



## Research Article

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## Women are not Marginalized in Igboland: A Critical Interpretation of Uche Nwaozuzu's *Ajari*

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**Abstract:** The conceptualization of gender roles within the African milieu has been institutionalized from the patriarchal viewpoint of which Igboland is inclusive. The counter narratives of gender discourse is what informed the nexus of this research in an attempt to put the records straight. Relying on Uche Nwaozuzu's *Ajari* as paradigm, the research explores the qualitative method of analyzing and interpreting this play text within the Igbo context and setting. This study adopts the cultural theory that breathers on the explanation of literary texts within the context of their sociocultural consciousness and political awareness. Insisting that the Igbo women are not marginalized as many posit, the research affirms that they possess political, social and religious powers as opposed to the myth of women marginalization in Africa and beyond. Hence, the situation of the female gender in a typical Igbo society is likened to a bottleneck system whereby the head (man) is dependent on the neck (woman). This paper concludes that women in the Igboland have powers politically and socially as well as revered against the general conception of African women.

**Keywords:** Gender Discourse, Women, Marginalization and Igboland.

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## INTRODUCTION

As a people's way of life, culture is a constructed phenomenon, created through the human endeavors to transform nature and the environment in order to sustain and enrich life. As human beings are social beings, culture becomes established through particular ways of living (Edewor *et al.*, 2014), transferred through human interaction, from trans-generational ones (through family and ethnic group) to inter-group ones (cultural interaction). Hence, culture appears in both material, cognitive, and normative dimensions (Nwabueze, 2011). Material culture comprises of objects and the physical elements human beings make use of; the cognitive are the beliefs and knowledge while the normative dimension consists of norms and values, the moral order of the society, and the rule governing appropriate behaviors in a society which may be subject to transformation.

Change as the only thing constant in human existence is almost not applicable in the place of Igbo women in the sociocultural milieu. Indeed, the way a nation goes, whether that of the mind or that of the spirit, is decisive in its effect upon art (Hamilton, 1963). This research is focused on the Igbo political system as concerns women. Over the years, there is a negative conformity in the presentation of women as marginalized, docile and passive to say the least. Such portrayals demand to be countered. Therefore, it is important to state that the question of time becomes inconsequential as the position of women in Igbo

political system renders the application of time inadequate since it is presented as a system of continuity. Igbo women were a formidable force in terms of their contributions to social, economic and political development to the society.

### Conceptualization of Marginalization

Marginalization is a social phenomenon by which individuals or communities are socially excluded, systematically blocked from, or are denied access to participate in social and political processes which are basic to integrate with the society. It inhibits a person, a group, a section or a community to enjoy rights, privileges, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of a society (Cookson & Stirk, 2019). Further:

the term has different connotations and nuances in the modern era of postcolonial, postmodern period and in the world that is predominantly driven by market forces, 'marginalized' may be used synonymously with the term 'oppressed' in comparison to an 'oppressor' as Paolo Freire used in his famous 'Pedagogy of Oppressed', 'proletariat' as used by Karl Marx, 'subaltern' used by Gramsci, 'powerless' as elaborated by Michel Foucault, or exploited, vulnerable, discriminated, disadvantaged, subjugated, socially excluded, alienated or downtrodden as used elsewhere in the available literature (4).

Peter Leonard opines that being outside the mainstream of productive activity and or social

reproductive activity that is excluded and their needs ignored in a society by people who perceive them to be undesirable without useful function is marginalization (Nagasurendran, 2017). It is therefore, a social exclusion that occurs when a certain group of people are denied access to institutions and opportunities due to some reasons such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, socioeconomic level and age disadvantaged in obtaining healthcare, decent education and employment that would improve their well-being (Master Class Staff, 2022). In a society, it is of different shades, economic, social or political but the major concern of this study is the political shade which this paper maintains are absent in the Igbo society using the play of Nwaozuzu as paradigm. This process of pushing someone or a group to the edge and according lesser importance, relatively having little control over their lives and resources; making them irrelevant in societal contributions leads to negative impact on human and social development.

In the historical reality and political context as established in the above concept of marginalization and characterized by domination, dehumanization, subjugation and suppression of individuals or groups, the cultural Igbo women have been in the opposite direction of the features of marginalization. They are not observed to lag behind in an expected positions or level of performance in the political, social or economic wellbeing compared to the average conditions of their male counterparts due to clear division of labour within the society.

