Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Conflict is universal. It occurs every second, minute, hour, day, week, month. In fact, conflicts leave with us just as we leave with conflicts. It can be found in homes, churches, Mosques, schools, in organisations locally and internationally.

Conflict is ambiguous as a term and does not have a comprehensive universal definition[1]. What this implies is the fact that what could trigger conflict in one community may not do so in another community. Conflicts are in two distinct perceptions – the overt and covert: 'The overt kinds of conflict are the types experienced on a daily basis in the forms of sabotage, work-to-rule, absenteeism, restriction of output, non-cooperation, go-slow and industrial action such as lockouts, strike actions, boycotts. The covert kinds are sabotage, complacency, no-productivity, stealing and low commitment to responsibility, that characterise the organisation in the contemporary world'[1]. The study falls in the second category, covert since community conflicts are involved and a good number of times involve family issues that may include stealing, usurpation and fighting.

There are six various kinds of conflict. They comprise intra-personal conflict that is concerned with personal matters with ways to make decisions on issues like what course to study, who to marry, management of personal finance and time, who to marry and what course to study. The second kind is inter-personal, disputes within colleagues, fiends and family members. The third category is intra-group conflict, which are conflicts in a group, the fourth type is inter-group conflict, that has to do with disputes

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amid two or more parties. The fifth type is intra-national and the sixth type is international conflicts.

The people of the southeast in Nigeria are mostly Igbos and as a scholar state that, the Igbo is a nation and not a tribe[2]. Igbo citizens may not score high in the definition of tribe in Oxford dictionary. Currently, calling them a nation might not be the precise qualification for the Igbo, but it is not far from it. Over this slightly careful view by the scholar on what the Igbos should be identified as, there is a distinct idea of the Igbo as a nation. The mother tongue of the five South-Eastern states of Nigeria is Igbo dialect[2]. The states are: Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Ebonyi. Igbo language is similarly spoken in parts of Rivers, Delta, Benue, Edo, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. It is used to conversed either as first or second language by minimum of about 35 million individuals[2]. These statistics have shown that the Igbo region is a large nation with a huge populace that require improve economy for their sustenance and due to this reason might seize opportunities to migrate towards bettering themselves.

It has been argued that peacebuilding is targeted to put in place the economic, political, social and environmental mechanisms needed for creating lasting peace achievable. This has nothing to do with structuring temporary or provisionary shelter. Peacebuilding can be pre-conflict or post conflict[1]. The former attempts to avoid a conflict from breaking out. The latter is responsive and comprises rebuilding of social infrastructure, rehabilitation of displaced persons and reconciliation or joint collaboration[3]. Another scholar states that peacebuilding is fundamentally persuasive and includes all activities essential to make the societies favourable for peace to reign[4].

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On the above submission, peacebuilding by the Igbo women is a culture that has been with the women for a long time. It is on this basis that the Igbo women, home and abroad always hold meetings for the development of their communities. These women are so organised that they erect commendable edifices in their communities.

Recently, there is a new development among the Igbo women living abroad. They travel to home communities to brainstorm with their women counterparts on ways to move the communities forward. This has become what is today known as 'August Meeting'. This has become almost compulsory that every Igbo woman living outside their husbands' home communities must travel home. In some communities, any woman who fails to do so and without a good reason is meant to pay a huge fine. During these annual visits, a lot is done by women. It has become a healthy competition among women of different communities in Igbo states to come up with one project or another and getting such executed in a good time. These projects include schools for girls, clinics, halls for their meetings and which could be rented out to generate money, and so many other projects meant to aid their husbands' efforts towards community building[5].

Migrating from one place to another by humans has been one major interest of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) since it was instituted in 1951. Being an inter-governmental institution, it appears at the lot and welfare of immigrants across the globe. The Igbo nation is one of the three main ethnic groups in Nigeria, quite hardworking, industrious and business oriented group of people, who challenge one another for economic buoyance. One of the bases for competition is the migration of the Igbo people to different parts of the world for economic improvement (greener pasture)

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and academic pursuits. The immigrants send money home to their families to invest at home and attend to their economic and social needs[6].

