

MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN IN IGBO TRADITION: MYTH OR REALITY?

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Abstract

There have been claims and counter-claims among scholars of Igbo tradition that Igbo culture creates conditions that enhance the marginalization of women by men. Thus, while some scholars endorse this position that women are marginalized in Igbo culture, there are other scholars who contest this endorsement. This study examines the claims of the later with specific reference to politics. Particularly, it reviews the works of those authors who claimed that the active participation of women in the politics of traditional Igbo society before colonization introduced what they described as the perversion of Igbo culture, showed that women were not marginalized in that society. This review ascertained firstly, whether traditional Igbo society treated women equal with men as these authors alleged. Secondly, it determined whether the marginalization that exists today in contemporary Igbo societies is the consequence of colonization. To achieve these, three criteria were used to analyze and critique the various arguments marshaled out by these scholars. Based on the analysis, it was discovered that women were politically and culturally marginalized in both the traditional and contemporary Igbo society, and that is why colonization might have contributed to this, it was not the origin of the marginalization in current Igbo society. In the light of these findings, it was recommended that unjust political and cultural practices that are oppressive to women should be dismantled to encourage better political and cultural participations of contemporary Igbo women.

Keywords: Feminism, marginalization, Igbo society, women, politics and culture.

Introduction

The birth of the human race cannot be traced to any specific period in history (B. Mondin, 1985, 20). This lack in epistemic exactitude notwithstanding, certain truths about human nature and human history are known. The most obvious of these is that human beings have existed for hundreds of centuries and that during this long existence, they, unlike the lesser animals, developed features that made them highly knowledgeable. For instance, they understood the concept of existence, survival and cohabitation which gave rise to what we know today as society.

In these societies, various needs gave birth to various activities such that the human society became a busy one. As the years went by, these societies expanded both in population and geographical occupation, with the expansions in population and ongoing activities, issues like conflict arose. This gave rise to the need to delegate roles that would

address issues like conflict resolution, moral upbringing and so on. The need for leadership and followership arose and gender roles were shared to ensure a habitable society embedded in peace and equity. Over the years, it has however been discovered that the shared roles do not favour both genders equally. The feminine gender appears to be disadvantaged in most societies as these shared roles have not only placed them under their male counterparts, but have also denied them the right to aspects of culture controlled by the men.

In Igbo society, roles like farming, hunting, building and provision of needs were delegated to the male gender while the female were given roles related to home maintenance and child upbringing. The roles given to the male gender came with benefits like property rights, political participation and social exposure which put men in the best position to assume leadership roles. On the other hand, the roles delegated to the feminine gender confined them to homes and made them dependent on the male for resources needed especially for home maintenance. These limitations have encouraged a male dominated society. For this reason, women are said to be marginalized.

To this end, this study explores the debate bothering on the political and cultural marginalization of women in the traditional and contemporary Igbo society. In doing this, the work aims to determine whether women of traditional Igbo society were politically marginalized by contesting and attempting to destabilize the claims of some scholars of Igbo history who claimed that women were not marginalized politically in ancient Igbo society.

The following questions are put forward to guide the investigation:

- a) To what extent did the traditional Igbo woman experience political marginalization?
- b) What effect does colonization have in the marginalization of women in the traditional Igbo society?
- c) To what extent has political and cultural marginalization of women been resolved in the contemporary Igbo society?

The criteria listed below would serve as the yardstick for accessing and judging the claims regarding the marginalization of women in Igbo society with specific focus on politics and culture.

- (1) Access –this entails the right of both genders to participate in the same political or cultural process without discriminating.
- (2) Equal Participation –this means that both genders are given same opportunities, rights and privileges for public offices, including leadership positions.
- (3) Equal Representation –this is when both genders are proportionally represented in decision making.

- (4) Gender Equity— this is when both genders have equal rights that is when men and women are accorded the same rights and access to participate in the political and cultural process of the...

The work is divided into four sections. The first section is the introduction. It lays the semantic and syntactic foundations for understanding the other parts. Section two presents the counterclaims of political marginalization of women in traditional and contemporary Igbo society. The arguments against the political marginalization of women were explored in section three. Section four presents cultural evidence to support the contention that women were marginalized politically in Igbo society. Section five which is the evaluation, conclusion and recommendations, unpacks the claims and counterclaims presented in the other four sections in order to determine whether women are actually or apparently marginalized in Igbo society.

