

**THE INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WOMEN'S
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY: THE CASE OF IGBO
WOMEN OF SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of women in agricultural development and identifies the institutional factors (access to land; credit; machines, improved seedlings and fertilizer; extension services; cooperative facilities) that constitute a hindrance to their agricultural productivity.

From an interview survey conducted with fifty Igbo women from two rural Igbo communities - Umannachi and Leru, the researcher derives data on the roles of Igbo women and the institutional factors that influence their agricultural productivity. The data reveal that Igbo women play extensive roles both as reproducers of human agents (bearers and rearers of children, care of the aged, the handicap and maintainers of labour force) and producers of food. In spite of the numerous roles of Igbo women, they have limited access to agricultural facilities. In line with the socialist feminist view, the thesis locates women's limited access to agricultural facilities in the patriarchal and class structures of the society which not only favour men as a gender but also as a class. The thesis argues that women's limited access to agricultural facilities partly explains their low agricultural productivity and the current food shortages facing the country, Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

**DEDICATED
TO**

My husband, Reginald for his invaluable editorial
commentary and suggestions.

My son, Nnazowa for his patience and endurance, and
My mother, Catherine for her untiring assistance
and support.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the role of Women in agricultural development and identifies the institutional factors (access to land; credit; machines, improved seedlings and fertilizer; extension services; cooperative facilities) that constitute a hindrance to their agricultural productivity.

Until very recently, the modernization literature on agricultural development in developing countries postulated that agricultural development only occurs when there is more land, more loan/credit facilities, improved seedlings, increased use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, increased use of machines, more extension services, effective marketing, transportation, storage and other infrastructural facilities (Schultze, 1964; Mosher, 1966; Mellor, 1966, 1976; Reynolds, 1976). In other words, according to these scholars, for there to be agricultural development in the developing countries, the traditional subsistence method of farming has to be transformed into modern forms by increasingly adopting knowledge derived from bio-chemical science and technology, and commercialized forms of agriculture.

Contrary to this view, however, experience has shown that mere provision, expansion, or adoption of modern facilities do not necessarily lead to increased agricultural productivity or agricultural development. Rather, the manner in which these

facilities (land and other agricultural inputs) are allocated or distributed to farmers can be a factor that either enhances or undermines agricultural development (Griffin, 1973: 240-241; Awolola, 1982: 125-126; Nkom, 1982: 206-207).

The implications of adopting a modernization approach which emphasizes growth (increased agricultural output) while neglecting equity in allocation and distribution of agricultural resources and benefits has been succinctly pointed out by Griffin (1973: 240-241):

Most underdeveloped countries have pursued a strategy of rural development which is located towards the technocratic end of the spectrum. The prime economic objective has been to increase agricultural output. The economic system has been justified essentially in terms of a liberal capitalist ideology: emphasis is placed on competition, free market and widely dispersed private property as sufficient conditions for achieving the objectives. In practice, property ownership is highly concentrated The benefits of technical change and higher output accrue, at least in the first instance to the landowning elite and other men of property. Inequality in income, far from being deplored, is welcome, since it is assumed that the rich will save a large proportion of their extra income and thereby contribute to faster accumulation and growth. In other words, the concentration of wealth is one of the ways whereby the output objective is expected to be achieved.

Women constitute the bulk of Nigerian farmers yet are denied access to agricultural facilities. This thesis argues that women's limited access to agricultural facilities is not only responsible for their low agricultural productivity but also for the food shortages facing the country today. The study locates this limited accessibility of facilities to women in the patriarchal structures that favour men as opposed to women in Nigerian society.

AIM OF STUDY

The study seeks to: (i) examine the role of Igbo Women in Agriculture; (ii) investigate the distribution patterns of agricultural facilities (land; machines, seedlings and fertilizers; agricultural training and extension services, and patterns of membership in agricultural cooperatives) between men and women farmers with a view to ascertaining the extent to which women's interests are represented; (iii) understand why the distribution is skewed in favour of men while women are denied access to agricultural facilities; (iv) make a case for equitable distribution of agricultural facilities especially in favour of women; and (v) attempt to suggest how the distribution of agricultural facilities could be made to benefit women.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Nigeria, as in other third world countries, women play extensive roles in agriculture, but have limited access to agricultural facilities (Women in Niger (WIN) Document; Oladeji, 1985; Okojie, 1985; Ngur, 1987, 1988; Elukpo, 1991).

The Igbo women's agricultural involvement is basically at a subsistence level. The principle crops they grow are cassava, cocoyam, maize, beans, okra, pepper, tomatoes, pumpkins and other vegetables. These food crops grown by women are mostly for household consumption with little left-over for sale in the market. Women also maintain poultry and raise sheep, goats, rabbits etc. The Igbo men grow yams, and oil palm trees. Both men and women clear and prepare the land or soil and ridge it for planting. Men cut and stake yam tendrils, build and repair huts, harvest yams and palm

nuts. Women weed, harvest and head-load produce home. They also process palm nuts for oil and sell the kernels. However, with the introduction of hand-press machines, the processing of palm fruit, formerly women's sphere, is increasingly passing into the hands of men. Men have more access to cash and credit with which to buy pressing machines. In addition to farm work, rural Igbo women fetch wood and water, cook food, take care of children and livestock, process food crops for domestic use and for sale. They also engage in retail trade, craft production (pottery, mat and basket making, cloths weaving and dying) especially during the off-farm season (Isichei, 1983; Mba, 1982). The preservation and storage of food are also the responsibility of women - fish smoking or drying, drying of grains (maize, rice, beans) and vegetables (pepper, tomatoes, okra etc.).

The numerous agricultural roles played by Igbo women are similarly observed to be the case in most African societies. For instance, Boserup (1970: 16) noted that women are the world's farmers. She stated that "Africa is the region of female farming par excellence." According to the United Nation's Economic Commission for Africa (U.N.E.S.C.A, 1974), women provide some 60 to 80 per cent of the agricultural labour force in Africa. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (F.A.O, 1974), African women are responsible for 70 per cent of marketing, 90 per cent of water supply, 50 per cent of the domestic animal care and 80 per cent of the supply of fuel.

A vivid summary of the numerous activities performed by rural women in Africa is stated by Okot p' Bitek, an East African poet:

Women of Africa,
Sweeper, smearing floors and walls
With cow dung and black soil,
Cook anyah, the baby on your back,
Washer of dishes,
Planting, weeding, harvesting
Store-keeping, builder,
Runner of errands,
Cart, lorry, donkey,
Women of Africa
What are not?
(Okot in McDowewll et al., 1976: 53-65)

In spite of these extensive roles played by rural Igbo women in particular, and African women in general, women are denied access to agricultural facilities, and their roles continue to remain invisible, unacknowledged or under-represented in development statistics and practices. For instance, Gross Domestic product statistics are compiled without including the value of women's unpaid domestic labour (women's informal/subsistence agricultural labour).

In the light of the continued neglect of women (denial of access to agricultural facilities) and their invisibility in agricultural development policies and practices, this study seeks to understand why this phenomenon has persisted.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The current research addresses the following questions: Why are Igbo women denied access to modern agricultural facilities, and to what extent does women's limited accessibility to these facilities account for their low productivity?

Sub-Questions:

Is the reason for women's limited access to agricultural facilities (i) internal (Nigerian and African patriarchal and cultural practices), (ii) external - colonialism/capitalism (Western patriarchal structures introduced into Nigeria) or (iii) the combination of both internal (cultural) and external (colonial/capitalist) factors?.

AREA OF STUDY/RESEARCH SETTING

(i) Physical Environment

The Igbo people live in south-eastern Nigeria from latitude 5 to 7 degrees north and 6 to 8 degrees east. Igbo land cover about 15, 800 square miles, approximately 8% to 9% of the total area of the Nigerian Federation (356, 669 square miles or 913,072.64 square kilometer). According to the 1965 National population census, Igbos constituted seven million of the total population. The 1991 population census estimates Igbos to be about twelve million of the country's eight-eight million people. A large number of the Igbo people are found on the core Igbo territory, southeast of the River Niger (former Eastern Region) and a smaller number on the west of the Niger (part of former Midwestern Region). The core Igbo territory is bound on the extreme south by the Niger Delta which is inhabited by the Ijaw and Ogoni people

as southern neighbours. On the northern border are the Igala and Tiv, and on the eastern boundry are the Yako and the Ibibio people. The Igbo area depicts a wide variety of physical features with an average temperature of 85 degrees frenheit and an average annual rainfall of 70 inches. There are basically two seasons the rainy season (usually farming season) starts in April and lasts until October, and the dry season (also harvesting season) starts in October and lasts until April.

(ii) Mode of Life

The Igbo live in small communities , with an average village consisting of about 100 to 200 compounds. A compound is a residential unit, a homestead made up of different households. Each compound is inhabited by a joint family consisting of a group of close patrilineal kinship, their wives and children. Descent is largely traced through the father's lineage and marriage is patrilocal. However, a few Igbo societies (Ohafia, Arochukwu) traced descent through the mother's lineage.

Apart from farming, most Igbo people engage in secondary, tertiary occupations - tailoring, carpentry, smithing, weaving, carving, pottery making and trading.

(iii) Farm Household and Farm Resources

The nuclear family constitutes the farm unit with both men and women engaged in farming activities. In addition to farm work, women process food and engage in petty trading activities. Children assist parents in farm tasks and in caring for the young (especially the daughters).

Although farming is basically an enterprise for the nuclear family, farmer, especially men, often receive assistance from relatives and age-mates on a reciprocal

and rotational basis. Hired labour also constitutes an important source of labour input. However, while it is easier for men to have a secondary source of labour, women have limited opportunities.

As small holder credit remains a problem in Nigeria, few farmers have access to limited commercial credit that is available, and most who do are men. Most farmers depend on local or traditional sources for their seasonal credit needs, such as "esusu"/"adashe," a rotational credit system, women members contribute small amounts of money at regular intervals to the pool of funds. Members then have access on a rotational basis to the money pool for investment in farming activities.

Land constitutes the major farm resource. The land tenure system of the Igbo is typical of many patrilineal groups in West Africa. Though land is communally owned, with every member of the compound presumed as having usufruct right to farm land, adult male members have more access to and control of land. Married women are allocated land by their husbands. Unmarried women have no rights. They work on their father's, brother's or uncle's fields. Women's rights to land in Igbo society is, therefore, largely dependent upon their relationship to men (husband, father, uncle or brother).

(iv) The Farm System

Igbo farming consists largely of subsistence, root crop, grains, vegetable, fruits (food crops) and cash cultivation. The root crops are yam (ji), cassava/manioc (akpu/ji-akpu), cocoa yam (ede), sweet potatoes (kuku nduku). The grains include maize/corn (oka), beans (agwa), rice (osikapa). The vegetables are tomatoes (tomoto), pepper (ose), okra (okwuru), melon (egwusi/egusi), pumpkin (ugu). The fruits are oranges (oloma),

banana (unele), plantain (ojoko), pawpaw/papaya (popo/opopo), coconut (ake-oyibo), mangoes (mango/mangoro), avacado (ube-oyibo), grape fruits (oloma), pineapple (akwu-olu), cashew (cashu), and guava (gova). The cash crops include palm produce (akwu), cocoa (koko), rubber (pana) (Note the underderlined words are Igbo names)

Only small herds of live-stock - goat (ewe), sheep (aturu), chichen (okuku) and cattle/cow (efi) are kept by the Igbo people because of the presence of tsetse fly in the area. Cattle are raised mostly to provide meat for household consumption and for status purposes.

The implements used for farming are hoes (ogu), matchetes (mma), cutlass (mma-oge), baskets (nkata/ukpa), apale, ete), iron dibbles , axes and cordage, rake and sickles. Igbo farmers maintain soil fertility through the practice of shifting cultivation (bush fallow). In this system, after one farming season the land is allowed to lie fallow for a period ranging from one year in the high densely populated parts of Igbo land (Orlu, Mbaise, Idemili - Ogidi/Umunachi, Awa areas) to seven years in some of the more sparsely populated areas (Ohaji-Egbema, Oratta, Okigwe/Leru areas). While the bush fallow system is as good as any other conservating method in restoring soil fertility, population pressure, especially in the densely populated areas, has reduced the fallow period below the critical level (one year or less) resulting in soil depletion and low output of crops. Another farming system prevalent in Igbo land is intercropping (in addition to monocropping) especially in densely populated areas. Crops that are commonly intercropped are vegetables - melons, okra, pepper, tomatoes, groundnut; grains - maize and beans and also root crops such as yams and cassava.

Crops are grown on two kinds of farms: bush farm ("ani agu") located at a distance from the family compound, and compound farms or kitchen gardens ("ani uno") immediately surrounding the family compound. While root crops/cash crops - especially yams, cassava, palm tree and a few grains - are grown on the bush farm, vegetables, grains and fruits are mostly grown on the compound/kitchen gardens.

The compound farms benefit from household waste and ash disposal and therefore remain fertile enough to support continuous crop products.

THE ANALYTICAL, CONCEPTUAL, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE DECLINING STATUS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD.

The literature on women and development contains various perspectives for understanding the declining status and neglect of women in development. For the purpose of this study, however, consideration will be given to the three most relevant frameworks for the understanding of realities of Nigerian and African women.

THE ANTI-TRADITIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

Within this perspective theorists see development purely in terms of adoption of Western culture and a Western model of development (just like the modernization approach). African culture and traditions are viewed as primitive and as therefore the major cause of the backward, oppressed and marginal status of women (Evans-

Pritchard, 1965; Goody, 1973; Huntington, 1975). For instance, polygyny is seen by these theorists as a cultural practice that is incompatible with equality; other examples include early/child marriage, female mutilation through clitoridectomy, and female child labour.

Christianity and other influences of the West are subsequently seen as providing significant improvements in the lot of African women. These theorists argue that attitudes, customs and some legal acts legitimate the unequal status of women in Africa, and the rights guaranteed women in many African constitutions do not grant women equality. They state that changes in laws must be accompanied by changes in attitudes, customs, practices and beliefs of the people. In other words, tradition must change if women are to gain equality in Africa. Change in tradition, for this school, is attainable through legislation, education and reform of rural productive methods. The needed change is therefore from primitive culture and technology to modern culture and technology.

Being Euro-centric and ethnocentric, this perspective portrays an overly pessimistic view of African culture as being primarily responsible for women's domination, and sees reform and attitudinal change in line with Western culture as the solution to the problem of women's domination in Africa. It fails to see that Western culture contains its own patriarchal structures that oppress women in Western societies and is, therefore, capable of exerting similar oppressive influence when imposed on, or imbibed by, women in African society. An instance of this is the Victorian and Christian image of women that coloured European colonial policies. Similar to

European women, African women were viewed and treated as mothers, wives and home managers (passive participants), rather than as actively engaged in economic activities such as farming, trading etc. Importantly, since monogamous marriage characteristic of Western societies and Western Christian teachings did not automatically guarantee Western women equality, it cannot promise to guarantee African women equality when adopted. Women still suffer domination from the hands of men/husbands under the Western form of monogamous marriage.

For these shortcomings, namely the overly Euro-centric bias and failure to see the part played by colonialism and Western Capitalism in furthering and reinforcing the oppression of women in Africa, the anti-traditionalist explanation is limited in its explanation of the exploitation of women in Africa.

THE ANTI-WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

The anti-Western perspective links women's oppression in Africa and other third world countries to colonialism and capitalism. This perspective argues that the incorporation of African and third world (non-capitalist) societies through colonialism into the world capitalist system undermined the status and economic powers of women (Boserup, 1970; Van Allen, 1974; James, 1975; Leacock, 1975, 1978, 1979; Remy, 1975; Aguiar, 1976; Deere, 1976, 1979; Rothenberg, 1976; Ivy Matsepe, 1977; Safiotti, 1978; Burkett, 1979; Etienne and Leacock, 1980). According to this perspective, although the traditional economic roles of women did not give them political dominance, it at least guaranteed them power over the allocation of resources.

For this perspective, African women traditionally owned and controlled the fruits of their labour and were relatively independent. With colonialism, however, women's independence ceased, and they began to be dependent on their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons. Women's traditional roles in which they were active producers of foodstuffs and reproducers - bearers and rearers of children, maintainers of husbands, children and the aged - began to be dichotomized and, subsequently the productive (public domain) became subsumed under the reproductive (private/domestic domain). As in Western societies, African women were thus viewed primarily as mothers, farmers wives/help mate as opposed to being farmers in their own right. Arguing further, the anti-Westerners state that capitalism reinforced the emerging patriarchal system.

Contributing to this debate, Boserup (1970) cites several areas in which colonial influence resulted in the deterioration of the status of women vis-a-vis their male counterparts. For instance, colonialists excluded women from cash-crops cultivation, taught men modern techniques and made machinery accessible only to men. Ivy Matsepe (1977) contends that the evidence that the integration of Africa into the capitalist system has produced social and economic setbacks is overwhelming. Colonialism, with its concomitant Westernization, not only altered the rigidity of the family structure as regards women but also led to even greater sexual inequality characterized by diverse manifestations of discrimination and oppression bound up with the private ownership of property and the division of society into social classes. By implication, the anti-Westerners suggest that only a return to the communal system and

the replacement of capitalism with socialism will improve the condition of African women.

By emphasizing the role of colonialism/capitalism in the oppression of African women, anti-Western scholars fail to take into consideration some aspects of African patriarchal structures that may have been in operation prior to colonialism and thus set the pace for the oppression of women. For instance, even though land was communally owned in many pre-capitalist African societies, land was under the control of a patriarch (Rogers, 1980: 133; Pala, 1980:195). Due to this limitation, anti-Western analyses are inadequate for understanding and explaining the oppression of women in Africa.

A SOCIALIST FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

This perspective, which attempts to synthesize the anti-traditionalist and anti-Western perspectives, argues that African women are oppressed and marginalized but contend that their oppression results from both traditionalism and colonialism/capitalism. Socialist feminists state that traditional attitudes of men towards women, certain religious beliefs and practices - for instance, Islamic religion's purdah practice which secludes women from public life - and some aspects of African customary laws contributed to the exploitation of women, while capitalism instituted through colonialism increased women's exploitation, extended the discriminatory customs and even initiated new discriminatory laws (Oakley, 1980; Rogers, 1980; Perchonock, 1982; Imam, 1982; Ngur, 1987, 1988). For the socialist scholar, therefore, legislative changes, education, employment opportunities, and changes in attitudes are

necessary but not sufficient to ensure equality and justice for women, since the ultimate factor underlying women's oppression, irrespective of variations in its manifestation, is private property. They therefore contend that true freedom for women lies in: abolishing or eradicating the family unit as it will enable women to be fully reintegrated into production (public domain); transformation of private housekeeping into social industry; collectivization of domestic economy; establishment of day care facilities for children and popular/public restaurants for feeding the population. Overall, the socialist suggests a total overhaul of the present capitalist economy and its replacement with a socialist order.

While most of the explanations offered by socialist feminist scholars apply to women in Africa, what becomes problematic in their argument is the practicability of some of the solutions provided which seem to be utopian, especially when put in the context of rural women. For instance, how would the family unit be abolished and what structure will be instituted in its place? Instances of collectivized structures, like the Israel Kibbutz (Gerson, 1978: 33-34; Rosner and Palgi, 1980 in Taplin Ruth, 1989: 72-73), and Tanzania Ujamma (Brain, 1976) have not been very successful. Moreover, women's oppression has not ceased to exist in the so called "socialist" societies - Soviet Union before its recent fall, China, Cuba etc.

From the discussions of the three theoretical perspectives above, it becomes clear that the oppression of African women is created and reproduced by the combined forces of patriarchy (African traditional and imported Western) and capitalism (class structure). While the first two of these theoretical perspectives focus on an aspect of these two

forces, the third combines the two approaches. This study will draw mostly from the socialist feminists theoretical perspective to show that rural Igbo women are not only dominated as members of a specific sex-defined group (the female gender), but also as members of the oppressed class.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section overviews the research studies and articles on the role of women in agriculture in the developing countries and the implications of development efforts for women farmers. Studies have been grouped under three themes (i) Women in Agricultural Development: Women as farmers rather than farmers' wives or farmers' helpmates. (ii) Women and Remuneration for Agricultural Activity. (iii) Women and Access to Agricultural resources. In discussing the themes and the arguments raised, literatures from Non-African countries, Other African countries, and Nigeria are highlighted.

(i) Women in Agricultural Development: Women as Farmers rather than Farmers's Wives or Farmers' Helpmates.

Until the 1970's, debate concerning development, especially in the Third World countries, centred on men as the main social actors and major producers of agricultural goods. With Boserup's pioneering book Women's role in Economic Development (1970), however, this view was challenged. Like men, women and children are social actors who actively participate in national and agricultural development. According to

the F.A.O (1986) estimation, women produce more than half of the worlds food. Women produce more than 80 per cent of the food for sub-saharan Africa, 50-60 per cent of Asia's food, 46 per cent in the Caribbean, 31 per cent in North Africa and the middle East and more than 30 per cent in Latin America.

Women constitute the majority of peasant farmers in most rural communities. Through their agricultural activities, they provide the family with its basic staple food and nutritional diet. In most societies, women are solely responsible for food processing, water collection and firewood gathering. "In the agricultural sector of Africa, women perform 80 per cent of food storing activities, 90 per cent of food processing, 60 per cent of the marketing and 50 per cent of domestic animal care ... often with few if any modern tools" (ILO/INSTRAW, 1985). Similarly, the bulk of household chores, food preparation, cleaning, washing, and child care lies mostly on women. Women also participate in cash crop production. They plant, weed, spray and harvest cash crops, and sometimes act as wage labourers on large farms and plantations. Women's contributions to cash crop production sometimes affects their food production. For instance, more time is sometimes spent by women than men on weeding of cash crop farms. The Nigerian Yoruba women, for example, work more than the men on cocoa plantations (WIN Document, (1985); Fresco, 1985).

In spite of the enormous agricultural roles of women, they are underrepresented in development statistics. Gross National Product (GNP) are calculated without including non-marketable indicators which include the bulk of women's informal sector, kitchen garden work, indirect wage, family and other unremunerated "invisible"

contributions of women to the nation's economy (Boserup, 1970; Taylor et al., 1985; Chinery-Hesser et al., 1989: 35; Pietila and Vickers, 1990: 10, 14). Yet these categories of unremunerated and unpaid labour, according to the World Survey Report, "lowers the cost of reproduction of the labour force and subsidizes male paid labour", and are in effect, "a powerful factor in the accumulation of capital in many countries at all levels of development" (World Survey Report in Pietila and Vickers, 1990: 10).

(a) Studies in Non-African Countries.

In their contribution to the aforementioned debate, Draper (1975) and Slocum's (1975) studies of preliterate societies indicate that the gathering activities of women account for 80 per cent of the food eaten by the people, whereas men's hunting activities only account for about 20 per cent of the society's diet. Aronoff and Crano's (1975) study of 862 societies revealed that women contribute enormously to their respective societies. The percentage of women's food production was 43.88% with a range of 32.24 to 50.73% in different societies. In their study of Bangladesh women, Kabir et al. (1976) found that women participate immensely at all levels of the production cycle - food growing, food processing, food preservation and storage of food. Women also raise chicken and other livestock, and engage in household craft manufacturing, house repairs and maintenance and in firewood and water collection.

In her contribution to a workshop on women, Davies (1983) observed that women in developing countries, especially in sub-saharan Africa and South-east Asia,

make up 50% to 90% of the agricultural labour force, yet women remain unrecognized by both national and international development agencies, and unrepresented in official statistics.

Dankelman and Davidson (1988) observed that by virtue of Third World rural women's enormous role in agriculture, animal husbandry and household, they constitute a major force in natural resource management. For Dankelman and Davidson, rural women not only have profound knowledge of the plants and animals they encounter, but they also know about the ecological processes around them (soil, water, forests, and energy). They noted, however, that in spite of women's tremendous role in agriculture and natural resource management, they are often neither consulted nor taken into account by development strategists and planners. They argued that rural women are the most affected by environmental degradation as a result of environmental mismanagement.

(b) Studies in other African Countries

Badran's (1972) study of Egyptian women showed that notwithstanding the practice of purdah, 44 per cent of the adult rural females are engaged in food production - weeding, food processing, and animal husbandry. Abbott (1975) observed that Kenyan women not only perform most of the subsistence farming activities (food crop growing), but also grow cash crops and raise cattle, a job previously performed exclusively by the men. Pala's (1976) study highlighted the enormous role played by African women in agriculture (hoeing, planting, weeding, harvesting, winnowing,

threshing, transporting), animal husbandry, and fishing. She noted that women have also been active in trade - distributing both agricultural and industrial goods in the rural and urban marketing centres. She noted that though women's efforts are often unofficially acclaimed, genuine efforts to officially encourage women through rural development policies remain very limited.

(c) Studies in Nigeria

Studies by Hill (1972) and Pittin (1984) of Northern Nigerian Hausa women in purdah showed that even though they do not participate in agricultural production a majority of the women, especially in the urban centres, perform the bulk of food processing and preparation of food for sale. They noted, however, that prepared foods are sold mostly by female children. Hausa women also dye knit, and weave clothes and mats. Non-Moslem and Pagan Hausa (Maguzawa) women in the rural areas participate in the production of food. They cultivate, process, and market farm produce. Perchnock's (1982) study of some Northern Nigerian societies revealed that women play a tremendous role in agriculture - planting of crops, weeding, harvesting, processing, winnowing, threshing, storing and marketing of agricultural produce. Women also keep and tend animals, mend homes, fetch water and collect firewood, and maintain their families.

(ii) Women and Remuneration for Agricultural Activities

Women constitute about 50 per cent of the population of the world. They work for between 10 to 16 hours daily on the average, performing two-thirds of the total work hours of the world. In spite of this high level contribution of women in development, they receive only about 10 per cent of the world's income and own less than 1 per cent of the world's property (International Labour Organization (ILO), 1985). Women are therefore the poorest of the poor in most societies (Ngur, 1987: 1, 3; Chinery-Hesse et al., 1989: 39-40).

According to Chinery-Hesse et al. (1989:39-40), "On average, women's income per hour is very significantly below that of men. Within the formal sector, they are paid significantly less in every country. Even where men and women work in complementary agricultural activities, women receive lower wages than men. Average earnings are substantially less in the formal sector Large numbers of women do not receive any monetary remuneration for the labour they put in on family farms or other enterprises." In most developing countries, "women constitute only a very small proportion of holders of productive assets, especially land" either "due to tradition or the legal framework under which property is invariably registered in the name of the husband or adult male in the household" (Chinery-Hesse et al., *ibid*).

(a) Studies in Non-African Countries

With respect to the above theme, in a study of a Rohtak district of Haryana in India, Chakravarty (1975) found that women spend between 8 to 9 hours on the farm

during the peak agricultural season as well as 3 to 4 hours on household and animal care respectively. They sow seed, transplant, weed, harvest, and store farm produce, but own less of the income generated from their farming activities. In her study on the extent to which rural women are integrated into the agricultural production process, Paulilo (1976) observed that women on small farms and wives of share croppers contribute enormously to agricultural production but are not remunerated for their efforts.

(b) Studies in Other African Countries

Reisman's (1980) study of pastoral societies revealed that pastoral women work harder and longer than their husbands or sons in order to complete the tasks which were considered the social obligations of their gender. Henn's (1984) study of African societies showed that African women perform the bulk of subsistence agricultural production but do not control much of the surplus emanating from such production. She attributed this development to a system of household patriarchy in which women and junior males' labour are under the control of senior men.

(iii) Women and Access to Agricultural Resources

The argument that development efforts in agriculture have different consequences for men and women was neither recognized nor accepted by modernization scholars, development activists, national and international development agencies until the 1980's (World Survey Report in Pietilia and Vickers, 1990: 16-17;

Rathgeber in Jabbra and Jabbra, 1992: 12). For the World Survey Report (1990: 16-17):

"In latin America, and the Caribbean, agricultural modernization has been characterized on one side by the industrialization of agriculture, which has generally been promoted by national and multinational agro-business, and on the other by agrarian reform. Women have not been fully integrated in either. Women have often been pushed into unskilled casual labour or have been marginalized from agriculture altogether by its industrialization.

The Asian rural structure is characterized by land scarcity and increasing landless, where agricultural modernization has generally meant the increase in yields brought about by the introduction of high-yield varieties. The effects on women have varied depending on the type of crops, the tasks culturally assigned to women, the changes in size and seasonal distribution of labour, and the characteristics of the household and the status of women within it.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, modernization has generally meant the promotion of productivity for cash crops, which are usually 'men's' crops, at the expense of food crops, which are usually 'women's' crops. The effects on women's status and on food production have been momentous. Since it was 'men's' crops which were promoted, women did not participate in agricultural modernization, food production lagged behind and nutritional levels worsened.

In the middle East and North Africa, male migration has been the recent trend of greatest relevance to women in agriculture. Migration has caused poorer rural areas to be depopulated and women have had to take up men's agricultural tasks, significantly increasing their workload."

Apart from the non-integration of women in development efforts in most of the developing countries, women have also "been systematically denied opportunities to benefit from development initiatives" (Rathgeber, 1992: 12). They have little or no access to productive resources - land, loan, machines, improved seedlings, fertilizer, extension services and facilities offered by cooperative organizations. Thus while development efforts meant "empowerment" for men, it often means "depowerment" for women.

(a) Studies in Non-African Countries

In their contribution to this theme, Jones and Jones (1976) revealed that Limbu women of eastern Nepal work with men in the cultivation of the soil, planting and harvesting of crops, while men work with oxen driven ploughs, women perform their farming operation with hoes. Chaney et al. (1981) observed that women perform crucial roles in crop production, storage, processing and off farm activities but that their access to agricultural facilities - land and extension services - continued to be circumscribed. Smucker's (1982) examination of the role of Haitian rural women showed that they participate not only in trading of their agricultural produce but also in agricultural production, and raising of livestock. They also take part in craft production. However, in spite of their numerous contributions, agencies of development fail to teach them the skills necessary for their economic advancement/upliftment. Mies' (1984) study of Andhra Pradesh village women in India found that women did more field work than men. She noted, however, that improved agricultural technologies have not meant less work for women. Rather, most of what women do is no longer defined as work.

(b) Studies in Other African Countries

Boserup's (1970) study of the implications of modernized agriculture for African women revealed that development often results in a decline in women's productivity and status. She observed that while men have come to monopolize new agricultural techniques which they use for their cash crop production, women are denied access to extension education and opportunities that can enhance their agricultural productivity.

Okla and Makey's (1975) study revealed that Ghanaian rural women play an enormous role in both food crop production and the growing of cash crop (cocoa). They noted, however, that while women perform the bulk of farm work, they hardly ever own their own farms. Palmer's (1979) case studies of the implications of large scale development efforts for women in three African countries revealed that little consideration is usually given to women as major agricultural producers. She noted that even though there is no intention to discriminate against women in agrarian reforms, development officers involved in the agrarian reform process simply do not consider the differential impact on women.

Bukh's (1979) study of rural women in Ghana showed that women have taken over greater responsibility of maintaining their households. She noted that women are not only tied up with the day-to-day responsibilities of caring for children and domestic services, but are restricted in their access to essential and strategic resources - land, labour, money, education and extension services. She attributes women's lack of access to resources to patriarchal structures (male bias) which give men privileges over women. Spencer's (1981) study of Sierra Leone indicated that women play an important role in agriculture and contribute at least 40 per cent of the total labour input. She observed that agricultural development projects which stress mechanization tend to have adverse effects on the female work load as they increase the amount of land available for planting, weeding, and harvesting which are women's major functions. Safiloo

(1985) observed that in spite of the numerous roles of Lesotho and Sierra Leonian women in agriculture, they remain marginalized with respect to their integration into agricultural development programmes.

Akeroyd's (1991) study of Southern African Societies revealed that African women play a vital role in subsistence and cash crop production and the well-being of their families. Nevertheless, constraints and problems for women continue to be discovered and reiterated to the extent that they have become ritualistic by most writers, politicians, planners and researchers. She noted that women are farmers and farmers are women, yet, too often, farmers are officially assumed to be men. The provision made for women is either non-existent, trivial or subsumed under the concepts of the 'family'/'household'. Development projects and policies are often premised on the assumption that the nuclear household has a unitary interest and maintains a single exchequer controlled by the male head. She argued that the implication of development efforts has often meant 'depowerment' rather than 'empowerment' for women.

