nor backward linkage nor articulation. The railways, the roads and the mines were all built to effect the evacuation of primary products to the

[104]R.A. Ozigbo, pp. 54-55.

[105] Ibid.

[106]Sir Ezema Chukwuma, Interview: 12/04/2012.

ports for onward transportation to Britain. Not one industry was cited for the transformation of primary product to finished goods. In south Eastern Nigeria, not even one public school was built by the colonialists, and the same was with hospitals and dispensaries.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE COLONIAL ECONOMY OF NSUKKA DIVISION, 1912-1960

5.1. Introduction

The colonial period in Igbo land was as elsewhere in Africa, a time of wide-ranging and many faceted changes. These changes were both economic and political. The political and administrative regime which colonialism introduced was designed to help guarantee that no revolutionary change was introduced into the long established economic relationship between Britain and Igbo land. The political system was designed to maintain that necessary degree of law and order considered important for the peasants to continue as before, to harvest and market the natural produce of their land which was required to feed the industries of Europe[1]. The arrangement brought about adverse and favorable changes to the economic fortunes of women in Nsukka Division.

The first two decades of colonialism brought new burden on men, one consequence of which was reduction of the labor input of men in household production. Periodically, men were required through the Rivers and Roads Ordinance of 1903 to work on the construction and maintenance of main roads, to clear rivers and creeks, to build the railway and to serve as carriers and hammock bearers for moving Colonial staff (African and European) from one station to another as they went on transfer or as they undertook periodic inspection tours. Male labour was also needed to build and maintain official quarters. This required the mento give so many days up to twenty one days a monthby each adult male to provide unpaid labor for the colonialists. Inaddition to this burden and the attendant harassment that accompanied it, taxation was introduced in 1928, and to this

[1]A. E. Afigbo, Igbo Women, Colonialism and Socio-economic Change," in, E. J. Otagburuagu and A. E. Afigbo, (eds), *New Brides, More Hopes: Igbo Women and socio-Economic change*, Institute of African Studies, Nsukka, 2008, p. 4.

was added the withdrawal of the labour of children from the farm because of schools attendance[2]. Thus, what infers from the above analysis is that as these and many uncoordinated demands especially on men increased, women had to bear more and more the brunt of increased labour input required to keep the family farm work going at high enough level to guard against a decline of production and the standard of living of the family. The high handedness and corruption of the warrant chiefs which abused the system often led to the escape of able bodied young men for long periods of time leaving the weight of keeping the family to fall fully on the shoulders of women. Even the introduction of taxation that was expected to ease the burden of forced labour introduced a new twist to the entire story. Since it was difficult to earn enough cash from the traditional occupations, with which to pay tax, men began migrating to the urban areas periodically in search of paid employment. The result was that the economic burden, especially from the point of view of labour, continued to weigh heavily on the women just as in the period of forced labour.

Efforts have been so far made to show how women in Nsukka were able to manage these situations and how in spite of all odds, they helped in keeping afloat the colonial economy. The research showed that women played the role of family head, providing the basic necessities for their families while the husbands remained at home in spite of which they could not contribute to the family income because of the payment of tax. Many women travelled long distances as far as Onitsha, Ogurugu and Asaba in search of markets to sell their goods. Many continued with the processing of the all-important oil palm produce which the colonialists required for their European industries. Many tilled the land and those who couldnot had to hire labour and pay for it.

[2]Ibid.

5.2. Women in Agriculture

Agriculture especially food production suffered tremendously during the colonial period. The monetization of the economy resulting from colonial economic policies favoured the growth, harvest and processing of cash-crops to the detriment of food production as discussed earlier. There was a focus on the production of palm produce which was the major cash crop in the Nsukka area, resulting in the undermining of food production and other crops in the area. As the need arose, emphasis shifted from the production of palm produce to the production of cassava not necessarily for food for the people but to produce starch, which was greatly needed for military uniforms during the war years, and also to serve as glue in the wood industry. We must stress also that colonial infrastructural development policy depended on free labour, which was forcefully obtained by enacting several ordinances and acts which empowered the warrant chiefs to carry out the exercise.

The forceful recruitment of men and sometimes women to work on roads construction, bridge building, railway line construction and building of official and administrative buildings also impacted negatively on food production. Most young and able bodied men were carried away to the colonial palm plantations as well as in mines and native courts.[3] Many others who acquired education found employment in the trading firms as clerks, bookkeepers, and security workers. Some men were employed by the Missions as missionaries and teachers in mission schools.[4] Added to the above was the

[3] Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation, 1900-1960*, p. 88.
[4] Ibid.

withdrawal of the labour of children because of their schooling.[5] All these led to the decrease of the work force in the family farmland.

The implication of all these was that the burden of food production and processing in the Igbo region and Nsukka Division in particular fell on women. Women intensified their activities in food production and food processing. Most of the women who were hitherto engaged in textile and pottery making, whose industries were drastically affected by the lack of colonial industrial policy and an unhealthy competition with imports[6]moved back to the farms. Let us not forget that the processing and cracking of palm kernel and sale of palm oil became largely the responsibility of women. The colonial period also witnessed the erosion of women's right and access to the produce of the oil palm. In pre-colonial times, women had complete control of the production and processing of the palm oil and kernel. According to Lady Ezema Uchechukwu[7], men were not interested in the production of the oil palm nor the oil or kernel. In fact in those days, there was hardly any real use for the kernel apart from the extraction of kernel oil which served as pomade and medicine for catarrh. But with the development and commercialization of palm produce, men began to assert their claim at first on palm oil, making it even difficult for their wives to find enough oil to meet the food needs of the family. However, this met with stiff resistance as will be discussed in this work.

[5] Afigbo, p. 4.
[6] Chuku, p. 88.
[7]Interview with Lady Ezema Uchenna, C 76 years, Retired Civil Servant, Odenigbo, Nsukka, July25, 2012.

5.2.1. Food Production

For the Igbo in general, food production was central to the life and culture of the people. In fact it is believed that agriculture provided the basis for other non-agricultural products. Around Nsukka Division, especially areas such as Abakaliki, particularly Ikwo, Izzi, parts of Udi and Bende, food production was intense and there was fertile land in excess of demand.[8]In comparison to other parts of Igboland, these places had adequate land for food production. One significant aspect of the Igbo food economy was the place of labour as well as gender in food production. Most men or women were farmers and most families produced enough to last them all year. The labor resources of individual families were effectively mobilized for agricultural purposes. On the whole, labor was mobilized from individuals, family, extended family, age - grade as well as migrants. In all cases, the labour were either complemented or rewarded in cash or kind.[9]

Women were involved in agriculture as suppliers of labour, food crop and livestock producers, processors of food and fish products, marketers of peasant farm surplus, and transporters of farm supplies and farm products between the farm and the homes. These they did in addition to their domestic and household chores which they performed in a hostile and discriminatory socio-economic and cultural environment.[10] The foregoing notwithstanding, Nsukka women were able to bear the burden that was thrown at them with equanimity. Ekete Ezea[11]said that the absence of men jolted the women and kept

[8]I. Obi, "Igbo Food Economy up to 1990," in, Onwuka Njoku and Obi Iwuagwu (eds), *Topics in Igbo Economic History,* First Academic Publishers, Lagos, 2008, p. 7.
[9]Ibid, p. 12.
[10]O. Oluwemo, "Women in Agriculture in Nigeria" in, Amadu Sesay and Adetanwa Odebiyi, (eds), *Nigeria Women in Society and Development,* Dokun Publishing House, 1988, p. 59.
[11]Interview with Mrs. Ekete Ezea, C. 78 years, Farmer at Ikeagwu Isakpu Nsukka, August 22,20012

them on their feet, and they never looked back. With most of the men in the mines, or busy building official quarters, farm responsibility fell on women.

Unlike in other parts of Igboland where women tilled the land to make yam mounds, Nsukka women were never involved in tilling the soil but were always available to tend the farm, but with the introduction of colonialism, they tilled the land to plant cassava which was a new crop, and which the men rejected. They also farmed cocoyam, planted maize and legumes for the family food. The colonial period was the period that cassava was adopted as a food supplement to yam in Igbo land with the withdrawal of massive male labour from agriculture, cassava assumed the status of staple food farmed mainly by women. Ekete again recalls that most men in Nsukka could not touch cassava with a long stick, but that the growing absence of men in the farms made cassava to be one of the main diets in the family food menu. Afigbo further suggested that the cassava food revolution took place between the middle of the second decade of the 20th century and the end of the third decade.[12]He advanced, as reason for this revolution, the labour-saving in cassava planting and the decline of the input of male labour into family farm work either because of the 1918-1919 influenza epidemic or because of the growing labour demands of the colonial period which has already been pointed out.[13] Because of the above, women who bore the burden of providing food for the family preferred the cassava to the labour intensive yam. With cassava becoming a 'woman's crop' and gaining acceptance generally as time went on, women acquired more economic power

[12]A. E. Afigbo, p. 6.
[13]Ibid.

within the family.[14] In times of economic hardship, cassava provided the solution for the emergency situation.

Whereas yam was available for inclusion in the family menu from about November to May, cassava was available all year round[15]. This gave the women and their children economic independence from the men. Afigbo had observed that by the end of the colonial period, men in Igboland were becoming increasingly dependent on their women, especially their wives because of their versatility and availability of cassavaall the year round.[16] During the colonial period, family food needs were met largely from the farm holdings of the women leaving them with little surplus for sale to give them extra income.[17]

One other reason for the adoption of cassava as a major staple by women was that when it matured, it could be left in the soil for up to three years. However, such new species like the "Agric" and the sweet ones, which matured faster than the others, decayed easily if left for more than a year in the soil. Another advantage of cassava over yam was that it could be produced well in old farmlands with diminished fertility. It was productive even on poor soil, and it was also drought resistant.[18] Equally important was the fact that it required less labour, for example, a cassava farm required little weeding and no staking like the yam. It could be planted and harvested at any time of the year. L.C Uzozie also observed that cassava is not a true annual. At any time of the year, both

[14]Ibid.
[15]Interiew with Sir Ezema Chukwuma, C 86 years, Retired Civil Servant, Odenigbo Nsukka, July 25, 2011.
[16]A. E. Afigbo, p. 7.
[17]Oluwasola, p. 64.
[18]L.C. Uzozie, "Patterns of Crop Combination in the Three Eastern States of Nigeria," in, *Journal of TropicalGeographical*, 33, 1971, p. 66.

new and old crops can be observed growing in the field. In line with Paul Zeleza's[19] argument, cassava fits into Igbo utilitarian philosophy in the acceptance of innovations that were useful. Cassava not only provided women the opportunity for capital accumulation, it also symbolized their economic independence. Gloria Chukwu has pointed out that the knowledge of processing cassava into garri (farina) was a most remarkable development by women[20].