Claims that Women are not Marginalized in Traditional Igbo Society

Debates about the political power wielded by women in traditional Igbo society abound. For instance, G. Chukwu (2009) and Akachi Ezigbo, (1990) itemized the following institutions through which women expressed their political powers in traditional Igbo society: the *Umuada*, *Alutaradi*, *Isi Ada*, *Otuodu*, *Ogbuefi*, *Loloanyi*, *Ogbaidi*, *Ogbunobodo*, *Iyamba*, *Ekwe*, *Onwene* etc. The arguments built around these political institutions however, lie on whether these structures justify the claim of equality of men and women politically in the traditional Igbo society. Some scholars present these female political institutions as proof of women's political power and rights of equality with men in traditional Igbo society. This first subsection reviews the works of such scholars.

G. Chukwu (2009) in her article, *Igbo Women and Political Participation in Nigeria* presents women politics in traditional Igbo society in four stages: (a) the pre-colonial period (b) the colonial period (c) the decolonization politics (d) post-independence politics. According to Chukwu, in pre-colonial Igbo society, social roles and responsibility were the channels through which power was diffused and gender equality was measured through comparative worth. By this, Chukwu means that a person's gender does not determine the magnitude of power and authority in the person's command. In other words, the social, political or cultural responsibility of an individual was not dependent on gender but on personal qualities, qualifications and experience.

Chukwu goes ahead to list some female political structures through which women exercised power and authority: the all-female age grade, the Women's Title Society, *Otu Odu* (Ivory society) in Onitsha, the *Ogbuefi* (cow-killer) society in Oguta (this is the highest and most important female society in Oguta), the *Ogbagidi*, *Ogbunobodo* (the one who kills in the town square) in Nsukka, *Iyamba* in Arochukwu, *Ekwe* in Nnobi, *Owene* in Onicha-ugbo and *Lolo anyi* (our queen) in Nsukka - Lolo is the highest and most important female title in Nsukka.

These titles, as Chukwu explained, gave social status, political power and religious power to women who were members. She stated that some of these women were seen as “men”

and enjoyed certain privileges like admittance into exclusive men societies such as the *Ekpe* of the *Aro*, the *Ohafia* and the *Ikamuo* of the *Oguta*.

According to Chukwu, colonization tampered with these channels through which women exercised political power and authority. Activities like masquerading, decision making, and political, judicial and executive power were overthrown through the introduction of urbanization, commercialization, and introduction of new technologies. While men were trained to adapt to these changes for the purpose of enhancing the indirect rule of the Europeans, women were left behind. Chukwu explains that with the intrusion of the British colonial rule, male dominance became very pronounced relegating women to the side. Men were taught to communicate in English and this contributed to enhancing their social roles and educational experience. Through education, the men were taught special skills matching the use of new technologies. They were employed in native courts, the transport industry, mines, Christian missions, trade companies, etc. women on the other hand, had limited access to the newly introduced western education, which by extension limited them also in other social, political, religious and economic responsibilities.

However, women still demonstrated their power by opposing the colonial administration through various means like boycotts, riots, strikes, sit-ins etc. this resulted to some successful female revolutions like the 1916 demonstration in reaction to the colonial control of the market place; the 1925 *Nwaobiala* movement to restore societal order and preserve Igbo heritage; the 1929 Water Rate Demonstrations; the 1929 Women's War; the Anti-Fax Demonstrations of the 1930s, the Price control and Produce inspection protest and the pioneer Oil Mill Demonstrations of the 1940s-1950s, Chukwu (2009, 203-36). All these, to Chukwu's understanding were clear indications that in spite of the perversion of Igbo heritage by colonization, efforts were still made during the decolonization period to uphold the original equality of men and women in Igbo land.

Concerning, post-independence politics of Nigeria, Chukwu argues that the imbalance between the military and civilian leadership was disadvantageous to women. The military frowned at women's participation in politics and while the civilian government permitted this, Northern women were disenfranchised leaving only southern women with the right to vote and be voted for. The few southern women who contested were not elected into office. Women therefore did not occupy any significant position in the Nigerian government. In the southern region however, Janet Mokelu and Flora Azikiwe were elected to the Eastern Working Committee of the NCNC between 1957 and 1965. Chukwu (2015) presents a list of other women who got involved in politics during this period. On the whole, Chukwu's analysis implies that the women of the traditional Igbo society were politically active before colonization set in. She is of the view that the issue of the marginalization of women was an imposed culture on the Igbo by Europeans.