(c) Studies in Nigeria

Ngaur's (1987, 1988) studies of pastoral Fulani society and Benue State women revealed that women perform numerous off-farm and farm activities. While the nomadic pastoral fulani women milk the cows, process butter and churn cheese, and market dairy products; the sedentary pastoral fulani women engage in agricultural and craft production, in addition to milking cow and processing cow products. Benue state women (Tiv, Idoma, and Igala) perform the bulk of farming activities: they plant, transplant, weed, hoe, apply fertilizer, harvest, thresh, winnow, transport, store and

preserve, and market agricultural products. The women also keep animals (sheep, goat, chicken), and engage in craft production. She noted, however, that in spite of the numerous contributions of women in agriculture and other spheres of production, they have little access to land except as gifts through their husbands or male relations. Women do not have access to other factors of production, especially those related to agricultural innovations and training. Women participate in farming activities only as family labour, with no control whatsoever over the products or proceeds of their labour, nor do they receive adequate remuneration. She noted that while rural women in Nigeria generally are in this predicament, the case of nomadic Fulani women seems to be worse. The deteriorating conditions of Fulani women (with respect to productive resources) stems from the male-centered development plans, in which only men are given pastoral innovative training and health information. She observed that the emphasis on men emanates from the assumption that the knowledge passed on to men will trickle down from husbands to wives.

Imam et al. (1985) highlight and discuss the role of various Nigerian women in agriculture, craft production, marketing and household chores. Yoruba women grow food crops and participate in the production of cash crops - cocoa and cotton. They provide fuel and water, prepare food and take care of the children. They trade and engage in craft production. Imam et al., however, observed that Yoruba women who participate in cash crop production only receive a token cash gift in return for their labour. Similarly, Non-Moslem rural Hausa women, Tiv women, Kilba women and Igbo women perform the bulk of agricultural production: they plant, weed, harvest and head-

load produce home. They process, thresh, winnow, store and preserve food. They also engage in craft production and marketing of agricultural produce. They fetch water, collect wood, cook food and take care of children. In spite of these great contributions, women are denied access to land, credit, information and training, and social amenities.

Oladeji's (1985) paper presented at the Women in Nigeria (WIN) annual conference indicated that women are major food producers, processors, and marketers of agricultural produce, but are constrained by sex-discrimination, government policies, and access to factors of production. Okojie's (1985) paper highlights the basic needs of rural women. She identified food and increased nutrition intake, health facilities, water, electricity, housing, income source, and education as the most pressing needs of rural women and children. Elukpo (1991) highlights the role of women in agriculture in Nigeria. She observed that over 80 per cent of women in Anambra, Benue and Imo states are involved in agriculture. Western Yoruba and Northern Hausa women also participate in agricultural production. Women clear land, till the soil, plant crops, transplant, weed, apply manure/fertilizer, harvest, process food, thresh, winnow, mill, transport and market farm produce. They also raise livestock. She noted that in spite of the impressive contributions of women in agriculture, the unavailability of farm inputs such as tractors, fertilizer, and improved seedlings, credit and finance, and land affect the effective participation of rural women in agriculture.

The aforementioned literature that deals with women in agricultural and rural development in Non-African and other African countries (Draper and Slocum, 1975; Jones and Jones, 1976; Kabir et al; Smucker, 1982; Mies, 1984; Boserup, 1970;

Badran, 1972; Pala, 1976; Bukh, 1979; Davis, 1983; Henn, 1984) demonstrates the enormous contributions of women in agricultural production - hoeing, planting, weeding, harvesting, winnowing, threshing, preservation/storage, and transporting and marketing of agricultural produce; animal husbandry, and fishing. In spite of their enormous roles, women remain unrecognized and thus largely without encouragement by both national and international development agencies.

While most of these studies highlight the numerous roles of women in agriculture, only a few of the studies deal with the issue of women's lack of access to agricultural facilities as a factor responsible for their low productivity. Moreover, none of the studies conducted in other African countries link women's limited access to agricultural facilities to their low productivity as a possible reason for the current food problems facing African societies.

Similarly, only a few of the studies on women in agriculture in Nigeria relate women's lack of access to agricultural facilities to their low productivity. None of the studies trace the present food shortage problem in the country to a possible neglect of Nigerian women farmers. Furthermore, most of the literature on rural women in Nigeria is not based on empirical survey research. Rather than addressing the fundamental issues of land, credit, technology, extension services and cooperatives which may be more crucial for women's increased food production, some of the articles (Okojie, 1985) tend to emphasize infrastructural facilities such as water, electricity, housing, education, etc. which are necessary but not sufficient for increased food production.

For the above reasons, this thesis seeks to relate the State's neglect of women farmers over the years to their low productivity and consequently to the food shortage problem facing the country today. This study also seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice (research) as few empirical studies have been done on Nigerian women farmers in general and Igbo women in particular.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The present study was carried out in Igbo speaking states of South-eastern Nigeria. The Igbo speaking states were chosen for this study because the available literature on rural women in Nigeria reveals that not much research has been conducted on the rural Igbo women farmers. The collection of data covered the period of two months starting from the second half of January, 1993. Data collection for the study was carried out at two levels the micro and macro levels.

At the micro-level, data were collected from two rural Igbo communities - Ummunachi and Leru. The collection and recording of data were done by staying in the two communities - Ummunachi and Leru. The researcher is, more or less, an insider in the two communities - by birth (Ummunachi) and marriage (Leru). Her membership in the two communities facilitated access to the community leaders and thus information from the women. The researcher, however, was conscious of the limitations of an insider with respect to the problems of subjectivity or objectivity in sociological research. Efforts were made to guard against being overly subjective. The use of a relatively structured interview schedule with open-ended questions which allowed the

women to freely express their views helped to guard against the researcher's tendency to subjectively impose answers on the women.

Data collection involved the combination of group discussion and personal interviews of Ummunachi and Leru women. Four group discussions were held with women in Ummunachi. The first of the four group discussions served as a pretest. During pre-testing it was discovered that the majority of the women preferred personal interviews in addition to group discussions. Before interviewing women in the two communities, they were briefed on the reason for the research, and why their communities were chosen for the research. Respondents were told that their willingness to participate in the study was voluntary and in no way compulsory. Similarly, after the discussions and interviews women were debriefed and thanked for their participation in the research.

Fifty women farmers randomly selected from the two communities - Ummunachi and Leru were interviewed. The random selection of women was done by throwing up tiny pieces of papers among a group of women in each of the ten villages of the two communities. The fifty women who caught a piece of the fifty pieces of paper became eligible for an interview. Twenty-five of the women came from Ummunachi and the remaining twenty-five from Leru.

For a wider representation of women respondents in the two communities, five women were randomly selected from each of the villages that make up the two communities. In all, there were ten villages - five in Ummunachi, and five in Leru.

TABLE 1: SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO VILLAGES

Community	Local Government	State	Village	Sample size
Umunachi	Idemili	Anambra	Ozzuh	5
Umunachi	Idemili	Anambra	Nmgbike	5
Umunachi	Idemili	Anambra	Umueze	5
"	"	"	Ngbana	5
"	"	"	Nkwelle	5
Leru	Isuikwato	Abbia	Agbala	5
Leru	Isuikwato	Abbia	Umuaka	5
"	"	"	Ugwu	5
"	"	"	Apku	5
"	"	"	Achala	5

All fifty respondents were interviewed on a relatively structured interview schedule with open-ended questions. A relatively structured interview schedule was used in order to allow women to express their views as much as possible, rather than limiting their options. Information gathered from the respondents was enriched by observations and verified by cross-questioning.

Questions were asked in the local language (Igbo) and on recording they were translated into English. Personal observations and additional information were noted on the back page of the interview schedule.

The information collected centered on the following: (a) Agricultural/farming activities of women - on-farm and off-farm activities of women and women's

time/labour allocation to these activities; (b) Women's use of and access to (i) land, (ii) credit, (iii) farming inputs - fertilizer, machines, seedlings, (iv) extension services, and (v) cooperative activities.

Macro level data came largely from a variety of secondary and primary sources. These include published studies, diaries, documents and records and reports of agricultural development agencies such as banks and allied institutions, ministries of agriculture and extension service departments, and agricultural cooperatives societies. Macro level data collection also involved the filling-in of interview schedules by officials of the institutions and the researcher.

In all, information was collected from six Banks/allied institutions; four Ministries of Agriculture and Agricultural Extension Departments; and two Cooperative societies. The information collected centered on the number of women agricultural facility seekers/applicants as compared to men; the number of women beneficiaries as compared to men; amount of money loaned-out to women as compared to men; type and quantity of agricultural inputs (machinery, seedlings, fertilizer, etc.) given to women as compared to men. In agricultural cooperatives, in addition to the above information, the number of women members and women occupying leadership positions as well as women's participation in decision making vis-a-vis men was ascertained. In tabulating and interpreting the data, tables were prepared from the respondent's schedule as well as those of various agricultural institutions.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH STUDY

The research study focused on Igbo women with data drawn largely from two rural Igbo communities - Umannachi and Leru. Although capable of being generalized to women in other Igbo communities (despite differences in cultural practices), the findings may not be generalized to women in other parts of Nigeria. Other constraints to the study include time, money and my status as a female researcher in a male dominated society. Time constraints reduced the extension of data collection to more Igbo communities and Igbo women. In spite of these limitations, however, efforts were made to gather as much information as possible in order to analyse the research problem.

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

(i) Institutional Factors

The institutions of agriculture are those agencies established in the society to service and promote agricultural development. According to Abalu et al. (1979: 89-90), "[t]he most important institutional factor in the agricultural sector is the government and its agencies at various levels. What kind of an institutional environment prevails in the agricultural sector therefore largely depends on the structure, conduct and performance of the various agencies of the state involved in the process of agricultural development". In Nigeria, these agencies include, the State, Banks/Allied Organizations, Ministries of Agriculture, Extension Service/Agricultural Research Institutes, and Cooperative

Organizations. In relation to farmers, the structure and dynamics of these agencies constitute the institutional factors that either enhance or constrain agricultural development.

(ii) Agricultural Development

Until recently the tendency has been to see development in terms of growth, evolution, or progress, hence the measurement of development on the basis of the economy's contribution to the gross national product (GNP) by development economists. Similarly, agricultural development is seen as the growth of, or increase in, agricultural productivity. This definition of "development", specifically agricultural development, has been criticized for emphasizing growth or increase in the national wealth without any attention on how the fruits of economic growth are distributed in the society. Consequently, development has been redefined as a process by which the economic, social, political and physical environments are transformed in such a way as to bring the benefit/fruit of development to the majority of the people who make up the environment. In this approach, development therefore aims at improving the life of the people. Agricultural development is seen as a participatory process, in which the majority of the rural farmers (men and women) partake in agricultural decision making and benefit from the sharing of agricultural resources and agricultural output with a view to uplifting their standard of living.

(iii) Patriarchy

Until recently the use of the term patriarchy referred to the rule or control of a family or group of people by an elderly male. Arnold (1964: 486) defines patriarchy as "that type of family government in which the father or male heir of his choice ruled the household." In an attempt to broaden the meaning of patriarchy, Beals and Hoijer (1953: 405) define it as "absolute rule by men."

As a vocabulary of feminist writing in the 1970's, however, the meaning of patriarchy, its legitimacy as a concept and its adequacy for defining male domination of women or women's oppression, have been subjected to serious scrutiny and criticism. Though feminist theorists do not agree on a single definition of patriarchy and its general applicability in all places and in all historical times, they seem to agree that women are oppressed by men, hence the relevance of the concept of patriarchy. While there may be differences in the lives of women in western, socialist and third world countries, all women experience some type of patriarchal oppression, both in historical and contemporary times (perhaps with the exception of forage societies). Thus one of the tasks of feminist theory has been that of developing and establishing a theory of patriarchy (i.e rule and domination of women by men).

For Hartman (1977: 71), patriarchy is seen as a set of social relations that have a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and a solidarity among them that enables them to control women. In such hierarchical relations, Hartman argues that men oppress women. She notes that patriarchy predates capitalism. Prior to capitalism, a patriarchal system existed in which men controlled the

labour of women and children in the family and by so doing men learnt hierarchical organizational and control techniques. With the emergence of the state and economic system based on exchange and increased production units, Hartman states that the problem for men became that of maintaining their control over the labour power of women. She notes that the shift in production from the family (household) to industry marks the transition from a personal system of control to an impersonal system of control mediated by society wide institutions.

For Millett (1970: 6) western society, like most historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. She notes that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance - in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands. According to Mackintosh (1977 :119 -127), "the characteristic relation of human reproduction is patriarchy, that is the control of women especially of their sexuality and fertility, by men."

From these definitions and conceptualizations of patriarchy it is my contention that most societies are characterized by some form of patriarchal structure. Women are oppressed both within and outside the context of class oppression. Patriarchy exists in most societies and various social formations - communal, tributary, Slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist social formations. What differentiates one society from the other, however, is the form of patriarchal practices. For instance, the type of patriarchy that was practiced in England during the Victorian era is different from the type that became the practice as capitalism became the predominant mode of production. Moreover, the

western form of patriarchy differs from the one practiced in Japan, China, Cuba, Soviet Union, India and Africa. It is also pertinent to note that patriarchal forms differ according to religious practices. For instance, the forms of patriarchy practiced in Islamic societies such as the middle east and Pakistan, differ from those in societies that practice Christianity. Even among Christians, while the Apostolic faith gave and continues to give women more authority, Catholicism does not. It can therefore be argued that patriarchy is cross cultural, although actualized differently in different societies. The form of sex roles may differ from one society to the other but power and authority have and do reside with the male. Importantly, patriarchy precedes capitalism and exists side by side with the precapitalist forms of social formations. As capitalism emerged, it interacted with and continues to reinforce patriarchy. The patriarchal system is carried over from one historical period to another to perpetuate the dominance of men.

(iv) Egalitarianism

Robertson (1985: 97-98) and Collins (1988: 73) see egalitarianism as equality of opportunity of citizens [irrespective of sex] with respect to rights, treatment, privilege, participation and access to social, political, and economic resources. Morton Fried (1967: 33) describes an egalitarian society as a society "characterized by the adjustment of the number of valued statuses to the number of persons, or fixing or limiting of persons capable of exerting power. As many persons as can wield power, whether through personal strength, influence or authority, can do so." Similarly, Etienne

and Leacock (1980: 9) describe an egalitarian society as that in which a "private, familial female domain is not defined and made secondary to a public political male domain. Instead, authority is dispersed and decisions are by and large made by those who will be carrying them out. All manner of social arts are used by both women and men to influence people, resolve problems and hold groups together."

While Igbo society reflects some of the characteristics stated in the above descriptions of an egalitarian society, the terms "relatively" or "fairly egalitarian", as used in this study, means societies that have some level of equity between the sexes - male and female with respect to access to social, economic and political resources.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATUS AND ROLE OF IGBO WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT BEFORE COLONIAL RULE

This chapter discusses the status and role of Igbo women in development prior to colonialism. In this discussion, the extent to which women have access to agricultural facilities - land, labour, credit, and the services of cooperative organizations - is examined.

IGBO SOCIETY BEFORE THE COLONIAL RULE

A useful discussion of the status and role of Igbo women prior to colonialism cannot be made without an overview of Igbo socio-political and economic structure.

Pre-colonial Igbo society, given its available stock of human resources, natural resources, and technological knowledge, was politically relatively egalitarian, and, economically, fairly developed. The great archeological excavations of Igbo Ukwu, Awka, Nsukka, and Afikpo amongst others include discoveries of highly rated iron swords, bronze and copper vases and ornaments, stone axes, and pottery works that attest to this fact (Isichei, 1973: 23; Nzewunwa, 1985: 22-23). Commenting on the excavations and the level of development and richness of Igbo culture, arts and crafts,

Isichei, (1973:23) stated:

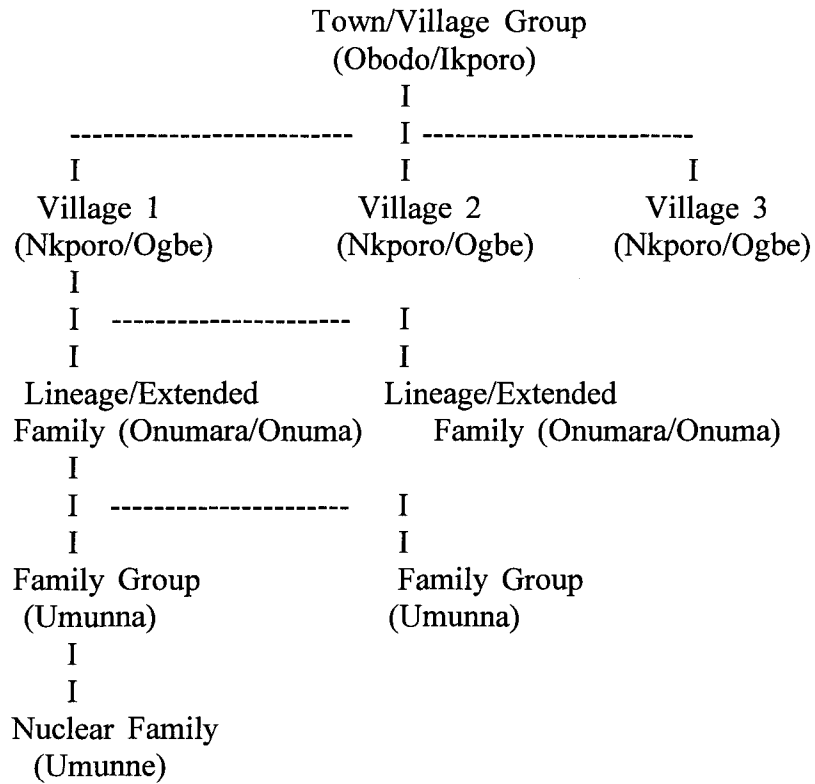
... The excavations reveal the antiquity of the institutions, and the treasures the uncovered the bronzes and beads, reflect the wealth of the economy, and the great artistic skill of the markers of the bronzes.

Isichei (ibid) noted that these great works of art, and the wealth and skills they revealed, were to the astonishment of the first Europeans settlers in Igbo land.

(i) Social Structure

The Igbos, like some Nigerian ethnic groups, were organized in kinship, village and lineage systems. Within the kinship system, the nuclear family of father, mother (mothers in the case of polygamous marriage) and children constituted the basic unit. Two or more nuclear families of fathers, mothers, and children made up a family group. The family group usually resided together in a compound erected with one main entrance. A number of family groups made up the extended family. A group of extended family members made up the lineage, and two or more lineages made up the village. A collection of related villages made up the village group or town (Meek, 1950: 90; Nzewunwa, 1983:23; Okere, 1983: 51-69). This structure is summarized in Figure I.

FIGURE 1: SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF IGBO SOCIAL STRUCTURE*



*Source: Adopted from Meek (1950:9) with some modifications by the author.

In the family group or extended family, the oldest male member, the Okpara/Opara/Okpala (as a result of differences in dialect), exercised a great level of authority and held the "ofa" - symbol of truth, authority and honesty. He mediated between his family and other families, and between his family and the ancestors upon whose goodwill the members depended (Nzewunwa, 1985: 25; Ekechi, 1989: 143). To insult the Okpara meant insulting the ancestors.

The Okpara worked for the welfare of the family, organized the exploitation of family land, and assigned farm land to women (wife/wives) and other members of the family. He rationed supplies of items in limited supply and, in times of stress, helped family members who were in difficulties. He bore the greater part of marriage, funeral, and hospitality expenses. In other words, as the head of the household the Okpara acted as the material and spiritual guardian of the group. In external matters, he assumed social, political and economic responsibilities for all members (Uchendu, 1965: 41, 98).

As the family's "ofo" holder, the Okpara represented the family at the village level. A group of Okparas represented the village at the village group or town level (Nzewunwa, 1985: 25; Ekechi, 1989: 143).

Among the Igbos, with the exception of the Ohafia matrilineal group, descent was basically patrilineal, and marriage patrilocal (Mabogunje, 1965: 26). Apart from the kinship groupings, Igbo society was also organized on the basis of age and sex (males and female) group/grades/sets (Utu Ogbo). Age grade is a social institution by which all male and female members of the society were classified into groups of approximately the same age for the purpose of performing societal duties (Meek, 1950: 198). Age grade members remained unorganized until they reached the age of fifteen to eighteen.

The elderly women's age grade and women's council and general assembly often paralleled that of the men (Nzimiro, 1972: 21). Women also formed various associations (nd'inyom, otu umunwayi/otu meten) through which they not only contributed to the

development of society but also fulfilled themselves and assisted one another, especially in times of difficulties or bereavement.

Igbo mode of religious worship was basically paganism or animism. Both men and women were assigned religious and spiritual functions. Women were assigned rituals concerning fertility, child birth, funerals, and purification (cleansing) after an abomination had been committed in the society. They also acted as herbalists (traditional medicine healers) and diviners (ndi dibia).

Within the Igbo social structure, women played the role of custodian of culture and moral catalysts of the people. Women drew the attention of the people to any perceived evils in the society, and took necessary action to either avert it, punish the offenders or help to purge the society of any evil that has had been committed (Eze, 19: 25-28, undated article: 25-28).

(ii) Political Structure

Although politics has been defined in several ways by different scholars, the definition of politics given by Mba (1982) appears to be very comprehensive and, as such, very useful in our understanding of the role played by Igbo women in politics in the precolonial Igbo society.

According to Mba (1982: vii) politics is "the process by which resources and values (human, material, and spiritual) are allocated within a social unit (nation, region, town, or village) for the purpose of meeting the needs and desires of its members. Politics occurs within a political system, which is the organized patterns of interaction among the people in the social unit for achieving the allocation objectives." Mba sees

government as only constituting a part of the political system, and defines it as "the formal institutions and offices involved in making and carrying out authoritative decisions in the system." The political system for Mba includes "many forms of political activity which take place outside the formal structures of government but which influence government policy, such as political parties, interest groups, and pressure groups, and social movements."

Although the Igbos, by virtue, of their common language (with slight variations in dialect), similar culture and similar social structure, could be said to be a fairly homogenous people, politically, Igbo communities differ in terms of the type and method of government adopted (Alagoa, 1981: 79-81; Mba, 1982: 21-28; Nzewunwa, 1985: 25). Oblivious of the cultural and political heterogeneity and complexity of Igbo societies, some early anthropologists (Meek, 1950; Green, 1974: 6) blindly classified Igbo societies as either "acephalous", "stateless" or "republican" societies.

According to Alagoa (1985: 79) the term "acephalous" "implies that Igbo communities do not have heads, or an institution of government with persons serving as chiefs or ruling political authority." The term "stateless," for Alagoa (ibid), "implies that Igbo communities do not possess formal structures of government with a hierarchical organization based on persons charged with functions of rule and government by the community at large." The "republican" classification, for Alagoa (ibid) connotes "a form of government in which leadership is not prescriptive and permanent, but changeable, flexibly assigned to persons of proven leadership capabilities."

By classifying every Igbo community as either acaphelous, stateless or republican, early writers failed to realize that Igbo communities differed culturally and politically notwithstanding their socio-linguistic similarities.

The writer's unilineal categorization of Igbo communities as either acephelous, stateless, or republican amounts to over generalization and as such an unrealistic or superficial portrayal of Igbo communities.

As observed by Alagoa (ibid) and Mba (1982: 21-28), Igbo society is culturally and politically heterogenous and should be treated or seen as such for a truer and better understanding of the complexity of the communities.

Alluding to the heterogenous nature of Igbo political systems, Nzimiro (1972: xiv) stated:

Kings and titled Chiefs might rule in one area (as in Aba, Onitsha, Osomari, and Oguta), while in others, such as Asaba and Aguleri, titled personnel and age grades combined ... In Western Ibo [Igbo] areas, we find Kingdoms which differ from these Niger areas, in details of structural organization. In some other Ibo areas, such as Nri, Ndi Nze (title associations) and heads of lineages (elders) combine in the rulership (cited in Alagoa, 1985: 79).

From Nzimiro (1972: xiv), Afigbo (1972); and Mba (1982: 21-26), two major political structures (with variations as practised in different Igbo communities) emerge - the pseudo-centralized/constitutional monarchy and a non-centralized/decentralized political structure. The pseudo-centralized political structure was practised mostly by

riverine Igbo communities, such as Onitsha, Osomari, Oguta, and Aboh amongst others. The non-centralized political structure was practised mostly by hinterland Igbo communities (Umunachi, Leru, Mbaise, Okigwe, etc.).

For the purpose of this study, the Onitsha pseudo-centralized political structure and a general feature of the non-centralized hinterland Igbo political structure will be highlighted.

The Onitsha Pseudo-Centralized/Constitutional Monarchy Political Structure

Within the Onitsha "Constitutional Monarchy" (Afigbo, 1972) existed a royal King (Obi/Eze) who acted as the head of the state and held the position of the highest official of Onitsha land. His person was seen as being sacred and the symbol that united the two lineages (royal and non-royal) that made up Onitsha town. The royal lineage (Umuezechima) constituted the Onitsha first settlers. The non-royal lineage constituted the subsequent settlers in Onitsha. The royal lineage provided the King (Obi). On assumption of duty, the Obi appointed chiefs (Ndichie) from both the royal (Umuezechima) and non-royal lineages (Ugwunaobamkpa). The Ndichie with the Obi acted as the chief decision making body. While responsible to the Obi, the Ndichie performed the executive duty of enforcing law and order. They also administered justice. The first son (Okpala) of the senior village (Ogbe) who came from the royal lineage acted as the spiritual and ritual head of the community. For a balance to be made between the two lineages - royal and non-royal - the next highest official, the Iyase (Onowu), came from the non-royal lineage. He acted as the second person in

command and controlled the affairs of the state in the absence of the Obi. The priest and priestess of "Udo cult" [Eze Udo (male) and Ada Udo (female)] came from the non-royal lineage.

The principle of "checks and balances" was upheld in the Onitsha political system. The powers of the Obi were checked and limited by the senior chiefs (Ndichie Ume). The chiefs (Ndichie) of the non-royal lineages could, and did, oppose an erring Obi. They also acted independently of the Obi when the need arose (Nzimiro, 1972: 266).

Apart from the female priestess were the Umuadaeze (daughters of the royal lineages). They played diplomatic roles in settling disputes and protecting the royal lineage. At marriage, they did not lose their agnatic tie, but maintained their royal connections throughout their married life. They informed the King about any plot to overthrow him, especially if the plot came from the opposing non-royal lineage.

In Onitsha political system existed the institution of the Queen Mother (Omu) and her council (Otu Omu). The Queen Mother (Omu) acted as the head of the Otu Omu (women council). The Queen (Omu) was usually an elderly woman in her post-menopausal period. Her person was regarded as semi-sacred. She possessed all the insignia of royalty, such as sword (abani), fan, and drum often held by the Obi. Like the Obi (king), she hailed from the royal lineage, but unlike him could not be deposed once appointed (Mba, 1982: 28; Isichei, 1983:192). She possessed her own palace apart from the that of the King in her father's compound. Her palace often acted as asylum for individuals who opposed the King (Meek, 1937: 192; Isichei, *ibid*). When in Obi's

palace, she sat beside him on her uniquely designed portable throne (Witford 1877:173). She performed her own "Ofala" - a rededication festival a few days after that of the Obi. The Omu, the senior members of her council, and the priestess held the Ofo (symbol of ritual authority). Like the Obi, they were regarded as embodying spiritual powers with links to the gods (chi). They were also surrounded and hedged with ritual and sexual taboos. Apart from her ritual and spiritual functions of heading women's purification activities, as well as other ritual duties, the Omu supervised the Obi's annual "Ofala" rededication ceremonies to gods and the new yam (iri-ji) festivals (an occasion for giving thanks to ani the earth goddess and source of all fertility, for the year's good harvest and better future harvest) (Mba, 1982: 23). The Otu Omu/Ogene (women's council), the equivalent of Obi's Ndichie, held titles that paralleled those of the Obi's council of chiefs (Ndichie). Rather than being appointed by the King (Obi) the women's council was selected by the Omu herself. The council members were usually elderly women.

The Omu and her councillors controlled trade and the daily activities of the market. Each day marketing activities could not commence in the Onitsha main market without the Omu fully seated on her seat in the market. She and her councillors regulated what was to be sold, by whom and at what price (Ibid: 24). In conjunction with her councillors she settled market disputes, levied fines or requested offenders to take ritual oath. All traders (women and men), Onitsha indigenes and foreigners paid dues to the Omu (ibid).

Noting the significance of the institution of Omu in Onitsha, Archdeacon Johnson (in Isichei, 1983:192) described it thus:

It is not a merely honorary title, but carries with it its own duties and responsibilities. The Omu is the fountain of honour to the men in the women, as the Eze or King [Obi] is the fountain of honour to the men in the country. She has absolute control of the trade in which the women are engaged, and can stop, or open as occasion requires. No important law affecting the rights and liberties of her sex could be passed by the king and chiefs in council without being first communicated to her and her chief women. ...

As found in Onitsha and some riverine Igbo communities, the political position of Queen Mother existed in some Yoruba communities (Iya Oba, Iya afin, Iyalode - mother of the town Mba 1982: 27; Isichei, 1983: 191) and in the ancient Benin Kingdom (Iyaoba) of Nigeria. As observed by Egharabya (1968: 75):

In the ancient Kingdom of Benin in the midwester part of Nigeria, it was the practice for the ruling monarch, three years after his ascension to the throne, to confer on his mother, the title of Iyoba (Queen Mother after which she was then sent to Uselu, a part of the Kingdom, to reign as Iyoba of Uselu and become one of the King's most important adviser until her death.

Similarly, the position of Queen Mother existed among the Ashanti matrilineal peoples of Ghana.

Although the Omu acted as the representative and spokesperson of the women in the Obi's council and had held spiritual and political powers, her political status was not equated with those of the Obi (Mba, 1982: 24). Moreover, she was assigned her post by the Obi who was a male. Thus, the Omu's occupation of a political position

was as a result of her relationship to a man. Onitsha men remained holders of the highest political posts. Moreover, not all women qualified for the post. Only elderly women beyond child-bearing age were appointed as Queen Mother.

Non-Centralized/Decentralized Hinterland Igbo Political System

Among the hinterland Igbo communities, the basic and highest form of political organization was the village group (Mabogunje, 1965: 27; Mba, 1982: 26; Nzewunwa, 1985: 25; Ekechi, 1989: 143). This group was made up of related villages who traced their origin from a common male ancestor (patrilineal Igbo communities) or female ancestor (matrilineal Igbo communities).

The village was divided into lineages or sublineages and extended families, each of which was headed by a male - the Okpara/Okpala/Opara - who was usually the eldest son of the lineage founder. He acted as the ritual and spiritual head of the unit and settled minor internal disputes that arose between members. The Okparas of the constituent lineage/sublineage made up the Lineage/Sublineage Council.

Beyond the Lineage and Sublineage Council was the Village Council, made up of the Okparas (heads) of the Lineage or Sublineage Council. In the Village council were also a few influential elders who administered the affairs of the village in conjunction with the village council members (the Okparas). The Okparas and the influential elders constituted the Village Council/Assembly of Elders (Oha). The influential elders were chosen by virtue of their wisdom, experience, communication skills (Mabogunje, 1965: 27; Ekechi, 1989: 143).

The Village Council/Assembly of Elders (Oha) acted as the highest law making and adjudicating body. Disputes beyond the adjudication of the Lineage/Sublineage Council were settled by the Village Council of Elders. Inter-village disputes were also settled by the Council of Elders. Disputes were usually settled at a common meeting or public place, such as the market square (Afia/Ahia), open field (ilo) or Shrine. Decisions on village affairs were usually arrived at by a consensus after a prolonged debate. Judgement between disputants were made by striking the "ofo" (symbol of truth, honesty and justice) and invoking the memory of the ancestors: "Our judgement is in accordance with custom and is therefore by which you must abide. If you refuse to obey the decision, may ofo kill you" (Ekechi, 1989: 144).

Every adult member of the village (man or woman) was allowed to be present at the council meeting, and to air his/her view. However, the views of the elders superceded. This explains why hinterland Igbo political structure was often described as gerontocratic (Ohacracy) - rule by a group of elderly persons of wisdom, intelligence and influence (Njaka, 1974: 13; Ekechi, 1989: 144). It is pertinent to note, however, that although the views of the elders often prevailed, the elders did not have monopoly of power and authority. As observed by Ekechi (1989: 144)

...in republican [non-centralized] Igbo society no single individual or social group actually monopolized power or authority. Instead, authority was in fact diffused. Thus native priests (nde dibia) secret societies (for example, Okonko), age-grades and others [women's associations] had their sphere of authority and influence.

