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Women in Colonial Nigeria: Bibliographical Review

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Abstract:

The nationalist struggle of women in Nigeria and other parts of Africa was one of the 1950s and 1960s popular reactions for independence from colonial domination. This sentiment of colonial women in Nigeria has attracted the attention scholars to investigate influence of colonialists and the role of women in the struggle against colonialist powers in Nigeria. For convenient review of various works which convey colonial women of Nigeria, this essay categorized literatures into political, economic and social themes. The sources herein scholars utilized and the views how they analyzed the roles of Nigerian women in social, economic and political areas are essential points for review of this historiographic paper.

Keywords: Government, maternal, inheritance, missionary, Muqaddamat, Malamai

1. Introduction

In African history, the 1950s and 1960s are the land marks in the development of new nationalist atmosphere in the continent. It was the period for movement of Africans seeking political, socio-economic and historical independences. This nationalist reaction of the mass had attracted women of Africa to join the movement for the struggle. The sentiment and great role of women in the struggle for independence, on the other hand, stirred the attention of scholars to study women's history. Nigerian women as one counterpart of the continent's feminine began to be the focus of historians. Writers from different disciplines with different perspectives, however, viewed the history of Nigerian women from different angles. The west writers with racist thoughts cut back the Nigerian women from their fundamental roles in political, economic and socio-cultural fields.¹

On the other hand, the actual figures of women in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods are plainly stated by the African and Africanist writers which have strengthened the Africanist paradigm of feminist studies in Nigeria since 1982. As L. Denzer noted, the development of women's study in America and Europe as well as the contribution and encouragement of Africanist scholars were causal factors for the development of women study. From 1987 onwards, women's study centers began to be organized in Africa. Ibadan and Legos were two notable Nigerian Universities that designed institutional curriculums inclusive of women as one concern of the universities' education and study.²

Therefore, the main concerns of this review paper are to appraise the nature, content and methods of historical writings on women of colonial Nigeria. The type of sources used by the writers for their discussion is the center of evaluation. It gives special emphasis on selected issues and literatures for clear illustration of the authors' argument. For convenience, therefore, I have categorized these literatures of scholars in to political, economic and marital status socio-cultural themes. In the first part, it analyzes political roles of Nigerian women hereby discussed in the works of Alaine S. Hutson: 1999, Steven Pierce: 2003, Judith Van Allen: 1972, and Lisa A. Lindsay: 1999.

Secondly, the paper analyzes works of scholars on economic aspects of women. Selected books and manuscripts for this theme includes Gloria Ifeoma Chuku: 1999, Gloria Chuku: 1995, Susan Martin: 1984, and Chima J. Korie: 2001.

In the last part, works on marriage and other social institutions of Nigerian women are exhaustively examined. The essay for review of this theme mainly focus on the works of Victor C. Uchendu: 1965, H.A. Wieschhoff: 1941, Kristin Mann: 1981, Kristin Mann: 1983, Paul E. Lovejoy: 1988, Misty L. Bastian, S. H Childs: 1946, M.M. Green: 1947, Allan Christelow: 1991, Juliet I. Okonkwo: 1971 and Ifi Amadiume: 1987.

2. Women and Politics in Colonial Nigeria

In this part of the review, basic works of V. Allen, S. Pierce, Alanis S. Hutson and L.A. Lindsay are examined focusing on their method of writing and argument ideas. Allen's paper states that Igbo women played great roles in traditional politics before the arrival of the British in the region. The Igbo tradition allowed women to gather for ceremonials, reconciliations and other social activities with autonomy to announce their decisions at the village level. This egalitarian assembly of women also discussed complaints of women on their husbands, and property ownership. After their discussion, the assembly requested the husband to apologize to his wife if he refused the women take such measures like strikes, boycotts or "sitting on him." These were the bona fide facts in the political traditions of Igbo women before the arrival of colonialists.³