### **Political Organizations in Igbo land**

The political system of women in Igbo land ranges from the family to the society which this research tends to address adequately to buttress the claim that Igbo women are not marginalized citing a clear example from *Ajari* and other remarkable works on Igbo women of southeastern Nigeria. Family connotes an “intimate domestic group made up of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating or legal ties” (Orji, 2012). This implies that family is a system made up of different components which includes politics-an authority structure of who takes major decision on both economic and social issues. Borrowing from the instruments of power in the cultural system which includes but not limited to decision taking, law making, and rights of ownership from the societal point of view, the Igbo women participate majorly in both family and society against the United Nations-Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLs) claim of 2010 published in the fifth issue of *World Women* in the area of family politics. Some of the findings of the abovementioned publications are derogatory, for instance: significant proportion of married women have no say in how their cash earnings are spent; married women from the less developed regions do not fully participate in intra-household decision making or spending (Orji, 2012). In the same line, (Uchem, 2001) presented a study of Igbo

women in the United States (Makere) as male subordinate and goes ahead to state that men are primary and pre-eminent and that women are secondary and undermined. A belief that excludes women from leadership positions in the family, church and society most especially in decision making and officiating at cult/ritual and political leadership positions; a notion that they were confined to domestic work during the colonial period, and they were not receptive to exogenous ideas and innovations.

From the above, it is clear that most scholars, playwrights, novelist, critics and others believed and reported that the Igbo women are marginalized in all sphere of their existence. Although a few numbers of writers (especially women) have taken an opposing direction in recent times to give a better historical account of Igbo women. The likes of Nwando Achebe, *The Female king of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* (Achebe, 2011); Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (Amadiume, 1987); Ahmed Yerima, *Queen Amina* (Yerima, 2019); Nkiru Nzegwu, *Family Matters: Feminist concepts in African Philosophy of Culture* (Nzegwu, 2006) Emeka Nwabueze, *The Dragon's Funeral* (Nwabueze, 2005); Tess Onwueme, *Then She Said It!* (Onwueme, 2016); Don Ohadike's *The Ekumeku Movement: Western Igbo Resistance to the British Conquest of Nigeria, 1883-1914* (Ohadike, 1991); Uche Nwaozuzu, *Ajari* (Nwaozuzu, 2021); Gloria Chuku, *Igbo Women and Economic Transformation in Southeastern Nigeria, 1900-1960* (Chuku, 2005) and others have in one way or the other try to put the records straight in the place of women politically, socially and economically. She states, Igbo women had played more important roles in the economic transformation of southeastern Nigeria between 1900 and 1960 than have been acknowledged in the existing works.

Moving forward from the corpus of literature available on the participation of Igbo women in politics, we can delineate two archetypes, one that hinges on the romanticization of African women's political history before European colonial domination and another that emphasizes their political subordination and invisibility. In the former, women had enormous political power in various societies until the imposition of European colonial rule and the Victorian gender tenet, when such power was eroded. The latter archetype holds that the current relatively marginal involvement of African women in political process can best be explained by the lingering inhibitive cultural and patriarchal forces. It is the former that this research set to explore and posit that Igbo women are not marginalized as claimed by many.

Critically rereading the works of the abovementioned scholars on social practices and oral/written histories of Igbo women and the society, it is evident that colonial laws, edicts, and judicial institutions facilitated the creation of gender inequality in Igbo

society; exposes the unlikely convergence of Western feminist and African male judges' assumptions about "traditional" African values where women are subjugated and oppressed; offers a conception of equality based on historical Igbo family structures and practices that challenges the epistemological and ontological bases of Western feminist inquiry. Nkiru Nzegwu posits that, prior to European colonialism, Igboland was a nonpatriarchal, nongendered society governed by separate but interdependent political systems for men and women (Nzegwu, 2006). In the same vein, Gloria Chuku submits,

Igbo society was a gendered one. Here the flexibility and dynamism of gender construct, and the fact that roles were not rigidly masculinized or feminized remain undisputed. The flexibility of gender relations allows women to play male roles and vice versa. Igbo society was in most cases a dual-sex symmetrical system where individuals were valued for their social duties and responsibilities, and though roles were gendered, female were not defined in antithesis to males (Chuku, 2005).