The age-grade (usually persons - male or female born at approximately the same time of the year) played a significant socio-political role in the hinterland Igbo society (Meek, 1950: 197). Their functions, which fall mostly within the executive realm, included for men: acting as soldier or mobilizing warriors in times of inter community conflicts; acting as community guard/police; collecting fines, arresting community offenders and enforcing punishment; clearing of community paths, digging of burial ground and burying the deads. Female age grades (otu umuagbogho): cleaned the stream; swept and cleaned the burial ground; arrested female offenders; collected fines and enforced punishment on offending females. The female age grades also contributed their labour in community marriage and burial rituals. They fetched water and supplied the firewood needed in such feasts. Both male and female age grades acted as a source of community cooperative labour.

Through their various associations (otu ndi de/nd'inyom - wives association; otu umuada - married daughter's association, otu meten), the hinterland Igbo women contributed to the socio-political organization and administration of Igbo communities.

Both as individuals and as a group, women aired their views in the general village assembly meetings. They acted as a judicial body for settling disputes between the women and other members of the society. They intervened in marital disputes and effectively mobilized action against defaulting husbands, either by ridiculing them or "sitting on them". Igbo women "sit on" a man when they sit outside his compound, singing abusive songs and refusing to leave until he agreed to their demands (Mba, 1982: 29). They often resorted to threats to leave their husbands, or refused to cook for

them, or denied them sexual intercourse when grossly offended by the men. They also threatened to leave the villages en masse when an act of injustice was perceived to have been committed by the men (Mba, *ibid*; Njoku, 1990: 128). Mba (1982: 29) noted that Igbo women's threats were often taken seriously by the men and concerted efforts were made to prevent women from carrying out their threats. Igbo women's political consciousness and their ability to collectively champion their course was clearly manifested in the 1929 Aba women's riot, often described as the first Women's Liberation Movement in Africa (Leith-Ross, 1935: 20; Njoku, 1990: 82).

Women, by virtue of their exogamous marriage (marriage outside ones immediate community) in which ties with their descent group were not severed, maintained peace and order between their family of orientation (natal family) and family of procreation (marital family). As observed by Green (1964: 157), exogamous marriage among the Igbos was not only "the great factor mitigating the centrifugal force of Ibo [Igbo] separatism" but also the link through which village groups (men and women) could trade with one another and in so doing "enabled women to play the role of peacemakers in dispute between their natal and marital homes." Green (*ibid*: 169) noted that the "double charter of residence", in which women had a foot in two camps, was reflected in the types of organizations women formed which were both intra-village and inter-village.

A vivid summary of the role and place of Igbo women (umuada, umuagbara/agbala, umuokpu or nd'inyom) in the socio-political administration of the society was stated by Njaka (1974: 123):

The Umuada (women) are considered the custodians of the Constitutions. Any female born in a polity is the ada ("daughter") of that unit. Although in general, women do not take part openly in most public affairs, they must not sit quietly when the constitution is violated and the land goes ablaze. At such times the umuada do intrude in the affairs of the state and can impose sanctions - which may include heavy fines, sit-ins, and other measures. Certainly the elders [male] will go to great lengths to avoid a confrontation with the umuada, and in this way the women do, indirectly, exert a strong influence on the affairs of the state.

Having presented an overview of Igbo political structure, an understanding of the place of women within the political structure only becomes clearer when seen in terms of their participation, directly or indirectly, in the activities of government or activities of the groups or subgroups which exercised authority (Lebeauf, 1963: 93). Alluding to this view, Mba (1982: vii) defines women's political activities as their "efforts to influence the allocation of resources and values in their communities by appeals to the leadership and their own participation in that leadership".

In line with this view of women's role in politics, one can say that the Igbo women played some roles in the socio-political administration of Igbo society. Women participated in settling familial, intra-community and inter-community disputes. They enforced punishment, and ensured that discipline and justice reigned in the society. Through their spiritual purification roles, women purged society of inflicted evils.

Although gerontocratic and male-centered, Igbo political structure was not oppressive of women and children. In as much as men generally held the highest political positions [the King (Obi) among the Onitsha Igbos, and Village Council of Elders (Oha) as the hinterland Igbo communities], women's positions of Queen Mother and her councillors (Omu/Omu Council), and Women's associations (and the youth age

grades) often acted to check the power and authority of elderly men through direct and indirect influences. As a pressure group, Igbo women (and youths) played a complementary rather than a subservient/subordinate role in the socio-political administration of pre-colonial Igbo society (Mba, 1982).

(iii) Economic Structure

Livelihood in pre-colonial Igbo society depended on the exploration and exploitation of the land. Land was depended on for agricultural production, hunting and grazing of animals. Subsistency defined the mode of farming, although agricultural surplus was sometimes exchanged in the market place (Nzimiro, 1972; Njaka, 1974: 25; Isichei, 1983: 84) or used in gift giving. The mode of exchange was basically by barter but was later replaced by the use of brass, copper, manilla and cowrie shells (Isichei, 1983: 109-112).

The great archaeological excavations of Igbo Ukwu, Awka, Nsukka, Afikpo with the farm implemnts discovered such as hoe, cutlass and matchete suggest that Igbo society belonged to the "Hoe-Culture", identified by Baumann (1976) in his survey of some East African societies. The hoe (ogu) was the basic agricultural implement. Other implements included cutlass (nma), matchete (nma oge), sickles, digging sticks (mbazu), basket and other implements made from raffia/palm leaves (apale, ete etc.). The farm implements were made by blacksmiths, iron smithers and weavers.

The hoe was used mostly for making mounds or ridges in which seeds were planted. It was also used for weeding crop. It has a short wooden and hook-like handle often cut from the branch of some hard tree. The shovel-like blade is made of iron by

local blacksmiths and is fitted to the hook of the handle. The cutlass and matchete are similar to broad knives. They have a wooden grip and their blades are either curved or straight. They were used for clearing bush, for weeding tree-crops and for felling trees. The digging sticks were used for digging and harvesting crops, and the baskets for carrying produce home.

The crops grown were palm tree (nkwu), yams (ji), cocoyam (ede), bread-fruit (ukwa), pepper (ose), melon (egwusi/egusi), pumpkin (ugu), okro (okwuru), pea (ube) kolanut (Oji/Orji). The crops grown were supplemented with wild food plants usually collected from the bushes. These include, root crops - wild yam (ji-ofia), wild vegetables (utazi, okazi, ugili), and wild fruits (udala, utu, mbembe) (Isichei, 1983: 36; Njaka, 1974:25). These crops and fruits provided Igbo society with vital food nutrients - carbohydrate, fat, protein, and minerals.

Palm trees served as a very useful crop in Igbo society. The oil extracted from the pericarp of the fruit is a good source of fat and cooking oil. The oil extracted from the kernel is used for body and hair creams, for soap-making, and in medicinal preparations. The palm tree itself is tapped for its milky white sap which serves as wine and which, in its fresh state, contains a substantial amount of yeast (Oluwasanmi 1966: 119). The palm leaves are used as fodder for domestic animals such as cows, goats, and sheep. The fodder left-over (on the branch of the tree) after the animals have fed is used as broom-sticks for sweeping the household. The twine-like structures extracted from the branch of the palm tree are used in basket making. The dried branches are used in house building and house fencing, and in supporting yam tendrils. Furthermore, the

dried palm branches and stem, and the shell from cracked kernel, were used as cooking fuel. According to Wilson (1945: 61), the oil palm "is a multipurpose West African plant supplying the inhabitants of the forest region of West Africa with materials for food, shelter, medicine, drinks, fuel, and illumination."

Most of Igbo oil-palm in the pre-colonial era grew in the bushes or on land jointly owned by the community (Isichei, 1983: 100; Njoku, 1990: 56-57). No single individual could claim ownership of palm trees growing on the communal land. Palm fruits were collectively harvested and later shared among the families in the community. Both men and women had rights to pick and process the palm fruits wildly growing in the bushes (Isichei: *ibid*; Ukegbu, 1974: 31-34). As observed by Ukegbu (1974: 31-34) in Mba (1982: 30), Igbo "women dominated the production of palm oil." "Like the men, women were free to pick palm fruits especially those growing in the wild bushes."

Yam was a very important root crop in Igbo society. It was regarded as king crop (eze ji) and was produced mostly by the men. Among Igbo men, yam symbolized wealth and the quantity produced determined whether a man was given an honorific title of "Eze-ji' king of yam (Njoku, 1990: 54-55). They constituted an important source of carbohydrate, protein, minerals and vitamin C in Igbo diet (Okere, 1983:93). Yam served as the major food eaten during the New Yam festival (Iri-ji/Jioku) and for a woman who had a new baby. It was either boiled or pounded (fofo - Nri-ji) and eaten with vegetable soup or roasted and eaten with palm oil. The New Yam festival, apart from serving as an occasion for giving thanks to ani/ala the earth goddess for the year's

good harvest, also served as an occasion in which the honorific title of Eze-ji was given to deserving members of the community. Like the renowned Native Indian Potlatch, large quantities of yam were cooked and served to the people. In the end, the festival served as an occasion for honouring hard work and redistributing wealth.

Cocoyam was grown by women. It acted as a cheap substitute for yam, especially during the planting season. Young leaves served as leafy vegetables in Igbo diet. Like yam, cocoyam contains some amount of crude and true protein, fat and oil. It served as a major food eaten during the Cocoyam festival. It was boiled and garnished with vegetables or pounded as "fofo" and eaten with vegetable soup. The vegetables - pepper, melon, pumpkin, okro are grown by women. They constituted the major ingredient for soup (Mba, 1982: 30).

Apart from the crops and fruits grown, animals such as goat (ewu), sheep (aturu), chicken (okuku) and cow (efi) were kept for both domestic consumption and for exchange in the market. Cows (kept mostly by men) were, rarely sold as their ownership symbolized wealth (ogaranya). Whoever killed one and treated the public to a feast with its meat and food was titled "Ogbuefi" (cow killer) and was respected and acclaimed in the society (Isichei, 1983:36). Goat, sheep and chicken were kept mostly by women. These animals constituted the major source of animal protein in Igbo diet.

As a supplement to the domestic animals, grass-cutter /cane rat (nchi) antelope (ene or ele), snails (eju) and a wide variety of birds (nnu-nnu) and fish (azu) were hunted for family food (Isichei, 1983: 35). Grass-cutter, antelope and birds were hunted mostly by men. Women hunted for snails, and both men and women fished.

Fishing as opposed to farming constituted the major occupation of riverine Igbo communities. Fish were caught by draining ponds, by poison, by traps as well as by nets and spear (Nzimiro, 1972: 4; Isichei, 1983: 42; Falola, 1985: 101-102). The catches were eaten or sold in the market. Those not eaten were smoked, dried or salted. While men fished mostly in the riverine communities, women preserved and marketed the fish.

Apart from farming, hunting, and fishing, Igbo communities engaged in arts and crafts - blacksmithing, wood carving, mat, basket and pottery making and cloth dying and weaving. Among Igbo women, the western Igbo women (Delta state) and the Akwete women (Abia state) were notable cloth weavers. While men engaged mostly in blacksmithing and woodcarving, women made pottery, wove mat and basket, and spun cotton, dyed and wove clothes. The Uburu women of Abia state also mined and processed salt (Isichei, 1983: 21-57; Njaka, 1974:25).

Igbo society engaged in trading and marketing activities. Produce derived from farming, hunting, fishing and arts and crafts were taken to the market for exchange. Igbo women constituted the bulk of the traders/marketers in the society (Mba, 1982: 30). As noted by Mba (ibid), Igbo women had "largely controlled local trade [especially hinterland Igbo women] and participated actively in long distance trade [riverine Igbo women of Onitsha, Oguta, Asaba, Aboh]." Women controlled the supply and prices of goods. The market women leaders, for instance the Onitsha Omu and her councillors, fixed the prices of goods, collected market dues and imposed fines on violators of market rules. Mba (ibid: 32) observed that the proceeds of Igbo women's trade normally belonged to them.

THE ROLE OF IGBO WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE BEFORE COLONIALISM

Igbo women's contribution to societal development not only fell within their productive roles, but also their reproductive roles. The productive roles include the numerous economic activities of women in the "informal" agricultural, domestic and cottage industrial sector. Their reproductive roles include the child bearing and child rearing duties of women, and the day-to-day maintenance of the labour force of husbands and children in both the agricultural and industrial sectors of the society. The reproductive roles of women also include the care of the aged, the sick and the handicapped.

Prior to the European penetration of Igbo land in 1830, Igbo women contributed extensively to agricultural production (Adeyokunnu, 1981; Elukpo 1991: 18). Although a distinction existed between the crops which women and men produced, there was no rigidity in the sexual division of labour between men and women (Leith-Ross, 1939: 89; Smock and Smock, 1972: 72; Okere, 1983: 163), and both men's and women's responsibilities were highly valued and appreciated in the society. In most cases, men were responsible for the planting of yams and other tree crops such as kolanut, and palm trees (climbing, and cutting of palm fruits; tapping of palm wine, and pruning of palm trees etc.); women grew food crops such as cassava, cocoyam, maize, beans, fruits and vegetables (WIN Document, 1985: 14; Smock and Smock, 1972: 79). However, it should be noted that both men's and women's responsibilities overlapped as flexibility characterized the division of labour between the two sexes. For instance, sometimes both men and women planted yams but differed in the method and tools used.

Occasionally a man, his wife and children worked together as a team in the growing of yam. While the men tilled the soil and made yam mounds with a long handled hoe, the women put the yam in the soil and covered the yam seeds with earth, with the short handled hoe. In processing oil palm fruits, men cut down the fruits and pounded them while women picked the nuts and expressed the oil.

Both men and women jointly participated in the clearing, burning and cultivation of the land, although women performed the bulk of the farm work. For instance, women and children performed most, if not all weeding and head-loading of the produce home (Okere 1983: 163). Also, the bulk of food processing and preservation tasks - threshing, winnowing, sieving, peeling, grating, pounding, drying, frying, smoking etc. - were performed by women, with occasional assistance from children (especially female children) (WIN Document 1985: 14; Smock and Smock 1972: 79). Most of these tedious and time consuming tasks, described by Kaberry Phyllis (1972) as "the last straw that breaks a woman's back after a long day's work on the farm and a weary trudge home," were performed with rudimentary tools and techniques.

Alluding to the non-rigid and complementary division of responsibilities between Igbo men and women, Smock and Smock (1972: 72) observed that farm income was equally divided between men and women:

... When a man sells his yams, the proceeds are for him, and when his wife sells her crops (cassava, okra, maize, pepper, cocoyams etc.), the money is hers. In turn, both man and wife have financial responsibilities, with each having types of goods and services they are expected to purchase or provide the family. Most men and women do not reveal to their spouses the size of their income nor how they spend the money in excess of what is required for the family use.

The above observations establish that Igbo women, like their men, enjoyed a level of independence and had effective control over the products of their labour: surplus crop realized from their farming efforts, how it would be disposed of, and how much of the money realized from the sale of the crops would be spent.

The harvesting of crops in Igbo society (especially of yams and cocoyam) was marked by various religious ceremonies - Iri-ji/Ori-ri Afejioku (New yam) and Iri-ede (Cocoyam) festivals (Okere, 1983; Njoku, 1990). All of these festivals were performed to give thanks to "ani/ala", the earth goddess, for the year's bountiful harvest and good harvest in the coming year. Though yam (New yam festival) was associated with the men and deemed as eze-ji (king crop), and cocoyam (Cocoyam festival) with women, both festivals were performed to appease ani/ala the earth goddess as source of all fertility and a symbol of femininity or femaleness. Women played a great role in these festivals as their reproductive and productive roles were reiterated and reaffirmed in and by the ceremonies. Importantly, the existence or notion of female gods (as source of fertility) among the Igbos was a recognition of female prowess and thus represents a respect for women.

In addition to the crop growing activities of rural Igbo women, a greater percentage of their time and energy was expended on searching for water and firewood (WIN Document 1985: 14). Water was needed for many purposes in the household - sanitation and waste disposal, childcare, crop growing and food processing. Women fetched water not only for domestic purposes but also for economic use. For instance, the domestic animals kept by women - goat, sheep, poultry, pig, etc. - needed water for

survival. Water was also needed for crop growing (kitchen garden), especially in the dry season. Similarly, water was needed for food processing, for example, palm oil, bean-cake, gari and cassava flour, and pap (corn starch) preparations. Firewood was also needed, not only for domestic food preparation but also for preparing food for sale, such as gari, a staple food in most Igbo families, and pap and bean-cake, popular drink and snack for breakfast in many Igbo and Nigerian families. Women also engaged in craft production - pottery, mat, basket making and clothes dying and weaving - especially during the off-farm season (WIN Document, 1985).

Igbo women performed the above mentioned tasks in addition to their reproductive duties of child bearing and rearing, and maintenance of the agricultural labour force. Moreover, Igbo women performed most of the household chores such as cooking, house cleaning, washing and sometimes repair work on houses. It is pertinent to say that these household chores are necessary for the daily survival of the family. Thus as indicated by the socialist feminists, any analysis of the role of women that excludes the above activities amounts to an inadequate representation of the role played by women in national development.

From the above discussions of the diverse roles of Igbo women, it is clear that women's crop growing roles were not neatly separated from their food processing, preservation, marketing, and water and firewood collection roles. Their reproductive roles of child bearing and rearing, and maintaining of the agricultural labour force were not clearly demarcated from their agricultural activities. The cycle of food production was not complete until the food was processed, preserved and perhaps sold in the

market. Importantly, water and firewood were indispensable in the food processing, preservation and preparation activities of women. Water and firewood were also crucial in the child rearing and maintenance practices of women. Thus any analysis of women as agricultural producers will be incomplete without the discussion of women as reproducers of agricultural labour force. In short, by virtue of their agricultural roles and trading activities, Igbo women were regarded as the feeders and maintainers of their families (Leith-Ross, 1935: 21; Mba, 1983: 30; Njoku, 1990:128).

IGBO WOMEN AND THEIR ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES PRIOR TO COLONIALISM

(i) Igbo Women and Land

Land constitutes the major agricultural resource and, as noted by Rogers (1980: 121), "of all the resources necessary for subsistence (other than one's labour), by far the most important is land."

A discussion of Igbo women with respect to land can only be made by locating their position within the Igbo land tenure system. Oluwasanmi (1966:23) defined land tenure as "the interrelationship between men in the use and control of land resource." Lowe (1986: 85) described land tenure as concerning "the allocation of natural resources among the individuals of a community"

Traditional Igbo land tenure conceived land ownership in terms of the principle that land belonged to the ancestors and to the unborn children, in community or tribal trust (Okere, 1983: 137; Oluwasanmi, 1966: 25). According to this principle, land belonged to the community under the control of the lineage head (usually a male); all

land was owned, there was no land that was not at the disposal of someone in the community. Rights were exercised over all land, even uncultivated land (bush or badly eroded land). Thus, "the concept of no man's land or abandoned land" did not exist in Igbo land tenure (Okere, 1983: 139). Individuals (men and women) did not own land but had usufruct right to farm land. Within this context, the Western concept of individual ownership of land did not hold in Igbo land tenure system. Individuals had only use right and not ownership right. As observed by Oluwasanmi (1966: 26) "individuals are prohibited from disposing of land of the group [community] either by sale or mortgage. Land was not a negotiable property and was as such not "inheritable, disposable and alienable by an individual." In other words, land could not be sold under the Igbo land tenure system. Individual men and women had access to land by virtue of their membership of the community. Both men and Women had access to land through the male head of the family via the lineage head. As Igbo society was basically patrilineal (though a few matrilineal communities such as those of Arochukwu/Ohafia existed), the use, control and allocative rights automatically passed through the male line from father to son.

DISPOSAL OF RIGHTS TO LAND IN IGBO LAND TENURE SYSTEM

(a) Kola Tenancy

In Kola tenancy, land was transferred from one person (the grantor) to another tenant) for a token gift of kolanut. According to Igbo tradition, the gift of kolanut was not akin to the purchase price of land, as the grantor could revert the transferred land

to himself on the death of the tenant who presented kola or if the kola-tenant did not have heir to continue making use of the transferred land. In this context of Igbo land tenure, usufruct rather than absolute ownership of land appeared to be the case (Okere, 1983: 140; Njoku, 1990: 41)

(b) Lease Hold

Under the lease hold, land was leased to another for a fixed period of time, usually for a year or two. Unless the period was over, the leaser could not terminate the lease. Only annual/seasonal crops with a short maturation period were planted on leased land (Okere, 1983: 140-141).

(c) Pledge

In pledge, no specified period of time was indicated. Pledge was often used by a money lender, in which case a piece of land was given by the borrower as security for a loan. Land was pledged to borrow money for urgent needs, such as bride prices. On repayment of the loan, the borrower or pledger redeemed the land. Pledged land could be repledged to a third party provided the original pledger agreed and the initial capital was not exceeded. Pledgee's rights could be passed to his sons or brothers if redemption has not been effected at his death. Seasonal crops (yams, vegetables) with short maturation period rather than perennial crops (tree crops -palm tree, kolanut) were usually planted on pledged land (Okere, 1983: 141; Njoku, 1990: 41).

(d) Tenancy

Tenancy occurred when a portion of land was given to a tenant by a land holder. Tenancy remained as long as the tenant or recipient, his sons or brothers occupied and

made use of the land. Tenancy ceased after the tenant had left. On leaving, the land reverted to the holder including all crops (seasonal and perennial crops) therein (Okere, Ibid: 142).

(e) Exchange

Exchange of land occurred as a matter of convenience, such as when a piece of land, perhaps because of its suitable location or suitable soil, was exchanged for another piece of land (ibid). For example, a family can exchange a piece of land for another with a family. Both families, it should be noted, only enjoy use right as the lands could revert to the former family holder.

In summary, in all the above methods of disposing of land in Igbo society, land was never alienated or sold. Land remained the ultimate property of the community. On ceasure of the user's usufract right, either voluntarily or by death, land reverted to the community for reappropriation.

The communal land tenure practice of the Igbos was also typical of some other societies in Nigeria and Africa. Among the Yorubas, for instance, land belonged to a vast family in which many members were dead, few were living and countless members were still unborn. Every member of the land owning family (men and women) was thus entitled by birth to a stake in family land, which must not be alienated without the consent of the land owning group.

From the above discussion of the Igbo traditional land tenure system, one can say that the communal nature of land ownership in precolonial Igbo society allowed both men and women to have use and therefore access rights to land. However, the

allocative and control rights belonged exclusively to male heads of the family and lineage/village heads. Women did not have allocative or control rights over land, they had access to land only by virtue of their relationship to men either as husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers, or sons. Moreover, the land tenure system which gave only men allocative and therefore control rights had already placed women in a disadvantaged or unequal position vis-a vis the men by the time of colonialism.

(ii) Igbo Women and Labour

Human resources in the form of labour constituted another important factor in agricultural production. Among the Igbos, the nuclear family of father, mother, and children was the basic unit of agricultural production. However, because the nuclear family was not self-sufficient, it often depended on other secondary sources for additional labour inputs - other members of the extended family, friends, age-groups/mates etc. These sources of labour were usually hired on a reciprocal and rotational basis and payment was mostly in kind - food and drink.

Under this reciprocal and rotational farm labour, a farmer invited his/her friends and relatives to assist him/her in a particular farm operation. The friends, relatives, or age-mates (in the case of a man) were well entertained but received no monetary rewards. In turn, the host would reciprocate by working on the other people's farms, in which they would also only be entertained through food and drink and receive no cash.

With respect to men's and women's access to these sources of secondary labour, while it was relatively easier for men to get some assistance from a wide source of labour - kinsmen and women, friends, relatives, and age-mates - women had limited opportunities - female friends, kinswomen, brothers and sisters. Alluding to this limited availability of labour for women as compared to men in his analysis of the organization of work and methods of food cultivation among the Igbos, Okere (1983: 167) stated that "work groups of women tend to be more circumscribed than those of men." Similarly, in their discussion of the sexual division of labour and source of labour for Igbo men and women, Smock and Smock (1972: 73) observed that "despite the fact that ... a heavy burden of farm work falls on women, labourers are rarely hired to assist with women's work." One could ask - Why was this so? The traditional patriarchal structures which favoured men over women were largely responsible.

(iii) Igbo Women and Credit

In some Nigerian societies, particularly in northern and western Nigeria and among the south-western Igbos, a traditional rotational credit system known as "esusu" or "adashe" was practised by women. As identified by Okonjo (1979: 327), the credit system among the Obamkpa and Ogwashi-uku Igbo women was aimed at assisting contributing members in small-scale capital formation. Members made fixed payments at regular intervals usually on a four-day, weekly or fortnightly basis. Members then had access, one at a time on a rotational basis, to the money pool for investment in

trading, farming and educational activities. Okonjo (ibid.) observed that the contribution clubs fulfilled for the community some of the functions of the modern Bank or Insurance company, for:

...not only can small-scale capital formation take place and savings accumulate, but loans can be made or goods bought on credit. They also offer an easy and comparatively ready access to money in the event of a personal crisis or misfortune, for instance, financial losses or illness or bereavement.

Among Umuannachi and Leru women, the "otu-umunwanyị" or "otu-utu" women's associations performed a similar function. Apart from collectively contributing to community development, members were assisted individually as the need arose. One limitation of the rotational credit system, however, was that the amount of resources realized was usually very small, especially where the group is very poor. Furthermore, ensuring that each member paid her dues as required was another problem of the rotational credit system. For instance, as noted by Ardener (1953: 129), "[t]he club's success depends very much on the existence of safeguards for ensuring that each member continues to pay her subscription until every member has received her take out." In his observation of the shortcomings of the credit system, Njoku (1990: 107) notes that:

The weakness of the Isusu is that members do not always get the money when they need it. One member gets his [her] hands turn on it when he [she] could do without it, while another may be desperately in need of money but cannot get anything because it is not his [her] turn [Njoku 1990: 107 quoted Okpi (1962: 29)].

In spite of the limitations of the traditional credit system, the practice depicts ingenuity on the part of precolonial Igbo women and is a mark of their determination to succeed and be self-reliant in the face of all obstacles.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that precolonial Igbo society, given its human, technological and material resources, was politically and economically fairly developed. Politically, Igbo society had a government structure that, though male-centered and gerontocratic, allowed women and youths some level of participation. Economically, Igbo society was able to cater to the needs of its people. Both men and women participated in the production process. Women, however, performed the bulk of the agricultural, marketing, reproductive and household chores. Through their activities as producers (farmer, traders, craftswomen etc.) and reproducers (child bearers and rearers, and maintainers of the agricultural labour force), Igbo women were not only appreciated and respected in the society, they also enjoyed some level of independence and autonomy.

The traditional land tenure system, by its communal and corporate orientation, enabled women to have use as well as access rights, even though the control and allocative rights over land remained largely with the men. Through the traditional practise of rotational and reciprocal farm labour and credit systems women had relative access to farm labour and credit. However, when compared to men, women had fewer labour sources.

Having discussed the status and role of Igbo women farmers, as well as the extent to which they had access to agricultural resources before colonialism, the next chapter will discuss the impact colonialism had on Igbo women with respect to their status, role, and access to agricultural facilities - land, credit, services of extension agents and cooperative organizations.

CHAPTER THREE

IGBO WOMEN DURING THE COLONIAL ERA

This chapter examines the impact of colonization on Igbo society, in general, and Igbo women with regard to their status, role, and access to agricultural facilities -land, credit, extension, and cooperative services.

Before the contact with European Colonialists, Igbo society was politically and economically fairly developed. Both men and women participated actively in agricultural production, and the responsibilities of both were necessary for the survival of the people. As such, women were highly valued and appreciated in the society. The division of labour between the sexes was more or less flexible, although women's work was more continuous and monotonous. Women were free to dispose of crops from their fields and had control of the surplus products and income derived from their marketing activities. Land was communally owned and both men and women had usufruct right to farm land.

IGBO SOCIETY AND THE EUROPEAN COLONIALIST

The presence of Europeans in Igbo land by the middle of 17th century not only drained its human resources (through slavery), it transformed the relatively egalitarian political structure. It further thwarted the technological and industrial development of Igbo society, and transformed the division of labour between men and women. It also impinged on women's access to the core agricultural resources.

European contact, which began on the borders of the River Niger, was based on the need for slaves, raw materials and a market for European made goods. As observed by Hanock (1943: 159) and McPhee, (1926: 30-31):

The rapid growth in England in the eighteen century ... created ... new wants among the people and caused considerable increase in the demand for tropical raw materials. The population of the growing industrial cities "needed light and needed soap; the new machines needed lubricant". Increased European demand for fats and oil and soap and illuminants put a great strain on 'the resources of the old-established supplies from animals and fish sources'. New sources of supply were machines and men. West African palm oil, palm kernels and groundnut provided invaluable sources of raw materials for the soap, candle, and edible oil industries. [Hanock (1943: 159) and McPhee (1926: 30-31) in Oluwasanmi (1966: 9-10)]

The first Igbo trading partners were the Portuguese, then the Dutch, followed by the British and France (Ume 1980: 2-4; Olaniyan, 1985: 115).

IGBO SOCIETY AND SLAVERY

The Portuguese presence in Nigeria was first visible along the estuaries of many rivers clustering in the Bights of Benin and Bonny in the late fifteenth century (Olaniyan, 1985: 113; Ume, 1980: 2). By 1472-1480, Portuguese vessels began paying regular visits to the rivers west of the Niger Delta, carrying slaves to the Gold Coast to be exchanged for gold (Olaniyan, *ibid*). Following a visit by John Affonso d' Aveiro (a Portuguese) to Benin City in 1482, a trade relationship was formally established between the Portuguese and Benin Kingdom. The items of trade included, pepper, ivory, beads and locally woven cotton textiles in exchange for European gin, gun powder, spirit, brass, bracelets, and copper. These were later displaced by human beings (slaves) as a major article of trade. When the trade between the Portuguese and Benin Kingdom

was consolidated, the then Benin traditional ruler, Oba Ewuare Ogidigan, sanctioned the building of a commercial factory in the port of Benin called Gwato (Ughoton). From then onwards, the port served as the only formal market where the Portuguese would trade with the indigenous population of the Bight of Benin on "friendly" terms (Ume, 1985: 3). In order to establish rapport among the people, the Portuguese used various strategies, such as inter-marriage, gifts and the use of the missionaries. Churches and Monasteries were established near Gwato but were later abandoned as the efforts to spread Christian faith failed.

The trade which began in the western territories (Benin Kingdom - Itékiri, Ijo, and Yoruba Kingdom -Ijebu) later spread to the East (Calabar, Bonny, Niger Delta and Igbo Communities). The trade link between the Portuguese and the western and eastern Nigerian territories was facilitated by the Portuguese colonies of Sao Tome and Principe.

Until the middle of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese had the monopoly of trade in both human and non-human objects in the Niger Delta/Igbo communities. This monopoly was challenged, however, when the Dutch and the English entered the scene in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Growing European demand for African slaves was motivated by the need for cheap labour in their newly established sugar plantations in the Island of Sao Tome and Principe, and in the Caribbean and West Indies. Large scale production of sugar in the aforementioned places not only demanded labourers who were energetic and could withstand the rigours of plantation life, it demanded labourers who were capable of

surviving the dangers of tropical diseases (Olaniyan, 1985: 115). Neither the Native American Indians nor the Europeans could adequately serve the new demands. Both the Native Indians and the Europeans were highly susceptible to tropical diseases. Moreover, European emigrants' labour was scarce and, hence, very expensive. European Plantation operators needed a steady supply of cheap labour. African slave labour was deemed to be most suitable. The mortality rate of African slaves in the Caribbean was low because of their adaptability to the tropical climate, and their higher resistance to tropical diseases - malaria and yellow fever. Furthermore, slaves could be obtained cheaply from West Africa.

If the Caribbean tropical climate was considered suitable for the growing of sugar and the establishment of sugar plantations by the Europeans, one could ask why sugar plantations were not established in West Africa which had a similar tropical climate as the Caribbean. Wouldn't it have been more rational and economical for the Europeans to establish sugar plantations in West Africa since their major source of labour came from West Africa? European choice of the Caribbean rather than West Africa for the establishment of sugar plantation was motivated by health and economic reasons. The European mortality rate in the Caribbean was low as compared to their mortality rate in West Africa. More suitable land was available in the Caribbean than in West Africa, and West African slave labour was cheap.