Similarly, I. Amadiume noted that the tradition empowered women to play active roles in village politics. Terms like "trust, love and respect" emanated from the sense of motherhood and served as principles for maternal politics. The tradition provided the principle that women should be succeeded by women. Women also played great roles in economy, reproduction, production, ritual activities and inherited property.⁴

Allen's paper is more influential than other scholar's work. It starts the basic arguments with reviewing the negative and positive impacts of Britain on the political economy of Igbo women. According to the article "altering kinship bonds and introduction of free choice in marriage, avoidance of barbarous practices, and introduction of education, modern health and sometimes female suffrage" are some of the positive impacts of colonialists on Africa. On the negative side, Allen and S. Martin expressed similar views. According to their common idea, Britain created a male dominated political system by disregarding autonomy of the village assembly of women and designed a pro-British native administration. Under the new administration, women lost the early social, economic and political traditions. Consequently, with active support from the men, women organized a social protest in 1929. Britain, however, took suppressive measures on women's riot and the freedom for village assembly further diminished.⁵ According to Allen, in modern political perspective of Britain, women were inactive in politics than men. That is why colonialist governments and missionaries did not give any attentions to women in political fields.⁶

Steven Pierce and Alanis S. Hutson articulated the status of women's freedom and authority in Nigeria. The two writers also depicted strong efforts of women to achieve freedom of inheritance and whichever statuses free of domination. Pierce focused on "the 20th C. [freedom of women property] inheritance in Kano of Nigeria". In relation to this, the essay deals with the 1923 and 1954 policy decisions of Kano government and its consequences on women's inheritance. In the view of S. Pierce, the two decrees were contradictory pro-British policies on gender aspects of Hausa. As it expresses, in the 1923 declaration women were denied from inheriting property, house and farms. All the properties of the dead husband were allowed to be inherited by male heirs and women were subjected to dependency on male for subsistence without any social entitlement but wives and mothers.⁷

S. Pierce argued that the 1954 decree of the Emirate of Kano considered the Sheria law in which "it does not forbid woman from inheritance." On the other hand, S. Pierce's argued that, though the declaration reconsidered economic problems of elderly women, it aggravated divorce, seclusion and economic dependency of women. Therefore, the author stressed that, divorce; seclusion and economic dependency of women were key aspects of the quest for women identity in the 20th C.⁸

The primary focus of A.S, Hutson's paper is activities of two Kano Muslim women. The practices how these two women rose to positions of "religious and secular authorities" is the first point for Huston. The author made clear the roles of these Kano women in showing the possibilities of taking positions in modern periods especially in Muslim community of Kano. In practice to social authority, however, these women did not go beyond their domain and had no any threatening influences on men and the elites. This was owing to the relation of muqaddama and elites through marriage or religious affiliation. Therefore, ordinary males and elites greatly contributed for women's success in working as muqaddamat and Malamai. In scrutinizing the roles of the two Muslim women, Hutson also noted that they had no objective of personal interest in Muqaddama and disordering the social and religious laws. When they took dominant position in their religion, however, they began to involve in the struggle for other social and political problems of the Muslim community such as lack of education, seclusion and corruption of Muslim women.⁹

To conclude the idea concerning the role of Hajiya Iya and Umma Makaranta - the two muqaddamat women, Huston argued that the activities of these two women without changing or avoiding the patriarchal system of the community, showed the way for possibilities of taking positions and struggling for equal opportunities.¹⁰

Both V. Allen and L.A. Lindsay argued that the colonial policies excluded Africans from political economies and cultural practices. Nevertheless, Lindsay more emphasized the whites' method of dividing societies in Africa into the dominated and the overriding archetype based on boundaries of gender and aboriginal residency to different blacks and whites for status and wage payment. As Lindsay's argument, this policy of the whites influenced both female and the male workers. Women were segregated from income generation to their family. Furthermore, the policy had destructive impacts on market women as the government decreed market control policy to curb inflation in Nigeria in 1940s.¹¹