The above was what prevailed in precolonial Igbo society, the dual- sex symmetric system where the social roles and responsibilities were the channels through which power diffused. Therefore, the claim by some scholars like (Orji, 2012); & (Ajayi, n.d.) that Igbo women are marginalized economically and politically are baseless facts as there are avalanche of proves that the role of women in Igbo economy are evident in active participation in agricultural development- cultivation and food processing, manufacturing and marketing, palm oil and cassava processing. They have demonstrated considerable resilience and adaptability, combining their indigenous skills with the new ideas and techniques. The production techniques and innovation in salt production, pottery, cloth and mat weaving, and general contribution to the development of trade and commerce in the Igbo region before 1900 (Chuku, 2005). Women's harvest was primarily used and stored for family use. She further accounts that, they preserved and intensified their agricultural activities to produce enough food that not only sustained the dense Igbo population (including the military) but also was enough for export to other parts of the colony and to overseas. Every Igbo woman was in the precolonial era full-time or part-time farmer and till today, they believe in the saying, 'aka aja aja n'ebuta onu mmanu mmanu' (Dirty hands brings forth an oily mouth) which implies that hard work comes before success, and uses every opportunity to showcase their belief and industrious nature. For example, an average Igbo woman (even in another man's land) uses a small portion of land around her (if any) to cultivate vegetables, maize and other domestic crops. This is not because she cannot afford buying them in the market if needed but because her hand is fertile. In Igboland, there was and has been complementarity of roles in the provision of food in the

household, where the husband provided yam and meat, and the wife or wives provided palm oil, melon, pepper and vegetables. The role complementarity is evident in *Things Fall Apart*, when Okonkwo completed his exile year in his motherland and is set to return to Umuofia:

Okonkwo called his three wives and told them to get things together for a great feast. 'I must thank my mother's kinsmen before I go'...Ekwehi would provide cassava for the feast. Nwoye's mother and Ojiugo would provide the other things like smoked fish, palm-oil and pepper for the soup. Okonkwo would take care of the meat and yams(C. Achebe, 1958).

This implies that before and after colonization, farming for Igbo people is not an affair for a particular sex, it is a collective effort but some crops are male and female oriented (Papersowl.com, 2021). Chuku further states that farming was the most prestigious occupation of Igbo men and women before the advent of western education and paid employment. This is because feeding one's family and visitors have remained the ultimate concern of Ndi Igbo. In Nsukka, the biology of both men and women are understood hence, the division of labour (ekere oru eke), activities like blacksmithing, climbing of trees and other strenuous jobs are for men because no Igbo man would like to subject his wife to any risky venture that would endanger her life or beauty for the saying that 'mma nwanyi bu ugwu di ya'- a woman's beauty is her husband's pride (Omeje, 2019).

Reverence to women in the Igbo land cannot be overemphasized, this assertion is evident in the existence of gods and goddesses and their place and contributions to the lives of Igbo people, hence, the political and social impact of Igbo women in Igbo society. Goddesses in Igboland are in charge of the most powerful deities that control the most important element of human existence, for example, 'Ani' (earth goddess) is the most powerful and respected deity in Igboland, and has connection with almost all areas of life and the respect to 'Ani' is extended to women generally. And that is the reason why the roles and place of women in Igboland cannot be said to be marginalized as the dominant notion on this issue claim. In the words of Arinze and Parrinder:

The Earth Spirit is the most important spirit after 'Chukwu'. She is the greatest mother spirit, the queen of the underworld, the owner of men and the custodian of public morality in conjunction with the ancestors. The earth as the mother of plant, animals and men, is of great importance to our people. The earth deity is the most important public and private divinity of the Igbo people of Nigeria, the unseen controller of every society in the African belief system (Agbedo, 2010).

The same also with 'Idemili' (water/sea goddess), 'Anyanwu' (sun goddess) and 'Njokuji' (yam

goddess). The goddesses in Igboland promote productivity, morality, fertility, hard work and wellbeing in spite the challenges of modernity, colonization and the in flocks of foreign culture (Ogunba, 1978). Hence, the reverence to women in the Igbo societies. This is also applicable and evident in some Igbo names like 'Nwanyibuife' (a woman is something or a woman is light), 'Nnedinso' (mother is holy), Nneka (mother is supreme) etc. at the general conception of 'Ikwunne' (Motherland) as seen in *Things Fall Apart* when Okonkwo was exiled for breaking the holy weak and had to seek refuge in his 'Ikwunne'. Uchendu clarifies,

It is true that a child belongs to his father but when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in his mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness, he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you and that is why we say that mother is supreme (C. Achebe, 1958).