To produce garri, women had to peel the cassava tubers, wash them and hand grated them through the use of manual graters and later mechanical graters. It was labour intensive. The mashed cassava was put into a jute bag (Akpa-Aji) or baft bag (a special sack with tiny perforations made of synthetic cords) and tied on four wooden frames to drain the liquid.[21]Heavy objects were placed on top of the bag and it was left for two days to drain the liquid and ferment. The drained pulp was then sieved to remove fibers then fried. It takes 2 hours or more to grate a 50lb bag of cassava and another 2hours to fry the same quantity of garri using hand labour. Elsewhere in Igboland, palm oil was added to the pulp during frying while in the Nsukka area, women added palm oil to the mashed pulp after grating all with the intent to neutralize the prussic acid content of the cassava. The quantity of palm oil used was determined by the quantity of cassava and also the type of colour the producer wanted to have after processing. In some cases, palm oil was not added.

In Nsukka Division, women preferred the processing of cassava into fufu (mashed cassava) to garri. Garri was introduced into the Nsukka area from Aba and Onitsha around 1930. Cassava processing in the Nsukka area took mainly two forms. After the

[19] I. Z. Paul, *A Modern Economic History of Africa, Vol 1, CODESRIA,* 1993.
[20]G. Chuku, p. 104.
[21]Ibid.

harvest of the tuber, it was peeled, washed and socked in water for upwards of 5 days to ferment. Then it was sieved and the pulp tied to a bag to drain water. Thereafter, it was cooked at least twice to reduce the prussic acid content and pounded. It was served with a sauce. The other method of processing and preserving it was by fermenting it either peeled or unpeeled, then sieved, after which it was moulded and left to dry. This was most common among women from Nrobo, Okwutu, Okpuje, the Eketekere area and women of Uzo-Agu in present day Udenu and Isi-Uzo L.G.A.) [22]

Up to 1947, local people in Nsukka ate cassava in the form of fufu, and not in the form of garri. It was the stranger population that imported garri from Onitsha and Enugu from the 1930s.[23] Gloria Chuku has observed that in the garri producing areas of Ngwa, Umuahia, Ohayi and Obiarukwu in Anioma, the producers enjoyed the advantage of the labour saving technique of mechanized grater[24]. These were centers where large-scale garri production had started and was exported to other parts ofIgbo land. These graters were brought by the colonialists to enhance food production so as to cope with the challenge of food insecurity that could hamper colonial activities. Unfortunately she observed that no record exists of a woman owning a mechanized grater because of its cost and partly because only men were trained on how to use mechanized graters.[25]Women had to take their cassava tubers to grating centers which were few and far between, and paid men to have their cassava tubers grated. In most cases, they trekked very long distances and stood in endless queues to have their cassava tubers grated.

[22]Interiew with Mrs. Ogbomma Comfort, 65 years, Farmer and Trader, Ukpabi, August 15, 2012.
[23]Ibid.
[24]G. Chuku, p. 106.
[25]Ibid.

Chuku argued that the inconveniencies would have been avoided and time and labour saved if women were encouraged to own their own grater.[26]

It must be noted that the spread of cassava and the processing of same into food greatly increased the workload of women. Everything about cassava; from cultivation to harvesting and processing was done by women until it started gaining much economic value especially during the Second World War. Even during the war, women did most of the work.[27]Nigeria became a strategic highway with the closure of the Mediterranean Sea route to the allies and the loss of the Far East to Japan in 1942. Construction of military facilities was undertaken in Nigeria and this drew a vast labour force away from the rural areas. Very many able-bodied males left the farms and were recruited into the army and other related services. At the same time, government accelerated export production all to the detriment of domestic food production. This led to fewer hands for farm work and food production as well as increased load for women. Yet, women did not relent, rather, the war demands increased women's economic importance[28]. Garri production became very lucrative.

There was also a growing urban population which demanded for garri as food than had hitherto been the case. Urban centers in Igbo region such as Aba, Umuahia, Onitsha, Enugu, Owerri, Nsukka and Abakaliki acted as major stimuli to garri production and trade.[29]According to Mrs. Ogbonna many women took advantage of the trade in garri to

[26]Ibid.
[27]Ibid.
[28]Ibid.
[29]Ibid.

pay school fees for their children and some built houses with corrugated iron sheets in their husbands' home[30].

Many women took advantage of the boom in the sale of garri to hire more hands to farm their lands while their husbands were away or engaged in other activities. The transport revolution especially in the roads and railways in the 1940s also stimulated the sale of garri to the Northern cities of Jos, Kaduna, Zaria and Kano where southern emigrants had created a favourable market for food as well as mining labourers. Also the war drive for starch production helped to increase garri production because even before this time, the liquid starch was always removed before frying to reduce the acid content.[31] It was at this period that the cassava industry witnessed the influx of men into cassava production. . This led to the loss of exclusive control over cassava production and sale to men in some areas by the end of 1944 due to the influx of unemployed ex-service men that participated in the Second World War.[32]This did not go without resistance and complaint by the women. By the end of the 1940s, the marketing of cassava products fell practically into the hands of men, especially those that had modern graters and the modern means of transportation to convey their goods. However, while men dominated the wholesale trade in cassava products, women still dominated in the petty trade.But because no information exist in the archives of women participation in agriculture or trade, this claim cannot easily be verified but what is certain is that at this period, men became involved in the processing of cassava and cassava products impacting negatively on women economic independence. Many men also moved into domestic food production and distribution due to high market demand for food largely as a result of

[30]Interview: Mrs Ogbonna Comfort.
[31]G. Chuku, p. 108.
[32]Ibid.

urbanization. Garri being the region's major staple attracted the greatest number of local producers and distributors.

According to a report of the Agriculture Department in Umuahia in 1943, Aba was the chief centre from which garri was exported to the Northern provinces followed by Umuahia. Cassava production rose steadily and by 1938, 4,011 tons was produced costing (£14, 177.64); 1940-4000 tons (£14,838.76) and by 1942, 21000 tons (value not added)[33] were exported to other parts of Nigeria.

In June 1943, 2 cups of garri sold for 1d against 10 to 1d prior to government's regulations on export to the North. But Mrs Oyimaja Ogbu has argued that no part of the Igbo region could have produced cassava or garri higher than Nsukka given the quantity of cassava cultivated and harvested in the Nsukka area. She asserted that at every Eke Nimbo, in Uzo- Uwani, women and men from Onitsha and Awka flooded the market with big Lorries to buy cassava and garri. She maintained that much of the garri that was exported to the North were Nsukka garri just like palm oil[34].

Finally, the production of cassava empowered women economically and gave them financial independence. It reduced women's level of poverty and became a major source of cash income for women who engaged in the industry. Cassava thus became a symbol of independence and potential wealth to women[35] helping them to subsidize the family food demand even in some cases without the help of their husband. This improvement in their economic position enabled women to send their children to school, with some

[33]NNAE, ABADIST 14/1/863,"Palm Oil Control Scheme", and ABADIST 1/26/910 "Palm Oil Grading Figures, Eastern Provinces, (Excluding Cameroon'), in tons" December, 1944.
[34]Interview with Mr. Oyimaja Ogbu, C 82 years, Farmer and Trader, Nguru, Nsukka August 25, 2012.
[35]Gloria Chuku, p. 112.

helping to pay the dowry of their son's wives. Many assisted their husbands to take high titles and even to pay their taxes. Cassava was thus the most important crop ofthe Nsukka women in terms of resources allocation, product utilization and income generation[36].

It can be said to a large extent that cassava revolutionalized gender roles, division of labour and status in Nsukka Division during the colonial period. Another very important crop among the Igbo generally and Nsukka in particular was cocoyam. It was one of the crops referred to as "women crop". It was very important in the people's food economy. There were various species but the most common was the colocasia esculenta also known as taro and xanthosoma sagitifolium also called tania. The colocasia esculenta was more popular around Nsukka area. The different cultivators of this species were known by several names, such as nwa Ovoko, Akupe, Agbaka,Amagoke, Anwunye, Ugwuta and Enyamenya. Whereas the colocasia esculenta predominates in southeastern Nigeria generally, it was quite obscure in the southwest for instance, where xanthosoma was the main cocoyam species grown[37.] The xanthosoma was also referred to as the new cocoyam because it was believed to be an introduced variety. It was regarded to be the male cocoyam with several cultivars known by different names among the people of Nsukka area. They include Ede Ocha, Ede Buji, Ede Beke, Ede Oku and Ede Uhie.[38]Cocoyam which was widely cultivated in Igboland was generally regarded as a patient and kind crop, which produced very well even with very minimal attention. It was regarded as the poor man's food hence it was referred to as women's crop.

[36]Ibid.
[37]"Strategies for Increasing Cocoyams and Xanthosoma Spp" in, *Nigeria Food Basket*, in, O.B. Anene, et al., (eds), *Cocoyam,* August 16,1987, Umuahia: National Root Crop Research Institute (NRCRIT).
[38]Obi Iwuagwu, p. 28.

In other parts of Igboland, cocoyam cultivation was not pursued with the same seriousness and vigor like other crops in the Nsukka area. It was planted during the early rain by April and harvested around December or January. After harvesting, it was cooked in large pots made out of drums. The cooking lasts for as long as 6 hours for it to boil or cook well. It was then peeled and left to dry either in the sun or in the kitchen rafter. Thereafter in the farming season, it was prepared as a special delicacy. Women did the entire work from processing to preservation. It provided food substitute during off-seasons when yam and other food crops were scarce. The delicacy made out of cocoyam was most notable in the Nsukka area of Igbo land and people referred to it as achicha[39].