The other area of focus for Lindsay's paper is payment of workers. Britain designed a policy which encourages male workers' involvement in industries than female. The male workers were paid wages below the whites. The author clearly expressed that this race and gender based employment, payment of workers and market control policy led to a general strike in Nigeria demanding "cost of living adjustment" and racial equality. In the final part of the paper, Lindsay noted the role of women in the general strike of southern Nigeria. As clearly stated, women workers and trade unions involved in the strike. The workers organized a protest demanding equal payment with expatriates. During this time, women were champions of trade and ranked at good economic position. Thus, they gave economic and political supports to the popular movement. They also set up official organizations such as the Legos women league and Oyingbo market women's association composed of elite women, market traders and nationalist politicians for the struggle. Generally, Lindsay concluded that women were aimed at not for the struggle against the racial inequality and payment issue but to maintain their economic capability- "breadwinning."¹²

These four authors expressed the political aspects of Nigerian women in combination with social and economic issues. For their analysis, they used both primary and secondary sources such as books, thesis, memorandums, minutes, archives and oral sources. However, Judith Van Allen is a political science scholar who wrote the paper on political science perspective. The essay lacks historical analysis and the sources that she used are only secondary accounts. From these essays, of course, it is pleasing that Allen's paper starts with a clear review of the negative and positive influences of colonialists on Africa.

3. Economic Aspects of Nigerian Women during Colonial Period

Scholars have analyzed the colonial economic policies and their adverse effects on Africa. Chima J. Korieh, an important historian, made investigations on Britain's gendered economic policy in Nigeria. The study covers the colonial period from 1913-1954. The author focused on the badly affected region of Nigeria- Igboland. According to him the colonial policy of Britain had no an official statement of totally isolating women. However, it segregated, from agricultural improvement programs such as training, extension and loan. In the colonial period, Igbo agricultural productivity, disastrously declined due to the wrong and marginalizing policy on women and paying no attention for sustainable production.¹⁴

Korieh compared the situation of women of Igbo during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Accordingly, women had similar status with men during pre-colonial periods. In the colonial period, however, they were subjected to "racial and gender subordination" because of the British policy of indirect administration. Korieh also argued on the incidence of social insecurities in relation to colonial economic policy. Britain followed agricultural policy in Igboland only focusing on exportable commodities by discounting production for consumption which led to food insecurity for Nigerians.¹⁵

J. Korieh and L.A. Lindsay had similar views on gendered and isolating policies of Britain on political as well as economic concerns of Nigerian women. The two scholars expressed that unlike the isolating policy of Britain, women of Igbo extended their active involvement in trade and agriculture. When the social strikes and peasant protests intensified in Eastern Nigeria, they took a leading role in the movement. Therefore, these authors clearly attested how much women of Igbo and Yoruba played essential roles in the movement against the catastrophic gendered colonial economic policies. Particularly they struggled to reform policies on food price and agricultural production.¹⁶ Korieh and Susan Martin dealt with women of eastern Nigeria during colonial periods. Martin, however, limited the focus of the paper to the period from the beginning of 20th c. to 1930s.¹⁷

Like Korieh's essay, Martin's main thesis focused on the role of women in agricultural production. When the demand for women's labor increased, colonial farmers made changes in the production of food and cash crops. As the author stated, these changes were set in different areas and styles. The first area of change was sex-based classification of labor and methodological adjustment of farming. The adoption of new crops to increase production for consumption belongs to the second. Through these adjustments, the entire task of agriculture belongs to women. Martin's essay also shows that these gender-related agricultural activities and innovations had unconstructive impacts on women's saving and investment.¹⁸