Also, the matrilineal system of Ohaofia people is evident in the importance placed on women in Igboland. They possess political, social and economic powers that can and has never been challenged by any man born of a woman in their own right. The Igbo women as individuals or group have great influence in the decision making of various subjects by men at all levels of social and political structure through institutions as Umuada/Umuokpu, Inyomdi and other women councils that have existed in time immemorial. Umuada is an association of patrilineage daughters of a community who are married within or outside the community (Nzegwu, 2003). The association is usually involved in political activities. They had in the past succeeded where men had failed. They legislated on matters that defied solutions provided by the male groups. According to Ngozi Ojiakor:

The Ukeabuo Ndi-Iyom (women's executive arm) of Ohaofia, had executive and legislative powers that found expression in severe cases such as murder, manslaughter teenage pregnancy, and adultery and family matters. These offences were considered sacrilegious such that threatens the peace, security and welfare of a community, if drastic actions are not taken to pacify and assuage the wrath of the god (Ojiakor, 2010).

In Igbo communities, Nwada (first daughter) is believed to be sacrosanct and are respected more than any other female child in the family. During the era of slave trade, it was noted that people in this area saw it as an abomination to sell the daughters especially the first daughters. There were also certain titles under the royal hierarchy that were usually reserved for a given category of women that command power and influence as same as that of kings in the community (Chuku, 2009). Communities in Igboland usually associated with such powers include Onitsha, Ogbaru among others. In

Nsukka, once a woman affirms the age of menopause, she is initiated (by choice) into the 'Oyima' masquerade cult that equals to the 'Omabe' masquerade cult of men in any community. In Ogbaru, Oduah Nwanyi was the political and ritual head of all women in a given community, at any gathering of males and females, she is entitled to break kola nut in the absence of a male chief (Ojiakor, 2010).

## SUMMARY OF AJARI

*Ajari* is a play set in southeastern part of Nigeria that explores the theme of political tussle in a traditional setting. In the play, Ajarinwanyi visits the shrine of Izugbe Dike where she vows to be the god's slave if she makes her husband (Abaliebuka) Onowu. Izugbe tells her that as long as she (Ajari) keeps her hands off evil and treats her stepdaughter well, then her wishes would be granted. Izugbe gives Ajari a pot. When she does well, the content of the pot remains water and when she does badly, the pot's contents changes to blood. Ajarinwanyi consults another medicine man called Igunkwu who makes a charm that would assure her husband's victory in winning the Onowu's seat. Igunkwu gives her a pot that contains the head of a hundred-year-old tortoise. He stated that any eye that sees the content of the pot would be a pawn in her hands, if they peep into it for the second time, they run mad and if they look again for the third time, they may die. He also goes ahead to explain to her that the most potent medicine would be the one with the head of a great medicine man. Ajarinwanyi kills the medicine man and puts his head in the pot. She then carries out the dead body with the help of her daughter Otunwa and Mkpisi (a kinsman of theirs who is the village idiot and drunk). Ajari allows Mkpisi look into the pot and commands him to bring her the staff of the Onowu's office as Mkpisi was once the bag bearer of the past Onowu. Abali the head hunter prepares to go in search of their lost medicine man after a meeting in the Igwe's palace with the chief. Ajarinwanyi tries to convince Abali her husband to consent to canvassing for the position of the village Onowu but fails as Abali insists that he would not get involved in the game and that if the seat was meant for him, then it would be his. On leaving his house, Prince Akwakata comes in search of Abali but Ajarinwanyi tells him her husband had left the house earlier. She manipulates Prince Akwakata to look into the pot and thus the Prince becomes her pawn. She then commands him to give her husband the Odo stool (a representative stool of the Onowu title) when it is recovered from the forest. Ugegedi, the Lolo vows to liberate her son from this madness after Abali denies any involvement in the current mishaps.