Maize cultivation in the East was peripheral, unlike the situation in other parts of Nigeria. Though a newly introduced crop[40], it has been cultivated in Nigeria for a long time, featuring in the country's export list since the begining of the 20th century[41]. In explaining the situation of maize in Eastern Nigeria, Okigbo said that cereals never really got fully adopted as major crops because they would have made excessive demands on the land. He also noted that their mode of preparation as flour was never really fancied until much later[42]. But by the late 1940s, maize (Oka) had become an important crop in the food economy of the Igbo. Of all the grains grown in Igbo land, it has the widest

[39]Lady Ezema Uchechkwu.
[40]See M.P. Miracle, "Maize in Tropical Africa,"Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1966, in, N. W. Simmonds, (ed), *Evolution of Crop Plants*, London: Longman,1979, G. Rouanet, *Maize*, The Netherlands, Macmillan, 1987, and R.F. Irvine, *West Africa Crops*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.
[41]Obi Iwuagwu, p. 31.
[42]P.N. Okigbo, "Towards a Reconstruction of the Political Economy of Igbo Civilization," Ahiajoku Lecture Series, 1986, Owerri Government Printer, 1986, p. 6.

distribution in view of its importance as a hunger-breaking crop[43]. It was usually the first crop harvested in the agricultural year[44].

The planting, harvesting, processing and preservation of maize was an entirely women affair. It was prepared in several ways especially as pap, Akamu to feed children and as breakfast for the entire family. It was also eaten fresh or dried. It was either roasted or cooked and eaten together with coconut, palm kernel, native pear or bread fruit. Elder Reuben Asogwa recalled that in those days at St Cyprians Teachers Training College, Nsukka, it served to sustain poor students who came from afar-off. According to him, it was fried not exactly as popcorn, and mixed with palm kernel which was served to them as mid-day lunch. He also recalled with a bit of sarcasm that even some of the teachers bought it from the local women who sold their wares around the school compound[45].

Maize was often inter-cropped with other food staples such as yam, cassava, cocoyam,and others. It was planted between mounds and took only three months to mature. It did not interfere with the growth of other crops which was what dictated its acceptance by Igbo women first and the men later[46]. Other staples also existed which enlarged the Igbo food economy and helped to create a variety in the Igbo food menu. Such crops included the vigna unguiculata, species. These were leguminous crops which like all other women's crop were planted at the slope of the yam mound. These included Akidi Elu, Akidi Ala,Ochokwu (small white beans found mainly at Unadu, Itchi and Ero-

[43]Iwuagwu, pp. 44-51.
[44]G.T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria,* London, Frank Cass and Company, 1966, p. 147.
[45]Interview with Elder Reuben Asogwa, 82 years, Retired School Headmaster, Iheakpu Awka, Igbo-Eze L.G.A, 28th August, 2012.
[46]Ibid.

Agu) Oraru Dibought from the North, Agbugbu (fiofio) and Ijiriji. These crops were planted by the women, harvested and preserved pending their demand for family use.

In fact what constituted the Igbo food economy ranged from crops, vegetables, fruits, oils and animals.[47]Apart from yam, all other crops that constituted the rich Igbo menu were "women's crops." In Nsukka area, men cleared and prepared the land, planted the yams, cut stakes and tended the yam vines, built the yam barns and staked the yams. Women planted the other variety of crops, weeded the farm two or three times, carried the harvested yams from the farm to the barn. In fact one daresto say that 80% of the total labour input into the Igbo food economy was done by women. Apart from planting food crops, they were also responsible for planting fruits like orange, native pear, banana, plantain, guava, pineapples, cashew, mango, African bread fruit,and others. They also farmed vegetables such as fluted pumpkin, cam-wood, bitter leaf, amarathus spinosus, okra, guinea pepper, African pepper,and others species. They also kept animals like domestic fowl, guinea fowl and even some reared native cow. These were used to improve on the family diet but were often sold in the market to help raise money for other use. This improved diet led to improved health leading to increase in population which greatly improved the colonial economy.

5.2.2.ExportCrop Production

The returns from oil palm products were by far the largest single source of cash income to the colonial administration of South Eastern Nigeria and the Igbo during the colonial period. The African oil palm, Elias Guinness, was one of the most important economic products. The leaves were used for thatching huts, the palm wine extracted

[47]O. Iwuagwu, p. 76.

from the growing bud of the tree was used as alcoholic beverage, the dead palm was a valuable source of timber, for use as pillars and beams, fuel for cooking, and a breeding medium for such edible fungi such as the mushroom[48]. Commercially the two products of importance were the palm oil and palm kernels. The palm oil was also a valuable source of vitamins to indigenous diets[49]. By the middle of 1500, palm oil the most valuable product of the oil palm tree entered the international trade of Nigeria albeit in very small amount[50].

However, following the Industrial Revolution in Europe, the demand for palm margarine, cooking fats, candles and lubricants, and kernel chaff, oil and palm kernel oil for production of soap, and livestock feed increased[51]. Peasant farmers responded impressively to the increased demands resulting in increase in export figures, four fold for palm kernel within the same period[52]. By the mid 1910s, Nigeria became the largest exporter of palm oil and kernels in the world. The value of palm produce export had increased from £1.5million in 1900 to over £40 million in the 1960s[53]. Njoku asserted that at the early decades of the colonial rule, palm produce accounted for 81.5% of the total value of Nigeria export earnings. However, Usoro argued that the export value of palm products as a percentage of total domestic exports averaged 82.1% between 1906 and 1919, between the beginning of the first and second World Wars,from 1914-1938 it averaged 50.6%. From 1939 the percentage contribution of palm produce relative to the

[48]E.Y. Usoro, *The Nigerian Oil Palm Industry*, Ibadan University Press, 1974, p. i.
[49]K..M. Buvhana and pugh J.C., *Land and people in Nigeria,* London, London University Press,1966, p. 132.
[50]A. J. Lathan, *Old Calabar, 1600-1891*, Oxford, 1973.
[51]N. Onwuka, *Economic History of Nigeria 19th and 20th Centuries*, Magnet Business Enterprises, Enugu, 2001, p. 154.
[52]Ibid.
[53]Ahazuem and Falola, "Production for the Metropolis," in, Falola, (ed*), Britain and Nigeria,* table 51.

value of total exports was still high despite increase in the number and value of other primary products exported as well as the value of mineral oil since its first export in 1956. In the periods 1939-54 and 1955-64, palm products share of the value of total domestic export averaged 34.1% and 22.0% respectively[54].

In addition to its export value, the oil palm industry had contributed significantly to export duty revenue both in absolute terms and proportionately. For example, after the introduction of export duty in 1916, the total annual revenue from export duty in 1917 and 1918 amounted to £330.639 and £490.917, respectively, which translated to 91.4% and 82.4% of the total revenue for the period. By 1952, export duty on palm products totaled £4,054,969 which represented 46. 3% of total export duty. Other duties like the purchase sales tax further contributed to the revenue of the oil palm belts. From 1955-1965, palm produce sales tax in Eastern Nigeria amounted to £1,050,000 representing 44.9% of the regions internal revenue[55]. The 1962/63 census showed that 70% of the 5,244,000 farmers,that is, 3,670,000, were engaged in palm production[56]. However what this census did not state was the contribution of women to the production, processing and sale of palm produce.

By the 1920s, the colonial administration made some efforts at influencing the future of the palm industry and increasing its productivity. By 1928, government had encouraged farmers to trim or cut down some of the overgrown palms in their groves and also weed same regularly. The exercise was not well received as the people could neither see the rational of cutting down palms that were still yielding fruits nor the importance of weeding palm groves as if they were yam farms. Between 1928 and 1939, the native

[54] E.J. Usoro, p. 3.
[55]Ibid.
[56] Eastern Nigeria Census Office Report, Enugu, 1964, p. 2.

administrations had established nurseries for palm seedlings as well as encouraged indigenous farmers to establish small scale palm plantations[57]. The promulgation of the Cultivated Oil Palm Ordinance in 1935, which required any farm that had up to 15 acre plantation of palms to register with the department of agriculture, as well as oil from such palm to enjoy attractive export duty rebate for its high quality helped to increase the number of privately owned palm plantation by the indigenes[58]. However, there is yet no record of any woman owning any oil palm plantation or being encouraged or assisted to own one by the colonial government. Yet the industry was dominated by women. Another method adopted to improve the quality and quantity of palm produce was the introduction of palm presses and nut-cracking machines. These were introduced to economize on labor. This was the first effort ever made to mechanize the oil palm industry. However, this initiative was taken by private trading companies and not the colonial government. Again, there is no evidence of any woman owning any press or nut nutcracker.

At Nsukka, women resisted the installation of any such machine because according to Ekete Ezea, only men were trained on how to manipulate the machine. Nsukka women feared that should the machines be installed, men will completely abandon the farms. Secondly, she argued that women shunned the palm presses because they were advised to pay for the extraction of the oil with the Kernel which they reasoned will deprive them of a major source of income[59]. Male focused training also eliminated women from palm oil

[57] NNAE, ARODIV20/1/83, "Annual Report, 1953, Arochukwu District, by H.C. Byatt, A.D.O.
[58] PUBLIC Records Office, London, (PROL), (0583)199, "Cultivated Oil Palm Ordinance, 6th June, 1935" and NNAE, RIVPROF8/11/167, "Progress Report on Oil Palm Improvement, 29th January, 1937.
[59]Interview with Ekete Ezea, Ikeagwu, Isakpu Nsukka

production which was one of their traditional occupations. In Nsukka traditional palm produce processing, a woman took not only the Kernels but also part of the oil from which she realized money to meet her own needs. Women in Nsukka therefore protested against the introduction of palm oil presses and payment with kernels because the development undermined their entrenched rights over palm produce production. For this reason, therefore, no sales of oil presses were recorded up till 1937 even after the initial demonstration has been recorded. Inspite of this, Nsukka oil commanded a high price from local middlemen because of its high quality[60]. Thus, the women saw no need for the adoption of the new technology.

The traditional method gave women absolute control of the extraction and sale of palm produce. An annual report of the Onitsha Province reported in 1937 that Nsukka women opposed the introduction of presses because they feared that the use of press would enable men to keep closer check on the amount produced[61], and also reduce women's income. It must be stated here that the opposition to the nut crackers by Nsukka women was not because they were resentful of scientific methods of extraction as Margery Perham[62] would argue but because such innovation excluded them from taking part in palm production and thus denied them the opportunity to benefit from the industry.