Women of Igboland in eastern part played great roles in economic history of Nigeria. Their roles in agricultural innovations, commercial and socio-cultural activities have attracted the attention of various scholars. G. Chuku is an economic historian who did enquiries on the economic history of Igboland in his essay entitled "women in the economy of Igboland." Chuku shared a common idea with Korieh and Martin on the role of Igbo women in agriculture, trade, commerce and household activities. Chuku's paper, however, also deals with Igboland women's role in "craft and local industries. " According to Chuku, women of Igboland verified recordable skills in innovation in the fields of craft and local industry technologies: salt production, pottery, cloth weaving and mat-making. Therefore, the author concluded that "women in the past ... played an important role in the economy of Igboland [of eastern Nigeria] and that they ... shown technological skills, flexibility, creativity entrepreneurial astuteness and receptivity to change in their various economic activities" though there was influences of colonial policy.¹⁹

G.I Chuku also had another essay which was published in 1999. The study focused on the period from 1886 to 1970. Most of the arguments in this article are almost similar to the 1995 essay. This article, however, focuses on assessing the roles of three Igbo women in trade and commerce. In the first part of this article, Chuku described the activities of Igbo women in household, child rearing, farming and local market. Long distance trade was the duty of men as husbands did not permit the wives to go far from their houses. Chuku then discussed how the three Igbo women - Lady Mary Nzimiro, Lady Martha Onyenma Nwapa and Mrs. Rosemary Inya - started their commercial interaction in the form of local leaders.²⁰

Chuku also analyzed the political and economic burdens of colonialists on women in general. They were forced to pay heavy taxes and producing commercial crops by neglecting food crops. Unlike all these jeopardies, the three women of Igboland were successful in acquiring skill of commerce and accumulation of huge capital. On the other hand, Chuku's essay recognizes the positive impacts of colonial policies for the success of these three women.²¹

They were ranked as models of success and inspiration of women and girls for active participation in political economy of Nigeria. They played pivotal roles in injecting the spirits of political movement for independence and freedom of participation in active economic roles in Nigeria and Africa at large. Chuku's paper, in this way, shows basic roles of the above three women like that of Hutson's discussion on the two Muslim women of Kano.²²

The papers that I have reviewed on economic theme of Nigerian women are soundly analyzed works. Writers are economic historians who exhaustively analyzed their thoughts based on various sources. For analysis of their issues, they used both primary and secondary accounts. Books, articles, archives, reports, thesis and oral sources are basic materials for their analysis. Particularly, the entire exploitation of oral accounts from interview of large number of individuals is acknowledgeable fact. In further expression, I support Korieh's article in that the socio-economic statuses of women of colonial Nigeria are discussed in comparison with pre-colonial and colonial period. In a general sense, however, the approaches they followed, the sources they used and the subject matter they focused are more or less similar.

4. Marriage and Socio-Cultural Aspects of Women in Colonial Nigerian

Under this section, the paper analyzes works of various writers on marriage and socio-cultural aspects of women during colonial Nigeria. For clear historiographical review, the researcher categorized basic ideas of scholars in to three sub-themes: customary marriage tradition, the church marriage and socio-cultural influences of colonialists on women of Nigeria.

As stated above, scholars from various social fields have provided their inquiries to show facts of Africa. Some, however, are activists of racist thoughts with the intention that they underestimated the actual figure of Africa. They distorted the history of the continent and considered Africans as social groups without morality and effort to maintain peace and order. Misinterpretation of ethnographical words of Africa is also the other wicked thought of most expatriate writers. They misused some words by detaching them from any relation to culture and language of Africans.²³

Researches uttered practices of marriage in different parts of Nigeria according to their custom, church rule and ordinance traditions.²⁴ Customary marriages is a social concern in which the two partners joined with a full decision of neither the woman nor the man but the woman's and man's family and clan.²⁵ J. H. Okonkwo said that marriage in Igbo culture is a sign of maturity. After marriage the man is expected to dissociate from his family, and take responsibilities to live alone with leading his social life. In Igbo culture, marriage is an institution to produce an able minded man who can take social responsibilities in the society. Therefore, production of male members through marriage gives great respect for the family. In this respect, marriage is mandatory for males in Igbo culture. Selecting the girls based on beauty and virginity are the primary tasks of the male's.²⁶