While African Slaves produced the sugar needed for the European tea/coffee drinkers, the absence of these Africans in their various communities impacted negatively on the development of the communities. As noted by Williams (in Ume, 1980: 5), "[t]he wealth of the British Empire was largely the product of African labour."

As the European demand for slaves increased in Nigeria, the need for more sources of slaves arose. Consequently, European slave dealers who were formerly restricted to the trading centres in the Nigerian coast line began attempting to penetrate the hinterland. As the slave trade moved from the western coast line to the eastern coastline, Calabar and kalabari (Bight of Bonny) became the major centres for slave dealers. Methods of enslavements which previously were mostly through conquest in inter-community conflicts, were expanded to include kidnapping and outright raids instigated by the European slave lords (Olaniyan, 1985: 119; Ume, 1980:315-316).

As the slave trade was firmly established in Calabar and Kalabari (Bight of Bonny) "commercial houses"/"canoe-houses" were set up by the indigenous slave dealers. The commercial houses served as trading centers between the indigenous slave dealers and the Europeans. Canoes (locally made ships) became the vital instrument for capturing and selling slaves by the indigenous slave dealers. Olaniyan (1985: 117) observed that the canoes were often heavily guarded and armed for military encounters with rivals.

A "house" consisted of a successful slave merchant, his immediate family, his slaves, guards, oarmen and other traders. The slave merchant acted as the head of the house. Working as a corporate, close-knit group, the "house" members promoted both the commercial and political interest of the "house".

The implications of European contact for the Bight of Bonny included a change from traditional fishing and salt production to slavery and the emergence of a new class of business men who controlled the economy and politics of the society (through their wealth, power and prestige).

Slavery in Igbo society (Bight of Biafra) was mostly introduced by the Aros of Arochukwu/Arochuku (dialectical differences), who first had contact with Calabar and Niger Delta slave traders. The Aros (known for their warrior-like, commercial and enterprising spirit) combined their commercial and organizational acumen (Olaniyan, 1985: 118; Ume, 1980: 32-34) with their control of the widely and highly respected oracle known as the Long Juju "Ibinam-Ukpabi" to procure and sell slaves. The oracle, also regarded as god (chukwu/chuku) offered protection to Arochukwu citizens who were seen as children of god (umu chukwu). The oracle was also used by the Aros for religious sanctions to maintain discipline and to preserve their commercial interests.

Through their early involvement in the long-distance trade, the Aros were able to establish and maintain trade links with many Igbo and neighbouring communities, such as Calabar, and the Delta traders. By exploiting the belief in the sacredness of the oracle, the Aros dominated the economy of Igbo society. They acted as middlemen of the hinterland Igbo communities, controlling and regulating the inland trade.

Would-be slaves and convicted offenders captured from the hinterland Igbo communities were often held in subjection by inciting the fear of the oracle god (chukwu), which was believed to have unquestionable jurisdiction over the people (Ume, 1980: 35). After being subjected to the oracle, they were believed to be wanted by the oracle. They were eventually sold as slaves to the coastal middlemen at Aniong Creek in Calabar.

Noting the stratagems in which hinterland Igbo slaves were recruited by the Aros, Ume (ibid), observed:

It [being subjected to slavery] was regarded as an obedience to the oracle; any contrary behaviour might provoke untold ills for the culprit. ... The dominant power of the oracle was widely accepted and scarcely opposed. ... The slaves obtained by violence and kidnapping could not have exceeded and might even be fewer than those who bowed to the dictate of the oracle.

Thus, unlike the practice in other parts of Nigeria where slaves were mostly captives of war, raids and kidnapping, Igbo slaves were more or less acquired through the use of oracle controlled by the Aros (Ume, 1980: 35-36).

In his estimation of the number of Africans and Igbos sold as slaves, captain Adams (1823: 129) observed that about 20,000 slaves were sold annually at Bonny, among which 16,000 were Igbos. He stated that over a twenty-year period, about 320,000 Igbos had been sold as slaves to European slavers at Bonny, and 50,000 at old and new Calabar, making a total of 370,000 Igbos. The remaining were natives of Brass, Ibibios and the Quas.

With this loss of a chunk of Igbo population in slavery, there was no doubt that slave trade had tremendous impact on the socio-economic and political development of Igbo society. The effect of slavery on Igbo society as observed by Isichei (1973: 47), is "the loss of large numbers of its strongest members in their prime." Igbo society, Isichei (1973) records, was deprived not only of its labour [who were mostly men] which, expanded on the plantations, helped Europe accumulate the capital for her subsequent industrialization, it was also deprived of new skills that might have developed, and the children that would have been born.

Although the predominant mode of recruiting slaves in Igbo society was less violent when compared to the wars, raids and kidnapping prevalent in other Nigerian communities (Ume 1980: 315-36), slavery often generated and sustained fear and insecurity in the people, which discouraged investment in productive ventures and technological innovations. Movements of people were often restricted during the slave era; people stayed indoors or close to their immediate communities for fear of being captured as slaves. As was often told by my grand-father and some of my town's (Umunachi) elders who witnessed the slave trade, children and youths were often hidden in a closet above the kitchen fire-place, while their parents were away from home (Umunachi Elders).

With this state of affairs, there was no doubt that both trade, craft and agricultural production suffered during the era of slavery. The restriction of the movement of people occasioned by the slave trade prevented both men and women traders from travelling and exchanging their produce. As markets for the exchange of

produce (arts, crafts and agricultural produce) became limited, the motivation to expand production invariably fell. Moreover, as the majority of persons taken as slaves were men (Manning, 1990) the crafts (blacksmithing, iron smithing, wood carving) which they produced were undermined. Igbo women, whose husbands and male children had been sold as slaves, were deprived of their male labour and were thus left to do the work previously done jointly with men. This meant more burden for women and under-aged children.

Slavery also introduced a social class of slave dealers who were mostly men. These men not only appropriated the wealth generated from such trade, they also influenced the socio-political affairs of the society with their newly found wealth and power. Almost all the Nigerian indigenous slave dealers were men. Moreover, slave facilitating organizations were owned and controlled by men. As observed by Hopkins (in Olaniyan 1985: 119), the "Atlantic slave trade was made possible by alliance of two groups, the European [male] shippers and African [male] suppliers." Similarly, Isichei (1983: 108) noted that:

[T]he trade in slave... was essentially an exploitative alliance between a comprado class [mostly male] - rulers, merchants and military aristocracy - which joined with an external [male] exporter to prey upon the peasant population

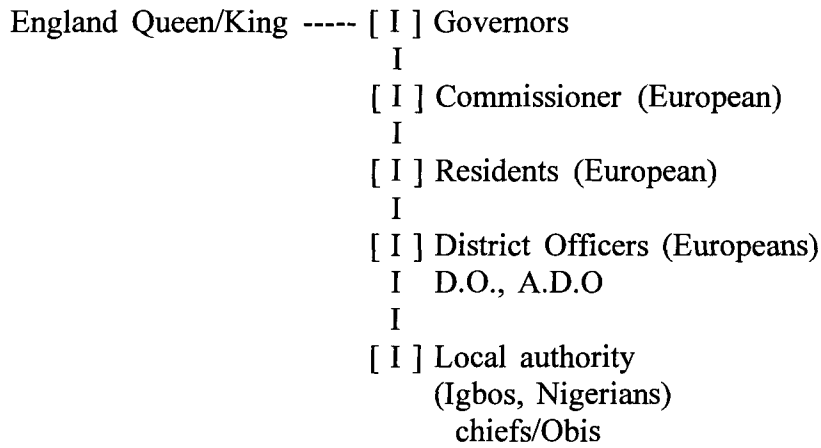
Isichei (ibid) observed that "the external slave trade enriched a minority, at the cost of the death, suffering or involuntary exile of thousands of fellow Africans."

IGBO POLITICAL SYSTEM AND COLONIALISM

Igbo women's political role in pre-colonial Igbo society was crucial for the organization and administration of society. When the machinery of colonialism was effectively established, however, "it was as though women had been rendered invisible to the exclusive male colonial administrators" (Mba, 1982:38). The British neglect of Igbo women in the colonial administration not only stemmed from their ignorance of the role of women's organizations, women titled- holders/chiefs such as Queen Mother (Omu), in the political affairs of Igbo society, but also from the British Victorian and Edwardian middle-class perspective, in which women were looked upon as wives, mothers, and home managers and as a result unsuitable for the rigours of public life (Mba, 1982: 39).

The British colonial political policy in south-eastern Nigeria was guided by Lugard's ideology of "the dual mandate". Within this ideology, the task of the colonial administration was seen as that of promoting the interest of the home country's industrial classes and advancing the interest of the "native races" in their search for progress (Hogben and Kirk-Greene, in Gambari, 1985: 166). In order to achieve this, the British colonial government introduced the "Indirect Rule Policy" in South-eastern Nigeria. Under the Indirect Rule System, the British colonialists ruled Igbo society through a chain of command (Figure 2) - from the Governor through his Commissioners and Resident officers, and the warrant chiefs to the people.

FIGURE 2: SCHEMATIC STRUCTURE OF THE INDIRECT RULE POLICY*



*Source: Adopted from Njoku, 1990: 21

Under the Indirect Rule System, the British sought to rule the colonized people through their pre-existing traditional/local rulers/chiefs by recognizing, supporting and preserving their authority, "so long as the fundamental laws confining their role so far as humanity and justice were observed and with the British political officers possible to an advisory one" (ibid). A traditional ruler was seen by the British colonialist as a [male] person who represented the executive authority of his unit, or a person from whom such an authority was derived (Afigbo, 1972: 34).

The Indirect Rule System was first used by Lugard in northern Nigeria (Hausa society) between 1900 - 1906. In Northern Nigeria, traditional political authority rested on a sole person (the Sariki/ Emir) who acted as the chief executive and judicial head of government. The Sariki/Emir had some state officials who ministered to him. Having been successfully implemented in Northern Nigeria, the Indirect Rule System was

introduced in south-eastern Nigeria in 1914. Its introduction in South-eastern Nigeria was similarly motivated by the need to preserve indigenous political institutions. It was also motivated by the success it had had in Northern Nigeria.

Unlike the Hausa society, however, Igbo society had no single person upon whom the ultimate authority of government rested. Igbo society was ruled by a collectivity of persons - the Obi, the Council of Chiefs/Elders, Age- grades, the Queen Mother (Omu) and Women's Council/Associations (Afigbo, 1972: 34).

Unaware of the complexities of Igbo political structure, the British colonialists felt that the Indirect Rule Policy would be applicable to that society. On experiencing the realities of the relatively egalitarian Igbo political system, the British colonialists discovered that there was no single person who "represented the executive authority" or "a person from whom such an authority was derived". Faced with this problem, the British administration selected a single person (male) and named him "Warrant Chief". As the sole representative of his unit, the Warrant chief acted as the chief executive and chief judge in the "Native Court" established earlier by the British administration under the Native Court Proclamation in 1901. Under the Native Court Proclamation, Ekechi (1989: 147) observed that "the only legal means of administering justice in [the Nigerian] territories was through a Commissioner's Court or Native Council [governed by English law]." This implied that all other forms of adjudicating disputes (native laws and customs) in the different communities were declared illegal. In other words, "the traditional systems of [administering] justice were regarded as obnoxious and so their continuation was viewed as constituting a breach of the peace" (Ekechi, 1989: 147).

By the replacement of the traditional method of adjudicating disputes (guided by native laws and customs) with the Native Court system (guided by English laws), British colonialists effectively undermined the Igbo traditional political institution which it initially "strove to protect and preserve".

Moreover, rather than being motivated by the need to protect and preserve the Igbo traditional political institution, the British introduction of the Indirect Rule and Warrant Chief System was motivated by economic interests. Indirect Rule and the Warrant Chief were used as a means of "coping with the practical difficulties of administering vast colonized territories [communities] with few [foreign] administrators and meagre funds" (Isichei, 1983:380; Gambari, 1985: 166). As noted by Isichei (1983: 380) the "[h]igh cost of White personnel, in salaries, home leave, and retiring benefits" was responsible for the British introduction of the Indirect Rule cum Warrant Chief Systems. Isichei (ibid) observed that a small number of White officials consumed half Nigeria's revenue in salaries and pension. They also consumed much of Nigeria's foreign exchange. For instance, in 1936 when Nigeria's total income was 6,259,547 British pounds sterling, 1,156,000 pounds was sent abroad as home remittances of government officials, plus pension payments (Bower in Perham 1948: 306).

The imposition of the Warrant Chief (a single leader) on Igbo communities not only destroyed Igbo collectivist and fairly egalitarian government, but also eroded the executive and judicial responsibilities held by governing bodies like the Council of Elders, the Age-grades and Women Councils/Associations. For instance, Mba (1982: 42) observed that "just as men's societies [age grade] were forbidden to take punitive

action, so women were not allowed to "sit on" anyone or discipline offending members of their association [or the community]." Afigbo (in Mba, 1982: 41) noted that:

The Warrant Chiefs were chosen quite arbitrarily, but one criterion was constant: Until 1929, no women was ever chosen. Nor were women made members of the native courts, court clerks, interpreters, messengers or police or army recruits.

Mba (1982: 41) stated that "these new positions were open only to men who had some education or some wealth or who could make themselves conspicuous."

The Aba women's riot of 1929 was organized by Igbo women to protest against the British colonial policies, namely the imposition of Warrant chiefs on Igbo communities; imposition of tax on Igbo people; and the falling prices of palm produce resulting from the British control of palm produce trade. Igbo women felt that they were not consulted before the Warrant Chiefs were appointed. Moreover, women felt that they were victimized by the abuses of the Warrant chiefs and native courts, especially on matters affecting them - marriage and divorce (Mba, 1982: 42).

Taxation as understood by Igbo people in the precolonial times, meant obligations to perform services and contribute goods for the running of the society (Mba, 1982: 44). In other words, people contributed to the running of the society in kind either through their labour or their produce. For instance, women Associations contributed their labour and goods to the community. They cooked for the community during festive periods; swept and cleaned village paths, streams and market places; and

performed purification and burial rites. Similarly, women donated farm produce and food for religious and community celebrations (Mba, *ibid*: 44-45). The contributions of labour and goods as an obligation to the community "were readily accepted by both men and women" (*ibid*: 45).

The British imposed tax demanded payment in cash in the newly introduced British currency. It also meant the counting of persons (adults) upon whom such taxes would be imposed. In situations where individuals were reluctant to make their fixed and regular tax payments, force was often used by the British administration to compel people to pay their taxes (Mba, *ibid*). As Igbo men and women were not familiar with cash and compulsory tax payments, or the counting of persons which they saw as an invasion of their privacy, both men and women resented and resisted the payment of taxes. However, while men's resistance was shortlived as it was immediately crushed by the British instituted police and army, women's resistance "continued even after they experienced harsh repression" (Mba, *ibid*). About fifty-five women were killed and several injured in the 1929 Aba women's riot in southeastern Nigeria (Mba, 1982: 77).

The falling prices of palm produce (Table 2) which began after the European firm monopolized the regulation of export crops prices was perceived by Igbo women (Madam Ruth Nwayafor of Oguta, Madam Omu Okwei of Asaba/Onitsha amongst others) who were major palm oil producers and traders as unfair, hence their protest and riot (Leith-Ross, 1939: 342; Mba, 1982: 48).

TABLE 2: ILLUSTRATION OF PRICE DECREASES*

Town	Date	Mixed Palm Oil (Per 4 Gallon Tin)	Edible Palm Oil (Per 4 Gallon Tin)	Palm Kernel (Per 50 lb)
Umuahia	November, 1928	6s 11d	7s 4d	5s 10d
"	December, 1929	5s 5d	5s 11d	4s 5d
Mbawsi	November, 1928	7s 0d	7s 5d	5s 11d
"	December, 1929	5s 6d	6s 0d	4s 6d
Uzuakolo	November, 1928	6s 10d	7s 3d	5s 9d
"	December, 1929	5s 4d	5s 10d	4s 4d

*Source: Adopted from Mba, (1982: 74) with modifications.
: Report of the Aba Commission of Inquiry, 1930. Lagos

The 1928 "Produce Inspection" law introduced by the British administration as a means of ensuring good quality oil for export (to their home industries) was regarded by Igbo women palm oil traders as an unwarranted interference in their trade. Through the Produce Inspection, Igbo women were expected to rigorously clean and purify their oil in order to meet the established standard. Since the processing of palm oil by women was a manual process, the rigorous cleaning and purification often meant more work for women (Mba, 1982: 47).

The imposition of Warrant chiefs, taxation and falling prices of palm produce, which had never been previously experienced in Igbo society, culminated in the 1929 Aba women's riot. This Igbo women's revolt signified their dissatisfaction with the British colonial rule. It shows also the radicalism of Igbo women despite the subservient and passive images held of women by British colonial administrators, missionaries and some anthropologists who studied non-western societies (Evans-Pritchard, 1965: 46; Goody, 1973; Huntington, 1975).

IGBO ECONOMY AND COLONIALISM

On the pattern of Igboland's trade relationship with Britain (aside from trade in humans), Isichei noted that Igbo society "exported a narrow range of raw materials, mostly palm produce, in return for various European consumer goods - gun powder, gin, whisky, clothes, enamel plates, plastic bowls etc." As the colonialists took monopoly of both export and import trade, they controlled the price of palm produce as well as home made goods. Commenting on the monopoly of Chartered Company Rule (1886- 1899) in the Niger, Isichei (1973: 116) stated that:

There is no competition amongst buyers for export on the river. The Company is the only such buyer, and pays its own price for produce ... The natives of Nigeria are further subject to the will of the company in respect of the goods received against produce. The company import what manufactured goods they choose, and practically impose them upon the native, who has a very limited and inferior class of articles from which to select

Moor (1902) observes that the British cotton export policy and "its reluctance to make the minimum investment in Nigeria" is geared "to divert the supply of cotton from the Nigerian hand-loom [cottage industries] to the power-loom of [British]

Lancashires." Further, Moor states that "the tendency in the past," has certainly been to "suck the orange," employing the minimum of capital, putting nothing into the development of the country ... and taking everything possible out of it." Simply put, what was happening was an illustration of the de-industrialization process (in this case clothes-woven cottage industry) set in motion by the colonialism.

For Igbo women, the implication of massive cotton exportation and importation of British made clothes was the destruction of their traditional hand-loom clothes industry (Isichei, 1983: 61-62; Ngur, 1987: 6).

IGBO WOMEN AND COLONIAL ECONOMIC POLICY

For a meaningful appreciation of Igbo women's experience in 'development' during and after the British colonial rule, an understanding of the Victorian image of women which the British colonialists brought along with them is necessary.

Within the Victorian image/ideology, colonized women were conceived as mothers, wives, and housekeepers in line with ideologies about British/European women (Mba, 1982: 39). Women were seen as passive dependents and, as such, farmers' wives, assistants or help mates. Men were conceived as farmers and, as such, potential agents in the British patriarchal and exploitative rule.

Men were seen as the sex to be relied upon in the exploration, extraction and exploitation of the colonized societies' resources (i.e producers) while women were seen only as reproducers and maintainers of the labour force (Mba, *ibid*).

In line with this conception of men and women came a transformation in the production relations between men and women. Palm produce, which was previously produced by both men and women (in the precolonial era), began to be assigned solely to men and to be regarded as men's crop (Ukegbu, 1974: 36; Mba, 1982: 30). As noted by Ukegbu, (in Mba, 1982: 30):

The production [and marketing] of palm oil was carried out entirely by women However, once palm fruits [oil] became a major export, it came to be regarded as a man's product since it could be exchanged for men's goods, such as guns, and spirits.

Similarly, Mba (1982: 52) observed that "[i]n agriculture, even where women were farmers, it was the men who were encouraged to take to cash crops, and they have since dominated the production of cash crops."

As palm produce was the crop that the British were interested in, it began to attract more importance/value and eventually constituted the 'cash, market and export crop'. Women's predominant crops, such as root crops, grains, and vegetables and fruits, became subordinated to the newly assigned men's crop (palm produce). As women lost these aspects of oil-palm production and marketing which they earlier controlled (Mba, 1982: 30), their economic power and status began to decline.

After the line of demarcation was effectively drawn between which crop was more valuable (men's assigned crop - palm produce) to the British home industries and which was less valuable (women's food crops), men's activities began to be categorized as "public domain", and women's "private domain". While men's public domain (which not only included their tree crop but also their wage labour in the mining sector) serviced the British metropolitan industries located in Britain, women's labour in the

private domain was meant for domestic subsistence (feeding both the agricultural and industrial labour force of husbands and children). The denial of women's participation in oil-palm production was further aggravated by the introduction of nut-cracking machines and hand presses which were increasingly owned and operated by men (Mba, 1982: 105-106; WIN Document, 1985: 9-14).

In order to ensure that the Igbo society, in this case Igbo men, 'oil the wheel' of British industries which were experiencing rapid growth in the eighteenth century (Oluwasanmi, 1966: 9-10), taxation (paid in the newly introduced British currency) was imposed on adult members, especially male adults. The only way for people to raise money for taxes was to engage in oil-palm production. In addition to introducing taxes, palm oil plantations, farm settlements, and mining industries were later set up in different locations, such as, Enugu (for coal mining), and Jos (for tin and columbite mining). The natives, mostly men, had to migrate to the plantations and mines to work as wage labourers (Mba, 1982: 51). The effect of this migration was not only the depopulation of the agricultural labour force, but also the deprivation for women of their male labour force. This meant an extra load for women, as they had to combine the growing of other crops, (yams) to the crops that they previously grew (Mba, 1982: 51). Moreover, most of the other jobs which were previously done by men or in conjunction with women and children, such as bush clearing and soil preparation, were shifted to women and children.

The demarcation between palm produce as cash, market or export crop and other root crops, grains, fruits and vegetables as food, subsistence or domestic crop, led to the commercialization of the economy. Furthermore, the introduction of taxes and wage employment marked the monetization and commercialization of the Igbo economy which was previously based on barter and gift giving (reciprocity). Another mechanism used by the British colonial rule to ensure compliance and which had the effect of putting Igbo women in subordinate position was religion which first arrived with the church missionaries as early as 1857; first with the arrival of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) at Onitsha in 1857, and then the Roman Catholic Church in 1885. Under the Christian church evangelization mission, Igbo women were called upon to be their husband's help-mates, good mothers, obedient wives and good home-makers (Mba, 1982: 53). The church never called on women to be good farmers. Observing that Christianity had a weakening effect on the generally respectful attitude of Igbo society towards its women (especially elderly ones), Emencheta (1981: 72), stated that "Christianity shook this attitude very badly. It was not considered nice and feminine to speak out." In other words, going by Christian teaching women, like their children, were to be "seen but not heard". Moreover, Christian churches did not offer much scope for female leadership among women converts. No Christian sect provided for women clergy or catechist (Mba, 1982: 59). Closely linked to the use of religion is the colonial educational policy for women which was in most cases implemented by the various religious sects - Catholic and Protestant (C.M.S) churches.

The colonial educational policies focused on men for clerical education (beginning with the popular three R's - Reading, writing and arithmetic) and, later, on women for domestic science as mothers, home-makers and managers (Mba, 1982: 64; Njoku, 1990: 81-82). As observed by Njoku (1990: 81-82):

The colonial government did not favour the idea of giving better education to women. To them sciences and medicine were not for women but for men. They only advised women to take up laundry, cookery, dressmaking, cleaning and hair dressing. The arrival of the missionaries in Igbo Land did not give women an early training, as they did to men, until the arrival of the Holy Rosary Sisters in 1928. The missionaries, both Romanists and Protestants did all that was possible to give men the type of education that resulted in moral values and dignity. Such education enabled many men to become preachers, catechists, teachers and civil administrators.

A similar observation is made by Boserup and Emencheta on colonial patriarchal education for women. For Boserup, "Colonial and Western Influence makes sharper divisions between the sexes particularly through education: scouting for boys, needle work for girls, special hospitals for women separated public toilets. All help to emphasize a person's sex" (Boserup in Rogers 1980: 38). Noting the emphasis on education and training of girls in the late 1960s Boserup added that emphasis was on " 'household' work, mainly cooking, childcare, sewing and embroidery" (Boserup in Rogers 1980: 88). According to Emencheta (1981: 92):

From birth girls are conditioned into second-class citizenship; in Africa, They are programmed into fulfilling subordinate and supporting roles - to men. They get fewer educational opportunities and at school are subtly channelled into "soft" subjects and away from subjects like maths, physics, chemistry and engineering.

These colonial patriarchal religious and educational policies for women had the effect of reinforcing the Victorian image of women, which portrayed them mostly as sexual objects and reproducers of the labour force.

IGBO WOMEN AND THEIR ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL FACILITIES DURING THE COLONIAL ERA

Since the British colonialists saw Igbo men as farmers, and women as farmer's wives or help mates, it was inevitable that the British colonial agencies of "development" - (banks, agricultural extension agencies, ministries of agriculture etc.) focused on men as agents in the exploitation of the colonized areas. As noted by Rogers (1980: 36):

The concentration upon men in the institution building process under colonial rule is self-evident, male hierarchies were used for direct or indirect forms of colonial rule, while female hierarchies atrophied or were actively suppressed, particularly by missionary organizations. ... The new institutions, including the army, police, civil service, political parties, trade unions, churches schools and universities, banks, local affiliates of multinational companies and in fact all development institutions are built up mainly or exclusively by male nationals. They are instructed by male expatriates in colonial administration, private enterprise, the colonial army or military advisers, development planning and administration, mission and state schools, and the rest. Much of the ideology of male supremacy is apparently passed on intact from the Western men to their local counterparts; the educated male elite with some outstanding exceptions are often much more hostile to women than are uneducated.

Further, Rogers (1980: 37-38), states that "the introduction of cash economy and the pursuit of individual security through accumulation of material wealth (the opposite of using wealth as gifts to accumulate security through personal obligation) is also

channelled through men. Cash crops and employment in plantations, mines, urban areas and in many even paid domestic work, were overwhelmingly imposed on or offered to men as was responsibility or serving in the colonial forces and payments of taxes"

The focus by the colonial agricultural development agencies on men and their tree crops meant that women who played a crucial role in food production were denied access to the same agricultural services rendered to men - Bank credit/loan, extension and cooperative services. However, when these services were available to women, the services were often more related to women's child rearing and home management roles than to how women could improve their agricultural productivity. For instance, the colonial extension education package for women like the formal education package emphasized child care, family health, nutrition, crafts and meal preparation skills for women. A summary of the implications of pro-male colonial agricultural extension policy is given by Boserup (1970: 55-56):

As a result of the attitudes of the extension service, the gap between the labour productivity of men and women thus continue to widen. Men are taught to apply modern methods in the cultivation of a given crop [cash crop], while women continue to use traditional methods in the cultivation of the same crop, thus getting much less out of their efforts than men. The inevitable result is that women are discouraged from participating in agriculture and are glad to abandon cultivation whenever their husband's income makes it possible.

Of all British colonial practices, land policies perhaps affected women the most.

IGBO WOMEN AND THE BRITISH COLONIAL LAND POLICY

The "Native Lands Acquisition Proclamation" introduced by British colonialism in southern Nigeria in 1910 sought to leave the essential rights of the community in land unchanged (Oluwasanmi, 1966: 38). Unlike the practice in Northern Nigeria, where the British claimed outright ownership of and final abiter in land by right of conquest, the authority did not attempt to arrogate to itself ultimate ownership in land in Southern Nigeria (ibid).

Under the Proclamation, Southern Nigerian peasants were 'protected ' "against unlawful transfer of land to foreign concession seekers by ignorant and improvident cheiftains or by avaricious members of the land-holding communities" (ibid: 38). Land could only be acquired by a stranger with the permission of the and approval of the Governor. Any stranger/alien who was found "in possession of any lands wrongly, or under colour of an instrument to which the approval of the governor had not been given" was made liable under the law to a fine not exceeding 100 British Pounds sterling or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding twelve months (Laws of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, vol.11, 1908: 1, 188 in Oluwasanmi, 1966: 38).

The "Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance" of 1917 allowed the Governor to acquire lands required for any public purpose for an estate in fee for a term of years as he (she) may think proper, paying such consideration or compensation as may be agreed upon or determined under the provision of this ordinance (Laws of Nigeria, 1948 in Oluwasanmai, 1966: 39). The compensation for land acquired was tantamount to the amount such land would fetch in an open market. The Ordinance recognized Southern

Nigerian's communal rights in land but stated that "land required for public purposes was the property of a native community, the recognized head chief [Warrant Chief in the case of Igbo society] of such community may sell and convey the same for an estate in fee simple, notwithstanding any native law or custom to the contrary."

The British "Native lands Acquisition Proclamation" and "Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance", though purporting to protect and preserve both individual's and community rights in land, introduced and perpetrated the sale of land, a feature which never existed in the precolonial Igbo land tenure practice. For instance, the clause "the recognized chief (who were in most cases imposed on the people) of such community may sell and convey the same for an estate fee" implied that land could be sold or bought for cash. By this clause, the British not only violated the native land law which prevented out-right sale of land, they also encouraged individual ownership of land against the collective communal land ownership. Alluding to the instances of land sale, Chubbs (in Oluwasnmi, 1966: 42) observed that "Onitsha land was frequently sold both by families and individuals, as much as 150 British pound sterling for an acre." For Chubbs, this replaced the traditional Kola tenancy, lease or exchange method of disposing rights in land in Igbo society.

The assignment of oil palm production to men and its emphasis as cash or market crop had the implication that more fertile land, especially the ones near homes previously used for women's subsistence food crops, was diverted to the production of cash crops. As a result, women had to walk very long distances to their farms. It was not uncommon to see Igbo women leaving their homes as early as 6a.m. to go to their

farms, only to come back home at sunset. The colonial efforts at diverting land from food crop to cash crop meant that less land would be available for food crop production.

As more fertile land was allocated to cash crop production, the level of food crop production dwindled, necessitating the importation of food staples to supplement decreased local production (Okere, 1983: 138). The national economic statistics in the 1960s show that export crop rose while food crop production stagnated. The colonial emphasis on cash crops, and the allocation of more land and agricultural inputs for its development, also had the effect of perpetuating the dependence of colonized societies on Britain and Europe for imported food stuff. The Regional Development Corporation established in 1949 to formulate and execute schemes of agricultural and industrial development mostly financed projects aimed at boosting the production of cash crops. Table 3 shows the Eastern Regional Development Cooperation investment on 'major' agricultural schemes, indicating that all expenditures made were on on cash crops.

TABLE 3: INVESTMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS ON
MAJOR AGRICULTURAL SCHEME*

Eastern Regional Development Corporation's Expenditures to:

31:3:59

31:3:60

BRITISH POUNDS STERLING

Bonny Coconut Estate	128, 335	139, 268
Calaro Oil Palm Estate	270, 517	312, 463
Cashew Nut Industry	199, 448	209, 362
Ikom Cocoa Estate	121, 554	140, 842
Kwa falls Oil-Palm Estate	178, 020	183, 124
Elele Estate	95	7, 169
Abia Cocoa Estate	-	4, 519
Umuahia Cocoa Estate	-	2, 117
Schemes under Ministry of Agriculture	19, 487	19, 478
Total	917, 456	1018, 241

*Source: Adopted from Oluwasanami, 1966: 102
: Annual Reports of the Northern, Eastern and Western Regional
Development Cooperations.

From the above colonial investment in agriculture, food crops were not considered worth investing in. Funds were allocated to only cash crops, and food crops were allowed to develop on their own.

The continuing fall in food crop production and the subsequent food imports witnessed in Nigeria since the 1960s attests to the negative implication of British cash crop and land policy. The current food crisis facing Nigeria and other African countries

owes their origin to the colonial cash crop policy and the subsequent neglect of food crop grown by women. The neglect of food crops in my view, is tantamount to the neglect of women who produce the crop. Similarly, the neglect of women is tantamount to the neglect of food crops.

The British policy of individualization and commercialization of land transformed the Igbo communal cum collective land tenure practices. Individuals especially men began to own land as personal property, as land could be bought and sold; the use/usufruct right which both men and women use had began to be undermined. With more value and cash attached to men's crop, men could sell their crops in the foreign market (through the marketing boards, foreign companies) and use the money realized to purchase land, while women could not, as their crop was regarded as a subsistence non-market (domestic market) crop meant for the up-keep of the family. The income realized from the little left-over from women's crop sold in the local market was hardly enough to purchase land.