The old Imo Broadcasting Service (the then only radio station in the old Imo State now divided into Imo and Abia States in Nigeria), in the early nineteen eighties, there used to be an incredibly prominent programme called *Oje mba*. The programme involves a particular traveller from a specific part of Igbo land who goes from a community to another in pursuit of a greener pasture. The exceptional programme was an excellent platform to showcase the various cultures of the Igbo people. Different week, the anchor of the programme, who is figuratively called Ojemba 'The traveller' is seen in a new community. His rapport with his hosts is very good and amiable, but will ultimately commit a cultural taboo which he will argue and struggle with the people in the community that he has done nothing wrong, however, he would be made to appease the land[7].

Migrating from Igbo communities to other places for economic reasons is common to the Igbo men and women. The Igbo mix well with their hosts. They are known for identifying with each other through monthly meetings where they discuss issues that affect their ancestral homes and, in these meetings, they help in peacebuilding by sending money home for one problem or the other towards solutions. Women do so too. A good example being the just alluded 'August meeting'.

The culture of migration in Igbo land whereby the Igbo leave their villages and relocate to another community, which might be far or near, for the modest reason of pursuing a new scheme or project that they will not normally accomplish in their own communities. Putting it differently, to the Igbo man, migration is life. The typical Igbo man journeys

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around so as to become wealthier and return home a better man for his relatives and friends to love and respect. *Ojemba enweghiiro* 'A migrant or a traveller does not have a foe' and thus, a cultural coinage that supports and inspires the Igbo man to migrate for constructive empowerment but to be conscious of the cultures of his hosts. The notion is moralistic in the view that it discourages any Igbo immigrant to attempt to break his hosts' traditions and customs; instead, it instils the principles that the guest and his host must dwell together in peace and that the serenity must be sowed by the migrant. In other words, *Ojembaenweghiiro* is a absurdity which prompts the immigrant that, even though one might encounter enemies during the course of one's migration and settlement, nonetheless, all attempt must be made to be peaceful, not allowing for any form of conflict to evolve and when it does, the immigrant is made to remember to be the one to pursue prompt resolution rightly and clearly as the Radio Programme *Ojemba* alluded ever did[7].

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1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are various extant works on instruments and classifications of Igbo Conflict Management which have attempted to deal with the procedures of the system. These write-ups include the one that says they are synonymous to ad hoc matters, that is, a group of people gathers together to examine a particular conflict or the other in an exceptional way that makes the society to be shielded from further conflicts[2]. The part language plays to the Igbo perspective with a precise attentiveness to the use of proverbs is unique[8]. Putting it differently, it simply means that with Igbo proverbs, people are able to communicate far better with each other and during the progression of conflict

management. Some scholars have widely researched on the importance of *ọfọ na ogu*, both consenting to the instruments of judicial concerns which are symbolic and are connected especially between the people and their ancestors[9, 10].

Not much research has been done on the role of women in conflict management in Igbo nation of Nigeria, peacebuilding to be specific either proactive or reactive as it were. Thus, the gap the study is filling.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to assess the involvement of women in peacebuilding in Southeast of Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

i. assess the nature of conflict resolution done by women in southeast Nigeria;
ii. investigate women's involvement in conflict resolution in Southeast Nigeria;
iii. find out the kinds of peacebuilding; proactive or reactive women engage in;
iv. examine the roles of women as agents of peacebuilding and its influence in Southeast Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of conflict resolution done by women in Southeast Nigeria?
2. How do women get involved in conflict resolution in Southeast Nigeria?
3. Which kinds of peacebuilding do women engage in: proactive or reactive?
4. How has the roles of women as agents of peacebuilding influenced the Southeast Nigeria?

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1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will go a long way in finding out the involvement of women in peacebuilding in the Southeastern region of Nigeria. This is against the belief that the women are not recognised in Igbo nation. Examining their involvement in peacebuilding can serve as a guide that connects women and peace, not only in Southeast Nigeria but in the continent of Africa. The study further empowers women in understanding better their roles in peacebuilding and issues that limits them. The findings from the study can be used for the establishment of policies and activities that encourage women's involvement and empowerment, leading to a more inclusive and equitable society.