The role of women in the production of palm produce cannot be ever-emphasized. From pre-colonial times to the present day, women dominated the processing of palm produce. Because it was a taboo for women to climb trees, men climbed the palm trees to

[60]G. Chuku, p. 12.
[61]NNAE ONPROF 1/14/523, File No EP1542, Vol 1A "1929 Annual Report Onitsha Province."
[62]P., Margery, *The Native Economies of Nigeria,* Oxford: Faber and Faber, 1946, p. 229.

cut down the palm heads. From collection to transportation of the palm nuts by head poter-age to cooking and processing,and the extraction of palm oil and Kernel was within the domain of women. They traveled long distances to the stream like Ohe Nsukka at Umakashi, Iyi Nsukka at Isiakpu, Nwokpa at Ibagwa to fetch water. Lejja women traveled as far as Enugu-Ezike to fetch water with gourds[63]. The only period of respite was the rainy season when they collect water to fill the earthen ware pots buried at the back of each compound, ezoro. Careful use of water collected may last a period of up to 3-4 months after cessation of rain. They were also responsible for the gathering of firewood with which to boil the palm nuts. When the nuts have been cooked which may last for at least 6 hours depending on the availability of firewood; it was spread out to cool. Thereafter, it was poured into a mortar measuring about 2 meters in length and half a meter in width. It may require two women to marsh the cooked nut with legs to separate the outer layer which contained the oil from Kernel.

Ezema further observes that mashing of palm nuts was a very tedious job which may last for about one hour or more. After the marsh, about 100 liters of water or more was required to help separate the oil from the pulp,which was another tedious job that required stooping down for another hour. When the oil was separated, it was again cooked for another 1 hour[64]. For all these efforts, about 20liters of good edible oil was produced. No wonder till date Nsukka oil has been the preferred cooking oil across Nigeria. By 1940 when the colonial administration discovered that there was an over-production of oil and Kernel which had drastically affected food production and other crops in the region leading to food scarcity, they called for a shift in emphasis towards

[63]Interview with Lady Uchenna Ezema.
[64] Lady Ezema Uchechukwu.

the production of cassava not to produce more food for the people but to produce starch which was much needed for military uniforms as was stated earlier[65]. Two years later, it was palm Kernel. Measures were taken by the colonial administration to increase Kernel production. To this end, the trade in garri was controlled.

In 1942, price control measures were introduced to reduce the price of garri throughout the eastern region from 8s to between 3s6d and 4s per 901b bag[66]. This measure drastically affected women who were the major producers of garri. Government imposed restrictions of exportation of garri to the Northern region where it had enjoyed a boom for the reason of Southern immigrants who were employed in the military and para-military operational bases and services such as building army barracks, roads and aerodromes and as military porters and combatant soldiers with their families[67]. This had created a large market for garri and palm oil. It was more lucrative for women to produce garri than oil or Kernels. For example, while the average returns per day for a woman in palm produce was 45.4d that of garri production was 65.6d.[68] To attract producers back to palm produce production, government had to adapt yet a number of measures. It promulgated the Nigerian Defense Regulations of 1939, and later in 1943, the Food Controls Order which restricted trade in domestic produce between Districts, Provinces and even between Regions. When these measures did not work, the ministry of food considered increasing the price of Kernel slightly which was the most needed at that time.

[65]NNAE AIDIST 2/1/907 "Governor Broadcast on Food Production" August 1940.
[66]NNAE ABADIST 14/1/873, File No. 1646, Vol 11, "Garri. Control of" D. O, ABA 2nd July 1943; and NNA1, CCI 1/1, File No. 4038/S.6, 'Restrictions on the Movement of Foodstuffs-Garri, 7th January, 1943.
[67]Ibid.
[68]NNAE, ABADIST 14/1/863, 'Palm Produce Production, Agriculture Department, Umuahia to the Resident, Owerri Province, 14 May 1943.

The prices that appointed agents should pay for kernel was increased from £5.85 6d per ton to £7.86ds 6d, from 8s 10d per bag to 12s 3d, and 25 5d per bushel to 35 3d[69].

Furthermore, women and children were made to crack more Kernels. The production officer of Owerri Province, Mr. J.A McCall encouraged women and children to crack kernels as a win-the-war measure. According to him, "this production business is our particular war effort, and surely that should come first, even if other duties of administration have to suffer[70]. The colonial administration mounted a series of propaganda machineries directed especially at women appealing for the cracking of more kernels. Posters with snappy sentences such as, "CRACK KERNELS, CRACK HITLER", and "WOMEN, DOES CRACKING WORRY YOURWAIST? YES, BUTDON'T WORRY YOUR CRACKING IS GIVING HITLER A SERIOUS HEADACHE"[71], were pasted everywhere in the Igbo area. These measures culminated in an increase in the production of the commodity in the entire Eastern Provinces. Export increased from 157, 715 tons in 1940 to 170,096 tons in 1941, and to 170, 451 in 1942[72]. Looking at the figures given above, the revenue generated from export and the purchase sales tax that accrued to the colonial administration at the expense of the labor of women, it may not be an overstatement to conclude that the colonial economy of Nsukka Division and by extension Southeastern Nigeria was derived from the sweat of women, as mothers, wives and sisters.

[69]Ibid.
[70] NNAE ABADIST, "Garri Control of 29th May, 1943.
[71] NNAE ABADIST, "Garri Control of 14/1/873" and 14/1/863, Palm Produce Production
[72]Gloria Chukwu, Igbo Women and Economic Transformation p. 99.

5.3. Women in Trade and Commerce

The colonial period witnessed far reaching changes in the economic role of women in southeastern Nigeria and Nsukka in particular. As stated earlier, the market place was the domain of women even in the pre-colonial period. They dominated trade. Infact, most of the products which were sold were food items which women exchanged for what they did not have. Men rarely went to market except to drink palm wine or to unwind with friends. Even the yam which was a man's crop was sold by the women. However, colonialism introduced new economic changes that were revolutionary. These changes that were introduced by the colonialists were designed to guarantee law and order for a proper exploitation of African natural resources for the development of the metropolis. Like we stated earlier, these changes had both adverse and favorable effects on women.

One impact that colonialism had on women was the fact that the Pax Britannica freed the highways and foot paths between towns of land pirates and head hunters and other man-made dangers. This meant that women could now engage more fully in local and intercommunity trade without having to wait until they had male escorts[73]. This ushered in a new dynamism in local and regional petty trading from which women benefited immensely. Secondly, the effective adoption of cassava as a food supplement to yam took place at this period[74]. The period also witnessed the processing of cassava into garri a major commodity of exchange during the colonial period. The rise of urban centers as economic bases also impacted on the economic fortunes of women[75]. It must

[73]A.E. Afigbo, p. 6.
[74]Ibid.
[75]J.O.N. Eze and C. Okonjo, "Trade and Transport in Nsukka Division", in, *Nsukka The Problems of Change and Continuity,* Seminar organized by the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 6th-11th February, 1972. P. 8.

be stressed here that the colonial economies of Africa depended primarily on the metropolitan countries which colonized them for their external trade. This dependence reflected the exploitative structural integration of the colonial economy to the capitalist system of the metropolis. The structural integration was also a function of the coercive measures which the colonizing powers used to transform the colonial economy to their interest[76]. Thus, Oyimaja Ogbu was quick to point out that the demand for oil and palm kernels forced many women to join in the palm produce trade. She recalled that many women had to join their husbands to search out the product even as they had to travel as far as Lejja, Ohodo, Ozalla and sometimes as far as Aku in search of palm produce. Initially according to her, men provided the capital. But as women bought and sold, they were able to make profit and some were able to take up businesses of their own. She recalls that they travelled as far as Ogurugu where they sold their wares and bought fish in return which they sold at the Nsukka market from where they made profits.

Those who were involved in garri production like Mrs. Nwabueze Comfort traveled as far as Onitsha where they sold their wares. According to her, she bought articles of clothing from Onitsha which she sold at Eke Nimbo, Opanda, and Eke Nwozege at Nkporogu and at Ukpabi. Mrs. Nwabueze however lamented that as soon as men discovered the profitability of the trade, women could no longer compete with the men who were much more financially empowered than the women[77]. The exception was in the sale of condiments where women dominated. They were conspicuous in the daily urban markets that sprang up in the new urban centers like Nsukka. They sold such things like

[76]A. Claude, *A Political Economy of Africa*, London: Longman, 1981, p. 48.
[77]Interview with Mrs Ogbonna Comfort.

fish, pepper, dried okra (Ukpo okwuru), fresh okra, vegetables of all types, crayfish and salt which they bought from Ohaozara.

The rise of urban centres led to migrations into the cities by artisans like carpenters, bicycle repairers, masons, shoe cobblers, local shoe manufacturers and civil servants who were mostly young men. Many of them depended on mobile food vendors which women readily provided. They sold such local delicacies like ayaraya Oka, Igbagwu, Okpa, Rice and Beans. Some prepared fufu made of cassava with soup and even garri. Mrs. Hanna Obeta Asogwa was renowned as a cook by her customers like Sir Ezema Chuwuma. She had five children who through her sole effort, was able to sponsor them to acquire Teacher Training Education. She was widely known as a stockiest and wholesaler of Bambara beans,Okpa, African mango (Irvingia gabonensis) Ogbono, and oil Bean (pentaclethra macrophyila), Ugba.

Another woman who was renowned for stocking food items was Mrs. Iyi Nwelete from Nsukka. She stocked such items such as palm oil, Kola nut, (cola acuminate) Oji Igbo, and Bitter Kola (Gacinia cola) Aku Ilu. She was also popular for her salt factory at Echara Nsukka. Another woman who was outstanding is Mrs. Urama Okike from Amufie, Enugu Ezike. She travelled as far as Umunede, to buy Kola nuts and Bitter Kola. Her son Venerable Urama Jonathan[78]recalls that she travelled for several days to buy Kola nut from Umunede. He observed that as a child he never lacked anything good because his mother made sure he and his siblings had a good education. She helped her husband to build a house with stone and corrugated iron sheet. The house was built since 1954 and still stands till date. She owned two bicycles, a Dodge and a Raleigh. The first

[78]Interview with Venerable Urama Jonathan Chukwualuka, 65 years, Retired School Principal, 12/11/2012.

was used by her son Jonathan to carry some wares to market for her while she herself rode on the other with her wares. She stocked all manner of wares like Bambara Beans, Okpa, Maize, Beans, Melon, Ogbonno and palm oil. She was so popular that she was generally referred to as Mama Amufie , the mother of Amufie [79]. Other women who owned bicycles in those days included Kaka Ugwuanyi and Nwada Idoko[80]. These women were able to buy bicycles at the cost of £5 which helped in facilitating their businesses and gave them an edge over some men. Most of them were breadwinners in their families. They were enterprising and industrious, traveling even as far as Orie Orukpa and Aho Adupi in present day Benue State and Orie Ogurugu in Kogi State.