As women's use rights to land began to be eroded, their access to land began to be more difficult, for instance, majority of the landless were women who depended completely on their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons for farm land. When land was allocated to women it was usually very small and in scattered fragments. As Rogers (1980: 38) noted:

... with the trend towards Western-style ownership of land rather than customary and communal rights, it was women's rights to land that suffered most - both directly, because of colonial officials' failure to register women's assets or usufruct rights and indirectly, because of their lack of access to cash for land purchase

Thus the relative inequality (patriarchal structure) which existed in the traditional Igbo tenure system with respect to women's control and allocative rights was further aggravated and sharpened by the colonial individualized and commercialized land policy which favoured men.

The colonial individualized and commercialized land policy was closely linked to the acquisition of other agricultural facilities besides land. For instance, individualized land ensured that an individual, in most cases a man, was able to present his personally owned land as collateral for Bank credit/loan, and to obtain services of extension agencies - farm technology, fertilizer, improved seedlings, etc. Land thus became a prerequisite for acquiring other agricultural facilities.

A vivid portrayal of the marginalizing effect of colonial land policy on women is presented by Rogers:

In traditional society, women had important rights based on the work they did on the land. The commercialization of the African economy, however, combined with Western-style legislation to confer outright ownership on one person, a man, since he would have the cash to deal in land, has seriously undermined those rights ...
[Rogers in Murray and Emencheta (1981: 22)]

The implication of colonial land policy for Igbo women is similarly visible in other colonized African societies. In her discussion of the effect of colonial land reform policy on Luo women, Pala (1980: 20) stated that even though "the overall objective of the land reform is to secure individual tenure under statutory law and to facilitate the possibility of individual use of land as collateral, the implication of registering land in the name of males is alienating women's access rights to land ..."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated the implication of colonialism for Igbo society in general and Igbo women in particular. It argued that the penetration of Igbo land by Europeans in 1830 not only drained its human resources through slavery (Isichei, 1973; Ume, 1980) but also transformed its fairly egalitarian political structure (Mba, 1982; Afigbo, 1972, Ekechi, 1985). Colonialism destroyed Igbo time-honoured craft and cottage industries (Isichei, 1983: 61-62) and transformed the division of labour between men and women, making it more rigid and less complementary (Mba, 1982: 30, 52; Njoku, 1990: 82). The emphasis on men and their assigned cash crop - palm produce as opposed to women and their food crops - not only undermined women's status, but also marked the origin of the food crisis in Igbo and Nigerian society today (Okere, 1983: 138). The emphasis on cash crops ensured that more farm resources were devoted to the production of cash crops. The focus in colonial policy on men was also extended to other agricultural facilities. Credit, extension education and membership of the cooperatives were opened to men while women were denied the same services.

The commercialization and individualization of land aggravated women's access to land as emphasis was on men's tree/cash crops. Thus, while men could sell their cash crops and use the money realized to purchase land, women could hardly do the same as their crop was meant to service the family with surplus for the domestic market. As more (fertile) land began to be diverted to the production of cash crop, men's cash/export crop continued to increase while women's food crop stagnated. As

individually owned land became a prerequisite for other agricultural facilities (e.g Bank credits, extension services, etc.), men continued to enjoy almost uninhibited access to services of which women were deprived.

Having discussed the implications of colonial policies for Igbo women during the colonial era, the next chapter will discuss how Igbo women have fared in the post colonial period with regard to their status, roles and access to agricultural facilities.

CHAPTER FOUR

IGBO SOCIETY IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA

This chapter discusses the status and role of Igbo women in development in the post-colonial era. In this discussion, the extent to which women have access to political and economic resources (agricultural facilities - land, credit, extension and services of cooperative organizations) is examined.

IGBO WOMEN AND THE POST-COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

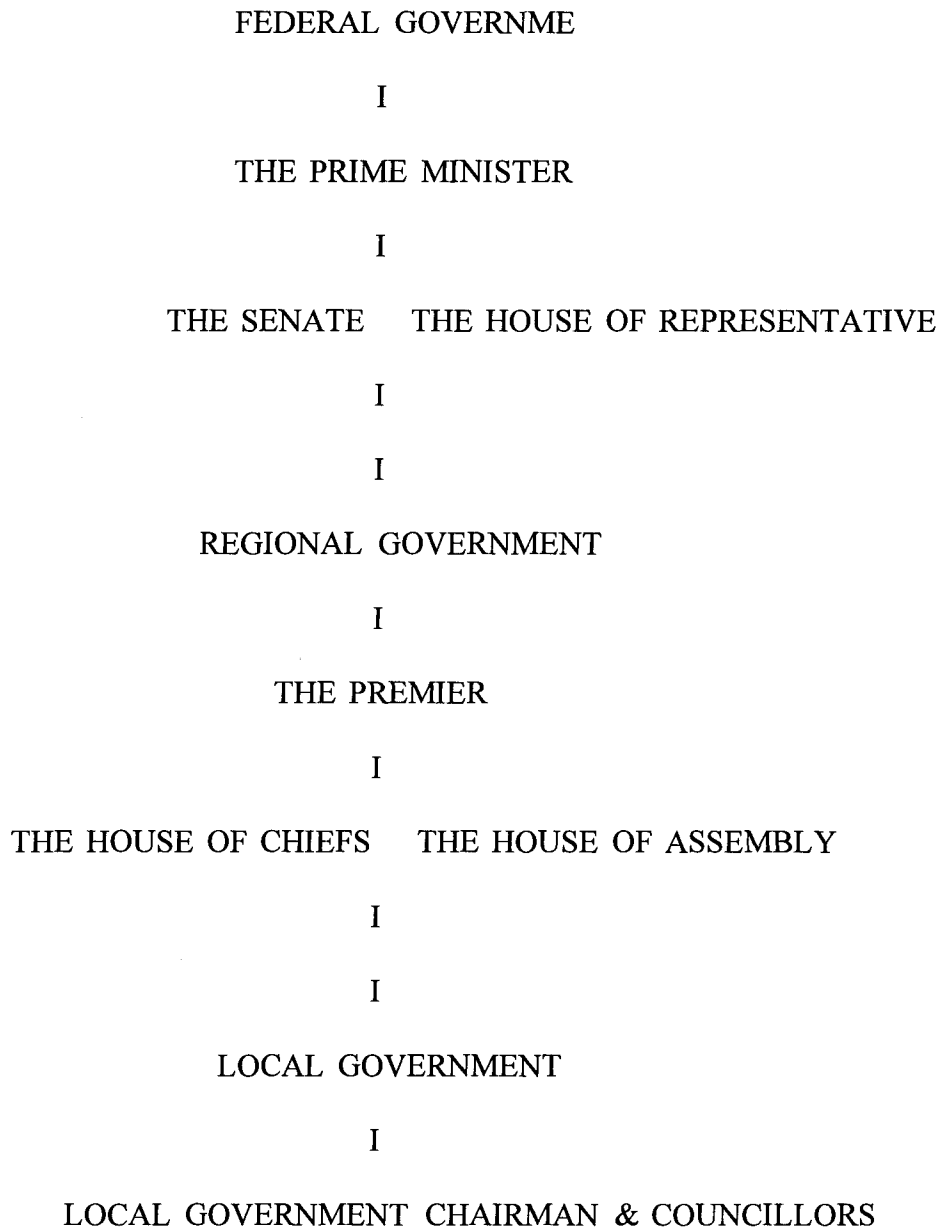
A discussion of Igbo women's participation in the post-colonial government can better be made by locating the position women occupied in the political structure and the roles they played in the administration of the state. Although Nigerian politics since independence in 1960 has been characterized by instability and military interventions, in discussing the place of women in Nigerian politics emphasis is placed on the first and the second civil rule, often described as the First and Second Republics.

FIRST REPUBLIC - 1960-1966

The Nigerian post-colonial government in 1960 was based on the parliamentary system of government fashioned after the British parliamentary Westminster model of government (Dare, 1985:189). Within the parliamentary system, a Prime Minister - Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa - acted as the chief executive of the federation. Beside the Prime Minister, the Governor-General - Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe - held only a ceremonial post. The post-colonial government operated in a Nigerian federation, with three

regions (Northern, Western, and Eastern Regions). A fourth region (Mid-western region) was later created in 1964. The government was based on a bicameral legislature (two houses) which operated at two levels (regional and federal levels) of the three tier governments (local government, regional and federal governments). At the regional level were two houses - House of Chiefs, and House of Assembly, and the Premier, who acted as the region's chief executive. At the Federal Level were the Senate and House of Representatives, and the Prime Minister who acted as the chief executive of the federation of Nigeria

FIGURE 3: SCHEMATIC REEPRESENTATION OF LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT*



*Source: Scheme drawn by the researcher.

The formation of parliamentary government was based on the three major political parties that were formed prior to Nigerian independence on October 1st, 1960. The parties were the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG), and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). Owing to the Indirect Rule/"Divide and Rule Policy", the three political parties were regionally based and were headed by leaders who came from the major ethnic groups of the three regions of Nigeria: Northern, Western and Eastern Regions (Dare, *ibid*).

The Northern based NPC was led by Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Western based AG by chief Obafemi Awolowo, and the Eastern based NCNC by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. Together, the three political parties more or less represented the three major ethnic groups of the respective regions - the Hausa/Fulani (NPC), Yoruba (AG), and the Igbo (NCNC). Consequently, the parties sought to address the needs, and protect the interests of, the three ethnic groups at the regional and federal government levels (*ibid*; Mba, 1982: 234-5). Since the NCNC served as the dominant political party in the East - predominantly Igbo speaking area - our discussion will center on the NCNC. How did Igbo women fare in the NCNC? What was the representation of Igbo women in the NCNC, both at the regional and federal levels and in the regional and federal elections?

Within the NCNC political party was the National Executive Committee (NEC). The NEC was headed by a national president elected at the party convention with forty-one members similarly elected at the party convention to serve the committee

(Mba, 1982: 235). The NEC organized the annual or special conventions of the party. Nine NEC officers acted as members of the central working committee. They bore the responsibility of managing the affairs of the party between meetings of the NEC.

Under the NEC and subject to it were members of the regional working committee drawn from the three (later four) regions. They organized the NCNC regional conferences. The NCNC national secretariat was headed by the National organizing secretary, and the regional secretariats were headed by the principal organizing secretaries.

The NCNC party regulations, recognizing the need to empower and enfranchise women and youths, specified that the presidents and general secretaries of the women and youth wings of the NCNC and one officer from every branch of both associations could attend the national convention as representatives. The party constitution similarly provided for representation on the NEC of two officers of various ancillary and affiliated bodies - women's associations, youth associations, the trade unions, and the ex-service men. The NCNC constitution allowed for individual candidate participation in elections.

Apart from the statutory bodies of the party there were, from time to time, committees set up by the NEC or the Eastern (regional) working committees to carry out specific assignments, such as settling nomination disputes, investigating cases of disobedience and corruption, and inquiring into local council disturbances. Women were often called upon to serve on such committees. Women therefore played a crucial role in quelling party disputes (Mba, 1982: 238). They also helped in educating and

registering voters for the various regional and federal elections.

Women were fairly well represented in the 1958 international constitutional conference held in London. Mrs Ekpo and Mrs Young once served as advisers to the Nigerian delegates at the London conference. The NCNC pre-independence convention held in 1957 at Aba also witnessed some representation of women. The three hundred and fifty NCNC delegates who attended the convention included representatives of eleven branches of women's associations. Between 1957 and 1965, there were always two or three women elected to the Eastern working committee. For instance, in 1957 Mrs Mokelu (Igbo woman), Mrs Flora Azikiwe (wife of Azikiwe, also an Igbo woman), and Mrs Grace Akpan (Efik woman) were members; in 1958, Mrs A. N. Wogu (Igbo woman) replaced Mrs Akpan; Mrs Ekpo Young (Efik), Mrs Nzimiro (Igbo) and Mrs Adanma Okpara (Igbo) were also elected at the NCNC conventions (Mba, 1982: 237). In 1959, two women, Mrs Ekpo and Mrs Mokelu, were appointed to the house of chiefs, and between 1961 and 1963 three women, Mrs Ekpo (Efik), Mrs Mokelu (Igbo) and Mrs Young (Efik), were elected into the house of assembly.

In spite of women's representation at conventions and elections as members of the regional working committees, Mba (ibid) noted that no woman ever held office in the Eastern working committee until 1961. No woman ever held the provincial secretary post until 1961. Moreover, women were often not given equal recognition (party patronage/ministerial appointments) or rewards (salaries, scholarships) as the men (Mba, 1982: 239). The two women appointed to the house of chiefs in 1959, while

holding a position of prestige, never had power or financial benefits. Similarly, the three women legislators elected to the Eastern house of Assembly were never given cabinet/ministerial appointments (Mba, 1982: 258).

Unlike the House of Chiefs, which served more or less as an advisory body "empowered to delay the passage of non-monetary bills, for six months, the Eastern House of Assembly was a legislative body. However, legislation was introduced only by ministers of the government" (Mba, 1982: 271). "Ordinary members [such as the three women] did not as a rule propose bills. What the women did was to continually urge the male ministers to consider the needs of women. They demanded more educational facilities for girls, more jobs and occupational training centres for women, improved working conditions for women, and the appointment of women into boards and corporations" (Debates of Eastern House of Assembly, 1954-65, Enugu in Mba (ibid).

At the federal level of the post-independence government led by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Prime minister) and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (Governor-General), no Eastern Nigerian Woman or Igbo woman was elected either to the Senate or the House of Representatives. Only Mrs Esan, a Yoruba woman from western Nigeria, was elected into the federal Parliament. She served for four years, from 1960 to 1964. In 1964, Mrs Bernice Kerry, from the newly created Mid-western region, was nominated to the senate. In office, both women campaigned for better representation and treatment of women; while Mrs Esan was more 'aggressive' and on the radical side; Mrs Kerry was more or less conservative. As noted by Mba (ibid:272-274), Mrs Esan "campaigned vigorously

on behalf of Nigerian women and succeeded in several cases in getting ministers to accept her proposal. She argued for more education for girls and for the appointments of women on boards." Mrs Esan, Mrs Ekpo and other women members in the Eastern House of Assembly showed deep concern for the position of women in the North who were not allowed to vote in the early 60's.

SECOND REPUBLIC, 1979 - 1983

Nigeria entered its second republic on October 1st, 1979, with a model of American Presidential government. The presidential system of government allowed for only a single executive president who governs with his/her appointed cabinet ministers. As opposed to the three/four regions of Nigeria's first republic, the second republic witnessed nineteen states which were carved out of the four post-independent regions. The government adopted the federal system of government with three tier levels of government and a bicameral legislature at the state and federal government levels. At the federal level were the President and vice president, the senate, and House of Representatives. At the State level were the Governors, House of chiefs, and the house of assembly. At the local government level were local government chairman and local government councillors. Significant political power was, however, exercised only at the federal and state levels. The discussion that follows is therefore confined to these levels of government.

Of the five registered political parties that contested election in 1979 - the Great Nigerian People's party (GNPP) led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the Nigerian People's Party (NPP) led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the People's Redemption Party (PRP) led by Alhaji Aminu Kano, and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo - the National Party of Nigeria led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari emerged as the winning party, and Shagari became Nigeria's second executive President (Colin, 1980: B583). The Shagari NPN later formed an alliance with the Azikiwe's NPP. Almost all the political parties had some women members and a women's wing which not only helped during party campaigns but also assisted in registering voters. Notable among women political activists were Madam Hanatu Chollom of NPP, Jos branch, the Late Mrs Uche Offianwali, NPP, Anambra branch, Mrs Adenike Oyagbola of NPN, and Chief (Mrs) Janet Akinrade.

Although the Federal Government under the leadership of Alhaji Shehu Shagari assured women and women's group of their representation in the government, women's direct participation in Shagari's government was very minimal. For instance, only two women were appointed federal ministers, and only six of the nineteen states had women commissioners (Colin, 1980: B597). Of the two women appointed at the federal level, neither was Igbo; both women came from the Yoruba ethnic group.

TABLE 4: PROFILE OF THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE (as at the end of December, 1979)*

President	Alhaji Shehu Shagari
Vice President	Dr Alex Ekwueme
Ministers:	
Agriculture	Ibrahim Gusau (NPN)
Aviation	Samuel Mafuyai (NPP)
Commerce	Isaac Shaahu (NPN)
Communication	Akanbi Oniyangi (NPN)
Defence	Iya Abubakar (NPN)
Employment, Labour and Productivity	Samuel Ogendengbe (NPN)
External Affairs	Ishaya Audu (NPP)
Finance	Sunday Essang (NPN)
Health	C. D. Ugwu (NPN)x
Housing and Environment	Wahab Dosunmu (NPN)
Industry	Adamu Ciroma (NPN)
Internal Affairs	Bello Yusuf (NPN)
Justice	Richard Akinjide (NPN)
Mines and Power	Ibrahim Hassan (NPN)
Science and Technology	Sylvester Ugoh (NPN)
Transport	Umaru Dikko (NPN)
Water Resources	Ndagi Mamudu (NPN)
Works	Victor Masi (NPN)
Social Development Youth	
Sports and Culture	Paulinus Amadike (NPP)x
National Planning	Mrs Adenike Oyagbola (NPN)*1
Federal Capital Authority	John Kadiya (NPN)
Police Affairs	Emmanuel Osammor (NPN)
Special Duties	
(steel development)	Paul Unongo (NPP)
Education	I. C. Madubuike (NPP)x
Ministers of state:	
Agriculture	Chief Olu Awotesu Emmanuel Aguma
Commerce	Alhaji Ahmadu Nahuce
Communications	Chief Eteng Okoi-Obuli
Education	Alhaji Bilyamin Usman
Employment, Labour and Productivity	Dr T. Michaulum

TABLE 4 Continued.

External Affairs	Chief Patrick Bolokor
Finance	Dr Abubakar Usman
"	Alhaji Ali Baba
Housing	Ademola Thomas
Internal Affairs	Alhaji ahmed Musa
Industries	Chief (Mrs) Janet Akinrade*2
Social Welfare	Dr I. Igbani
	Alhaji A. Dan-Musa
Transport	Alhaji Garba Wushishi
Works	Alhaji Asheik Jarma
SPECIAL ADVISERS TO THE PRESIDENT	
National Security	Bukar Shaib
National Assembly	K. O. Mbadiwe (x)
Political Affairs	Chuba Okadigbo (x)
	G. A. Odenigwe (x)
Information	Olu Adebajo
Petroleum and Energy	Yahaya Dikko
Economic Affairs	E. C Edozien (x)
	J. Odama
Statutory Boards	O. Olaifa
Budget Affairs	T. A. Akinyele

*Source: Adopted from Colin (1980: B591 - B592), with modifications by the author. African Contemporary Records: Annual Survey and documents 1979-1980.

x :Igbo men members of the federal executive.

*1*2: The two women members of the federal executive.

The profile of the nineteen state governors in Table 5 shows that all were male. No woman was a state governor. Women were granted some rights under the Shagari administration, however. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Establishments granted married women in the Public Service the same rights and amenities as their male counterparts - government quarters or rent subsidy, and medical care. Married pregnant

women were granted twelve weeks maternity leave (three months) with full pay, and unmarried women were similarly granted twelve weeks maternity leave, but without pay (Colin, 1980: B597).

TABLE 5: PROFILE OF THE STATE GOVERNORS*

STATE	PARTY	GOVERNORS
Anambra*1	NPP	Jim Nwobodo
Bauchi	NPN	Tatari Ali
Bendel*2	UPN	Prof. Ambrose Alli
Benue	NPN	Aper Aku
Borno	GNNP	Mohammed Goni
Cross Rivers	NPN	Dr. Clement Isong
Gongola	GNNP	A. Barde
Imo*3	NPP	Samuel Mbakwe
Kaduna	PRP	Balarabe Musa
Kano	PRP	Abubakar Rimi
Kwara	NPN	Adamu Atta
Lagos	UPN	Lateef Jakande
Niger	NPN	Awwal Ibrahim
Ogun	UPN	Chief Bisi Onabanjo
Ondo	UPN	Michael Ajasin
Oyo	UPN	Bola Ige
Plateau	NPP	Solomon Lar
Rivers*4	NPN	Chief Melford Okilo
Sokoto	NPN	Muhammadu Kangiwa

*Source: *ibid*, p.B584.

*1*3: Predominantly Igbo speaking states.

*2*4: Partly Igbo speaking state.

IGBO SOCIETY AND POST-COLONIAL ECONOMY

A discussion of Igbo economy in the post-colonial era cannot be made without an examination of the Nigerian economy. At its incorporation into the nation state called Nigeria during the colonial era, Igbo society ceased to be an autonomous

economy. Thus the dynamics of Igbo economy are reflected in the Nigerian national economy. Similarly, the dynamics of the national economy have bearing on Igbo economy.

Post-colonial Nigerian and Igbo economy, like the precolonial and colonial economy, depends largely on the exploitation of land. About 70 per cent of the labour force depend upon agriculture for their livelihood (Oluwasanmi, 1966: preface).

The roles expected of agriculture include: the provision of food for both rural and urban population, employment and a source of income for rural dwellers, raw materials for industries, markets for the products of the non-agricultural sectors, labour force for the expanding non-agricultural sectors, a source of capital formation for investments in developmental services, and a source of foreign revenue.

Although agriculture is expected to play these roles, agricultural productivity in post-colonial Nigeria cum Igbo society continues to be on the decline. Consequently, Nigeria has to import most of its food requirements, with food import bills running into millions of Naira annually. The contribution of agriculture to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been on the decline (Table 6). For instance, the agricultural contribution rates recorded between 1960 to 1982 were thus: 1960 - 63.4%, 1970 - 51.3%, 1980 - 18.0% and 1982 - 13.7% (Olayide, 1960-1975: 26; Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Economic and Financial Review, various years (Lagos) in Bode Onimode in Alminbar Tribune, 1987: 55). Moreover, Onimode, (1987: 55) noted that the production of staple root and tuber foods (cassava, yams) "fell from 6.1 million tons in 1961/65 to 4.5 million tons during 1981/83, while the aggregate food output declined

from 17.5 million tons during 1961 to 16.2 million by 1981/83." This decline is partly a reflection of the increasing role of the oil in the Nigerian economy since 1970's

TABLE 6: AGRICULTURAL EARNINGS IN NIGERIA, 1960-1982*

Year	Agricultural Earnings As Percentage of Gross Domestic Product
1960	63.4
1962	61.2
1963	59.7
1964	57.6
1965	54.9
1966	55.6
1967	56.1
1968	55.0
1969	53.0
1970	51.3
1971	36.0
1972	32.0
1973	27.9
1974	24.7
1975	23.4
1976	23.95
1977	20.56
1978	19.23
1979	19.69
1980	18.00
1981	13.27
1982	13.68

Notes: 1960-75 was based on 1974/75 factor cost;

1975-80 was based on 1980 factor cost;

1981-82 was based on 1982 factor cost;

*Sources: Adopted from Bode Onimode, in Alminbar Tribune, 1987: 55.

1. S. O. Olayide, Economic Survey of Nigeria, 1960-1975, p.25
Table 3.1;

2. Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Economic and Financial Review, various years (Lagos)

3. CBN, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, various years (Lagos).

Food imports have risen, from N47.8 million worth of food imports in 1960 to N51.6 million in 1966; N57.7 million in 1970; N440.9 million in 1976; N1,020.7 million in 1978; and N1,091 million in 1980 (Ekpo, 1986: 259). This rise is in spite of the various measures taken by the Federal and State Governments to curb food shortages and increase agricultural productivity.

Until the 1970's there was little effort made by the government to stimulate food production in the country (Ekpo, 1986: 263). The successive governments since independence have been emphasizing, the production of cash crops (Onimode, 1987:55), while food crop is left to take care of its self.

The 1975/76 to 1979-80 Federal and State governments expenditure on agriculture, as shown in Table 7, reveals that food crop had the least share. Both Federal and State governments invested less on food crops. Emphasis was given to fishery, livestock and irrigation.

TABLE 7: NIGERIA: ACTUAL PUBLIC CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ON
AGRICULTURE, 1975/76 to 1979/80 (Naira million)*

State	Agriculture	Food Crops	Irrigation	Fishery & Livestock	Total
Federal	402.401	12.445	78.166	91.012	492.962
Anambra	17.476	0.540	-	6.046	24.062
Bauchi	13.635	0.422	1.999	4.977	21.033
Bendel	29.582	0.915	-	5.276	35.773
Benue	45.369	1.403	0.613	8.769	56.154
Borno	21.319	0.659	2.654	8.941	33.573
Cross River	33.168	0.025	0.001	3.711	37.905
Gongola	23.726	0.734	3.230	5.581	33.271
Imo	32.893	1.018	-	3.430	37.341
Kaduna	51.560	1.595	-	8.601	61.756
Kano	33.7752	1.044	28.075	7.341	70.212
Kwara	18.752	0.574	-	4.883	24.209
Lagos	8.400	0.260	-	10.253	18.913
Niger	18.808	0.582	5.482	3.925	28.797
Ogun	28.438	0.880	-	4.547	33.865
Ondo	52.234	1.880	-	5.336	59.185
Oyo	31.077	1.615	-	8.769	40.807
Plateau	18.930	0.585	1.252	8.200	28.967
Rivers	40.048	1.239	-	7.381	48.668
Sokoto	22.490	0.696	5.784	9.129	38.099
Total	944.058	29.192	127.206	216.108	

*Source: Adopted from Ekpo (1986: 266), in the Nigerian Journal of Economics and Social Studies, Vol. 28, P. 266 , with some modifications by the author.

1. Fourth National Development Plan, 1981-85

Table 8 shows that Manufacturing, Defence, Land Transport, Mines and Power had the largest share of the financial allocation in the 1979-80 Budget. Agriculture remained among the least financed.

TABLE 8: 1979-80 BUDGET - MAIN RECIPIENTS (million Naira)

INTER-SECTORIAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION*

<u>Recurrent Expenditure</u>		<u>Capital Expenditure</u>	
Primary Education	548.2	Manufacturing	1,365.6
Other Education	326.1	Land Transport	962.2
Defence	520.0	Mining	726.2
Public Debt Charges	358.3	Defence	602.0
Police	197.8	Power	540.0
Homes and Housing	105.6	Education	391.1
Health	97.2	General Administration	373.8
Information	76.4	Water Resources	359.5
Finance	70.4	Communications	320.5
Labour	63.3	Agriculture	183.5
International Affairs	50.8	External Affairs	175.3
Total (including others)	N2,900.0	Total (including others)	N6,610.0

*Source: Adopted from Colins, 1980: B611, in African Contemporary Records.
Annual Survey and Documents, 1979-1980
1. New African, June 1979.

Government attempts to increase food crop production only became visible from the 1970's, when the country's food problem reached an alarming state. Between 1970 and 1980, several strategies aimed at increasing food production were adopted. The measures taken either aimed at new policies or resuscitating pre-existing policies. The new strategies included: introduction of Land Use Decree; establishment of the Nigerian Agricultural Credit Bank (NACB); Nigerian Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (NACGS); Accelerated Development Area Projects (ADAPS); National Accelerated Food Production (NAFP); Green Revolution; River Basin Development Authorities; Export Credit Scheme, and the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructures. The measures aimed at resuscitating pre-existing agricultural policies including, Commodity Boards, Extension Services, and Cooperative Societies (Ekpo, 1986: 263; Oladeji, 1985: 6-7). The strategies were implemented by the agricultural development agencies or institutions such as the Land Acquisition Institution (Federal, State and Local Governments); Agricultural Credit Institution (Banks/Allied institutions); Farm Input Procurement and Distribution institutions (Ministries of Agriculture - federal, state and local government headquarters); Extension service Institutions; and Cooperative Institutions.

Having identified some of the Agricultural Development Strategies and their implementing agencies or institutions, a discussion of how the institutions operate will be made. In discussing how they operate, an attempt is made to identify the factors within the institutions that influence women as farmers and, as a consequence, hinder them from producing more food.

LAND USE DECREE AND LAND ACQUISITION/ALLOCATION INSTITUTION

As earlier indicated, land is one of the basic resources for human existence. Interest in land for Nigerians/Igbos is primarily due to the fact that the economy is essentially agrarian.

The Land Use Decree is one of the major attempts made by the post-colonial Nigerian government to influence and control the use of land. Promulgated under Decree No. 6 by the Federal Military Government (under the leadership of General Obasanjo) in 1978, the Land Use Decree is aimed at ensuring the availability of land and security of tenure for productive uses. Its other aims are:

- (i) to assert and preserve by law in the public interest, the rights of all Nigerians to the land comprised in the territory of Nigeria;
- (ii) to assure, protect and preserve in the public interests, the rights of all Nigerians to use and enjoy land in Nigeria and the national fruits thereof in sufficient quantity to enable them to provide for the sustenance of themselves and their families;
- (iii) to vest all the land in every state of Nigeria in the Military Governor of that state, who shall hold such land in trust and administer it for the use and common benefits of all Nigerians in accordance with the provisions of the Decree;
- (iv) to check the soaring cost of land and make land easily available to all developers, such as individuals, cooperative organizations and governments for development purposes;
- (v) to check speculations on land, which result in the hoarding of valuable land in an

undeveloped state with a view to reselling the land at an exorbitant price at a later date, usually when the value of the land has been enhanced by government projects paid for with the tax payers' money;

(vi) to eliminate complications and uncertainty in dealings on land. For instance, with the implementation of the Land Use Decree, cases of one parcel of land being sold to two or more persons would be a thing of the past, and the use of land would be secured cheaply; and

(vii) to make for orderly development of land in the state (You and the Land Use Decree, Bendel State Government (undated publication).

In order to achieve the aforementioned aims, a body known as the "Land Use and Allocation Committee" was established in the Urban centres. The Committee was entrusted with the responsibility of:

- (i) advising the State Military Governors on all matters in respect to the management of land, resettlement of persons affected by revocation of rights of occupancy on the ground of overriding public interest; and
- (ii) determining disputes as to the amount of compensation payable for improvements on land.

In respect of land in the non-urban (rural) areas, control and management is vested in the Local Government within the area of jurisdiction of where the land is situated. A body known as the "Land Use Allocation Advisory Committee" is established to advise

the Local Government on any matter connected with the management of land in the rural area. The Local Government acts on behalf of the State Military Governor in whom all the land in the state is vested under the Decree (ibid: 1-2).

Under the Land Use Decree, individuals are presumed to have only use rights. For an individual to "develop" land, he/she was expected to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy. "Developed Land" under the Decree meant "land where there exists any physical improvement in the nature of roads, development, services, water, electricity, drainage, building structures or such improvement that may enhance the value of the land for industrial, agricultural or residential purposes" (ibid: 3). "Improvements" meant "any thing of any quality permanently attached to the land directly resulting from the expenditure of capital or labour by an occupier or any person acting on his behalf, and increasing the productive capacity, the utility or the amenity thereof, and include buildings, plantations of long-lived crops or trees, fencing, wells, roads and irrigation or reclamation works, but does not include the result of ordinary cultivation other than growing produce" (ibid).

Under the Decree, individuals who had already developed a parcel of land in both urban and non-urban areas were allowed to retain all developments and improvements (building, agriculture, grazing as the case may be) they previously had made on the land. For potential developers, with respect to undeveloped plots, a person is not allowed to hold more than a total of half (hectare in all urban areas in any state.

A half hectare contains ten plots or 15.2 by 30.5 metres (50'x 100') or five standard plots of 30.5 by 30.5 metres (100'x 100). In non-urban areas, a person may hold up to five hundred hectares for agricultural purposes, and up to five thousand hectares for grazing purposes, depending on the circumstances of a particular area.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

- (i) A person who had already developed a plot or parcel of land could apply on the appropriate forms for a Certificate of Occupancy, statutory in the case of urban areas and customary in the case of non-urban areas, for a grant to cover the property.
- (ii) An individual could also apply for a Statutory right of Occupancy over a parcel of undeveloped land within a half hectare limit. The half hectare limit presupposed that the undeveloped land was prior to the commencement of the Decree vested on the applicant. In this case, the applicant must also show evidence that the land or property was vested on him prior to the commencement of the Decree.
- (iii) A person may also apply for an allocation of land, and ultimately a Certificate of Occupancy for a parcel of undeveloped land not previously vested in him.

Applications are made to the State Governor through the Land Use and Allocation Committee in the case of urban areas, and to the Local Government Authority through the secretary in the case of areas outside declared urban areas. Applications for the non-urban areas are considered by the Land Allocation Advisory Committee. Recommendations are made to the Governor or local Government, as the case may be,

and if approval is given a Certificate of Occupancy (statutory in the case of urban areas or customary in the case of non-urban) is issued to the applicant. The Certificate of Occupancy serves as evidence of the grant, and accords the recipient land use rights.