Furthermore, this study is important because it can advance academic research on women involvement in conflict management and peacebuilding by providing information and data on it for more inclusiveness and representation, and contribute to the global conversation on the issue.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is on three communities in Anambra, Imo, and Abia States in the Southeastern region of Nigeria. They include, Ozubulu in Anambra, Mbano in Imo and Umuahia in Abia. The three states have been chosen because of their proximities to each other. The timeframe is 2012-2022 due to the recent recognition of women in conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives.

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1.7 Limitation of the Study

The only limitation the research had was the inability of the researcher to have a first-hand observant participation in the three communities during their conflict resolution sessions. The researcher did not succeed in convincing the women to allow her participate in their sessions. They were of the opinion that speaking with the researcher was enough for any data the researcher wanted from them.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms

Women: Women in Igbo culture are those who are married from one family or community to another. A woman not married cannot inherit anything from her father. In other words, what constitutes a female being called 'woman' is marriage to a man. This status gives her the right to belong to women meetings and gives her the authority to contribute in matters concerning women in the community. In this context, the research focuses on married women in Igboland and the way they manage peace in their communities.

Conflict: This is a clash of interest between one person or group or the other. Conflict is inevitable to man and can have a positive benefit if well managed. In other words, conflict is not entirely negative as many people think. Conflict can be seen as the opposite of peace because every conflict being managed is aimed at achieving sustainable peace with justice and fairness.

Peacebuilding: This is a kind of peace resolution which helps to forestall a conflict taking place at all, or when a conflict has already taken place, peacebuilding attempts help to mend issues and bring peace back to the community. In other words,

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peacebuilding is a mechanism for bridge building between people or groups of people. Sometimes, it may be between warring states. The concept of peacebuilding was made popular in 1992 at the United Nations (UN).

Southeast: This is one of the six geopolitical zones that make up the entire Nigeria nation. This region comprises the Igbo people states of Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, and Abia.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Conflict

Conflict has causes, types, ways of handling it and lastly stages. Knowledge of all these indices makes the term 'conflict' more meaningful.

2.1.1.1 The Causes of Conflict

There are four popular causes of conflict. They are as follows: contradicting value system, competition for inadequate resources, psychological needs of groups and individuals, and manipulation of information[1]. Inadequate resources entails the common problem the society has in sharing what is available. In doing this, this is usually a big conflict as many find it difficult to have a share in the resources of the land. On the second factor which has to do with value system, it is in this segment of the factors that religious and ideological sentiments belong. For instance, the Christian, Muslim, and Traditional value systems in Nigeria have from time to time been a cause of conflict. This is because religion controls how a good number of people think and act. Ideology is a very hard thing to define. As a result, it gives a lot of problems in the management of conflict in a given society[1].

On the third cause, that is, psychological necessities of individuals and groups, psychological disputes are caused by three main things: genetic, needs and environment. One's need which cannot be met causes psychological defect that pushes the person to robbery, prostitution et cetera[2]. When an an individual is denied love, security,

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belongings and friendship, he or she is most likely to become frustrated and aggressive. The cause of today's conflict in Nigeria can be traced to frustration where kidnappers, bandits, terrorists are frustrated and resort to crimes[2].

Manipulation of information as a cause could sound simplistic. However, manipulation of information in any level brings about suspicion which if not checked could lead to a big conflict. When those in government or simply, those in authority fail to give adequate information to the people on how things are being done, or what are expected from investments made, they begin to lose trust from their subjects. This loss of confidence could lead to conflict.

2.1.1.2 Types of Conflict

There are two main types of conflict: functional and dysfunctional conflicts. Functional is also known as constructive conflict which is when a conflict improves the quality of decision, stimulates creativity and innovation through which problem can be aired and tension released. This kind of conflict promotes an environment of self-evaluation and change. On dysfunctional conflict that normally leads to retarded communication, reduction in group cohesiveness and a subordination of goals. Dysfunctional conflict may bring a system to a halt or threatens its survival[2].