Another author who vigorously supported the claim of gender equality in traditional Igbo society is Akachi Ezeigbo. Quoting Mba, Ezeigbo (1990:36) states that:

The strength of Igbo women in the traditional society
lied in their forming their own strong organizations

where they controlled their own affairs and possessed political influence on the basis of their collective strength.

Ezeigbo states that though women were excluded from participating in political decisions affecting the community at large, they had complete control of the affairs concerning themselves.

C. Acholonu (1995) who also made the case that women were not politically subjugated in traditional Igbo society enunciated that Igbo culture produced a category of highly resourceful, successful, and economically empowered women who could and did take male titles and wielded a lot of political influences in their families and communities. Buttressing this claim, she affirms that what determines political power in all parts of Igbo land, are economic power and hardly gender. Thus, a rich woman or an enlightened woman who is outspoken, hardworking, and fearless can hardly expect to be looked down upon by any member of the society or of her own immediate family. On the contrary, the family, community looks upon her and accords her recognition through traditional honors and titles (C. Acholonu 1995, 44).

Supporting Acholonu, N. Nzegwu explains that traditional Igbo society has a number of such women who by virtue of their success in commerce had accumulated so much capital in terms of material and non-material goods that the society recognized them. Such women were granted the *Ogbuefi* title, which was one of the highest titles any Igbo man could take. Nzegwu (2004, 563) makes the point that Igbo females do not have one gender identity given their multiple roles. Alluding particularly to *umuada*, she asserts that meaningful social ascription takes place at the level of the lineage and that *umuada* occupies a dominant position and are ever present forces in their natal families. Disagreeing with views that evaluate women as second rate, Nzegwu maintains that in western Igbo land, which is an achievement oriented society, individuals (both females and males) are expected to be industrious and to excel. Consequently, a social classification that subordinates women to men or vice versa cannot work (Nzegwu 2004, 564).

It is rather Victor Uchendu (1965, 87) that throws more light on this point in his *Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*:

The African woman regarded as a chattel of her husband, who has made a bride wealth payment on her account, is not an Igbo woman, who enjoys a high socio-economic and legal status. She can leave her husband at will, abandon him if he becomes a thief, and summon him to a tribunal where she will get a fair hearing. She marries in her own right and manages her trading capital and her profits as she sees fit... She can have leasehold, take titles, and practice medicine.

Uchendu underscores that this is an important point given views and theories that paint the picture of female inferiority and subordination as though they were true of all women at all times and in all places. He makes the point that Blumberg's theory that surplus resources and having access to such enhances women's position explains the autonomy of independence of Igbo successful women. For her, these powerful and assertive female figures who gain economic power through trade have been projected as great achievers. By any standard, there is no way one can see them as second class citizens. At the same time, the image of subordinate, passive, and vulnerable women is not what one sees analyzing the social circumstances of these women. Rather the picture one gets is that of strong, courageous, independent, and hardworking members of society whose roles were complementary (in the family and society), independent of men.

The point therefore is that pre-colonial economic activities in Igbo nation was characterized by women-driven economic wheel. Nwanesi (2006) notes that these women traded in various kinds of agricultural products, ranging from palm product, yam, Cocoa-yam and so on. Thus, prior to the advent of colonialism; Igbo men regarded merchandise as women's occupation. The money that accrued from these enterprises gave Igbo women the power to be independent and to provide them with material needs ((Nwanesi 2006, 33).

Colonialism is therefore blamed by Nwanesi as the harbinger of women oppression in Igbo land. The advent of colonialism made the economic status of women insignificant. Nwanesi, claim that S.M. Martins in a study of *Ngwa* people maintains that colonialism induced poverty on Igbo women by transferring economic power first to the colonizers and more recently to the African men. The British colonizers were said to have considered what was obtainable in Britain while changing the economic power of women to men. Nwanesi explains that with regards to economic gender roles in Europe in 19th century, men were regarded as intellectually superior to women. Hence, men were regarded as breadwinners, who should be authoritative and self-asserting. On the other hand, women were regarded as the weaker sex and less intelligent. The British colonizers took their own gender roles as a model which should be incorporated within their colonies (51).