As land was vested in the Governor under the Land Use Decree, no person is permitted to sell or buy land. Land is allocated by the Governor or the Local Government as the case may be, to persons or organizations for development purposes. Persons to whom land is allocated pay some fee, which is considered reasonable for processing their applications. The fees is regarded as a premium or rent. It constitutes revenue for the government for development purposes. Holders of Certificate of Occupancy, pay land premium or rent annually to the government. The fees are far less than what would have been paid for the purchase of such plots of land before the introduction of the Land Use Decree. While the holder of the Certificates of Occupancy must not sell land, he or she could, with the approval of the Governor or the Local Government, as the case may be, assign, sublet and mortgage his or her interest in the property to another person (ibid).

In assessing the impact which the Land Use Decree has on Igbo farmers in general and Igbo women in particular, it is pertinent to say that the land Use Decree does not have much effect on the pre-existing commercialized land practices inherited from the British colonial administration. The practice of land sale still continues in spite

of the efforts made to stop the sale of land (Okere, 1983: 145; Chubbs, 1961:19; Oluwasanmi, 1966: 42). The ability to acquire more land depended on one's financial capabilities. The rich, predominantly men, continue to purchase more land at the expense of the poor majority, predominantly women.

Though purporting to promote availability of land for agricultural "development and improvement", the Land Use Decree clause, which defines "improvement" as including "plantation of long-lived crops or trees," implies that land acquired would be used for the growing of perennial tree/cash crops with long maturation periods. This not only ensures that only tree/cash crops (presumably male crops) are grown on the acquired land, it ensures that private individual (mostly men) make use of land, while land is being effectively alienated from the traditional collective communal use (Oluwasanmi, 1966: 41; Lowe, 1986: 58). Moreover, by emphasizing plantation and cash crop agriculture, the Land Use Decree denies women the right of access to land for their seasonal and daily subsistence crops.

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT INSTITUTION: BANKS/ALLIED INSTITUTIONS

The nature of traditional Nigerian/Igbo subsistence agriculture in the post-colonial era was such that it allowed for little savings. Hence Nigeria was in a position where it could hardly finance its development at a desirable level. The majority of peasant and women farmers do not possess enough capital to purchase tractors, fertilizer, spraying equipments, animal-drawn ploughs and to hire farm workers. As a result the Federal Government, in its 1970-74 Development Plan, initiated action to evolve a national farm finance programme to increase the provision of agricultural

finance. This led to the establishment of the Nigerian Agricultural Credit Bank (NACB) in 1973 and the Agricultural Credit Guarantee scheme (ACGS) in 1977. Prior to 1970, however, attempts made to finance agriculture were mainly at the regional or state government level. These earlier attempts, were inadequate in terms of attained coverage and the efficiency of operations. According to the 1970-74 Development Plan,

The proposed Nigerian Agricultural Credit Bank which is to operate in all States will assist farmers particularly in the area of cooperative farming and agricultural marketing cooperatives. The Bank will make money available directly to the Cooperative Societies, credit-worthy farmers, State Government (Second National Development Plan, 1970-74).

The aim of the NACB is to provide credit and loans for developing and enhancing the level and quality of agricultural production including horticulture, poultry farming, pig breeding, fisheries, forestry and timber production, animal husbandry and other types of farming as well as storage, distribution and marketing of such products in Nigeria (NACB Guide for Applicant). Potential beneficiaries include individual farmers, cooperative organizations, limited liability companies, government owned agricultural organizations, financial institutions and other government bodies. The NACB undertakes two types of lending:

(i) "On-lending" - by which money is loaned to established institutions against repayment guaranteed to third parties. The institutions include government bodies, cooperative bodies, and companies. The ultimate beneficiaries have no direct contact with NACB.

(ii) "Direct-lending" - to individual farmers and farmers' organizations. Beneficiaries are in direct contact with NACB.

The NACB requires 100 per cent security for its loans, except those to small holders. The security for loans consists of credit worthy guarantors, the viability of the project, as well as availability of good management. Being a full-time practising farmer and using modern inputs or methods of farming are sufficient evidence of good management for the individual farmers and farmers organizations (Nwagbo, 1981: 94).

Of the total N334.8 million approved at the commencement of the NACB, N169 million (50.5%) was disbursed. Part of the problem of low disbursement was the low level of funds on which the bank operated vis-a-vis the number of applicants (NACB: Annual Report, 1978). About 166 million or 58 per cent of all loans made in 1977/78, were to farmers cooperatives and government bodies. Thirty-four per cent of the loan in 1977/78 was for marketing purposes. For on-lending, the corresponding figure for the 1978/79 was N204 million or 65 per cent of all loans. Forty-one percent of the all loans in 1978/79 was for marketing purposes (Nwagbo, *ibid*). Direct loans to individual, medium and large scale farmers, limited liability companies and others comprised 42 per cent of all loans in 1977/78 and 35 per cent in 1978/79. Of these loans, poultry enterprise accounts for the highest percentage.

The implications of the NACB loan policy for the Nigerian farmers are as follows: Nigeria's total population in 1979 was close to 80 million, of whom at least 70 per cent (56 million) were rural farmers. Against such a scale of population, the coverage of the services of the credit bank could be said to be minimal (Baba, 1982:

91). In particular, certain NACB clauses which emphasize "credit worthy farmers" and "farmers who use modern inputs" ensures that only the few medium and large scale farmers (who were mostly men) deemed "credit-worthy" are granted loans, while the small scale peasant farmers who are in the majority are denied access to loans on grounds that they are neither "credit-worthy" nor "users of modern farm inputs" ("Progressive" farmers). As women constitute the bulk of peasant farmers and non-modern input users in Nigeria and Igbo society (WIN Document, 1985: 8-14; Elukpo, 1991: 18), the above NACB clauses more or less excludes women as credit applicants and eventual credit beneficiaries. Moreover, even when credit is given to small scale farmers it is often received late, and the amounts given are usually inadequate to finance the farmers' agricultural activities. The untimely and inadequate provision of credit to Igbo peasant farmers in general, and women farmers in particular, usually prevent them from using the credit obtained to increase their productivity.

The bulk of Nigerian and Igbo women farmers are cultivators of grains and root crops rather than (modern/commercialized) poultry products which attract highest loan percentage (Baba, 1982: 91 Oladeji, 1985: 7). Although, Igbo women kept and tended chicken in the pre-colonial and colonial times, modern and commercialized poultry established in the post-colonial era attract men since they have money and can establish and manage poultry.

AGRICULTURAL INPUT PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTIVE INSTITUTIONS:
MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE

The procurement of fertilizer from Europe became the monopoly of the Federal Government in 1976. Before fertilizer reaches the farmer a lengthy process of bureaucratic handling is involved. For instance, the distribution and transportation of fertilizer from the State level to individual farmers is usually through a long chain: local government, district heads, village heads, and then to the individual farmers. This lengthy process creates problems for the ready availability of fertilizer as it hardly reaches the farmers at the time they plan for production (planting seasons). Consequently, crops are planted late, the result of which are usually low yields. In order to avoid the bureaucratic bottleneck, farmers resort to buying the limited farm input at a much higher price from the market. This makes the question of farm subsidy meaningless. As noted by Alabu et al (1987: 1):

The most important factor responsible for the limited use of fertilizers by only a small proportion of farmers is not so much the question of "ignorance" of the farmers as to their values, method of use ...but simply the fertilizers are not available particularly at the time when they are mostly needed.

Most farmers (especially small scale peasant farmers) are denied access to agricultural inputs because of administrative bottlenecks. Apart from bureaucratic problems, emphasis is usually on "Progressive farmers" who are usually males. Women not only suffer more under the bureaucratic distributive structure as they occupy the

lowest level in the hierarchy of farmers, they also suffer as a result of their limited finances. Most women farmers cannot afford the price charged by distributive agencies for agricultural inputs, let alone of buying from the market at exorbitant prices.

EXTENSION SERVICE INSTITUTION

First introduced by Cambridge University in 1973, the term "extension education" was used to describe a particular educational innovation (Bogunjoko, 1982: 140) aimed at taking knowledge derived from the Universities and research institutions to the ordinary people, where they lived and worked (Sanders, 1966). For Farguhar (1962), agricultural extension is a service system which seeks to assist farm people through education procedures to improve farming methods and techniques, increase production efficiency and income, better their levels of living and improve the social and educational standards of rural life.

In effect, agricultural extension was expected to give the rural people that form of educational assistance best suited to their needs. In so doing, it bridged the gap between research and farmers' experience, providing farmers with knowledge to solve their problems (Bogunjoko, *ibid*; Awolola, 1982:128). It also sought to bring farmers' problems to the notice of the extension and research workers so that the problems could be solved. Without the help of extension workers, research remained hidden in reports, while the government and research scientists remain ignorant of the farmers' needs

(Bogunjoko, *ibid*). The extension worker acts as the liaison officer between the farming community, the research scientists and the specialist field staff of the agricultural department.

Extension practice in Nigeria is more or less mechanistic (Awolola, 1982: 128) and as a result constitutes an obstacle to successful agricultural development. In Nigeria, extension education involves actions aimed at taking, transferring, handing over or depositing "something" to the farmers (Awolola, *ibid*). In other words, extension staff merely pass on or enforce government orders and instructions to the farmers (Bogunjoko, 1982: 143). The achievement of Extension services is measured in terms of quantities of improved seeds and other agricultural materials distributed to the farmers, rather than in terms of the enduring changes and development of the farming system. Consequently, the tendency is for extension agents to go to communities with targets of high agricultural productivity, specific crops and specific farmers they consider "modern" or progressive" who will help them achieve their aim (Awolola, 1982: 129).

As a result, only specific strategic places, crops and influential farmers get the attention and services of extension. For instance, tree and cash crops produced by medium and large scale farmers (usually male) attract the attention of extension agents. Food crops produced by women are left to develop on their own. Women often get less attention; they constitute the bulk of small scale peasant farmers, and usually do not cultivate tree/cash crops. When attention is given to women by extension agents, it is centered on teaching them what "most women already know": home economics and

skills oriented to childcare, family health, nutrition, crafts, and meal preparations (Oladeji, 1885). For instance, according to F.A.O (1974), 100 per cent of the information and training in home economics goes to women, 15 per cent only of agriculture and 20 per cent of animal husbandry. The emphasis on domestic training for women and the virtual neglect of their core agricultural needs is as a result of the patriarchal attitude of extension agencies. Apart from the general problem of inadequate extension staff, most of the available staff are male who prefer to deal with their male counterparts. For instance, the Fourth National Development Plan estimated the extension worker farmer ratio to be 1:2,500, out of which the majority were male.

COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS: COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

The cooperative movements began in Nigeria under the 1935 Cooperative Societies Law, based on the Indian Cooperative experience (Arua, 1981: 108). The aims of Cooperative Movement as indicated in the Nigerian Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85) include: provision of adequate credit facilities, equitable pricing and allocation of scarce resources, a fair share of licences for imported equipment and tariff protection for infant cooperative industries. It was believed that through achieving these aims farmers will have better access to credit, marketing facilities, agricultural inputs, land and better pricing for their agricultural produce (Arua, 1981, Ibid).

The Nigerian Cooperative movement addresses the following four major activity areas: (i) Consumer Cooperatives; (ii) Craftsmen and Artisanal Cooperatives; (iii) Thrift and Loan Cooperatives; and (iv) Agricultural Cooperatives.

Agricultural Cooperatives are the predominant cooperative movement in Nigeria and Igbo society. They consist of Produce Marketing Unions and Societies, Credit Unions and Societies, Group farming Cooperatives, fishing and Multipurpose Cooperatives (Ibid). Since its inception, the cooperative movement has grown in number and membership. As of 1950, the number of cooperatives stood at 849 with 65,000 members. By 1980, it rose to 11,254 cooperatives with about 1,000,000 members. In spite of this increase, however, only 5 per cent of Nigerian farmers (mostly large scale farmers and males) actually belong to the cooperative movement. For women, their membership in cooperative organizations is even more limited. Most of the peasant farmers have limited knowledge of modern cooperatives, and are reluctant to enrol as members.

The produce marketing unions inherited from the colonial administration dwelt mostly on male dominated tree/cash crops such as palm produce, cocoa, groundnut, cashew nut, and rubber. Women constitute most of the members of credit union, however, through their traditional "Esusu"/"adashe" credit systems earlier discussed in chapter 2.

The problems associated with modern cooperatives which discourage most peasant farmers (especially women) from participating include inability to pay regular contributions as a result of their limited financial resources (Arua, 1981: 112-113, Ngur, 1987), lack of commitment and embezzlement of cooperative funds by corrupt cooperative officials.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Like the colonial political policy, the post-colonial political policy is male biased. However, unlike the colonial policy which totally excluded women in the political administration of the society (Mba, 1982; Njoku, 1990)), the post-colonial policy gives women minimal representation. Thus women's political status, which was on the decline during the colonial era, has relatively improved in the post-colonial dispensation.

Post-colonial agricultural policy, like colonial policy, has not enhanced women's economic status as women still lack access to the major resources necessary for improved agriculturally productivity. Post-independent governments' efforts at development remain lopsided. Emphasis continues to be placed on male dominated cash crops, forestry, and fisheries, while women's food crops are left to develop on their own. This partly resulted in food shortages and, subsequently, massive food importation. As the government battled with the food problem, various agricultural development policies are initiated and entrusted with serveral agricultural institutions and agencies. In executing the policies, large scale "progressive" farmers who are mostly men and who are in the minority gain access to land, credit, agriclutural inputs, extension services and cooperative facilities whereas women who constitute the bulk of the small scale peasant farmers, are denied access to similar facilities.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF USING A HISTORICAL ANALYTICAL METHOD FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

Chapters two, three and four which are guided by the historical analytical method are grounded in the Socialist feminists understanding that the forms of oppression, subordination and exploitation experienced by women are non-static. In other words, women's oppression is dynamic subject to variations in different historical periods. According to the Socialist feminists (Oakley, 1980; Perchonock, 1982; Imam, 1982; Jaggar, 1983; Ngur, 1987, 1988), the forms of oppression experienced by women in contemporary societies are specifically a historic product of capitalism.

The historical exploration of the status of Igbo women in the above mentioned chapters show a difference in their status before and after the colonial rule. The use of a historical analytical method enables the researcher to identify and explicate the different ways in which women were oppressed in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. Although there were some patriarchal structures in pre-colonial Igbo society (land tenure practice which gave men control, allocative and access rights whereas women had only access or use rights, male centered and gerontocratic society) which exerted minimal oppressive influences on Igbo women, colonial policies and practices introduced new oppressive structures (commercialised, individualised or privatized land tenure practices, assigning of cash crops to men) that worsened the status of women. According to the socialist feminists (ibid), capitalism instituted through colonialism in African societies increased women's oppression. Capitalism extended African discriminatory customs and even initiated new discriminatory law.

Colonial institutions such as the state, churches, schools and agricultural "development" agencies as shown in the aforementioned chapters reproduced and perpetuated patriarchal structures which ensured male dominance over women. Thus while men had access to agricultural resources, women were denied access to similar resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings. Discussion is guided by the socialist feminist perspective which sees women's oppression as a function of traditional patriarchal structures and capitalism.

CONTEXTUAL MATRIX OF RESPONDENTS

The contextual matrix of respondents aims at eliciting information on different variables (socio-demographic and household variables) which have a bearing on the role of women farmers. There are a number of characteristics of respondents which influence their role performance, apart from the institutional factors which constitute the subject matter of this study. These characteristics are presented in Tables 9 to 19 in Appendix 1.

Information on socio-demographic variables such as respondents' marital status, age, occupation, income, education, and religion were obtained. Family and household information such as husband's occupation and income, total number of children, number of working children, size of land holdings, size of operational holdings, level of household technology, and level of farm mechanization were also obtained. Also obtained was information on respondent's exposure to mass media, and participation in social organizations.

The marital status of respondents (Table 9 in the Appendix) shows that 70% were married, while 30% were widowed. The 30% of the women who were widowed act as the heads of household and breadwinners. This finding is particularly interesting because it shows that some women (especially widowed women) could be, and are, heads of their family, contrary to the biased categorization which depicts only men as households heads and breadwinners at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances. As noted by Dankelman and Davidson (in Sontheimer (1991: 13), studies conducted on seventy-four developing countries show that women head more than one fifth of the households in Africa and in the Caribbean, and 15 per cent of those in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa. In Kenya, Botswana, Ghana and Sierra Leone, almost half the households are headed by women (Taylor et al., 1985; Chinery-Hesse et al., 1989: 14). Dankelman and Davison observed that the entire responsibility of feeding, clothing and housing children rests completely on women who are heads of their households.

The age distribution of respondents (Table 10) shows that 46% were in the age group of 36 to 45, followed by age groups of above 45 years (28%), and those of 22 to 35 years (26%). The average age was 42 years. Thus most of the women were in the active and productive period of their lives.

Table 11 shows that 78% of the women did farming as their main occupation combined with trading (74%), or tailoring (4%) as subsidiary occupations. The 22% of the non-farming respondents who were mostly civil servants - teachers (9), clerical

workers (1) and nurses (1) took farming as their subsidiary occupation. Thus agriculture was the major occupation of rural women.

As shown in Table 12, 28% of the women indicated between N1,110 to N1,500 as their annual income, followed by 24% whose income falls between N510 - N1000, 18% with N1,510 - N2000 annual income, 18% with an annual income above N2000 (9 or 18%), and 12% with annual incomes of between N100 to N500. Going by the Nigerian Naria exchange rate to the United States dollar at the time the data were collected, N1,500 was equivalent to 60 United State Dollars. The high inflation rate and high cost of farm inputs made it very difficult for women to invest the limited amount on productive activity. Most of the women interviewed explained that over 80% of their money was spent in maintaining the family (reproductive activity). This finding confirms Ngur's (1987) observation that rural women constitute the poorest among the poor in the society.

The educational distribution of respondents in Table 13 shows that 66% of the women had primary education, followed by those with secondary/vocational education (12%), illiterate (10%), post-secondary education (10%) and adult literacy education (2%). Thus most of the women, though not highly educated, were fairly literate. The level of women's literacy influences their comprehension of agricultural development packages and their ability to adopt and apply knowledge derived from such packages to improve their agricultural productivity.

In terms of religion (Table 14), the majority of women were christian (98%), and 2% were believers of traditional religion. None was a Moslem. Being a Christian or

Moslem (purdah/seclusion) determines the extent of women's involvement in agriculture in multi-religious Nigerian society. The Islamic practice of Purdah limits women's participation in the public arena. Most of what Moslem women do is restricted to their homes. Thus they engage mostly in home-bound activities such as food processing and preservation, and crafts (Hills, 1972; Perchonock, 1982). Christian religion, on the other hand, does not have such a restriction for women. By virtue of Igbo women's christian religion, unlike the secluded Moslem women, they participate actively at all stages of the food cycle - clearing of the bush, tilling of the soil, planting of crops, weeding, harvesting, head-loading of crops home, processing, storage and preservation, and sale of agricultural produce.

The tables 15a and 15b on husband's occupation and income show that 38 % of the husbands were non-farmers, while 32% were farmers. Thirty per cent of the respondents were widowed. The income table shows that 30% of the widowed women do not have any additional income from husbands. 26% of the husbands earn between N11,000 to N15,000 per annum, 18% earn between N5,100 to N10,000, 12% constitute unknown husband's income, 5 or 10% earn between N1000 to N5000 and only 2 or 4% had incomes above N15,000 per annum. For the women whose husbands were either non-farmers or deceased, the greater burden of farm activity and family financial responsibilities lies completely on them.

Tables 16a and 16b show that the majority of the women had between 6 to 10 children (60%), with 40% of the women having 1 child to 5 children. The average number of children was 6 children. Half of the women interviewed do not having any

working child (50%) who could have alleviated their financial burden. Twenty-one (42%) had between 1 to 3 children who are working, 3 had between 4 to 6 children who are working, and none had more than 6 children who are working. Though working children can provide an immediate source of labour and financial assistance, the greater number of children an Igbo woman has, the greater are the number of reproductive years spent on bearing, rearing and caring for children. This has often resulted in poor health for women and children as the rearing of children is carried out amidst poor sanitary conditions, inadequate health, nutritional or family planning facilities. Because of the enormous time spent on child bearing and rearing and the fatigue associated with them, women are often left with little or no time for recreation and time to care for themselves. Moreover, the bearing of so many children impact negatively on women's health.

The data on size of land holdings (amount of land owned by the family) and size of operational holding (amount of land actually cultivated) (Table 17a and 17b) show that a majority (66%) of the respondent's families had between 3 to 5 acres of land, 28% of the families had between 1 to 2 acres, 4% of the families between 6 to 10 acres, and only 2% of the respondent's families had more than 10 acres. The majority of the respondent's families operate between 3 to 5 acres (70%), 28% of the families operate between 1 acre to 2 acres, 2% operate between 6 to 10 acres, and none of the family operated more than 10 acres. Thus Igbo farming was still basically at subsistence level

with small land holdings and operational holdings. Intensive farming supported by adequate farm resources will enhance women's agricultural productivity on the small plots of land.

The levels of household equipment (Table 17c) and farm mechanization (Table 17d) were respectively measured by the scale developed by Narwal (1981) and index developed by Singh and Singh (1970) and Kaur Satnam 1987). Narwal's household equipment scale rated the following household equipment thus: Stove (1), Beater (2), Milk cooker (2), Toaster (2), Coal iron (1), Cooking gas (6), Rice cooker (4), Pressure cooker (4), Sewing machine (4), Electric iron (4), Electric heater (4), Juice extractor (4), Electric kettle (6), Immersion rod (4), Mixer (6), Electric grinder (6), Cooking range (6), Refrigerator (9), Gobar gas plant (6), Coffee percolator (9), Knitting machine (9), Washing machine (9), Geyser (9). The household items with rating scales of (1) or (2) fall mostly within the basic household equipments and thus constitute the low level of household equipment. The household items with rating scales of (4) and (6) constitute the medium level of household equipment. Household items with rating scale of (9) constitute the high level of household equipment.

Singh and Singh and Kaur's farm mechanization index rated the following equipments thus: Tractor (7), Combine harvester (9), Pumping set (6), Disc harrow (4), Cultivator (3), Winnowing (3), Thresher (3), Trailer or Haulage (2), Leveller (2), Seed drill (2), Fodder cutter (2). Farm mechanization items with rating scale of (2) are considered the basic farm equipment and technology. They constitute the low level of

farm mechanization. Items with rating scales of (3) and (4) constitute the medium level of farm mechanization. Items with rating scales of (6), (7) and (9) constitute the high level of farm mechanization.

Women's household activities are influenced by the level of household equipment. For example, the possession of a cooking stove, water bore-hole or water storage tank could reduce the time spent by women in search of fuel/firewood and water. Similarly, the level of farm mechanization affects women's agricultural activity. The household equipment data show that half of the families (50%) had low level, followed by medium (36%) and high (14%). The farm mechanization data show that the majority of the families (52%) had low level, followed by the families who had none (46%) and medium (2%). Igbo household equipment is still very minimal. Women who perform the bulk of household work use their labour and energy on the daily domestic work that sustains the family. Without improved or mechanically operated household equipment, for instance cooking stoves and water storage tanks, Igbo women spend most of their time searching for firewood and preparing meals. They also spend a lot of time and energy on fetching water. These tasks affect women's time and physical well-being, leaving them with little or no time and strength to participate in income yielding activities. Igbo farming technology is also still largely characterized by the use of rudimentary farm implements - hoes, cutlass, machetes etc. The continual use of rudimentary implements adversely affect women's productivity. Much time and energy is still being spent by women on planting, weeding, harvesting and processing of agricultural products.

Data on women's exposure to the mass media (Table 18), show that the majority (56%) of the women rarely listen to radio, watch television, or read Newspapers, Magazines or any other print media. Women's exposure to mass media (especially media articles or news on agricultural technology) does influence their agricultural activity because information on farm methods are sometimes discussed on the radio or in print media. This is particularly important for women as in most cases they do not have time to attend demonstration sessions organized by extension departments. Since most of the rural families owned radio (especially the portable ones), one solution may be that women could take the radio along with them to the farms in order to avail themselves of the agricultural information disseminated through the radio.

Information regarding women's participation in organizations (Table 19) shows that the majority (64%) of the women belonged to between 3 to 5 organizations, followed by 26% who belong to between 1 to 2 organizations and 10% who belong to between 6 to 10 organization. On the average, the women belonged to 4 organizations. Women's organizations which includes wife's associations, village women's associations, women's wing of town unions, better life for rural women's association, women's rotational credit unions, women's religious organizations and cooperative societies not only act as avenues for solving family, marital, and financial problems, but also serve as avenues for creating awareness (through information dissemination) among women about new farm innovations and facilities.

WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL AND HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES

Data on women's agricultural and household activities show that Igbo women play important roles in the farm and at home. Women were sometimes assisted by their husbands, daughters, sons and other outside help, depending on the type of farm and household activity .

(i) On-Farm Activities

Although farming was seasonal, during the farm season women are engaged fully and on a daily basis in farm activity. They clear and till the soil, plant crops, apply fertilizer, weed, harvest and head-load agricultural produce home. Men (both husbands and sons) assist with soil clearing, tilling, planting application of fertilizer and occasionally with carrying of produce home. As long as they are of age and are at home with their mothers, female daughters assist in all aspects of farm activity, especially those which men rarely assist their wives/mothers - weeding and heading of produce home. From the data collected, 80% of the women obtain assistance from their husband in the on-farm work, 92% from their sons, 100% from their daughters and 5% from other outside help. Women grow most of the subsistence food crop - cassava, cocoa yam, maize, beans, vegetables and fruits. Men grow yam, palm tree, kolanut, and cocoanut. Although there is a division of labour between men and women in terms of farm activity and crops grown, the division of labour was more or less flexible. For instance, though yam cultivation was regarded as men's activity, women sometimes grow yam. The women noted, however, that with increasing commercialization of the economy as a result of colonization and Western influence, the division of labour

between men and women is becoming more rigid. Men are taking over the production of some crops (palm produce) that were jointly produced by both men and women in the precolonial times. According to the women, the takeover by men of their palm produce tasks has affected their status economically. Prior to the takeover of palm produce production by men, women controlled the marketing of palm oil as well as the income derived from the sale of the oil (Ukegbu, 1974: 36; Mba, 1982: 30). With the incorporation of palm produce as an item in international trade (colonial influence), and the takeover of palm oil trade by men, men now control the greater income derived from such trade. As noted by Huston (1985) in Sontheimer (1991: 10), "[a]s the transition to cash-cropping makes inroads on rural agriculture, women's activities become both more burdensome and less socially valued. Marginalization occurs where there is a desperate and pervasive demand for cash to meet family needs. If those needs can be supplied only by the market, unpaid traditional roles will no longer evoke respect, thereby under-cutting the authority of women."

(ii) Off-Farm Activities

Off-farm activities are daily activities performed about twice in a week. Off-farm activities which include threshing, winnowing, grinding/pounding, drying smoking, frying, preparation of farm products for sale are almost completely women's responsibilities (women and their daughters). For instance, 96% of the women

interviewed said that they perform these activities with the assistance of their daughters, and 4% said that they were assisted by their sons. Food storage, handicraft production, and the sale of agricultural produce sometimes receive men's assistance.

(iii) Household Chores

Household chores are an every day activity necessary for the maintenance of the family. Data on household chores show that women perform the bulk (98%) of these chores with assistance coming mostly from the female children. With the exception of house maintenance, which is performed by both men and women, almost all the water and fuel or firewood used in the household is fetched by women and their daughters. Similarly, the pre-cooking, cooking, food serving, house cleaning, clothes washing, sowing, feeding and bathing of children, and preparation of children for school were performed by women, with help from their daughters.

(iv) Domestic Animal Care Duties

Women also perform most of the domestic animal care duties - collection of animal feeds, feeding of animals, cleaning of animal wastes and sheds. These duties, which are necessary for the upkeep of domestic animals, are performed on a daily basis. Help was occasionally received from husbands and male children. Overall, 80% of the women interviewed did the animal care work with their daughters, while 20% said that their husband or male children assisted them. The findings on the off-farm activities, household chores and domestic animal care duties confirm the F.A.O (1974) report, that

"African women are responsible for at least 70 per cent of marketing, 90 per cent of water supply, 50 per cent of domestic animal care and 80 per cent of the supply of fuel."

WOMEN'S TIME SCHEDULE

Information on women's time schedules (Table 20) shows that the majority of the women (78%) have leisure time about once or twice in a week (mostly on Sundays and perhaps one of the market days - Nkwo). The majority of the women (64%) worked for about 16 to 19 hours in a day (Table 21). During the peak of farming season, women spend as much as 9 hours or more a day on farm activity. Midway through the farming season, women spend about 5 to 8 hours on farm work and after the harvesting season, they spend about 1 to 4 hours. In addition to this farm work, most of the women (68%) spend about 3 to 4 hours a day on domestic work (Table 22). Women hardly have enough time for rest or for themselves.

These findings parallel Chakravarty (1975), Economic Commission For Africa (ECA) (1976) and Ngur's (1987) claim that women in India, Africa and Nigeria work as much as 16 hours a day and spend as much as 8 to 9 hours on the farm during the peak agricultural season. As noted by Leslie, et al. in Chinery-Hesse et al. (1989), "[t]he hours of work necessary for women to fulfil their function is one of the most important factors affecting their welfare [well-being, health, and time to participate in income yielding activities]." Alluding to this view, Monimart (1991: 58) observed that "[t]he excessive increase in [women's] workload threatens [their] educational role. Overloaded

with work, burdened with babies, and toddlers, the mother finds it hard to fulfil her educational role." Similarly, Monimart (ibid) stated that [t]he girls are sacrificed; they do servant's job, their work is indispensable to the household, and schooling becomes even more inaccessible to them. The overburdened women cannot always find the time to attend their own literacy session or training sessions - whose timetables are in any case not worked to fit with women's." She warns that the increased workload of women and girls in particular threatens the future too: "the young women of the year 2000 are likely to be illiterate as their mothers, without having had the chance to acquire their mother's traditional knowledge" (ibid).

TABLE 20: WOMEN'S LEISURE TIME, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Number of Times a week	Frequency	Percentage
No Leisure Times	3	6
1 - 2 Times	39	78
3 - 4 Times	6	12
5 - 6 Times	2	4
Total	50	100

TABLE 21: NUMBER OF WOMEN'S WORKING HOURS, UMUNNACHI
AND LERU

Working Hours per day	Frequency	Percentage
13 Hours	1	2
14 Hours	5	10
15 Hours	12	24
16 to 19 Hours	32	64
Total	50	100

TABLE 22: NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT BY WOMEN ON DOMESTIC
ACTIVITY, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Hours per day	Frequency	Percentage
1 - 2 Hours	6	12
3 - 4 Hours	34	68
5 - 6 Hours	5	10
7 - 8 Hours	2	4
9 - 10 Hours	-	0
11 - 12 Hours	3	6
Total	50	100

PATRIARCHY, CLASS AND ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL FACILITIES

(i) Women and Land

The data collected on women and land show that although land was previously communally owned, it is presently owned individually and privately. All the women interviewed (Table 23) said that women do not own land, and that land was given to women by either their husbands or male relations. On the relationship between women's non-ownership of land and their agricultural productivity (Table 23), 70% of the women indicated that ownership of land determines what they can produce, since production is determined by the amount of land they were given by their male relations (husband, or male kindred). About two-thirds (68%) of the respondents (Table 24) indicated that women's non-ownership of land may be linked to the present food problem - shortage/high cost of food stuff in Igbo communities. According to these 34 women, if less land or poorly fertile land was given to women, less would be produced leading to high prices of foodstuff. In terms of what could be done to enhance women's access to land (Table 11: 04), 52% of the women indicated land reform, 8% indicated cooperative society, and 6% stated that nothing could be done because the land issue is culturally based. According to the 52% of the women, land reform which recognizes women's need for and use of land is more likely to enhance women's access to land.