An informant named Urama Okike recalls that many women had to leave for market as early as 3.am on foot while those who could afford bicycle like herself left by 6.am. Women continued to dominate local village markets and urban petty trade during the colonial period. Their chief articles of trade included foodstuffs, vegetables, spices, products of local crafts and industries, and other imported provisions. Many of them engaged in other economic activities (usually on part time basis) such as food processing, farming and local crafts to augment their income from trade.

As stated earlier, the production and marketing of palm oil and Kernels, the main exports of the Igbo, had been the preserve of women. Even with men's intervention following the commercialization of the industry most Igbo women still dominated the trade in palm oil and kernels. By 1914, women had begun to earn cash in their own right from the export trade in palm produce. They valued palm kernel as their reward for helping in oil processing, and the usefulness of the kernel trade as a source of cash for

[79]Interview with Urama Jonathan.
[80]Interview with Urama Okike, about 96 years old, Retired Palm Produce Agent and Trader 12/11/2012.

them. Infact most women in Nsukka tried to combine different sources of income and were constantly exploring ways of diversifying these sources. Increased income gave Nsukka women economic independence. They were able to buy foodstuff if their husbands did not produce or provide enough. They also accumulated money for hard times so as to pay school fees and health bills if the need arose.

5.4. Women in Industry and Manufacturing

Igbo traditional economy stood on a sectorial tripod that embedded agriculture, trade and manufacturing. These sectors had an inter-dependent relationship; the development of one impacted that of the others[81]. With specific reference to manufacture and trade, it should be stressed that manufacture provided the context for trade that was the distribution of goods from areas of plenty (low marginal utility) to those of deficiency (high marginal utility). Trade also stimulated manufacture by creating a vent for the disposal of surplus production, thus moving the economy away from subsistence to market orientation[82]. However, the first two decades of colonial rule were marked by the acceleration of the de-industrialization of the economy that resulted inthe destruction of local industries. Sometimes, this was because traditional industries had difficulty in competing with the mass outputs of the western industrialized economy.

Iron smelting ceased to exist. Salt production declined serving only in so far as it catered for local needs. Local textile production declined. Northern Nigeria had by the 1920s changed from an exporter of cloth to an exporter of cotton and an importer of cloth[83].The de-industrialization of Northern Nigeria was orchestrated by government

[81]Onwuka, Economic History, p. 57.
[82]Ibid.
[83]W.M. Freand and R.W. Shent on 'Vent for Surplus Theory and the Economic History

policy. The notorious caravan tax, imposed in 1902 and first collected in1903, added to the cost oftextiles from Northern Nigeria. The abolition of tax on British textiles in 1904 by Lugard gave a clear fiscal advantage to the later over the former.[84] Local textiles survived only in special markets in Igbo land because it was used only for traditional ceremonies.

5.4.1. Textile Making

The textile industry in Igboland and indeed in Nigeria suffered enormously in the colonial period. Rev Basden reported that in the first decades of the 20th century, cotton was grown throughout the Igbo country[85]. The best known areas of production were Ndoki with Akwete as the nexus; Aniocha with Asaba and Agbo as the leading center; Nsukka, Udi and Abakiliki[86]. Unlike other crafts, no rituals or taboo was involved in the production system of textiles.[87]The technique of production though simple and the tools home-made the process was tedious and energy sapping[88]. Textile production was a typical home craft with a flexible organization principle. There was no fixed production time, and the loom could be located and worked in any part of the family compound.

The five main production stages include ginning, carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving. Nsukka-made textile was widely distributed in Southeastern Nigeria and beyond. By the 1850s, W.B. Baikie had commented favorably on the presence of Elugu Igbo clothes in the Niger-Benue confluence environs. He described the clothes as unique

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of West Africa," *Savannah*, 1977, pp. 191-6.
[84]M. Johnson, "Cotton Imperialism in West Africa," in, *African Affairs*, Vol. 5, 1974, p. 183.
[85]G.T Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, London, 1921, p. 325.
[86] Onwuka, "Manufacture and Trade In Igbo Culture," in, Onwuka Njoku and Obi Iwuagwu, (eds), *Topics in Igbo Economic History*, First Academic Publishers, Lagos, 2008, p. 61.
[87]W.B. Baikie, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwara and Benue*, London, 1856.
[88]Interview with Mrs Mary Eze, about 65 years, former Weaver, Caterer, 24th June, 2012.

for the elaborate decorative perforations. Around the Aniocha area, clothes produced by their women were snowy white, a colour which was associated with the people's philosophy of the pure and heavenly[89]. In pre-colonial days, the textile industry was a major source of wealth for Nsukka women. It was both an economic pursuit and a way of life for Nsukka women. Mothers taught their daughters the craft from their tender years, such that at the age of puberty, they had mastered all the intricacies of the craft as discussed earlier.

An informant, named Mrs. Eze, recounts that weaving started with ginning, a process by which cotton seeds and other extraneous materials were extracted from the cotton. This was done by pocking out undesired matter by hand. This was followed by casing, a method of disengaging the cotton fiber. This was done with a carding bow made of resilient wood and about half an inch in diameter, the ends of which were attached to a string[90]. The bow string was snapped with a small flattered stick between the thumb and forefinger. The snapping caused the string to vibrate through the mass of ginned cotton, paralleling out the fibre and thereby aligning it properly for spinning. Spinning was done on a wooden spindle 6-8 inches long. To spin, a piece of cotton was pulled out from the mass and the end attached to the spindle. Then more cotton was drawn out, thereby obtaining a thread of fluff. The spindle was set spinning by a sharp twist between the thumb and the fore-finger[91].

This was a time consuming and tedious job as was stated earlier. Basden had reported that Igbo women were such experts that they "caused the spindle to revolve so

[89] Onwuka, p. 62.
[90] O. Njoku, *Economic History of Nigeria,* p. 68.
[91] Ibid.

rapidly that it appears to be stationary[92]. Onwuka has noted that dyeing was an intricate and long drawn process demanding much patience[93]. Expert dyers from Igalaland came to Nsukka area of Igbo land to teach weavers the art. Some of them settled permanently at Nsukka especially at Ibagwa-Ani and Edem.

Around the Nsukka area, weaving was done on a horizontal broadloom which was made of wood and which was usually homemade. The vertical loom was the most common in Nigeria in which women wove. Vertical looms produced clothes in the general length of 6 to 9feet and a width of 12 to 22 feet. Horizontal looms produced much narrower strips. Around the Nsukka area, women rejected the spinning wheel that was introduced by the colonial officials because local spinners using local methods produced high quality threads which they sold to the weavers at cheaper rates than those spun on wheel. The locally-spun threads were not only cheap but were also as light as the imported yarns[94]. However, the imported yarns were so expensive that the average indigenous weavers could not afford them[95]

Nsukka weavers made use of both locally spun yarns from their Northern Nigeria neighbors as well as imported yarns. At Ibagwa-Ani and Edem centres of weaving in Nsukka, clothes woven with imported yarn was called Orii. Mrs. Obeta Maria claims that Orii was an imitation of the Akwete, Yoruba and Igbira clothes. Orii was lighter and more beautifully designed than clothes woven with local yarns, and therefore more expensive. Mrs. Obeta further observed that tailors could sew Orii into garments without constantly breaking the machine needles because it was lighter than clothes woven with

[92] Ibid
[93] Ibid
[94] G. Chuku, p. 138.
[95]Interview with Mrs. Eze Mary.

local yarns. The local industry began to suffer, firstly with the trade in palm produce becoming lucrative and women giving most of their attention to it and secondly, the imported yarn was very expensive which further increased the cost of production leading to reduced sales, and; thirdly, the influx of cheap European manufactured articles into the market. Some of the weavers turned to garri production and pettytrading. Many of the weavers interviewed attested to the fact that local textile weaving helped them and their mothers to supplement whatever their husband was able to provide for the family. Many were able to take such traditional titles like Ori N'echi-one who is celebrated alive. However, with the influx of European fabrics which were cheaper and more fanciful the demand for locally made clothes began to decline.

The emergence of less tedious and more profitable occupations like garri production and trade in imported goods also adversely affected the industry as many abandoned the loom. Meanwhile, Akwete weavers were able to navigate the many changes that accompanied colonialism and capitalism to keep their industry alive and strong till date. They adopted the colorful machine made yarns in place of locally made cotton threads in their weaving. They also adopted various patterns and designs from exotic motifs. These innovations were possible because the women were both inventive and receptive to change. Women weavers had recorded considerable achievement with respect to the quality, style and quantity of their products, and in marketing and distribution of their products.

5.4.2. Pottery Making

Pottery was one of the most ancient crafts of human kind, predating the Neolithic Revolution.[96] In Nigeria, archaeological evidence from Iwo-Eleru, Afikpo and Nsukka has revealed several pottery traditions dating back several millennia before Christ.[97] Pottery was a woman's preserve. Its production was widely diffused in pre-colonial Nigeria. In Igboland, the centers of production that were represented in published literatures included Inyi, Ishiagu and Ibeku. There were other producing centers in other parts of Nigeria which include Oshogbo, Oyo-Ile, Abeokuta, Jebba, Badagi, Bida, Kwom, Naraguta, Birom and Abuja[98]. The industry had a wide distribution. Nevertheless, a few centres did achieve enviable artistic and technical excellence, for instance, the high quality of the potters that their products were in great demand for many miles around. Bida specialized in the production of clay lamps and small pitchers used for ablution. Abuja pots achieved recognition beyond the immediate production vicinity[99]. In Nsukka area, Nrobo was the only centre of pottery production which achieved wide recognition. Other centres had lost out due to pressure from trade in palm produce.

The tools and techniques of production were simple. Its processes were delicate and demanded enormous patience and manual dexterity while others were grueling and even dangerous. Nrobo is a hilly area hence the winning of clay (urua) involved tunneling. The method of winning the clay from the pre-colonial period did not change. The tools and method of tunneling remained the same just like the method of moulding. Anyaboru

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[96] O. Njoku, *Economic History Nigeria,* p. 56.
[97]D.D. Hartle, "Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria ," *Nigeria Magazine*, 99, 1967, pp. 136-7. A. Fagg, "Pottery from the Rop Rock Shelter Excavations of 1944 and 1964*," West African Journal of Archaeology*, 1972, pp. 29-38, Benard Fagg, "Recent Work in West Africa, New Light on the Nok Culture," *World Archaelogy*, 1969.
[98]O. Njoku, p. 47.
[99] Ibid.