Similarly Amadiume (1987) believes that the emergence of British colonial rule disrupted the usual political gender balance prevalent during the pre-colonial epoch. She argues that with the introduction of indirect rule, the power of the general assembly was now transferred to the warrant chiefs. No woman was among these warrant chiefs until after the Aba women's riot in 1929; women were not allowed to protest as they used to, neither were their interests considered as before. Women were literally left out in the political organization during this period and were banned from having women's forums and associations. Similarly, the autocratic system of governance through these warrant chiefs was just unconventional and incompatible with the Igbo Society. Women felt left out in the administration of the society. The commission of inquiry set up to ascertain the cause of the women's 1929 riot met a stiff complaint-laden women group with hysterical outburst: "We don't want chiefs instead of coming home to consult women, they generally agree with the District Officer straight away" (77).

Moreso, Nwanesi claims that post-colonial governments in Nigeria have been more or less sexist. She notes that the gender political discrepancy associated with colonial era was further orchestrated in post-colonial administration to exclude women. The situation was as unpalatable in civilian regimes as it was in military regimes. Till date, the percentage of women in political administration is still very insignificant. This according to her has led to the formation of some women's pressure groups and committees whose aim is to uplift women's involvement in Nigerian administration. However, these associations, Nwanesi insists "would not have a smooth sail as patriarch-minded people who have come to believe in domestication of women would not relent in countering their effort" (Nwanesi 2006, 43-50).

On the whole, the authors reviewed in this section generally claim that what is presented above have shown apparent epochal cultural shift in Igbo gender roles and representations which they believe is a clear case of the fall from grace to grass imposed by western cultural imperialism on Igbo women.

Critique of the Claim of Gender Equality in Traditional Igbo Society

The contentions of scholars who claim that there is gender equality in traditional Igbo society cannot be dismissed easily because these claims are based on factual cultural practices some of which still exist in some parts of Igbo land today. However, as shall be seen shortly, the vacuity of their arguments does not lie in these social practices but on their interpretation. It is therefore important to point out some of these interpretative lapses in order to show why arguments cannot hold.

In reaction to Chukwu's claims, it should be noted that having one woman participate in some male functions does not justify women's active participation in politics. The term "all-male" or "men exclusive" state or village assembly indicates gender dominance in decision making. Women are restricted from attending these assemblies as Chukwu herself tacitly conceded. They are rather represented by one person who speaks not for them but on their behalf. Their inability to take part and speak for themselves or make their contribution is a clear sign of marginalization. In some cases, as Chukwu explains, the *Isa Ada* is just an observer. This reflects marginalization which means being relegated to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group. Other instances of traditional groups and organizations that gave women access to exercise political power, as stated by Ezigbo do not portray them playing a major role in decision making and political representation as it affects both gender in the community. Most of the decisions they were allowed to make were decisions affecting women alone. The power they exercised was exclusive to women.

Additionally, the connection between economics and politics is made by Acholonu, Nwanesi and others who claim that the person that has the wealth has the power and therefore that since most women in traditional Igbo society are wealthy it follows that they are powerful. Nevertheless, this connection is made without taking two things into consideration: the economic structure of traditional society and the existence of other practices that do not support gender equality claim.

In the first place, the economy of traditional Igbo society is agrarian and as such revolves around land and land products. In this society, women do not own land. They cultivate the land and enjoy the fruit thereof through the agency of men who are their husbands or in rare cases fathers for women who are either unmarried or divorced (Iwuobi, 2008). Strictly speaking therefore, it will amount to poor analysis of the situation to argue that women in this type of society exercise a broad-based economic autonomy and its attendant political power. The economic and political powers they wield and enjoy, they do at the pleasure of their male counterparts.

On the various powerful women groups which authors in the previous section claim are indicative of gender equality in traditional Igbo society, it has to be realized that objective researches have consistently shown that people in a group, whether gender or racial tend to form strong cohesion when they are under common threat or persecution. For instance, even people in conflict with one another will ordinarily put their differences aside in the face of a common enemy. Spencer Graves (2005) captures this phenomenon:

In particular, people who feel *threatened* look for ways to protect themselves. A natural response is to increase contacts with others who seem to share the perception of the threat, building with them a common group identity and unity of purpose in response to the threat. For example, police and military are generally more cohesive under fire.