From the data collected, Igbo women do not own or control the allocation of land. Their access to land is largely determined by their relationship to a male patriarch - husband or male relations in the case of a married woman or widow, and father, uncle

or male kinsmen in the case of a daughter. These findings confirm the view that women do not own or control the allocation of land (Okla and Makey, 1975; Bukh, 1979; Rogers, 1980; Pala, 1980; Chaney et al., 1981; Ngur, 1987, 1988). According to the present study, women's limited access to farm land is one of the greatest problems Igbo women farmers have had to grapple with. This problem was aggravated by the British colonial land policy. As indicated by the women, prior to colonialism, land was communally owned. Both men and women had usufruct rights, though the control and allocation of land was in the hands of men. Thus while the Igbo precolonial communal land tenure system did not give women allocative and control rights, it nonetheless guaranteed women's use and therefore access rights.

With the arrival of colonialism, with its emphasis on cash crop, the palm-produce became an internationally marketable cash crop. With the colonial Victorian conception of men as farmers and heads of household, men were seen as producers of oil-palm. This led to men's control over oil-palm production and marketing, which was previously jointly produced by men and women. Consequently, more and better land began to be allocated to the growing of cash crops - palm produce, rubber, cocoa, groundnut (peanuts) and cotton. Thus women were left with less and poorly fertile land to grow their food crops. As men began to earn more income from the sale of their cash crop, they were able to purchase and own more land, whereas women could not do the same. Within the new individualized land ownership structure, the use right which women had had in the communal land ownership structure was eroded. Similarly, the importance previously attached to women's food crop began to decline. Accessibility

to land for women began to be more difficult hence their entire dependence on their male ward for land. Moreover, when land is allocated to women, it is usually in very small lots which are fragmented and farther away from homestead. One consequences is that women walk very long distances in order to get to the farm.

According to the present study, the declining food production of the country, not only owes its origin to the colonial individualized land and cash crop agricultural policies which were skewed in favour of men, but also to the neglect of women (producers of food crops) who were systematically denied access to land and other agricultural resources. As indicated earlier, the neglect of women is tantamount to the neglect of food crops and vice versa.

Efforts made on land reform through the "Land Use Decree" by the post-colonial Nigerian government failed because land reform was based on the colonial male-biased model. The Land Use Decree did not redress the inequality in land distribution or consider the issue of women and access to land. Nigerian men (including Igbo men) still controlled the allocation of land. Because land was used as collateral security for loans, and also is a prerequisite for other agricultural facilities, women could hardly obtain loan or other agricultural resources, hence the continued decline in their agricultural productivity.

From the information gathered on women and land, it can be said that the the interplay of patriarchy and capitalism (brought about through colonialism) explains Igbo women's limited access to land. This finding parallels the view held by socialists feminists that the oppression of African women results from both traditionalism and

capitalism.

TABLE 23: THE IMPLICATIONS OF WOMEN'S NON-OWNERSHIP OF LAND FOR THEIR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Implication	Frequency	Percentage
No effect	15	30
Limits productivity	35	70
Enhance productivity	-	-
Total	50	100

TABLE 24: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN'S NON-OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND THE PRESENT FOOD SHORTAGE PROBLEMS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Relationship	Frequency	Percentage
No effect	16	32
Food shortage	34	68
Total	50	100

TABLE 25: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S OWNERSHIP OF OR LIMITED ACCESS TO LAND, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Solutions proposed by women	Frequency	Percentage
No Response	17	34
Nothing can be done	3	6
Land Reform	26	52
Formation of Cooperative	4	8
Total	50	100

WOMEN AND CREDIT (LOAN)

Data on women and credit (Table 26) show that various sources of credit (loan) exist in the rural area - Women's rotational credit "Esusu" through Women's Association (otu meten/Otu utu/Otu ndiinyom/otu nwunyedi), cooperative societies, banks and allied institutions, friends, husband's and children who are gainfully employed, siblings, work places and churches. As shown in Table 26, 82% of the women interviewed about sources of credit for women mentioned the existence of women's rotational credit, 46% indicated the existence of credit through friends, 42% mentioned the existence of credit through banks/allied institutions, 42% indicated the existence of credit through husbands, 28% indicated the existence of credit through children, 24% mentioned the existence of credit through cooperative societies, 6%

mentioned the existence of credit through work place, 4% indicated the existence of credit through siblings, 2% mentioned the existence of credit through church, 4% indicated that there was no form of credit facility.

Although all the women interviewed indicated interest in obtaining bank loans, they rarely apply. Of all the women interviewed, 96% of them indicated that they have never applied for a bank loan. They rely mostly on other sources of credit (loan) namely women's rotational credit association (esusu), women's groups (otu meten), friends, husbands and children who are working, brothers or sisters, work place, and church. The women indicated, however, that the money obtained from these sources was often insufficient to enable them to purchase farm inputs for further investment in agriculture. Of the two women who had applied for bank loans, only one was actually granted a loan.

TABLE 26: SOURCE/S OF CREDIT (LOAN) TO WOMEN,
UMUNNACHI AND LERU, IN RANK ORDER

Source/s of Credit	Frequency	Percentage
Women's rotational credit "Esusu"	41	82
Friends	23	46
Banks/allied institutions	21	42
Husband	21	42
Children	14	28
Cooperative societies	12	24
Work place	3	6
Siblings	2	4
Church	1	2
None	2	4

Note: most women gave multiple responses

TABLE 27: COLLATERAL SECURITIES REQUIRED BY
BANKS/ALLIED INSTITUTIONS BEFORE CREDIT IS GRANTED,
UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Collateral Security	Frequency	Percentage
Land	32	64
House	29	58
Bank account	18	36
Guarantor/Surety	13	26
Vehicle	10	20
Machines	3	6
Share certificate	3	6
Husband's consent	2	4
Membership of cooperative	2	4

TABLE 28: DIFFICULTIES WOMEN ENCOUNTER IN OBTAINING
LOANS FROM BANKS OR OTHER CREDIT INSTITUTIONS,
UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Difficulty	Frequency	Percentage
Inability to provide collateral security	37	74
Inability to repay loan	10	20
Lack of knowledge of bank's credit procedures	5	10
Not allowed by Husband	3	6
Urban bias/neglect of women	2	4
High interest	1	2
Subsistence Crop	1	2
Non-membership of cooperative society	1	2

TABLE 29: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO CREDIT (LOAN), UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Solutions proposed by women	Frequency	Percentage
Special/soft loan to women with low interest rate/extended repayment period	30	60
Cooperative society	10	20
Education of women on credit procedures	6	12
Nothing can be done	2	4

Of all the women interviewed, the majority (90%) indicated that collateral security had to be provided by credit seekers before being considered for loan. With the exception of two women who had no knowledge about the kinds of collateral security demanded by banks, all the women interviewed (Table 27) indicated one kind of collateral security or the other. These include land, house Bank account, Guarantor or Surety, Vehicle, Machines, Share Certificate, husband's consent, and membership of cooperative. In all, land, house, bank accounts, and guarantors appear to be the collateral security mostly demanded by banks/allied institutions.

The majority of women did not apply for (96%) or obtain loans (98%) for the following reasons (Table 28):

- (i) Inability to provide collateral security such as land, house or other collateral securities demanded by banks. The inability of women to provide

collateral security is as a result of their non-ownership of land, house or other landed property by women. The majority of the rural women do not have bank accounts. This is because the little income derived from the sale of their agricultural produce, and arts and crafts was very often used for reproductive functions - feeding and maintenance of the family, and education of children.

- (ii) Fear that they may not be able to repay loan - as a result of crop failure or family maintenance related problems. Due to crop failure or family maintenance related problems, women are often unable to repay loans borrowed from banks.
- (iii) Lack of knowledge of credit procedures. Most women do not have sufficient knowledge on how the bank credit procedure works. In view of their very limited knowledge in this regard, they cannot apply for bank loans. Women's limited knowledge is a result of the male biased structure which sees banking as a male domain. By virtue of men's daily transactions with the banks, they are able to learn banking procedures. Since rural women rarely go to the bank, they have limited information on banking procedure.
- (iv) Not allowed by husband. Because of the public-private dichotomy, in which men see banking as their own domain, husbands sometimes refuse wife's requests to apply for a bank loan.
- (v) Urban bias and general neglect of women in favour of men. From the data collected, some of the women acknowledged that there was urban bias in the establishment of banking and other loan granting institutions. They also stated that

there was bias in the granting of loans to farmers. According to the women, banks are often established in the urban areas. Loans are generally directed to men. The women stated that the male-biased structure (patriarchy) which pervades the society, including loan granting institutions, is largely responsible for the inequality of access to loans.

- (vi) High interest rates. Women are discouraged from borrowing money from the bank because of the high interest rates which they cannot afford to pay.
- (vii) Subsistence farming as non-priority loan-granting area. Emphasis of loans by the banks is usually on cash crops produced by men. The implication of the banks' emphasis on cash crops is that women, who are generally subsistence farmers, are excluded by agricultural lending policies.
- (viii) Women's non-membership in cooperative organizations. In most rural communities only about one-third of the women belong to cooperative societies. Since loans to farmers are sometimes given to the cooperative group, the majority of women who are non-members of cooperative organizations do not benefit from such loans.

On what could be done to enhance women's very limited access to credit, the women gave a variety of responses (Table 29). These include, the provision of special/soft loan to women with low interest rate and an extended repayment period, the formation of cooperative society by women, and the education of women on credit procedures.

From the aforementioned data on women and credit (loan), inaccessibility of bank loans to Igbo women farmers proves to be another institutional factor that influences their agricultural productivity. The majority of rural Igbo women farmers do not have adequate capital to purchase fertilizer or to hire tractors to improve their farm yields. The money which women occasionally raise through rotational credit associations (esusu), women's groups (otu meten) or friends is hardly sufficient to enable them to purchase farm inputs for considerable investment in agriculture. Rural women are usually unable to provide the collateral security (mostly land, house, bank account etc.) often demanded by banks and other allied institutions. Most of the rural women do not have bank accounts. Women hardly have enough money to open bank account. Their meagre income is usually spent on maintaining and feeding the family.

The banks give credit priority to "the progressive" or large scale farmers who are generally men. The large scale farmers who are mostly land owners and members of cooperative societies are able to provide the necessary collateral securities required by banks. Conversely, women who constitute the majority of the peasant and small scale farmers are denied access to loan on the grounds that they are not "credit worthy", since they cannot provide the collateral security needed by banks.

Although the Government policy for banks and other allied institutions emphasize the provision for loans to farmers irrespective of gender, information gathered from both banks and other allied institutions (Table 30) indicate that more men than women sought and obtained loans.

TABLE 30: PATTERN OF CREDIT DISTRIBUTION OF SIX SELECTED
BANKS/ALLIED INSTITUTION IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

YEAR	NO OF CREDIT APPLICANTS		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990 (Percentage)	1503 (79.3%)	393 (20.7%)	1896 (100%)
1991 (Percentage)	2449 (80.5%)	594 (19.5%)	3043 (100%)
1992 (Percentage)	3533 (71.5%)	1411 (28.5%)	4944 (100%)
Year	NO OF CREDIT BENEFICIARIES		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990 (Percentage)	918 (74.5%)	314 (25.5%)	1232 (100%)
1991 (Percentage)	1295 (71.3%)	522 (28.7%)	1817 (100%)
1992 (Percentage)	2863 (72.8%)	1068 (27.2%)	3931 (100%)
YEAR	AMOUNT GRANTED		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990 (Percentage)	N619800 (96.5%)	N222015 (3.5%)	N6420015 (100%)
1991 (%)	N10819907 (96.2%)	N425000 (3.8%)	N1244907 (100%)
1992 (%)	N12303212 (93.1%)	N895000 (6.9%)	N13198212 (100%)

Note: N stands for Naira, Nigerian Currency.

The bank credit requirements or provision as indicated by the above six banks include:

(i) 15% of total Deposit liability, (ii) beneficiary's ability to provide acceptable collateral security, (iii) membership in a cooperative organization, (iv) personal account, (v) applicant must be a bona-fide farmer with no other means of livelihood but farming.

The kind of collateral security required by banks/allied institution as indicated by the above banks include: (i) Certificate of occupancy (of land) and land lease, (ii) legal mortgage on land, (iii) agricultural credit guarantee fund from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), (iv) personal bank account, (v) Life Assurance policy, (vi) share certificates, (vii) buildings/houses, and (viii) Guarantors. Married women loan-seekers must also have their husband's consent.

Looking at the aforementioned credit provisions or collateral security requirements (Credit Policy), in principle they appear to be equitable in terms of accessibility of credit to any gender and member of social class. In practice, however, equity does not hold. For instance, the land, houses or property, certificate of occupancy, and share certificate often demanded by banks are owned and controlled by men. Women do not own land, and very often land is registered under a male relative's name (husband, sons or male relations) with males holding the certificate of occupancy. Women are also required to seek their husband's consent before applying for loan. As one bank official puts it:

Banking which is a public domain is not supposed to be for women. As "breadwinners", men own property and thus operate bank account. As mothers and house-keepers, women are supposed to stay at home and play their maternal roles of child care and home manager.(A Bank official's opinion, 1993).

Apart from the disguised gender bias inherent in the bank credit policy, a class biased dimension is also manifested. For instance, apart from land and houses which most male farmers can claim to own, only very few State recognized farmers, mostly the large scale or 'progressive' male farmers, can provide share certificates, legal mortgage on land, Life Assurance certificates, Agricultural Credit Guarantee Fund from the Central Bank. Most of the rural farmers are peasants, among whom women constitute the majority. Thus the hierarchy of credit applicant and beneficiary is often such that rural women are at the bottom.

In terms of the problems of credit institutions with respect to farmers, especially women, the banks indicated the following: inability of farmers to repay loans; lack of encouragement (consent) by men to their wives to obtain loans from the banks; loans granted women are in most cases taken by husbands and diverted to uses other than farm activity; cultural barriers that prevent women from owning land; and an information gap between farmers and the banks. The banks recommended the following solutions: massive encouragement of women by husbands, traditional rulers, and bank officials to seek credit from the banks; disbursement of credit at a low interest rate; modification of culture to give leverage to women; proper monitoring of credit to ensure that farmers invest loans on agricultural production; education and persuasion of farmers to repay loans; and a mass mobilization and enlightenment campaign for farmers.

The above indicated problems and recommendations are more or less the same as those stated by the women themselves. The research findings support previous studies conducted elsewhere on a similar topic (Bukh, 1979; Ngur, 1987, 1988). As compared to men, women have limited access to bank loans. Apart from land, loans which act as capital are necessary for the procurement of agricultural inputs such as machines, tractors and fertilizer. Women's limited access to bank loans affects their ability to invest in agriculture and increase their agricultural productivity. The inequality of access to credit between men and women lies in the patriarchal and class structures which favor men over women. Thus while men, on account of their relatively easier access to capital are able to increase their cash crop production, women's productivity of food crops suffers a decline. This lack of capital to improve the growing of food crops partly accounts for the dwindling food problems experienced in contemporary Nigeria.

WOMEN AND AGRICULTURAL INPUTS - MACHINE HIRING SERVICES, SEEDLINGS, FERTILIZER.

The information collected on women and agricultural inputs (Table 31) shows that a variety of agricultural inputs - fertilizer, hybrid seedlings, tractor hiring services, pesticides and insecticides, and veterinary services - are available in the local government headquarters and ministries of agriculture for rural farmers. Of all the women interviewed (Table 31), 86% acknowledged the availability of fertilizer in the ministries of agriculture, 66% indicated the availability of hybrid seedlings, 20%

mentioned that a machine/tractor is available, 8% indicated that veterinary services for animals are available, 2% indicated that insecticides/pesticides are available, 8% said that there were no agricultural facilities in the ministries, and 8% said that they do not know if any agricultural facility is available in the ministries or local government headquarters. Thus most of the women expressed awareness of the existence of some type of agricultural inputs and indicated a desire to acquire them. At the same time, however, women indicated that most often they could not acquire these agricultural inputs. Seventy-four per cent of the women interviewed (Table 32) indicated that they had never applied for or rented any farming inputs.

TABLE 31: TYPES OF FARM INPUT/S IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Input	Frequency	Percentage
Fertilizer	43	86
Hybrid seedlings	33	66
Machines/Tractor	10	20
Insecticides/ Pesticides	1	2
Veterinary services	4	8
None	4	8

TABLE 32: WOMEN WHO HAVE EVER OR HAVE NEVER APPLIED
FOR FARM INPUTS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
No	37	74
Yes	13	26
Total	50	100

TABLE 33: CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN
FARM INPUTS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
Bureaucracy and Undue delay in Input distribution	22	44
High cost of inputs	13	26
Priority given to men and women neglected	5	10
Lack of finance for transporting farm inputs	4	8
Women's farm land too small and in different places	4	8
Inadequate farm inputs	1	2

TABLE 34: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO ELIMINATE THE CONSTRAINTS

Solutions proposed by women	Frequency	Percentage
Elimination of bureaucratic bottlenecks	17	34
Commitment and honesty of input officers	9	18
Input distribution through cooperatives or community leaders	6	12
Subsidized input for women	4	8
Input distribution directly to women	2	4
Adequate transportation facilities	1	2
More inputs for distribution	1	2
More land for women	1	2

The majority of the women could not apply for (74%) or obtain farm inputs (82%) because of the following reasons (Table 33):

- (i) Bureaucracy and undue delay in input distribution. Most often women had to go to the ministries several times before they can procure farm inputs.

Considering their limited financial resources and enormous economic and

familial responsibilities, they chose to pursue other economic and familial responsibilities rather than going to queue at the local government ministries (without any guarantee that at the end of the long wait they would be given farm inputs). More often, inputs were received very late, when planting season was passed or well underway.

(ii) The high cost of agricultural inputs. Because of women's meagre income, most cannot afford the prices charged by input distributing institutions.

Moreover, some of the women interviewed stated that the prices of inputs charged by the ministries of agriculture were equivalent to the price in the local market, or often higher. Thus, instead of the rigours involved in going to obtain farm inputs at the ministries of agriculture, women often resorted to buying similar inputs on the open market.

(iii) Priority is given to men. Most often, due to the emphasis on the "progressive farmers" who are usually male, or male heads of household and male dominated crops, women are neglected. This bias stems from the dichotomy between the public and private domain, in which men are assigned public domain while women are expected to remain around the home to care for the children and clean the house.

(iv) Lack of finance for transporting farm inputs. As a result of women's limited financial resources, they usually do not have money for transporting themselves to and from the ministries of agriculture which are often located miles away from their homes.

- (v) Women's farm land is too small and in different locations. Most of the time the land allocated to women is very small and fragmented. With scattered pieces of land, it is often not possible to administer a hired tractor since tractors work more effectively on large pieces of land (such as those owned and controlled by men). The size of a farm land determines the applicability of farm machines. Since the land allocated to women is often very small, women may not find it worth while in the first instance to hire a machine. Moreover, if the size of farm land is too small, the input distributive agencies may not be willing to apply their machines or tractors on such lands.
- (vi) Inadequacy of farm inputs. Most often, the quantity of input given to women is very small and does not result in increased agricultural productivity. Further, it is often not worth the time and energy spent by women to acquire it. This discourages women from seeking to procure agricultural inputs from the ministries of agriculture.

Women were asked what could be done to eliminate the aforementioned constraints. The following responses were given by them (Table 34): The elimination of bureaucratic bottlenecks, more commitment and honesty on the part of input distribution officers, input distribution to be done through cooperatives and community leaders, subsidized inputs for women, direct distribution of inputs to women, adequate and affordable transportation, more inputs for distribution, and more land for women.

At the macro-level of data collection, the information gathered from four ministries of agriculture/local government headquarters (Table 35) shows that more men than women apply for and obtain inputs.

TABLE 35: PATTERN OF INPUT DISTRIBUTIONS OF FOUR
SELECTED MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE/ALLIED BODIES IN
SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

YEAR	NO OF INPUT APPLICANTS		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990	17503	4301	21804
(Percentage)	(80.3%)	(19.7%)	(100%)
1991	32153	9565	41718
(Percentage)	(77.1%)	(22.9%)	(100%)
1992	32669	15795	48464
(Percentage)	(67.4%)	(32.6%)	(100%)

YEAR	NO OF INPUT BENEFICIARIES		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990	13118	3853	16971
(Percentage)	(77.3%)	(22.7%)	(100%)
1991	24198	6662	30860
(Percentage)	(78.4%)	(21.6%)	(100%)
1992	14297	3400	17697
(Percentage)	(80.8%)	(19.2%)	(100%)

YEAR	AMOUNT OF INPUT GRANTED (IN NAIRA - N)		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990	N2100	N300	N2400
(%)	(87.5%)	(12.5%)	(100%)
1991	N2880	N720	N3600
(%)	(80%)	(20%)	(100%)
1992	N3450	N400	N3850
(%)	(89.6%)	(10.4%)	(100%)

The ministries/allied bodies indicated the following as the problems related to granting inputs to the farmers (especially women): inadequate supply of inputs (by the state) to the farmers, lack of finance by farmers to enable them to purchase farm inputs, and poor information dissemination as a result of communication gap between the ministries and the farmers. On what could be done to minimize or eliminate the problems, the ministry officials suggested the following: decentralization of input procurement and distribution, provision of more transportation facilities, and provision of more inputs for distribution to the farmers.

The problems and suggestions made by the ministries are the same as some of the problems and recommendations given by the women in this study, as well as similar research done else-where (Boserup, 1970; Ngur, 1987, 1988). The inability of women to gain access to agricultural inputs (machines, tractors, improved seedlings, fertilizer and improved technologies) constitutes an institutional impediment to their efforts to increase agricultural productivity. The male bias inherent in development policies - land reforms, credit (loan), extension services - is also present in the distribution of agricultural inputs. Emphasis is placed on the "progressive male farmers," male heads of households and male dominated cash crops in the distribution of agricultural inputs. Given that rural women are almost always engrossed in domestic chores and farming activities, they can hardly afford the time to accomodate the bureaucratic delays usually associated with input procurement. Conversely, men can afford the time to pursue the procurement of inputs in spite of the bureaucratic delays because of the patriarchal structures which exempts them from performing household chores. Moreover, the costs

of obtaining most of the agricultural inputs are often beyond the affordability of most rural women.

WOMEN AND EXTENSION SERVICES

Data collected on women and extension services (Table 36) show that various information and training services are available in the ministries of agriculture and other agro-based research institutions. These services include information on new method of farming, veterinary services, pest control services, domestic science training, and adult education.

As to whether there are differences in the information given to men and women, 22% of women responded no, 26% of women said yes and 52% of women said that they do not know. According to the women who indicated yes, information is usually on the type of crops grown or animal kept by men and women. Of those who responded, it could be said that women receive different information and training as compared to men. In addition to information on improved farm methods, women also received training on domestic science - knitting, weaving, dying, soap and pomade making. Much of the information given to women is on domestic science. This finding confirms the notion that most of women's extension packages are usually on domestic science and home economics. As indicated by the F.A.O (1974) and U.N.E.C.A (1974): 100 per cent of extension information and training in home economics goes to women, 15 per cent of extension information and training on agriculture goes to women, 20 per cent extension information on animal husbandry is given to women and 10 per cent of

teachings in cooperative activities is given to women. This domestic science emphasis of extension services is narrow and fails to address the crop production problems facing rural women. The domestic science emphasis of extension service for women stems from the patriarchal view of women as house- keepers and home managers (reproducers). By this emphasis, agricultural extension agencies underplay the economic roles of women as producers of crops.

With respect to the importance of the training and information given (Table 37), a majority of the women (86%) said that it enhances productivity. Though most of the women interviewed expressed a desire to seek information on improved methods of farming, 48% of the women (Table 38) indicated that they had never been visited by agricultural extension staff. They stated that visitation was on request and mostly to cooperative groups. Moreover, they maintained that visitation of extension staff was only for people who could afford the cost of such services. Reflecting these barriers, only 24% of respondents said that they have been visited once by extension staff, 9% of respondents stated that they have been visited twice and 10% of respondents indicated that they have been visited three times or more by extension staff. Moreover, 40% of the women (Table 39) indicated that they had never attended demonstration sessions organized by agricultural extension officials; 34% had attended only once, 18% attended twice, and 8% attended three times or more. Although, women are increasingly receiving extension services, when compared to men (as shown in Table 42), women still have limited access to extension services. This finding supports previous research (Boserup, 1970; Bukh, 1979; Chaney et al., 1981; Smucker, 1982; Ngur, 1987).

According to Ngur's (1987) study of the Fulani society, "while both 'Fulbe' [Fulani] men and women were hampered by lack of adequate access to information on improved animal husbandry practice ..., the women's plight [was] ... worse. [A]ll extension work was directed at men alone. None of the 46 women [involved in the study] had ever set eyes on either a livestock extension officer or a home economics agent." Ngur noted that "most knowledge of innovations in livestock management or agriculture ... trickled down to the women from their husbands. The husbands were the single most important source of information to the women." She stated that "the patriarchal development policies inherited from the colonial masters" were responsible for this situation.

TABLE 36: TYPES OF TRAINING AND INFORMATION SERVICES
AVAILABLE IN THE EXTENSION DIVISION OF MINISTRIES OF
AGRICULTURE

Extension Information	Frequency	Percentage
New methods of farming	34	68
Veterinary services	15	30
Pest control	14	28
Domestic science (dying, weaving, knitting, soap/ pomade making)	13	26
Adult education	4	8
None	3	6

TABLE 37: THE IMPLICATIONS OF EXTENSION TRAINING AND
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION FOR AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTIVITY, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Implication	Frequency	Percentage
Improve Productivity	43	86
No effect	-	-
No Response	7	14
Total	50	100

TABLE 38: NUMBER OF TIMES WOMEN ARE VISITED BY
EXTENSION STAFF, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	24	48
1 time	12	24
2 times	9	18
3 times or more	5	10
Total	50	100

TABLE 39: NUMBER OF TIMES WOMEN ATTENDED
DEMONSTRATION SECTIONS ORGANIZED BY AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION DEPARTMENTS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	20	40
1 time	17	34
2 times	9	18
3 times or more	4	8
Total	50	100

TABLE 40: THE GENDER COMPOSITION OF VISITING EXTENSION
STAFF, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Only men	1	2
Only women	3	6
Both men and women (equal number)	13	26
Both but more men than women	10	20
Both but more women than men	2	4
Do not know	21	41
Total	50	100

TABLE 41: ATTITUDE OF WOMEN TOWARDS NEW AGRICULTURAL METHODS/TECHNOLOGY, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Negative	1	2
Positive	49	98
Total	50	100

With respect to the gender composition of visiting extension staff, the women gave the following responses (Table 40): 26% indicated both men and women visiting staff (equal ratio of 1 man:1 woman), 20% indicated both, but more men than women visiting staff (3 men:1 woman), 6% indicated only women staff, 4% indicated both men and women, but more women (3 women:1 man), 2% indicated only men visiting staff, and 42% said that they do not know. It could be said that there are more male than female extension staff. The inaccessibility of extension services to rural women is yet another institutional constraint that limits their agricultural productivity. Apart from the general problem of inadequate extension staff to all farmers, where extension staff are available they are mostly males and would prefer to offer their services to male farmers and male heads of household. As noted by Ngur (1987: 7), "except for home economics agents, agriculture, livestock and cooperatives extension agents are mainly men."

With respect to the general awareness level of women about new farm methods and technology, the majority of the women (82%) interviewed indicated that women's awareness level is still very low, even though women's attitude to new agriculture

methods (Table 41) is positive (98%) because believe that they have the potential to enhance their productivity (Table 16: 09). This finding challenges the view (modernization activists) that peasant farmers, and rural women in particular, are resistant and unwilling to accept change. Women are willing to accept change in so far as the innovation will increase their productivity without subsequently increasing their burden, and will be suitable to their time schedule. For instance, some technological innovations have had a reverse effect of increasing women's work load without subsequently increasing benefits to them. Similarly, other technological innovations have also resulted in the loss of employment for women. Labour-saving technology which reduces women's work often simultaneously deprives them of employment because men have owned and operated the new equipment. For instance, Igbo women boycotted petrol-run equipment presses when their introduction threatened to destroy the cottage industry of hand pressing palm kernels (Mba, 1983; Afonja, 1984). Fuel powered grinding mills have had a similar impact where women have neither the capital to own them nor access to alternative employment. Rural women in Upper Volta rejected solar reflective cookers because they conflict with their time budget. Rural women allocate specific time in the day to specific activities. Rural women in Africa cook the main meal of the day after returning from the farm around sunset. Without taking consideration of the time budget or comfort of women, solar reflective cookers were introduced which required cooking outside at noon when the sun was very hot.

Women rejected this technology because it conflicted with their time - at noon they were still at their farms. Moreover, most women cook inside the house when the sun is strongest.

At the macro level of data collection, the information obtained from four extension divisions of the ministries of agriculture/allied institutions (Table 42) shows that more men than women sought and received information in the extension divisions. The patriarchal (male biased) view in which men are assigned to the public domain, while women are expected to occupy the private domain, underlies the low level of women's participation in extension training. Often women are so preoccupied with their presumed familial and domestic duties and other productive activities that they have little or no time to seek information or attend demonstration seminars organized by agricultural extension departments.

TABLE 42: PATTERN OF INFORMATION/KNOWLEDGE
DISSEMINATION OF FOUR SELECTED AGRICULTURAL
EXTENSION/RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

YEAR	NO OF INFORMATION SEEKERS		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990	11891	2809	14700
(Percentage)	(80.9%)	(19.1%)	(100%)
1991	22453	5252	27705
(Percentage)	(81%)	(19%)	(100%)
1992	10194	2523	12717
(Percentage)	(80.2%)	(19.8%)	(100%)

YEAR	NO OF INFORMATION RECEIPIENTS		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1990	9989	2701	1290
(Percentage)	(78.7%)	(21.3%)	(100%)
1991	20548	4722	25270
(Percentage)	(81.3%)	(18.7%)	(100%)
1992	11396	1921	13317
(Percentage)	(85.6%)	(14.4%)	(100%)

When asked about the problems related to information dissemination to farmers, the extension officials suggested the following:

- (i) Inadequate extension staff especially female staff. The inavailability of adequate numbers of extension agents, especially female agents, is one of the extension problems facing rural farmers. According to the Nigerian Fourth National Development Plan's (1980 - 1985) estimates, the ratio of extension workers to farmers is 1:2,500, most of which are male. Since male agents prefer to work with male farmers, women are often not offered services by male extension agents.
- (ii) Restrictions in respect to crops women can grow (food crop). Cash crops produced mostly by men attract more extension attention than food crops produced by women. Since women hardly own cash crops even when they contribute to growing them, women are often denied extension services.
- (iii) Poor roads, especially during the rainy season. The unavailability of accessible roads, especially during the rainy season, prevents extension workers from reaching the majority of the rural farmers who happen to be females.
- (iv) Inadequate transportation facilities.
- (v) Inadequate extension facilities.
- (vi) Illiteracy of farmers, their conservatism and unwillingness to accept new ideas. This latter point is not supported by my findings. Most rural women interviewed were willing to seek information on new methods of farming, in so far as it will increase their productivity and reduce their drudgery.

(vii) Government's negative attitude to agricultural programmes in preference to other sectors of the economy, such as defence and petroleum projects. More funding is often allocated to defence and other sectors of the economy which are mostly dominated by men. The agricultural sector, often dominated by women, is left to care for itself. This policy is not only motivated by the modernization "trickle down economics", where the revenue generated in the other sector is expected to cater for agriculture, it is also motivated by the patriarchal structure which favours male - dominated sectors of the economy. Consequently, agricultural productivity has continued to decline especially women's food crops.

Based on these problems, the officials recommended the following solutions: the use of farmers plot for demonstration purposes; improved technological knowledge should be supported with necessary inputs, education of farmers, training and recruiting of more extension service staff; and organization of workshops and seminars for both extension staff and farmers.

WOMEN AND COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

Data on women and cooperative activities show that different kinds of cooperative societies (both modern and traditional) exist in the two rural communities under study (Table 43). These societies include joint men's and women's cooperative societies, women's societies, and men's societies. While the joint cooperative society

appeared to be most common in Leru community, women's cooperative society was more common in Umannachi community. With respect to the level of women's involvement in cooperative activity in terms of membership, participation in decision initiation, decision making and discussions, data collected from the women indicated a low level of women's involvement in both the joint and women only cooperative societies. In Leru community, only about 2% of women belonged to the joint cooperative society. Similarly, only about 10% of Umannachi women belong to a modern cooperative society. The profile of women who stated that they belong to a modern cooperative society differs from that of those who do not belong. Most of the women members were community leaders, community spokeswomen, school teachers or rural public servants (rural elites). Most of these people were not fully involved in farming and had substantial financial backing by virtue of their non-agricultural based occupations. Farming was taken only as a subsidiary occupation. This suggests that membership in cooperatives, apart from being gender biased, could also be class biased. The ability to participate in cooperative activity is not only related to one's gender, but also to one's social class.