Nwogede recounted that the pots were sold at Nkwo Ibagwa, Okwutu, Eke Abi and at Orie Nrobo. Transportation in those days was by head poterage. To get to Nkwo Ibagwa, the women traveling in group left Nrobo as early as 4.am to enable them arrive Ibagwa at around 8.am or 10.am. They carried between 5 to 10 medium size multipurpose pots, each costing between 4pence to 6pence in the 1930s.[100] During the first and second world wars, pottery products attracted better prices. During the war, an average big water pot cost 4 shillings, which attracted more hands into the industry. If an average potter produced 7 pots in two native weeks, at the price of 4 shillings per big water pot, she will be making about28s 6d a month far above what a government worker who at that time received an average of 10s-15s a month[101].Against claims by some scholars, pottery production was not a part time home industry for Nsukka women. The production of pottery wares took all their time as many involved in the industry had no time for the farm. They had to hire other women who helped them to weed the farms of their husband and get paid from their pockets[102].

The potters were all agreed as to the uses of the profit made from the sales. Apart from job satisfaction, they were able to supplement the family income and for the family food menu. They bought rice, beans and condiments which helped to give variety to the family diet. They also bought clothes for themselves and their children. Some of them were responsible for the payment of the children school fees. Many took such titles such as Lolo-Anyi and Ogbu Anyinya a title which gave them status among women and which accorded political right and respect in the village and even town. The industry did not

[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Interview with Okike Okoro, 70 years, Potter and Trader, Nrobo, Uzo Uwani, 18/11/2012.

suffer much from competition with imported pots since most of the European pots served mainly as cooking pots. Secondly, Nsukka people needed the pots to preserve water during the rainy season. Thirdly, they considered water from the clay pots to be cooler than water stored in European wares. Because of the taboos surrounding the craft, it was insulated from men unlike in other businesses.

5.5. Women's Response to Colonial Economic Policies

Whether the African woman was engaged in cottage industry or was a farmer, as a trader in all manner of goods, she enjoyed her own income and a degree of financial independence from her husband[103]. In Africa, the European type housewife was unknown. This was what the colonial administrators were ignorant of and made polices that were detrimental to the economic independence of women. To some of these policies, their reaction was passive but to some, they declared full scale war on the colonial administration and native authorities.

Within their corporate power, women in Nigeria were able to confront the colonial administration, when the latter introduced measures that worked against their interests[104]. With a Victorian background, the colonial administrator considered African women as unfit for many of the occupations and civil life. Most of their policies infringed on the traditional economic and political rights of women. The price control of palm produce, the taxes that were introduced, the control of the market place, palm produce processing, (Pioneer Oil Mills), the control of the sale of garri towards the North all met with

[103]Obadima Elizabeth, in, "WIN," *Women in Nigeria Today,* 1985, p. 140.
[104]G. N. Amuluche, "Women Struggle in Pre-colonial and Colonial Nigeria: Lessons for Modern Feminism," in, *The Kpim of Feminism, Issues and Women in a Changing World,* (eds), George Uzoma Ukagba, et al, Trafford Publishers, Canada, 2010, p. 217.

resistance from the women. Women reacted with vehemence from one town to the other in many parts of Eastern Nigeria. Uchendu noted that in 1903, Eket women protested against the introduction of a six-penny canoe tax. In 1916, Onitsha market women opposed the change of market site and refused to pay stall-fees, because they saw it as men's interference in women's affairs. In 1925 women closed down the commercial area of Calabar, took over native courts, challenged the police and protested against government's interference by levying market tolls and fees without adequate consultation with them. In 1927, there were anti-tax protests in Warri Province, where the women rejected colonial Native courts and attempted to revive the indigenous judicial system.[105]

If there were pockets of resistance, the more fierce women movement against oppressive and anti-women policies of the colonial administration was later to emerge in Igboland, where women were best prepared for the organization of corporate action. Thus according to Victoria Ekpo the greatest anti-colonial tax revolt of economics and political character was the women's war of 1929-1930, which covered over 6,000sq miles of Eastern province, mass demonstration at government's actions and representatives, blockades of roads, traditional cursing of government actions and representatives and determined resistance to police pressure throughout the region expressed the women's mass protest against the proposed taxation of women and other oppressive colonial polices. Government enumerators, warrant chiefs, colonial administrative and trading establishments were attacked, native courts buildings and tax records were destroyed and detainees released[106].

[105]P.K. Uchendu, *Education and The Changing Role of Nigerian Women*, Fourth Dimension Publishers Enugu, 1995, pp. 14-15.
[106]Ibid.

Ekete Ezea has observed that Nsukka women rejected the use of Pioneer Oil Mills (POM) because the colonial administration had preferred to train men on the operation of the mills against the traditional practice of women processing palm produce. Secondly, they were required to pay for the services of the mills with their kernel which was a produce that yielded profit to the women. They therefore resorted to the traditional method of extracting palm oil. It was just recently in the year 2000 that oil mills were installed in the Nsukka area. The militant response of women to the unjustified colonial policies lasted from 1925-1930.Their protests were staged in defense of more than one value, which the British had tried to destroy. Their actions were motivated by two main needs, namely to defend women's economic independence and privileges, and to resist the imposition of warrant chiefs, whose installations made nonsense of the traditional Igbo dual-sex political system and appointment by consensus[107].

5.6. Conclusion

From the forgoing analysis, it has been demonstrated that Nsukka women and Nigerian women in general played very crucial roles in the colonial economy. In trade, industry and manufacture, they showed innovativeness and resourcefulness. Through their economic pursuits, they were able to sustain their families sometimes as breadwinners, and the colonial economy. Nsukka women accounted for and still accounts for a high proportion of the work involved in food supply, farming, processing, and storage, and in both retail and wholesale marketing for local and regional trade. It was as a result of the active involvement of women in the economy especially in southeastern Nigeria that gave impetus to men to take to wholesale trading. Women had financial

[107]A.G. Nnamani, p. 218.

power. They were able to buy for themselves and their children and sometimes their husbands and parents whatever they deemed necessary, hence many Igbo men had to take to commerce to be able to satisfy the ever increasing appetite of the Igbo woman hence contributing to the growth of the economy.

CHAPTER SIX

COLONIAL ECONOMIC POLICIES AND GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR

6.1. Introduction

Colonialism ushered in a new phase in gender relations. It altered the pre-existing domains of male and female, husband and wife. The period witnessed the encroachment on areas predominantly the preserve of women by men. It was also a period that saw many women as bread winners. Most of the colonial economic policies impacted negatively on women exposing them to the global capitalist economy which eroded the already existing economic independence of women as witnessed during the pre-colonial period. The period, as stated earlier, saw the loss of the autonomy and control of the market place, the heart of matriarchy, resulting in the masculinization of the market place and the economy except in textile and pottery.

The colonial period witnessed the break down in the traditional socio-economic and family structure leaving a fractured community in which women bore the socio-economic burden of maintaining and subsidizing the family economy by their increased roles in agriculture, trade, commerce,and industry. All these did not in any way change the role of women as mothers, wives, and nurturers of the family. The period added to the burden of women as it witnessed a widening of the gap between the genders in areas such as access to education and employment into the civil service.

6.2. Gender Division of Labour in Household Economy and Food Production

The result of the struggle for indigenous authority in the Eastern provinces of what later came to become Nigeria had serious repercussion on the power of the people to regulate their own affairs without external interference.Earlier on it was stated that the

primary objective of colonialism was economic which involved the expropriation of the natural resources of the weak by the strong. Hence the colonialists set up coercive administrative instruments to obtain the obedience and submission of the people. The administrative instruments either by omission or commission impacted negatively on gender division of labour in the household economy and food production. With the promulgation of the Rivers and Roads Ordinance of 1903, which mandated community heads to ensure that land routes and waterways within their domain were kept in satisfactory condition, a new twist appeared in the horizon. The ordinance made it mandatory for every able bodied male between 15 and 55 years to provide 24 days unpaid labour to the colonial administration.

This policy brought new burden on men, one consequence of which was the reduction of the labour input of men into the family economic effort. While the men worked to clear the waterways, build and maintain the roads and serve as hammock bearers for colonial officials, women had to bear more and more the brunt of the labour input required to keep the family work going. The responsibility of clearing the farm, tilling the soil in some cases and processing the food, fell on the shoulders of women. In most cases, young men had to run away as a result of the high-handedness of the colonial officials leaving the full weight of keeping the family to fall on the shoulders of women. In 1928 when taxation was introduced, an unexpected twist to the entire story emerged. Young and able-bodied men abandoned the villages and began migrating to the urban centers in search of paid employment. The result was that men abandoned their families and responsibilities in search of waged labour to afford them the opportunity to pay tax or risk imprisonment.

This created a gap between the genders and a division of labour that was unprecedented and lopsided. It was the role of a man to till the soil, and plant the yam, cut the tree for staking the yam while planting such crops as cassava, okra, maize,and others, and weeding of the farm was the responsibility of women. Women were filled with incessant activities, in the household, market, farm and she paid the price of fatigue and strain.[1] Women increasingly did men`s tasks in agriculture.

6.3. Gender Division of Labour in Cash Crop Production

Expanding domestic market for some crops casts doubt on the aptness of the term "cash crop" which is often used synonymously with export crops. Farmers who produced mostly for domestic market did not necessarily fare worse than those who produced mostly for export.[2] However, colonial agricultural policies centred squarely on production for export. The colonial period witnessed the influx of men into economic actives hitherto dominated by women. For example, the introduction of new techniques in the oil palm industry and increased commercialization of palm oil and palm kernels brought men into the industry. Men not only entered the industry, they also hijacked and controlled it. As a result, women never regained the control of the palm oil industry that was hitherto their main domain.[3]

It must be noted as was stated earlier that the processing of palm produce was the exclusive preserve of women, but all these changed with the introduction of the Pioneer Oil Mills (P.O.M). The colonial administrators influenced by their Victorian gender ethos favoured men more than women regarding the installation and operation of these mills.

[1] E. Isichei, *A History of Nigeria,* Longman, London, 1983, p. 440.
[2] Onwuka, *Economic History of Nigeria*, p. 140.
[3]Ibid.

When improved palm seedlings were introduced into South Eastern Nigeria, the colonial administration did not consider it necessary to encourage women to establish palm plantations. They discriminated against women as only men were trained on how to tend the new plants for improved production. Nevertheless, women continued to play dominant roles in palm produce production. Similarly, when mechanized graters were introduced, women's monopoly of the cassava industry was broken. The graters were owned by the men, who were also preferred for training by the colonial administration and expatriate firms. During the war years, men dominated the wholesale trade in cassava products such as garri and starch hitherto controlled by women.