In Igbo and Yoruba tradition, their customary law forced the women to take a socio-economic obligations and full concerns to her husband. As a bench mark for the development of marriage and compensation for her obligations, bride price is paid. If the woman fails to do all these obligations, she is forced to return back the bride-price.²⁷

Polygamy is a recognized marital institution in which both the males and the females acknowledge for high social status.²⁸ In Igbo, women can marry wives from their husbands' lineage. As C. Uchendu and A. Wieschhoff states, there existed a firm relationship between father - children than husband-wife basically for the continuity of male line.²⁹ Children were considered as signs of god's favor. Owing to this high value of children and economic significance that the wife accepted polygamy as a legal institution with high respect. The well-being of the wives, on the other hand, was secured in the family when they gave birth particularly to male children.³⁰ M.M. Green depicted the beliefs of Nigerians on exogamy viewing it as an instrument for socio- economic and cultural advantages. In social values, it is the road for interaction among villages or groups within a village. It is also a principal tool for solving disputes among villages³¹ though it has discouraging impacts on the women and men. V.C. Uchendu asserted that the wives would be emotionally unsecured because a husband could 't sexually satisfy all the wives. Stanley H. Childs **also** noted that the customary law of polygamy encourages divorce. In comparison of the two sexes in asserting break up, nevertheless, the male has more freedom than the female.³² In Igbo village culture, there were some taboo aspects in marriage tradition. Inter marriage, among individual's common descent of the village, between slaves and slave descents with free man sleeping of brothers and sisters together were some of the strictly forbidden practices.³³

The position of Nigerian women on freedom of property inheritance is an issue that scholars of various regions have studied. H. A. Wieschhoff, Stanley H. Childs and Victor C. Uchendu argued on decrees of Igbo customary marriage laws. According to their investigations, the woman had no freedom of owning material properties, lands of her husband as well taking her children at the time of his death. She was not considered as part of her husband's family. No legal protection rather considering her as unmarried woman. The husband's brother had a full right to inherit the property, the farm land and the family including wife of the died. The wife was obliged to marry the man that her husband's brother has chosen. If she is not loyal, all her properties will be taken away and she is chased out.³⁴ However, in Yoruba culture their children had the right to inherit their parents' properties.³⁵

A. Christenlow argued on Islamic tradition of inheritance of property in Kano of Nigeria. Islamic customary law provided equal rights for wives, widows and daughters to inherited properties. However, claiming property and land is not possible either for the wives or the widows unless they have children. For the widow, the law has restriction on "sell, loan, paw, donate and exchange" of the properties to others.³⁶

Victor C. Uchendu and Stanley H. Childs gave an idea about weaknesses of customary marriage in that there was no any procedure of registration during the process of marriage alliance. As a result, either of the two parties can easily break the marriage. In this old tradition dowry was a source of marriage. This practice creates the circumstance that an old and rich man could marry a very young girl without her interest. The male buys the female and considers the female as material goods. Bride-wealth and virginity were also from the basic marks of marriage. If the girl lacks virginity before marriage, she is forced to return back the bride-wealth and lost the social acceptance, economic privileges, rights of fertility and sexual intercourse with her husband. For the males paying bride-health was too burden for marriage.³⁷

The other thought of scholars in relation to native marriage is women's association in the place of marriage and village. According Green's view, women of Igbo had the right to affiliate in two ways based on the principles of exogamy. They could make associations in their husbands' village since they have been married and in their born villages as they had been born. Therefore, the life and activities of females were situated in the two cases.³⁸

There was a social division of labor between two sexes of the family in Igbo. However, women were dominant in the socio-economic roles. They performed most activities: feeding and managing the family, buying and cultivating crops, clearing bushes, hoeing and framing. When compared with women, men only performed duties like livestock, climbing palm trees and involving in speech of public affairs in the village.³⁹