With regard to the activities undertaken by the cooperative societies (Table 44), the joint cooperative society in the Leru community produces palm kernel and cashews (male dominated crops). Umannachi Women's cooperative societies produce cassava, maize, vegetables, yams, fruits. In addition, they make soap and body cream (pomade), dye and wove clothes, process garri (from cassava), and retail Beer drinks.

Though most women interviewed were aware of the benefits of cooperative societies (as shown on Table 45), their participation in cooperative activities is low. The following constraints (Table 46) limit their participation in cooperative activities.

- (i) Dishonesty and lack of commitment by cooperative officials. A majority of the women interviewed stated that most often cooperative officials embezzle funds entrusted to them. This discourages women from joining cooperative organizations.
- (ii) High dues. Cooperative dues are often beyond the affordability of most rural women. These high dues tend to perpetuate the gender/class inequality inherent in cooperative societies. Thus only the influential and wealthy men and women in the society can afford to be members of cooperative organizations.
- (iii) Non-Profitability of Cooperative activities. Some of the women interviewed stated that they terminated their membership in a cooperative society because they did not find it rewarding. They were unable to "reap the fruit of their labour" at the end of the farming period. This inability to "reap the fruit of their labour" often arose either from crop failure (as a result of climatic hazards) or corruption by cooperative officials.
- (iv) Lack of time for cooperative activity. This stems from women's preoccupation with numerous time-sensitive domestic chores and other reproductive activities which they are expected to accomplish (even if at their own expense). They therefore hardly have enough time for cooperative activities.

The non-prevalence of Igbo women as members of cooperative societies has exacerbated their problems of accessibility to bank loans, and other agricultural inputs. Information and training are often dispensed through the cooperative movements in most parts of Nigeria and Africa, and since cooperatives are dominated by men (Conti, 1979: 86; Ngur, 1987: 11), information and training reaches more men than women. As observed by Storgaard (1975) and Brain (1976) of Tanzania's newly formed cooperative Ujamma villages, "a family membership, land rights and communal labour obligations and work-points are usually all registered in the name of the head of the household. No married woman is recognized as a household head. If a woman is widowed or divorced, she must battle for the right to be recognized as the head of a separate household with a right to land or right for her name to be registered as a member of the Ujamma Cooperatives." Similarly, Ngur's Study of Kilba household reveals that only Kilba men were members and beneficiaries of cooperative organizations.

TABLE 43: TYPES OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN UMUNNACHI
AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Joint men and women	26	52
Women	26	52
Men	6	1

TABLE 44: TYPES OF CROPS INVOLVED OR SOLD BY THE
COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES, UMUNNACHI AND LEERU

	Frequency	Percentage
<u>Joint Men and Women</u>		
Palm kernel	27	54
Cashew	2	4
<u>Women Only</u>		
Cassava	26	52
Maize	19	38
Vegetables	14	28
Yam	5	10
Fruits	3	6
<u>Other Activities</u>		
Soap and pomade making	13	26
Cloth weaving & Dying	9	18
Garri making (product made from cassava)	1	2
Beer	1	2

TABLE 45: SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES TO MEMBERS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU IN RANK ORDER

	Frequency	Percentage
<u>Joint Men and Women Cooperatives</u>		
Help to procure farm inputs (fertilizer seedlings)	27	54
Help to procure loan	12	24
<u>Women's Cooperative</u>		
Teach Members domestic science	17	34
Act as source of labour for members	3	6
Give financial support to members	3	6

TABLE 46: CONSTRAINTS PREVENTING WOMEN FROM PARTICIPATING IN OR BECOMING MEMBERS OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Dishonesty and lack commitment by official	23	46
High dues (especially in modern cooperative) and inability of women to meet cooperative financial commitment	18	36
Non-income generating	15	30
Diversion of funds and lack of accountability by officials	13	26
Women overburden by household activity hence no time for cooperative activity	9	18
Inadequate Knowledge of the aims of cooperative society	5	10
Do not know	5	10

TABLE 47: WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Solutions proposed by women	Frequency	Percentage
Sincerity and honesty of officials	17	34
Education of women	17	34
Low dues	8	16
Commitment of officials	7	14
Reduction in women's familial responsibilities (especially by husbands)	4	8
Government support with initial capital	4	8
Full involvement of women at all levels of decision making	1	2

Based on the aforementioned constraints, the women recommended the following (Table 47): More sincerity and commitment of cooperative officials; the education of women about cooperative movements; the reduction of women's familial responsibilities so as to avail women time for cooperative activities; government support of cooperative organizations with initial capital, and adequate involvement of women at all levels of cooperative decision making.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Igbo women in Nigerian contemporary rural areas have very limited access to agricultural resources - land, credit (loan), agricultural inputs (machines, fertilizer, improved seedlings), extension services, and membership in cooperative associations. Women's limited access to farm resources results in the lowering of their agricultural productivity and, as such, partly accounts for the present food problems facing Igbo society in particular, and Nigerian Society in general. Efforts by the Nigerian government and agricultural development institutions have failed because the state and agricultural development institutions do not specifically address the needs of women who constitute the bulk of rural farmers. The state and agricultural development institutions still places emphasis on men as owners of land and property, operators of bank accounts, cultivators of internationally marketable crops (cash crops), large and medium scale "progressive" farmers, and members of cooperative societies.

Igbo women farmers are not only denied access to agricultural resources because of their gender but also because of their class. Within the hierarchy of rural farmers - large scale (progressive) farmers, medium scale farmers, small scale farmers and peasant farmers - women constitute the bulk of the peasant farmers whose contributions to agricultural development largely sustain the family, even though their contributions are regarded as unimportant.

In the light of the above findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the interplay of patriarchy and class discrimination as argued by the socialist feminist scholars (Oakley, 1980; Perchonock, 1982) explains rural women's limited access to productive resources and the non-recognition of their roles in agricultural development.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Until very recently, modernization theorists on agricultural development were mostly concerned with how to increase agricultural productivity through the use of modern farm technology (Shultze, 1964; Mosher, 1966; Mellor, 1966, 1976; Reynolds, 1976). In their quest for agricultural growth, little attention was given to the distributive mechanisms through which agricultural facilities get to rural farmers. Studies by Griffin (1973), Awolola (1981), and Nkom (1981), however, have argued that mere adoption of modern facilities does not necessarily lead to increased agricultural productivity or agricultural development. They posit that the manner in which these facilities (land and other agricultural resources) are allocated to farmers is a critical factor that either enhances or undermines agricultural development. This view aptly applies to the agricultural productivity of Igbo society, which has been on the decline because of the distributive mechanism which discriminates against women. Igbo women's access to agricultural resources is very limited.

Women constitute the bulk of Nigerian farmers yet they are denied access to agricultural facilities. A review of the role of Nigerian rural women reveals that they participate labouriously in agricultural production and the marketing of agricultural products and crafts. In addition, Nigerian women bear the burden of the household duties and the maintenance of the labour of husband and children. In spite of the

numerous roles played by Nigerian rural women, they are denied access to agricultural facilities, and their roles continue to remain invisible or under-represented in development statistics and practices. In view of this, the present study examined the role of women in agriculture in two rural Igbo communities - Umannachi and Leru. It investigated the distributive patterns of agricultural facilities between men and women farmers. It attempted to understand why the distribution is skewed in favour of men while women are denied access to similar facilities.

In order to understand why the distributive mechanisms of agricultural resources discriminate against women, the study sought explanation from three theoretical frameworks, namely the Anti-traditionalist perspective, the Anti-western perspective and the Socialist feminist perspective. Both the Anti-traditionalist and Anti-western perspectives proved to be inadequate for explaining Igbo women's very limited access to agricultural facilities. While the Anti-traditionalist perspective explains women's oppression as a function of African patriarchal culture, the Anti-western perspective sees women's oppression as a function of colonialism and capitalism. As revealed by this study, Igbo women's limited access to agricultural resources is a combined function of patriarchal structure and capitalism. In this regard, the socialist feminist perspective, which argues that both patriarchy and capitalism are the causes of women's oppression, proved to be the appropriate theoretical framework that explains Igbo women's limited access to agricultural resources.

The thesis traced the role and status of Igbo women in the socio-political and economic development of Igbo society from the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. The use of historical materialism as the method of analysis is motivated by the socialist feminist view that "the subordination of women takes different forms in different historical periods" (Jaggar, 1983: 317). In other words, women's subordination is dynamic and manifested in different forms in different historical periods. The study noted a difference in the forms of subordination experienced by Igbo women before and after the colonial rule.

The study argues that pre-colonial Igbo society was politically and economically fairly well developed, given its level of human resources, technological and material resources. Although pre-colonial Igbo society had a government structure that was male-centered and gerontocratic, it allowed women and youths a considerable level of political participation. Both men and women participated in the production process. However, women performed the bulk of agricultural, marketing, reproductive and household chores. In view of their activities as producers (farmers, traders, craftswomen etc.) and as reproducers (child bearers and rearers, and maintainers of the agricultural labour force), Igbo women were not only appreciated and respected in the society, they also enjoyed some levels of independence and autonomy. By its communal and corporate orientation the traditional land tenure system enabled women to have use

rights, as well as access rights, to land even though the control and allocative rights remained largely with the men. Through the traditional practice of rotational and reciprocal farm labour and credit systems, women had relative access to farm labour and credit. However, when compared to men, women had fewer labour sources.

The penetration of Igbo land by Europeans in 1830, which marked the beginning of colonial rule, not only drained Igbo society's human resources through slavery but transformed its fairly egalitarian political structure. It also destroyed its craft and cottage industries, and transformed the division of labour between men and women, making it more rigid and less complementary. The emphasis on men and their assigned cash crop (palm produce) as opposed to women and their food crops not only undermined women's status but also marked the origin of food crisis in Igbo society and Nigeria. The emphasis on cash crops ensured that more farm resources were devoted to the production of cash crops. The focus of the colonial policy on men was also extended to other agricultural facilities such as credit, extension education and membership in cooperative societies were opened to men while women were denied the same services. The commercialization and individualization of land aggravated the problem of women's limited access to land as emphasis on land utilization was on men's tree/cash crops. Thus, while men could sell their cash crops and use the money realised to purchase land or modern farm equipment, women could hardly do the same as their crop was meant primarily to service the family, and secondarily to be sold on the domestic market. Therefore, while men could use modern equipment, women continued to use rudimentary implements and are severely limited in their capacity to increase

food production. As more fertile land was increasingly diverted to the production of cash crop, men's cash/export crop continued to increase while women's food crop stagnated. As individually owned land became a prerequisite for other agricultural facilities (bank credit, extension services etc.), men began to enjoy almost uninhibited access to the services while women were deprived of the same services.

Like the colonial political policy, the post-colonial political policy is male biased. However, unlike the colonial policy which totally excluded women in the political administration of the society, the post-colonial policy allows women some representation. Thus women's political status, which was on the decline during the colonial era, has improved in the post-colonial dispensation. Post-colonial agricultural policy, like colonial policy, has not enhanced women's economic status as women still lack access to the major resources necessary for improved agricultural productivity. Consequently, women's agricultural productivity has continued to decline. Post-independence government efforts at development remain lopsided. Emphasis continues to be placed on male dominated cash crops such as palm produce, cocoa, rubber and forestry and fisheries, while women's food crop was left to develop on its own. This results in food shortages and, subsequently, massive food importation. As successive post-colonial governments grapple with the food problem, various agricultural development policies have been initiated and entrusted to several agricultural development institutions.

In executing the policies, large scale "progressive farmers" (mostly men and only a minority of the population) are given access to land, credit, agricultural inputs, extension services and cooperative facilities. Women, who constitute the bulk of the peasant farmers continue to be denied access to similar facilities.

In line with the socialist feminist view which attributes women's oppression to patriarchal practices, this field study found that Igbo women do not own land. Land is allocated to women by their husbands or male relations. This confirms the view that women's access to land is a result of their relationship with men - husbands or male kinsmen (Okla and Makey, 1975; Bukh, 1979; Rogers, 1980; Pala, 1980; Ngur, 1987).

The study reveals that Igbo women have limited access to bank loans because of the banks' credit provisions and requirements which are characterized by patriarchal structures. The banks demand land as collateral security which the women cannot own and therefore cannot provide. In addition, credit granting institutions do not regard food crop production as important and therefore a priority.

Igbo women are also disadvantaged in access to agricultural inputs, extension services and facilities provided through cooperative movements. Women's disadvantaged position stems from the subtle patriarchal policies and practices that emphasize cash crop farming generally associated with men, and see women's agricultural activities (food crop farming) as merely an auxiliary activity. As a result of the aforementioned agricultural institutional problems facing Igbo women which arise from entrenched patriarchal and class biases in Igbo society, the study

contends that Igbo women's agricultural productivity is adversely affected. The study further argues that Igbo women's limited access to farm resources is related to the current food shortages facing the country.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that the subordination of Igbo women, including their agricultural activities, is as a result of entrenched patriarchal and class discriminations in the society. For there to be considerable improvement in the status of women and in their productive engagements, there is a need for a restructuring of the way women and their roles are perceived.

Various attempts by Nigerian governments and agricultural development institutions to address agricultural development failed because of the male biases and patriarchal ideologies which characterize development policies. For instance, the emphasis on male-dominated crops ignores food crops produced by women. The prevalence of notions such as "male as head of household and breadwinner"; "male-the-farmer" or "progressive farmer" give men far greater advantages over women with respect to access to land, credit, farm inputs, technologies, extension services and cooperative facilities. Consequently, women have been disadvantaged and thus hindered from increasing their productivity. Unless government and agricultural development institutions demystify and break through male bias and patriarchal ideologies which fail to see women as farmers and as contributors to national development, the allocation of resources and training in development policies will continue to be channelled to men.

The demystification of patriarchal ideology should begin by dispelling the erroneous notion that women are not active participants in national development and that they therefore cannot be beneficiaries of development initiatives and packages. It is only by dispelling this notion and recognizing that women are producers of food and other agricultural goods that their marginalized social and economic status will be addressed. This implies a redefinition and reconceptualization of our notions of work, labour force and economic activity to include the informal work performed by women.

International Labour Organization (1954) defined persons engaged in labour force activity as: "persons who performed some work for pay or profit during the specified period." In 1982, the concept of labour force was redefined with the word "Economic" incorporated. According to the 1982 definition, labour force is seen as: "persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services as defined by the United Nations System of National Accounts and Balances." Though more inclusive than the ILO 1954 definition, the 1982 redefinition of labour force basically means the same thing as the ILO 1954 definition. In both definitions, the work performed by women in the informal sector is excluded. The word "Economics" as used by the United Nations include wage or salary employment and entrepreneurial profit (Ngur, 1988: 6).

In principle, however, the United Nations and ILO suggested that "the production of economic goods and services should comprise all production and processing of primary commodities, regardless of whether they are for marketing or household consumption or for barter" (ILO 1982, UN 1968 in Ngur, 1988: 6). While

this definition attempts to incorporate some forms of women's informal work ("production and processing" of agricultural commodities), it excludes work performed by women that does not involve "production or processing" of commodities such as repairs or maintenance work performed by women on a house. Because of the inadequacies in these conceptualizations of labour force or work, there is the need for a more comprehensive definition of work that will include as much as possible, if not all, the informal household work performed by women. A comprehensive definition of women's informal work will enable development planners to document women's work properly.

Contributing to the reconceptualization of work to include women's numerous informal activities, Anker (1983) proposed four categories of labour force instead of the two - "economic" and non-economic" - inherent in the United Nations (1968) and ILO definitions (1954, 1982). The four categories are:

- (i) Paid labour force: This includes persons in wage employment who are paid in cash or kind.
- (ii) Market-oriented labour force: This includes persons in paid jobs, persons engaged in family enterprise activities such as unpaid family labour in agriculture and where part of their products are sold; own account workers; and members of producer cooperatives. As observed by Ngur (1988: 8), this category of workers (who are mostly women) is useful to development planners

because although they are not engaged in subsistence activities, they are directly affected by Nigerian government subsidization, pricing and input availability policies.

- (iii) ILO labour force: This includes all persons engaged in the production of goods and services regardless of whether these are sold or consumed. Some of women's informal work which would not have been counted is inclusive in this definition.
- (iv) Extended labour force: This category includes the ILO labour force, as well as persons engaged in activities not currently included in the most recent United Nations recommendations on System of National Accounts (SNA) who contribute to the family survival through work such as fetching of water, collection of firewood and child bearing, rearing and maintenance of other family members, etc.

These four categories of labour force are more comprehensive and fit with the socialist feminist conceptualization of women's activities. They include both the productive (agricultural and other economic activities) and reproductive (child bearing, rearing and family maintenance) activities of women. As noted by Ngur, this grouping of the labour force "is more likely to yield reliable data which can be of invaluable use to policy makers."

For greater justice and equity with respect to access to agricultural resources, in addition to the suggestions given by the women who participated in this study, the following need to be done:

- (i) Women, who produce much of Igboland and Nigerian's food, should be given independent access to land. The independent access to land should be incorporated or codified in the legal system of the society, so as to ensure women's security in, and greater access to, land. This involves a change in the present Land Use Decree with a view to specifically addressing women's need for land, considering their numerous agricultural roles.
- (ii) Women's genuine need for loans should be recognized and addressed. There is the need for a reconsideration of the requirement for collateral security often demanded by the banks which the majority of the rural women can hardly afford. The current banks' demand for land, houses, and other durable properties as collateral security should be deemphasized, especially for rural women. The provision of mobile banks in the rural areas with special divisions that cater specifically to rural women farmers will go a long way towards making bank loans easily accessible to rural women.
- (iii) Appropriate technology that can facilitate the execution of women's agricultural activities, such as weeding, should be recognized and addressed. Machines should be designed in such a way that they can be easily manipulated by women. Moreover, the cost of these inputs should be affordable to rural women farmers.

(iv) As much as possible, women should be consulted in the designing and formulation of agricultural development policies and programmes. Development projects which involve the majority of women for whom they are meant for ("development from below") have proven to be more successful than those in which women are not consulted or involved ("development from above") (Gubbels and Iddi, 1986; Mutemba, 1985).

(v) Extension education tailored towards activities that enhance women's agricultural productivity should be emphasized rather than the narrow domestic science and home economics. Women should be given training on improved farm methods, pest control measures and fertilizer application. Extension education seminars and demonstration sessions should be flexible to suit women's time schedule, in order to ensure increased participation of women. The training of more female extension service workers will go a long way towards enhancing women's access to extension information. This is particularly important because female extension workers will have easier access to women farmers than male extension workers. This is so because most Nigerian societies frown on interaction between women and male strangers.

(vi) The restructuring of the present cooperative movements with a view to making them less gender or class-biased, and the intensive education of women on the activities of cooperative organizations, are likely to motivate women to participate in cooperative activities. This is very important in Nigeria where cooperative societies are given priority over individual farmers with respect to farm inputs. Membership in cooperative societies will afford women the opportunity of having more bargaining power with respect to obtaining agricultural facilities than would individual women.

(vii) There is the need for the government to be genuinely committed to the promotion of food crops produced by women rather than to concentrate attention on men's cash crops if the present food problems of the country will be solved in the near future. This requires that the government should make determined and sustained efforts to promote research on rural women and food crops by specifically providing funds and moral support for women's related issues. Research on women's issues will generate and document information that will guide development policies for women.

Finally, as argued by the socialist feminists, the campaign for equity of access to agricultural resources for women will not be attained without the greater participation of the majority of rural women who are directly denied access to farm resources. The role of Igbo Women's Association, Women's Cooperative Organizations and other

Nigerian Women's Organizations becomes very crucial in this campaign which is part of the efforts to liberate women. This is particularly so because of the remarkable and powerful roles played by women's group and associations in precolonial and colonial Nigerian societies. Women's groups, as collectivities, were forceful agents for change and justice in Igbo and Nigerian precolonial and colonial societies. Women's groups can also be agents in the campaign for equity and fair play between men and women with respect to access to agricultural resources in contemporary Nigeria.

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APPENDIX 1

CONTEXTUAL MATRIX OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 9: MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Married	35	70
Widowed	15	30
Separated	-	-
Divorced	-	-
Total	50	100

TABLE 10: AGE OF RESPONDENTS IN YEARS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 21	-	-
22 - 35	13	26
36 - 45	14	46
Above 45	14	28
Total	50	100

TABLE 11: MAIN OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	39	78
Non-farming*	11	22
Total	50	100

Occupation (subsidiary or secondary)

Farming	11	22
Trading	37	74
Tailoring	2	4
Total	50	100

*Non farmers include Teachers, Nurses, and Clerical workers.

TABLE 12: INCOME OF RESPONDENTS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU (IN NIGERIAN CURRENCY, NAIRA - N)

	Frequency	Percentage
N100 - N500	6	12
N510 - N1000	12	24
N1100 - N1500	14	28
N1500 - N2000	9	18
Above N2000	9	18
Total	50	100

TABLE 13: EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	5	10
Primary	33	66
Adult literacy	1	2
Secondary/Vocational	6	12
Post-secondary	5	10
Total	50	100

TABLE 14: RELIGION OF RESPONDENT, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	49	98
Moslem	-	-
Traditional Religion	1	2
Total	50	100

TABLE 15A: RESPONDENT HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	16	32
Non-farming*	19	38
Deceased	15	30
Total	50	100

*Non-farming include trading, driving, teaching, Palm wine taping, draughtsman.

TABLE 15B: RESPONDENT HUSBAND'S INCOME, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Nil (Deceased)	15	30
N1000 - N5000	5	10
N5100 - N10000	9	18
N11000 - N15000	13	26
N151000 - Above	2	4
Not Known	6	12
Total	50	100

TABLE 16A: RESPONDENT'S NUMBER OF CHILDREN, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
1 - 5	20	40
6 - 10	30	60
Total	50	100

TABLE 16B: RESPONDENT'S NUMBER OF CHILDREN WORKING AND EARNING INCOME, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Nil	25	50
1 - 3	21	42
4 - 6	3	6
Above 6	-	-
No response	1	2
Total	50	100

TABLE 17A: SIZE OF LAND HOLDING, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
I - 2 acres	14	28
3 - 5 "	33	66
6 - 10 "	2	4
More than 10 acres	1	2
Total	50	100

TABLE 17B: SIZE OF OPERATIONAL HOLDINGS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
1 - 2 acres	14	28
3 - 5 "	35	70
6 - 10 "	1	2
More than 10 acres	-	-
Total	50	100

TABLE 17C: LEVEL OF HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Nil	-	-
Low	25	50
Medium	18	36
High	7	14
Total	50	100

TABLE 17D: LEVEL OF FARM MECHANIZATION, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Nil	23	46
Low	26	52
Medium	1	2
High	-	-
Total	50	100

TABLE 18: MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE OF RESPONDENT, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	2	4
Rarely	28	56
Weekly	11	22
Daily	9	18
Total	50	100

TABLE 19: RESPONDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN AND MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS, UMUNNACHI AND LERU

Organization/s	Frequency	Percentage
1 - 2	13	26
3 - 5	32	64
6 - 10	5	10
Total	50	100

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

RESPONDENT'S DATA

- O1 Marital status
- O2 Age
- O3 Occupation a. Main b. Subsidiary
- O4 Annual Income of respondent
- O5 Educational attainment
- O6 Religion

FAMILY DATA

O7 Information on Husband

- O7.1 Husband's Occupation
- O7.2 Husband's Annual Income
- O7.3 Husband's Educational attainment

O8 Information on Children

- O8.1 Number of Children
- O8.2 Ages
- O8.3 Sex/es
- O8.4 Educational attainments of children
- O8.5 Number of children working and earning income

II HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

O9 General Data on Household

O9.I Amount of land owned by the family (in acres).....

O9.2 Amount of land leased-in (in acres)

O9.3 Amount of land leased-out (in acres)

O9.4 Operational holdings (in acres)

O9.5 Types of crops: Women

Men

O9.5 Type of household

O9.6 Number of rooms

O9.7 Household equipment

.....

.....

O9.8 Farm machinery/tools

.....

.....

O9.9 Domestic Animals

.....

O9.10 Farm animals

.....

O9.11 Other family possessions

.....

10 Mass media exposure of Respondent

MEDIA DEVICE	FREQUENCY				
	Daily	Weekly	Rarely	Never	
10.1 Radio and other listening devices	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
10.2 Film, T.V. and other A.V. aids	Weekly	Monthly	Six	Rarely	Never
	.....	.... Monthly	...	.....	.....
10.3 Newspapers, Magazines & other printed materials	....	....	....	....	.....

11 Participation in and Membership of organizations, clubs, societies and associations

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.....

III WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL AND HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES

12 Role of Women in Farm and Home

12.1 <u>On-farm activities</u>	FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION				
	Respondent's participation	Husband Yes/No	Daughters Yes/No	Sons Y/No	Others Y/No
Preparation of Soil (tilling, ploughing, clearing e.t.c.)	D/TW/W/TM/M/R /N	.....	.....	....	....
Planting of crops	.....	.....	....	....	.....
Application of fertilizer/pesticides	.....	.....	....	.....	.....
Weeding/hoeing	.....	.....	....	.....	.....

Harvesting of crops
 Carrying/headloading
 of crops home

12.2 Off-farm activities

Threshing

Winnowing

Grinding/Pounding

Drying

Smoking

Frying

Storage

* D=Daily, TW=Twice a week, W=Weekly, TM=Twice a month, R=Rarely
 N=Never

Preparation of
 farm products for
 sale

Marketing of Farm
 products/animal

Handicraft - Knitting,
 dying, weaving,
 pottery/mat/basket making

12.3 Household chores

Fetching water						
Collecting firewood	.....	....	....	..	.....	.....
Pre-cooking activities	.....	....	....	..	.....	....
Cooking	.....	....	....	..	.....	.....
Serving food	.....	....	....	..	.....	....
Washing dishes	.....	....	....	..	.....	.....
Cleaning house	.....	....	....	..	.....	.....
Washing clothes	.....	....	....	..	.....	.....
Sewing/Mending clothes	.....	....	....	..	.....	.....
Feeding children	.....	....	....	..	.....
Bathing children	.....	....	....	..	.....
Preparing children for school	.....	....	....	..	.....
Helping children in homework	.....	....	....	..	.....
Maintenance of house	.....	....	....	..	.....

12.4 Domestic Animal Care Duties

Collection of fodder and animal feeds	.....	....	....	..	.....
Feeding of Animals	.....	....	....	..	.....
Cleaning of Animal wastes and sheds	.....	....	....	..	.....
Other duties	.....	....	....	..	.....

13 Respondent's Time Schedule

13.1 Time of getting up in the morning

13.2 Time of going to bed

13.3 leisure time

13.4 Approximately how long awake

13.5 Approximately how long asleep

13.6 Number of hour spent on farm work

13.7 Number of hour spent on domestic work

IV INFORMATION ON AGRICULTURAL FACILITIES

14 Land

14.1 What is the land tenure/ownership practice in the
community?

.....

14.2 How is land allocated in the community for agricultural
activities between men and women

.....

.....

.....

14.3 For what crops is land allocated?

.....

.....

.....

14.4 Do women own land in the community?

14.5 If not, in what way does non-ownership of land affect
women's agricultural productivity?

.....

.....

14.6 To what extent does women's non-ownership of land explain
the present food problems (shortage/high cost) in your
community?

.....

14.7 What do you think should be done to enhance women's
ownership of and limited access to land?

.....

15 Credit

15.1 What source/s of credit is/are available for women in the
community?

.....

15.2 Have you ever applied for bank loan/credit?.....
and for how much?

If not, why?

15.3 If so, how often do you go to the bank/credit institutions
for loan/credit?

15.4 Have you ever been granted credit/loan?

If so, how much and how many times?.

.....

if not, why

.....

15.5 Do you have to provide collateral security before being
considered for credit/loan?

15.6 What are the collateral securities required by banks/credit
institutions before credit is granted?

.....

15.7 What difficulties do you and other women in your community
face in your attempt to obtain loan from banks/credit
granting institutions?

.....

15.8 What do you think should be done to enhance women's access to
credit/loan?

Agricultural inputs - machines hiring services, seedlings,
fertilizer, etc.

16.1 What type/s of farming input/s is/are available for women
in your community?

.....

16.2 Have you ever applied for or hired/rented any farming
inputs?

If not, why?

16.3 If so, how often do you go to ministries of agriculture,
agricultural research institutes for machines/tractor
hiring services or for obtaining seedlings, and
fertilizer?

16.4 Have you ever been granted inputs sought?

if not, why?

16.5 What do you think are the constraints on women's efforts
to hire machines or acquire other agricultural inputs?

.....

.....

.....

16.6 What do you wish to see done to eliminate the constraints?

.....

.....

17 Agricultural Extension Services

17.1 What types of training and information services are
available to women in your community?

.....

.....

17.2 Are there differences in the training and information given to men and women in your community?

17.3 What is the importance of such training/information?

.....

.....

17.4 How often are you visited by agricultural extension service staff?

17.5 How often do you attend demonstration sections organized by agric extension bodies?

17.6 What is the gender composition (men and women) of visiting extension staff?

17.7 What is the general awareness level of women with respect to new farming methods/technology/input?

.....

17.8 What is the attitude of women towards new agricultural methods/technology/inputs?

.....

17.9 What are the implications (positive/negative) of such new methods/technology?

.....

.....

18 Cooperative Activities

18.1 What type/s of Cooperative societies exist in your

community?

.....

18.2 What is the level of women's involvement in Cooperative

societies? :

Number of women membership

Women's participation in decision initiation, decision

making, and discussions

Number of women in leadership positions

18.3 What type/s of crops are involved or sold by the Cooperative
society?

.....

.....

18.4 What other services are provided by the Cooperative society

to members?

.....

18.5 What are the constraints preventing women from participating

in or becoming members of Cooperative societies?

.....

18.6 What do you think should be done to enhance women's

participation in Cooperative activities?

APPENDIX 3

MACRO LEVEL DATA COLLECTION

PATTERNS OF CREDIT DISTRIBUTIONS OF SELECTED AGRICULTURAL/ALLIED BANKS IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

O1 Name of Bank

O2 Number of Agricultural Credit Applicants in:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992

Men Men Men

Women Women Women

O3 Number of Credit Beneficiaries/Receipient in:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992

Men Men Men

Women Women Women

O4 Amount of Credit Granted in:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992

Men Men Men

Women Women Women

O5 Bank Credit Provisions/Requirements

.....

.....

O6 Type/s of Collateral Security/ies required by Banks

.....

.....

O7 Problems of Banks with respect to granting credit to farmers ...

.....

.....

a. Problems with respect to men

.....

b. Problems with respect to women

.....

O8 What should be done to alleviate the problems:

a. Men

.....

b. Women

.....

O9 What should be done to increase bank's credit capacity

.....

APPENDIX 4

MACRO LEVEL DATA COLLECTION

PATTERNS OF INPUT DISTRIBUTIONS OF SELECTED MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

O1 Number of Agricultural inputs applicants in:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992

Men Men Men

Women Women Women

O2 Number of input Beneficiaries/Receipiants in:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992

Men Men Men

Women Women Women

O3 Quantity of inputs granted:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992

Men Men Men

Women Women Women

O4 Type/s of Agricultural inputs granted

.....

.....

.....

a. Type/s of input granted men

.....

.....

b. Type/s of input granted women

.....

.....

O5 Type of collateral security required, if any

.....

O6 Problems related to granting inputs to farmers

.....

a. Problems with respect to men

.....

b. Problems with respect to women

.....

O7 What should be done to alleviate the problems

.....

.....

APPENDIX 5

MACRO LEVEL DATA COLLECTION

PATTERNS OF INFORMATION/KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION OF SELECTED AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION/RESEARCH BODIES IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

O1 Number of indicated Agricultural Information and training seekers in:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992

Men Men Men

Women Women Women

O2 Number of information/training recipients in:

a. 1990 b. 1991 c. 1992.....

Men Men Men.....

Women Women Women

O3 Type/s of Information disseminated

.....

.....

.....

O4 Type/s of Information/training given to men

.....

.....

.....

O5 Extension Services Provision/Requirements if any

.....

.....

O6 Problems related to information dissemination to farmers

.....

.....

a. Problems with respect to men

.....

b. Problems with respect to women

.....

O7 What should be done to alleviate the problems

.....