The point here therefore is that the fact of the existence of strong women forums does not show that women are not marginalized in traditional Igbo society. It rather shows as demonstrated in the example above that the fact of the marginalization of women and the threat they feel from such marginalization is the reason they formed such strong forums to protect their interest. This fact is also demonstrable from the different contemporary global feminist movements who feel that women are being marginalized and are calling on women all over the globe to unite to defend their interest.

Overall, this section has shown that why there are arguments that traditional Igbo society is a paradise of political gender equality, such arguments on a closer scrutiny are difficult to sustain. Consequently, besides showing that these authors erred in their interpretations of Igbo political institutions, the section also showed that their claims fail in the criteria of equal participation, equal representation, and gender equity. This is because though women were allowed to exercise power on certain levels, their political rights were not equal with the political rights accorded to men. The next section will examine some cultural practices in traditional Igbo society and use it to reinforce the argument that women were marginalized.

Cultural Evidence of the Marginalization of women in Traditional Igbo society

Practices Relating to Infidelity in Marriage

In a dialogical interview conducted by this researcher with a woman married in Nsukka, Enugu state, the woman was asked about customs that guide the institution of marriage and her response smacks of marginalization. According to her, any woman married in Nsukka stands the risk of running mad if ever she gets sexually involved with another man. In other words, the punishment for a woman who commits adultery according to the Nsukka tradition is insanity. When asked the punishment for a man who did the same, she said there was none. This implies that in Nsukka community, the grave punishment for adultery was exclusive to women. This cultural practice is not limited to Nsukka, it extends to a good number of Igbo communities.

Widowhood Practices

Widowhood practices are some of the cultural observances that are very detrimental to the women in traditional Igbo society; and to an extent it still affects women in some communities in contemporary Igbo society. Upon the death of her husband, a woman is exposed to many cultural observations that do not help but add misery to her poor psychological condition. This must have prompted *Donbraye (1999)* in her submission that “*The low status of women has resulted in subservient treatment of widowhood.*”

Ada Njiaba (2017) **shares the harrowing experiences that widows undergo in Igbo land.** For her, the right to the dignity of the human person is violated when a married man dies; his widow or widows are subjected to torture, cruel and inhuman treatment by the husband's family, particularly the womenfolk. The Igbo custom expects the widow to mourn the husband for one year, and within that one year, she is expected not to take part in social activities. Immediately her husband's corpse is lowered into the grave, the women lead her into the house, where her head is scraped clean of any strand of hair like a criminal in prison custody. She changes into black mourning dress which she will wear for one year. This can only happen if the husband's relations do not suspect her of killing him. If they do, she can be forced to swear an oath or drink the water used in washing the corpse in order to prove her innocence. If she fails in any of the duties the custom demands from her, her action is labelled abominable and sanctions will be placed on her. This discriminatory attitude to women is not applicable to widowers (186). It must be submitted here that if the man has in his possession several women as wives, the custom cannot stop him from sleeping and putting them in the family way, simply because he is mourning one of them, who had died.

Disinheritance of Widows

Traditionally, in Igbo land women are excluded from ownership of landed property which is culturally the exclusive preserve of men. So women cannot inherit land of their husbands. A widow under the customary Law in Igbo land can only inherit her husband's estate if it is given to her under a valid will by him. But where a husband dies intestate, the

widow's interest in the house and farmland is merely possessory and not proprietary, and this is however subject to good behaviour. This position of the customary law was restated in *Nezianya & Anor v Okagbue Ors* (1963) wherein the court held that the Onitsha Native Law and custom postulates that a married woman, on the death of her husband without a male issue, with the concurrence of her husband's family, may deal with his (deceased's) property; her dealings, of course, must receive the consent of the family. The consent may be actual or implied from the circumstances of the case, but she cannot assume ownership of the property or alienate it. She has however a right to occupy the building subject to good behavior.

In Nwogu's (2018), view, the rights of a widow in her husband's property in customary law was further adumbrated in *Nzekwu v Nzekwu* (1989) wherein the Supreme Court of Nigeria held that A widow who chooses to remain in the husband's house and in his name is entitled in her own right and notwithstanding that she has no children to go on occupying the matrimonial home and to be given some share of his farmland for her cultivation and generally to maintenance by her husband's family. Her interest in the house and farmland is merely possessory and not proprietary so that she cannot dispose of it out-and-out. The absence of the right to inherit by a widow stretches to the ability of the woman to administer the estate of her deceased husbands. In *Ehiamike v Ejiamike* (1972) the court held that the widow of a deceased person had no right under Onitsha customary law to administer the estate of her late husband, particularly where the first male issue of the deceased is no longer a minor (81-82).