On the other hand, K. Mann's view is opposite to Green's arguments. In Legos, as K. Mann noted, women were not allowed to take part in any income generating activities but only to engage in house hold management.⁴⁰ Women and men, furthermore, had separate

power in their religious practices. Owing to this fact, male and female sexes considered themselves as separate classes of the Igbo village.⁴¹

Women in Igbo of Nigeria were also the focus of Ifi Amadiume's book. In the analysis of the matriarchal foundations in Nigeria, Amadiume classified the Igbo society into different cultural groups: Onitsha, owerri, western Igbo, cross river and north eastern Igbo. Amadiume's idea is different from Mann's and analogous to Green's argument in that as he stated except in eastern Nigeria group of Igbo (Afikpo), in all branches, women played central role in socio-economic and political activities. In Afikpo tradition, women were denied in performing any roles. Then they lost their role of maternality.⁴²

The other subject under this section of the paper focuses on review of the influence of missionaries and colonial state on marriage of Nigerian women. When Europeans began to introduce their culture - marriage in church - Africans were instigated and began their involvement in this alien tradition.⁴³ Regarding principles of marriage and discourse of Africans to this culture, some argued that tradition of church marriage is practically the same as the customary marriage practices except for the church hereby encourages monogamous practice.⁴⁴ Uchendu attested influences of missionaries and colonialists on traditional marital relations of Ngwa. Some practices of customary marriage were adopted by the church marriage and in effect traditional marriage practices were modified. This adjustment of Christian marriage with traditional style was enacted by the missionaries, teachers and other colonial agents in the colonial institutions: schools, churches, trade and cities. In such mixed style of marriage, polygamy was legalized with commercializing sex practices and changing concubines to prostitution by the protestant missionary churches.⁴⁵

As the 1981 and 1983 published works of Kristin Mann stated, the church marriage decree permitted the male and female to give their properties to their heirs. Women were more dependent on the men. It is the men who have great role of economic source and the women were restricted to household and child care activities. This view is similar to Mann's statement who stated women under traditional marriage.⁴⁶

The colonial government also decreed law of ordinance for marriage. K. Mann had two papers published in 1946 and 1981 which clearly expressed marriage choices of educated African elites. Customary marriage, church marriage and marriage under the government ordinance are compared in relation to interests of African elites. According to the discussion of Mann, the ordinance law has some common characters with the church marriage. However, in some rules the two are different. Though women are economically dependent on the husband, divorce is strictly forbidden and women have the right to take full property of her husband when he dies. This decree made proud for women and resentment for men. Under this law marriage is with the same social status. Therefore, it enhances social segregation.⁴⁷ H. Childs and Mann revealed that other than opposition of the clergy and the males, African elites chose the west's marriage styles for social, cultural and moral values. In spite of this, later, they understand over the socio-political and cultural dominations of the west and apparently began to show their resentment to the practice.⁴⁸

All these scholars examined the three marriage systems prevailed in Nigeria during the colonial periods. None of them attempted the type of marriage most recommended for the Nigerians in accordance with the socio-cultural and political economy of the society. Their papers did not have clear expression on the advantage and disadvantage of each marriage systems. Of course, Uchendu and H. Childs uttered some points about disadvantages of polygamous marriage. Similarly, Uchendu and H. A. Wieschhoff expressed a sort of points on the draw backs of native marriage in general.⁴⁹

E. Lovejoy's and Allan Christelow's papers have basic themes that discuss aspects of Muslim women in Hausa and Northern Nigeria regions. Slavery, inheritance and violence are points of discussion. According to the notion of their papers, Islamic marriage laws allow the men to have many wives in the form of concubine who are subordinates of free wives with no equal right. In further explanation of Lovejoy and Christelow, during the period of slavery, women were recruited into slavery for concubine. When the period came to an end, they were severely affected by the Islamic laws. Ex-slave women had the right to claim the socio-economic freedoms if they are Muslims before they were captured into slavery. The British law also made the condition to complex by confirming the customary Islamic laws on inheritance, concubine and redemption payment of ex-slave women. By the newly decreed law of Britain, male ex-slaves had no the right to access of land and wife. Due to this, the domestic and theft-related violence on women were aggravated and the life of female ex-slaves more worsened.⁵⁰