6.4. Gender Division of Labour in Trade and Commerce

Trade and commerce in 20th century Igboland witnessed revolutionary innovations and improvements. All economic revolutions in the era of colonialism occurred in the sphere of trade and its allied linkages[4]. These evolutionary innovations and economic revolutions altered the already existing gender division of labour in trade and commerce. As indicated above, the British colonial interest was centred on trade and facilities that encouraged the extraction and exportation of raw materials as well as the distribution of imported manufactured goods. Most of the colonial economic policies either by omission or commission favoured the men who invaded the economic space hitherto the preserve of women. Until well into the colonial period, trade in palm produce was the exclusive preserve of women. They were responsible for the processing of palm oil and kernel which they sold either to African middlemen or directly to the beaches and collecting

[4]Ikenga R.A Ozigbo, *A History of Igboland in the* 20th Century, Snaap Press, Ebygy, 1999, p. 82.

centres of the European trading companies. In the late 1920s, men joined the trade as produce buyers and bulk purchasers for the expatriate firms.[5] Men were also in charge of the distribution of imported European products which they sold in local markets and along the streets as petty traders.

The construction of modern market structures in urban centres displaced Igbo women from one of their most important domains, the market place. As market sites were relocated and stalls built, tolls were imposed on the stalls and market authorities established to administer the markets. All these sealed the complete transfer of market authority from women to men. By 1905, with the elevation of Onitsha to a district headquarters, Onitsha women gradually started losing the market place with the large influx of male traders from the Igbo hinterland[6]. The tenants and stranger elements in Onitsha have hijacked trade in the town. They have since the beginning of the twentieth century been in control. This situation was very embarrassing because trade had been the major occupation of the women. This action had driven Onitsha women into becoming mobile textile traders without stalls, owners of restaurants, beer parlours and other businesses which were operated in apartments in their homes[7].

The story was the same at Aba. In 1954, when government had proposed making it a municipality, Ngwa women were opposed to the proposition fearing loss of political control of Aba and their consequent economic power to stranger elements, which were in greater majority. This led to several mass demonstrations by Southern Ngwa Women's Association (SNWA).[8] Similar situations existed in Enugu and Afikpo where indigenous

[5]Ibid.
[6]Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Trnsformation in Southeastern Nigeria,* p. 16.
[7]Ibid.
[8]Ibid.

women organizations fought to keep control of market authority from settler-elements. Due to the nature of colonialism, women not only lost the control of the market place but also a major source of their livelihood, trading. Many of the women could not compete favourably with their male counterparts who were more favoured by the new economic opportunities than women.

Another colonial economic policy that adversely affected gender division of labour in trade and commerce was the monetization of the economy. Prior to the introduction of British money, certain currencies were in use. These were brass rods, manilas, copper wire, cowries,and the like. In addition to these mediums of exchange were assorted imported goods such as textiles, gun powder, guns, alcohol, salt, tobacco, and other products. This imported merchandise was valued in measure with an equivalent to between 5 and 14 shillings depending on the region, foreign firm and the period[9]. The introduction of silver and bronze coins as well as subsidiary aluminium coins in 1906 met with some resistance by the women who preferred the old medium to the new. A number of reasons account for this rejection. Firstly, the old currencies had been in use for several years, and the local people were familiar with them, and they had proved to be time tested stable monetary media[10]. They were also convenient in terms of their suitability to the price level in local markets. A second reason for the unrelenting resistance to the introduction of British money was the low purchasing power of the new money[11]. Another reason was the cumbersome nature of the new money. The bronze penny was

[9]Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11]Ibid.

particularly very unpopular because it was heavy and easily tarnished and therefore subject to counterfeit[12].

Women also rejected the British notes as real money because they were very inconvenient, flimsy and made of thin paper. It could not be stored in traditional method of burying money because it was vulnerable to termites and other insects. It was also susceptible to wear, tear and damage if not handled with ultimate care[13]. The new British money eventually succeeded the old currencies because of some factors. One was the inherent problem associated with the old currency. Another was that the new currency enabled the traders to calculate prices and make purchases with ease. Inconveniences associated with the weight of the old currencies were another factor. Finally, government paid their employees their salaries and wages with the new money. Most of the ex-service men from the Second World War put substantial amount of the money they received into circulation in Igbo towns and villages in a manner never been possible before. Some of them went into trading. This rejection of the new currency put women in a disadvantaged position. Men were employees of government and therefore earned salaries and wages. They were also the ones that were recruited into the army for the war of 1939-1945 and therefore, were more financially empowered than the women, which relegated the women to petty trading because they cannot favourably compete with the men.

It is imperative to note that the resistance of women to the new currency can best be explained in terms of the advantages of the old currencies over the new money, and on the other hand, in terms of the difficulty in obtaining the coins due to its scarcity and the manner they were introduced rather than the so-called notion that Igbo women were slow

[12] PROL, Co/446/24, "F.D. Lugard to Joseph Chamberlain," 19th July, 1902.
[13] G. Chuku, p. 107.

in accepting innovations[14], if this could be regarded as innovative. The people already had a means of exchange and women being custodians of the people's culture and tradition felt that the new money was an imposition and therefore had to resist as they did to every other denigration of Igbo culture, tradition and sensibilities. It can therefore, be said that the new economic order created by colonialism and foreign capital had contradictory effects on gender division of labour in trade and commerce.

6.5. Education and Gender Division of Labour in the Civil Service

Western education especially the variety of it provided by missionary institutions was from the very beginning aimed at subverting the indigenous cultures of the people regarded as primitive and sinful and at producing young men and women thoroughly immersed in the supposedly superior European "Christian culture"[15]. Colonial and missionary type education curriculum was therefore filled with Bible reading, history of European activities, the singing of European songs and the study of English literary classics. Education was also conceived by the missions as a major means of proselytizing. Their view of education was narrow. The curriculum was heavily weighted on the three Rs-reading, writing and arithmetic-sufficient to enable the children to operate under the missionary banner[16]. The products of these mission schools were to graduate to catechists, deacons and then priests, while the girl's schools were established mainly for the wives and fiancés of their male workers[17].

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[14]Ibid.
[15]S.O. Osoba and A. Fajana, "Education and Social Development during the Twentieth Century," in, Obaro Ikime, (ed), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books, Ibadan, 2004, p. 585.
[16]Ibid.
[17]E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis*, Longmans, London, 1966, p. 286.

Osoba and Fajana however argued that missionary achievement in education in the 19th century was very modest. They observed that the missions for most part of the period did not establish educational institutions that were geared towards meeting the social and material needs of Nigerians. Thus, it was not until 1850 that a few secondary schools like the C.M.S. Grammar School, Lagos was established, followed by the Roman Catholic Teachers College, later Saint Gregory's College, and Methodist Boys High School, all in Lagos in 1878. Up till this period no secondary school had been established for girls[18].In the hinterland especially in South Eastern Nigeria, the government school, Awka was opened in 1907 and by 1918 it had attained its standard IV class. The first secondary school in Igboland was the Methodist Boys Institute, Uzuakoli, opened in January 1924. By 1925, the C.M.S Dennis Memorial Grammar School was established at Onitsha, followed by the Christ the King College, (C.K.C), in 1933[19].

The first all-female college was opened in 1895 by Miss Edith Warner at Ogidi,and firmly established in 1906, from where it was finally moved to Ogbunike as Saint Monica's Training College in 1909[20]. The college was aimed at giving domestic education to girls to prepare them on how to be good housewives and on hygiene. The objective of the pioneers of western education in Nigeria, the missionaries and colonial administrators was to serve as an instrument of evangelization and as avenues for producing various categories of minor functionaries like clerks, junior technicians in public works, sanitary inspectors,[21]and the like. The colonial administration abandoned

[18]F. Anyika, *Methodism in Igbo land, Eastern Nigeria, 1966-1932, Genesis and Growth*, Green and Company, Onitsha, 1977, p. 131.
[19]G.T. Basden, *Edith Warner of the Niger,* London, 1972.
[20]E. Ifeoma, "The C.M.S St Paul's Training College, Awka, 1904-1936", B.A. Project, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1994.
[21]S.O. Osoba and A. Fajana, p. 574.

the schools to the Christian missions, only making the rules, supervising the schools and offering annual grants in aid. Educational development for most of the colonial period was hopelessly inadequate for meeting the needs of a modern state[22].

In the Nsukka area, secondary education was late in coming. The first secondary school to be established was the Saint Theresa's College, Nsukka, built by the Roman Catholic Mission in 1954. The school catered only for boys. Igbo Etiti Grammar School which was established in 1960 was also an only-boys' college. Anglican Grammar School which was established by the C.M.S Mission in 1961 was also a boys' school. It was not until 1961when the Queen of the Rosary CollegeNsukka was established that girls began to have access to secondary or college education. Even at that, access was limited to a very few due to inability of parents to pay the recommended fees.

The one and only Teachers Training College at Nsukka, the Saint Cyprian's Teacher Training College, established by the CMS in 1956 admitted only boys until the early 1970s when girls were admitted into the school. Another school that gave girls the opportunity to have access to secondary education was the Community Secondary School Isienu, Nsukka, which was established by H.R.H, Igwe (Bar) Charles Abangwu as a co-educational college. In 1964, educational statistics showed a gender gap in access to formal education in Nigeria.[23] During the colonial period these gaps affected gender division of labour in the civil service.

Research has shown that majority of female civil servants were of junior staff cadre.[24] An analysis of the distribution of female senior management staff showed that

[22]Ibid.
[23]E.E.O. Christiana, "Women in Employment and Labour," in, Amadu Sesay and Adetanwa Odebiyi, (eds), *Nigerian Women in Society and Development,* Dokun Publishing House, Ibadan, 1998, p. 144.
[24] Ibid.

most women in senior management were to be found in selected ministries especially education, health and social development, as teachers promoted to inspector of education, nurses promoted to nursing tutors and social Welfare Officers[25]. Okojie further argued that the low proportion of women in the civil service relative to men and their preponderance in lower salary and non-management levels was a reflection of their limited access to western education at this time[26]. Alele-Williams also noted that existing data on Nigeria showed that at all levels of education, fewer girls than boys were enrolled at school despite the numerical advantage of females.