On the selection day, the Eze and some chiefs set off to the okposi forest to where the Onowu would receive the stool from the Prince, and then they would all head back to the village square to present the new Onowu. Odikpo accompanies them even though he was not selected to go, and then tries to instigate some of the chiefs against Abali, he also gave money to some of his

fellow chiefs to win their favour. Akwakata's sense was restored and he goes ahead to present the stool to Abali but is interrupted by Odikpo who brings out a gun and orders that the stool be given to him. Just then, Mkpisi arrives shouting that he has found the staff, Odikpo turns and shoots him. Abali stabs Odikpo and both Mkpisi and Odikpo died. Suddenly, a disheveled Ajarinwanyi appears carrying the pot with the medicine man's head.

### **Women and Politics, Economy and the Social Space in Ajari**

Anchoring on the qualitative and analytical research method, and cultural theory to examine the play text and confirming the aptness of the theory which tends to explore the dynamism of traditional politics and the place of women in the Igbo society. Thus, the situation of the female gender in a typical Igbo society is likened to a bottleneck system whereby the head (man) is dependent on the neck (woman). Female in the Igboland have powers politically and socially compared what is obtainable in the western world.

The character of Ajarinwanyi as seen in the play possesses great powers coupled with her ambition. We see a woman who has gone out of her way to install her husband as the Onowu of their community and either by her making or the making of the gods achieved that desire by paying with her life and the lives of others. Ugegbedi on her own side vows to get her son's sanity back which she achieved at the end, as the only thing the Igwe, her husband did was to discuss the situation of his heir apparent with his friend without any further action seen. The power women had in the precolonial Igbo societies were also manifest in the colonial era as evident in Nwabueze's *The dragon's Funeral*, where he narrated the Aba Women's Riot, and the Nwando Achebe's historical account of Ahebi Ugbabe, the only Warrant Chief and village head in colonial Nigeria. This challenged the outmoded narrative of the passivity of women in the colonial power structure. They were actively involved as individuals or groups in shaping public policies in the colonial era. Women regularly approached British officials with personal requests and complaints which was focused on socio-political and economic issues such as taxation, politics, policies, price control, cost of living, family issues, representation, marriages and other frustrations that the colonial economy placed on them (Alozie, 2020).

The character, Ajarinwanyi represents an average Igbo wife or mother with lots of respect and regard in most Igbo communities in the sense that it was through her that the seat of the Onowu became competitive with different men in the society indicating interest to run for this position. She is strong willed and influential such that the men who ordinarily are not supposed to concern themselves with a woman ambition and support for her husband, are worried to the extent of visiting to warn or beg her to desist from supporting her husband instead of sorting out the issue as men. The

following conversations show the tactful portrayal of the women as ambitious, powerful and influential in the Igbo society by the playwright:

- Ogirisi: My salutations to the habitants of this house.
- Ajari: Welcome Nnaanyi Ezedibia (*Ajari courtesies and Ogirisi gives her a pat on the back with his flywhisk*)
- Ogirisi: How are you my wife, and the children?
- Ajari: We are strong and healthy, Ezenwokdibia.
- Ogirisi: What about your husband, Abaliebuka?
- Ajari: He has left on a hunting expedition. Let me get some kola nut for you.
- Ogirisi: Do not bother yourself...this is no time for eating kola nut...since your husband is away, I must tell you why I am here.

From the above conversation, one can already tell that in Igbo land one person does not marry a woman (ofu onye anaghi alu nwanyi), hence the reason he referred to Ajari as 'my wife'. It is also established that the man has spiritual powers as a spokesman for an oracle or a representative of a god or deity in the community by his name 'Ezedibia' or 'Ezenwokedibia' who by the power he possesses sees beyond the physical. In spite of his powers and place in the society, has gone to Abali's house to discuss with Ajari concerning the Onowu race knowing fully well that Abali would be out by that time of the day. This is an indirect means of showing the woman's power and might. In furtherance, Ezedibia in his statement made this clear when he clearly said:...the suppression of truth is the bane of an elder, that is why I have felt it a duty to inform 'you' of the events coming before us so that 'we' can remove the hand of the monkey from the soup pot...(Nwaozuzu, 2021) the pronoun 'you' and 'we' justifies the claim that he specifically visited to see the woman of the house and not the man. This shows the importance and influence of the person in the affairs of men and the community. Below is another evidence from the text:

- Ogirisi: What I am about to tell you is of grave importance. It has come to the knowledge of the gods that you been pushing your husband into the tussle for the seat of the *Onowu*. This office is a sacred one. It is only the gods that choose whosoever they deem fit. So, you will be incurring the wrath of the gods if you persist in pestering your husband to do what is against his will and that of the gods.
- Ajari: It baffles me why the gods would not want my husband to be the Onowu...
- Ogirisi: It seems you have not yet understood what I said woman. The gods are against your coercing your husband into doing that he does not want to do.
- Ajari: I have never forced Abaliebuka into doing anything against his wish, and who says I am coercing him into coming out for the Onowu stool? As far as I know, it is Eze

Ejiofor's duty to choose his Onowu. My duty is to support my husband in any way I can.

Ogirisi: So, you doubt the sagacity of the gods?

Ajari: I do no doubt the gods. What I am afraid of, is your insincerity. Did those gods of yours not tell you to warn the other people who are out now in the village canvassing for this same post...

Ogirisi: Silence woman lest you swallow your tongue. How dare you insult me? Ezenwokedibia. My last word to you and all your companions is greed, especially that rich fool Odikpo is to steer clear of this matter before it eats your heads. That title is mine through wisdom and experience. This is my last warning...if the ear refuses to hear, when the head is served it goes with it.

From the above conversation, the place of the female figure is already clear as a threat to the male folk who should ordinarily be less concerned with a mere woman supporting her husband for the Onowu position. In the Igbo society, seldom does a man (husband or son) take a serious decision without consulting the woman (mother or sister). After Ezedibia's visit to Ajari, Odikpo (another man canvassing for the same position) visited hence, the following conversation ensued:

Odikpo: Where is your husband?

Ajari: I have told you he is not in.

Odikpo: Is it true that your husband has an eye for the office of the Onowu?

Ajari: Who told you that? This is the first time I am hearing this ridiculous tale. I think you are accusing my husband falsely.

Odikpo: This is not a question of false accusation... I will deal with that hunter of rats and rabbits. You and your husband are threading on dangerous ground.

Ajari: You cannot do anything Odikpo. I have done more than exchange words with effeminate men like you. My hands have done mightier things on greater men than you, and can still do more because I am Izugbe. Now state your mission and leave.

Odikpo: Listen woman I have not come to bandy words with you. All I want to say is that you should warn your husband that he is playing with fire. He should call it a quit with such ambition as being the Onowu. The office is not for hunters of rats and rabbits like him.

From Ajari's dialogue, we see a fearless woman who has done 'mightier' to secure a position for her husband and it is evident that both men that visited know her powers in achieving a goal and the extent she is ready to journey for her ambition. Going down the play text, she ended up setting the two men (Ezenwokedibia and

Odikpo) against each other and her aim was achieved and her husband was installed the Onowu. A woman in the Igbo society is political in both the family level and the society at large directly and indirectly.

In conclusion, it is pertinent to note that gender roles are social constructs that are not natural in terms of sex (male or female) but based on roles place on both sexes by the society. It was used here as a social and political construct as well as a systematic structuring of relationships between men and women in the Igbo society. These socially constructed (gender) roles which men and women are seen to play are often propagated and perpetuated by the media particularly film (Agunloye, 2019). This by implication is the Nigerian situation articulated by the culture of the colonizers and imposed on the colonized against their existing pattern. And as argued that women in Igbo societies are marginalized politically, Omeje opines that, the Igbo people in the precolonial era has no election process as it is today in Nigeria but most political positions in Igboland are selected by the gods using special means to communicate to the people. Okonjo argues that it was within the colonial period that Igbo women suffered the greatest loss of power and Nzegwu describes colonialism as an alienating experience for Igbo women, arguing that it took away their political voice and visibility (Muonwe, 2019). There is need to change narratives concerning Igbo women and the issue of marginalization and focus on the neglected female heroes of the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial period. Women should be well placed in future historical and artistic literature for who they were politically and otherwise. In the words of Nzegwu, until Igbo women are given their due position in historical research, Igbo history and historiography will never be complete (Opata, C.C., Apeh, A.A., Asogwa, S.O., Alaku, 2021). There is need to restructure the image of Igbo women according to the Igbo culture and present realities in their homes, workplace and the political domain by subsequent artistic output such as plays, articles and books.

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