Educational and linguistic influences of colonialists are also other areas of focus for scholars' argument. M.L. Bastian, P.K. Tibenderana, A.S. Hutson and Allen discussed the manner of girl's colonial education in Nigeria. Colonialists designed educational systems to train girls for "good wives for sons of chiefs" by selecting them only from the merchant and aristocrat classes. This style of education was more enhanced by the seclusion principle of aristocrats and merchants as they wanted women for sexual interests. Similarly, colonialist governments followed sex and age based separatist method to isolate girl students from interaction with boys and aged women. The missionary school educated women were free from paternal domination but with colonialists' supervision in every activity.⁵¹

M. L. Bastia added that, in spite of segregation and domination, colonial education for Nigerian women added a positive impact. Educated women were developed into elite Christians and mothers who played pivotal roles in the nationalist movements of Nigeria in the 20th C.⁵² K. Tibenderana's essay explicated the factors that influenced expansion of girls' education in Nigeria. Accordingly, the Muslims' negative attitude towards education and the preferential methods of British policy to fund for girl's education limited its expansion. Though there were many girls who sought education, Britain was unwilling to fund for education as the policy approaches relied on money saving objectives.⁵³

In reviewing the methodological approaches of writers under the marriage and cultural themes of this review paper, the researcher has observed and analyzed all the methodology of writing, emphasizes to the subject matter of their thesis, clarity and coherency of their language and the sources that they relied on. Thus they are from different disciplines: Historians, Anthropologists, Sociologists and Linguistics. Each of these scholars argued on their literatures according to the philosophy of their disciplines. For instance, Juliet I.

Okonkwo is a linguistic scholar who wrote one chapter from the book "Igbo Traditional Life, Culture and Literature" in M. J.C. Encheruo and E.N. Obiechina eds. The author gives no attention to principles of historical writing. Only certain secondary sources are used without any analysis. Ifi Amadiume, M.M. Green, Stanley H. Childs, H.A. Wieschhoff, Misty L. Bastian and Victor C. Uchendu are Anthropologist and Sociologist scholars who discussed the social and marital aspects of Nigerian women in accordance with the perspective of their disciplines: Anthropology and Sociology. As a source, they used only books and articles in narrative approach. Their papers lack historical writing methodologies and analyses. Other scholars such as Peter Kazenga Tibenderana, Paul E. Lovejoy and Kristin Mann are historians. They used both secondary and primary sources. Sources from informants are exhaustively utilized to analyze issues concerning marriage and other socio-cultural practices of Nigerian women. Books articles, reports, minutes and other archival sources are also basic argument materials for these scholars of history.

5. Conclusion

This review essay has analyzed various literatures of scholars that discuss the political, economic and socio-cultural aspects of Nigerian women during colonial periods. Accordingly, papers on political concerns of women indicate women of Nigeria had played great roles in their political traditions, though, in some parts, their culture isolates them from official involvement in public political discourses. During colonial periods, they suffered from domination of expatriate powers and their agents. This Burdon initiated the Nigerian women for public protests and the struggle for freedom.

In the second part, the paper has appraised basic thoughts of scholars on economic activities of women of colonial Nigeria in comparison with their roles in early economic cultures. In this vein, mostly, women were champion of activities in different economic sectors. They were also renowned in indigenous socio-cultural manifestations of Africa. Later, however, Nigerian women suffered from colonialists' marginalizing approaches. They were segregated in political as well as economic activities. They had no equal rights in political, economic, education and other socio-cultural interactions. These were some of the basic factors that initiated them for the struggle against colonial dominations.

6. Notes

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