There was also a sex disparity in educational achievement because of a higher drop out among girls. For example, girls drop out more often from school due to pregnancies, early marriage, and heavy demand on girl's time to perform household task[27]. Gender imbalance in education has also been traced to Nigerian societal traditions and myths which relegate women's education to the background vis-a-vis the men.

The contents of traditional education for most Nigerian language group maintained a rigid division between masculine and feminine subjects. Education for girl's right from the very beginning was designed to make them primarily effective mothers and housewives. Girls were brought up in the traditional family set-up to be passive, obedient, lady like and always submissive to men. Boys on the other hand, were encouraged to be aggressive, competitive and independent. Boys were further assisted by a traditional political arrangement, where men were at the helm of affairs either as kings, chiefs, or

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Alele-williams, G., "Education and Status of Women" in, Ogunsheye, et al, (eds), *Nigeria Women and Development*, Ibadan University Press, Ibadan, 1988, pp. 177-179.

family heads[28]. Gender stereotyping in traditional education was therefore firmly accepted in most traditional settings. Fafunwa submitted that "while the boys were receiving vigorous training in the farm under the instructions of their fathers, the girls were undergoing training at home under the strict supervision of their mothers. They were taught to take care of their families[29]

Thus, the contemporary under-representation of women in various tiers of the Nigeria school system was nothing but a logical development for a society with a traditional background of gender inequality in education. The under-representation of women in the various sectors of the labour force and the civil service has just been one of the surviving legacies of a traditional educational background that saw house-keeping as the exclusive career of women. Economic constraints were also a major factor militating against women's education in Nigeria. Many parents considered women's education as a waste of fund. It was believed that money spent in training a girl was a waste since she was going to get married thus leaving only boys in the family to cater for their aged parents.

Therefore, faced with the option of choosing between sons' and daughters' education, the daughters were always the victims. This is further reinforced by discriminatory employment practices which restricted women to low paying jobs as typist, cleaners, cooks, clerks,and other menial duties, thus discouraging parents further from investing in girl's education. Even the school system encouraged the boy child to be a tough engineer or a medical doctor while at the same time encouraging the girl child to

[28]A. Kayode, "Women in Educational System," in, Amadu Sessay and Adetanwa Odebiyi, (eds), *Nigeria Women in Society and Development, D*okun Publishing House, Ibadan, 1998, p. 93.
[29]A. B. Fafunwa, *AHistory of Education in Nigeria*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1974, p. 56.

become a gentle nurse or a primary school teacher[30]. It could be seen that the odds against women in education were too high to be ignored. It was difficult for a nation to move forward effectively without adequate participation of women in the educational system and in the civil service.

6.6. Conclusion

Colonialism and its administrative policies altered the already existing gender roles and division of labour. Both in food crop production, cash crops, in trade and commerce, the two genders participated actively. In the household economy, women could be seen playing the role of family heads and providing for the family as men were either running away to the urban centres or were forcefully conscripted to work for government for a given number of days.

In cash crop production, the introduction of the palm presses opened up the processing of oil palm to men and even in the trading of same. It was the men that were privileged to own and operate the presses leaving the women outside the use of this new technology which would have facilitated and reduced the work load on them. In trade and commerce, men dominated wholesale trade in European manufacture and as produce buyers and bulk purchasers for the expatriate firm. However, women did not relent particularly in the Nsukka area where the palm presses were rejected.In education however, women were completely marginalized as the missionary type education favoured the men until much later into the colonial period. Nevertheless, no one was in doubt of the central place of the Igbo woman in the colonial economy.

[30]K. Alao, p. 195.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This work is a study of the role of Women in Nsukka Division from 1912 to 1960. The study analyzed the contributions of women to the development of the colonial state and the colonial economy. It examined the role of women in the colonial economy as a prelude to understanding the impact of colonial economic policies on the roles which women played in that period. The study adopted the gender perspective as the framework of analysis because of its holistic approach.

The interdisciplinary approach was adopted as the methodology for gathering facts and data. Published and unpublished materials and the internet were of great assistance. Archival materials were also used. One handicap of this source was that most of the materials were silent on women with the exception of its reference to the Aba Women's riot of 1929-1930. Nevertheless, it contained vital information on the administrative policies of the colonial state.

In chapter two, the work discussed the historical geography of the area under study. It examined the climate and vegetation of the area, and how it influenced the settlement pattern of the people. It also studied the culture, political and social organization which helped to understand the position of women in the socio-political and economic life of Nsukka. The work concluded that as a boarder community, Nsukka's culture and traditions must have been greatly influenced by its non-Igbo neighbours –the Igala, and to a lesser extent, the Idoma of the Kogi and Benue areas. Nsukka culture remained dominantly Igbo especially in its language and marriage customs, in its religion, world-view and kinship system which were unmistakably Igbo. The work also revealed that the

imposition of British rule brought about a harsh break with the past. However, behind the misleading superficial changes, there has been a basic continuity of institutions.

The third chapter examined the role of women in the pre-colonial economy of Nsukka Division. It argued that the economic side of pre-colonial Igbo society rested on a tripod, viz: Agriculture, trade, and industry. Agriculture dominated the other two, while trade distributed the products of the two. Women dominated trade and industry which included pottery, textile weaving, and palm processing. Women also played tremendous roles that cannot be overlooked in agricultural production. They were in charge of the processing of palm produce, the weeding of farmlands, the planting of auxiliary farm crops,and so on. Women complemented every effort of men in the farmland.

The fourth chapter explored the establishment and nature ofthe colonial economy in Nsukka Division in South Eastern Nigeria. The dissertation is of the view that colonialism was basically an exploitative agenda of the colonialists, meant to expropriate the natural resources of the weak by the strong. The colonialists adopted war and the use of force as a major strategy to subject the people to submission. The need to eliminate the local middle men by British merchants from trade in palm oil and kernel led to pressure from the British government which acquired and secured control of the Igbo hinterland. This created a vent for surplus for the much needed forest products of the region. Lots of expeditions were organized from 1895 to 1912 and finally in 1924 when the Igbo hinterland finally fell to British domination. Coercive administrative instruments intended to obtain the obedience and submission of the indigenous population were set up. From forced labour in the creeks to the mines and road construction, men were subjected to all forms of humiliation, leaving the women to bear the brunt of the family upkeep.

The influx of foreign products into Igboland introduced disequilibrium to the economy of Igboland. These products whetted the appetite of the indigenes forcing them to slave in the farms for the much needed cash crops to the detriment of food production. With the introduction of transportation in the form of railway lines and motor vehicles, the movement of forest products from areas of lower marginal utility, to areas of higher marginal utilities was carried out. Urban centers were created, leading to waves of migrations by able bodied young men to the new urban centers. This led to increased work load on women to whom the responsibility of caring for the families fell on their shoulders. Many of the local crafts suffered under colonialism as they could not compete favourably with the cheap European goods.

Women were forced to abandon their trade and take to petty trading to be able to eke out a living for the sustenance of their families. Added to these was the entry of men into the trade in palm products such as oil palm and palm kernel. Because of men`s financial advantage, women lost a very important source of economic empowerment. Men also abandoned the farms to take to trading in foreign manufactures, further invading an economic zone hitherto the preserve of women. In farming, men went into large scale cassava farming not for the benefit of the family, but for garri production.

The introduction of railway in 1912 further opened up the North and the South, leading to a vast array of the regional products and migration of young men to Northern Nigeria in search of greener pastures. The railway revolutionized the political economy of Southeastern Nigeria. Taxation was also another policy of the colonial administration that impacted negatively on the economic role of women during the period of study. Men who could not afford to pay their tax fled the villages, abandoning their families, leaving

the responsibility of sustaining the family to the women. Apart from pottery, every other local industry either went into extinction or was practiced by a few.

The fifth chapter appraised the impact of colonial economic policies on gender division of labour and concluded that colonialism ushered in a new phase in gender relations. It altered the existing domains of male and female, and husband and wife. The period witnessed a break-down in the traditional socio-economic and family structure. Most of the administrative policies either by omission or commission impacted on gender division of labour in household economy and food production. Men abandoned food production as they were forced to work on roads and bridge building projects. Taxation further intensified the pressure on men who abandoned the villages and the farms for the emerging urban centers in search of paid employment. With this scenario, women took up the responsibility of sustaining their families as bread winners which hitherto was not the case.

Men also invaded the production of such cash crops as palm oil and palm kernel with the introduction of the Palm Oil Mills (POM) which altered the existing status quo. In trade and commerce, the story was not different. Men became bulk purchasers and produce buyers for expatriate firms. They also became distributors of imported European products, leaving the women to petty trading in the markets and streets. The monetization of the economy was also another policy which affected gender division of labour. In education, the missionaries with their patriarchal European world view started by firstly, training men as catechists, teachers, and evangelists. Women were trained at the different vocation centers as good housewives, and seamstresses. Parents also preferred sending

the boys to schools as the girls would be married off to another family.Overall, the colonial period was a very difficult period for the Nigerian woman.

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Lady Ezema Uchechukwu	F	75	Retired civil servant	Odenigbo Nsukka	29/10/2011
Mrs. Oyimaja Obayi-Ogbu	F	80	Retired trader	Nguru, Nsukka	30/10/2011
Mrs. Obetta Maria	F	67	Former weaver/Farmer	Ibagwa-ani	24/06/2012
Mrs. Eze Mary	F	68	Former Weaver/Caterer	Ibagwa-ani	24/06/2012
Mrs. Urama Monica	F	66	Former Weaver/Farmer	Ibagwa-ani	24/06/2012
Mrs. Ekete Ezea	F	78	Trading and Farming	Ikeagwu-Isakpu, Nsukka	17/11/2012
Mrs. Anyagboru Agnes	F	63	Porter	Nrobu Village square, Uzouwani	18/11/2012
Mrs. Anyagboru Nwogede	F	85	Former Porter	Nrobu Village square, Uzouwani	18/11/2012
Madam Ojoma Okike-Okoro	F	78	Porter/Trader	Nrobu Village square, Uzouwani	18/11/2012
Mrs. Nwabueze Comfort	F	65	Farming/Trading	Ukpabi Uzouwani	24/11/2012
Ven. Urama Jonathan	M	65	Rtd School Principal/Clergy-man	Amufie Enugu-Ezike	28/11/2012
Chief Agbo-Ngwu Festus	M	80	Commissioned Agent	Ama-Inyi, Echara-Nsukka	30/11/2012
Madam Urama Okike	F	98	Retired Trader	Amufie Enugu-Ezike	01/12/2012

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