Unfortunately, all the above decisions by our courts are in support of these unfair customs that portray inequality and discrimination against women. The custom that denies a woman the inheritance and administration of her husband's estate is repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience and should be declared so by the courts.

Other Cultural Practices that Discriminate against Women

Generally, Igbo women are denied participation in a lot of cultural practices which men enjoy. Participation of women in activities of this nature is considered taboos in Igbo land. A taboo is anything forbidden or disapproved for religious group or by social custom, Mariri (1998). Agbogu and Igbokwe (2015) citing Anozie (2003:157) and Iwuchukwu (2006:205) list a number of activities considered taboos for women in Igbo culture.

- (a) Women are not allowed to eat the gizzard of a fowl
- (b) A woman must kneel or squat if she must take palm wine before men. In other words, women are not permitted to take palm wine in the presence of men and if they must, it must be taken kneeling or squatting (a sign of submission).
- (c) A pregnant woman should not eat egg or grass cutter meat. It is important to note that egg and grass cutter meat are proteinous meals which are in no way harmful to a woman or the child in her womb.

- (d) Women do not touch a kola nut tree. This can compel one to ask if a kola nut tree is gender sensitive too.
- (e) A woman should not be the first to taste the fruit of any plant.
- (f) Women do not break the kola nut when a man is around. In order words, the prayers or blessings said by a woman during the breaking of a kola nut holds no water when a man is around.
- (g) Women are not shown a kola nut during its presentation.
- (h) Women are not allowed to enter the obi (elders section of the compound) during her mensuration.

These cultural observations silently attach more importance to men over the women. It sends a message of male dominance of women and this boils down to marginalization.

Women in Present-day Igbo Culture

With the enthronement of Western civilization which in turn has introduced various groups, organizations and bodies fighting for the rights and liberation of women, most of these rigid cultural practices have been mitigated. Unhealthy widowhood practices are not as popular as they used to be. Today, some Igbo communities do not compel women to cut their hair. Wearing of white or black mourning clothes for a period of time is still common but the duration of time is no longer as lengthy as it used to be. All these are as a result of modernization, Christianity, and various women liberation movements. Most of these cultural practices, especially the ones that give preference to men over women still exist and need to be permanently eradicated. The existence of these practices still confirms the marginalization of women in traditional and contemporary Igbo society in the area of culture.

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the arguments presented and reviewed, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- (a) Women of the traditional Igbo society were marginalized politically and culturally compared to the women of the contemporary Igbo society. Though there are claims that the society created outlets for women to exercise power, they were excluded from making certain decisions that affected the community at large. As stated by some of the works reviewed in this study, some gatherings were “all-male” or “exclusive to men” and the women who were permitted to attend these gatherings were mere observers. Their opinions were not important.
- (b) Colonization had a worsening effect on the political marginalization of women in the traditional Igbo society however, it cannot be seen as the origin of marginalization of women in Igbo land. It also has no effect on the cultural

marginalization of women. Marginalization had been in existence and this is why it was easy for the Europeans to work with the men more than they did with the women.

- (c) Political and cultural marginalization is still a reality in contemporary Igbo society. There are improvements as women now participate in politics and decision making that affects the nation; however there are still limitations to how far a woman can go in politics. We are yet to have an elected female governor in the Igbo states in Nigeria; we still do not have women as traditional rulers, neither do we have women among the council of elders in some Igbo communities.

In conclusion, neither women of the traditional Igbo society nor those of the contemporary Igbo society meet the criteria of equal access, equal participation, equal representation and gender equity in the areas of politics and culture. Therefore, we can say that the women of both the traditional and contemporary Igbo society are politically and culturally marginalized.

Recommendations

Marginalization of women is a reality and women of the Igbo society are victims of political and cultural marginalization. Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made.

Firstly, Women should be given the opportunity to explore higher leadership positions in Igbo society. There is no personal quality in men who occupy these positions that cannot be found in a woman. Some women are talented leaders and should be allowed to spread their wings and explore their capabilities.

Secondly, more awareness should be created to curb unfavorable cultural practices that affect women.

Thirdly and finally, more research should be done to explore other areas in which Igbo women and women in general are still marginalized. Some of these areas include: economic marginalization, social marginalization, gender preference and educational marginalization.

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