There are other different types of conflict in conflict management. They comprise intra-personal conflict that is concerned with personal matters with ways to make decisions on issues like what course to study, who to marry, management of personal finance and time, who to marry and what course to study. The second kind is inter-personal, disputes within colleagues, fiends and family members. The third category is intra-group conflict, which are conflicts in a group, the fourth type is inter-group conflict, that has to do with

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disputes amid two or more parties. The fifth type is intra-national and the sixth type is international conflicts. The intra-national conflict is within nations while the international conflicts deal with disputes between two or more nations (for instance, the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine).

2.1.1.3 Conflict Handling Styles

There are four main conflict handling strategies: confrontation, avoidance, third party, and Joint Problem Solving (JPS)[1]. The first and second are not good handling strategies due to the fact that they have a tendency to intensify a conflict. The third and the last one tend to be constructive and they assist in reducing a conflict that has got to an aggressive and armed stage. It is the third and fourth handling strategies that the state actors, i.e. the military with the police and some other related agencies are envisaged to adopt for the curbing of different kinds of vices such as kidnapping menace which has become a rape to the nation and has driven many to their early graves. Avoidance is a concept that means, issues does not matter so as no attempt would be made towards resolving any problem that rears its ugly head. Confrontation is a notion of fighting the enemy, may be with the guns without recourse to the core causes of the conflict. The outcomes of confrontations are always bad since one is fighting the shadows. The military should incorporate the four-conflict handling mechanism, the joint problem solving (JPS) within itself: air force, army and navy (and maybe, collaborating with other paramilitary parastatals with their intelligence gatherings).

2.1.1.4 The Stages of Conflict

There are six stages in conflict. They comprise: the formative stage, the escalation stage, the violent stage, the de-escalation stage, the improvement stage and the transformation

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stage. The first stage centres on early warning signs which include evident rivalries and behaviour resulting to two that involves provocative public statements[3]. Weapons are indiscriminately used as law and order are essentially disrupted in the third stage which is the peak. Ceasefire occurs in stage four to allow external force to interfere. Stage five result in dialogue while the sixth centres on maintaining peace.

In stage one, which is the formation stage of conflict, offensive language is usually used without realising the effect of such language. In stage two, which is the escalation stage, allegations and counter allegations are the prevalent occurrence. In stage three which is the violent stage, (this is the exact stage that Nigeria finds herself in the contemporary times with various kinds of vices such as kidnappings and killings in different parts of the nation), the evidences are fights, deaths and sorrows. De-escalating stage which stage four, calm words are utilised (threatening languages or war songs are discarded). The improvement stage, which is stage five, words of peace and negotiations are the order of the day (the military ought to key into this strategy as guns do not win battles). The last stage which is the transformation stage is the sixth stage, is a period of peacebuilding where utterances of troubleshooting is used and employed so that the conflict does not relapse. It is essential to emphasise that the concept of peacebuilding was popularised by an Egyptian born diplomat and former UN Secretary General who suitably defined it as a strategy for intensifying and fortifying peace so as to avoid a relapse of conflicts.

The following are conflict progressive stages:

1. Stage One: Emergence of a Problem;
2. Sides Form/Taking or taking sides;

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3. Positions Harden;
4. Communication Breakdown;
5. Committing Resources to the Course of the Issue;
6. Conflict Goes outside the District;
7. Perception of the Conflict Becomes Distorted;
8. Sense of Crisis Emerges;
9. OutcomesVary[4].

On the part of Conflict Mode Instrument, five styles are itemised as follows:

i. Competing, that is being assertive and uncooperative;
ii. Collaborating, that is being both assertive and cooperative;
iii. Compromising, being intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness;
iv. Avoiding, that is being unassertive and uncooperative;
v. Accommodating, that is being unassertive and cooperative[5].

From the foregoing, it is clear that stages of conflict differ from one perception to another. But one thing is central, that is the fact that when communication breaks down, conflict becomes more escalated.

It is important to note that conflict is not entirely negative. There are positive effects of conflict as well, as these scholars enumerate:

1. It encourages people to exercise extra efforts and to be hardworking. In situations of conflict, people use their skills, abilities and talents.

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2. It might please specific psychological prerequisites such as creations and dominances, aggressiveness, egos and esteems and consequently gives opportunities for productive uses and release of violent urges.
3. It offers constructive and innovative ideas. For example, the benefits that workforce receives these days are the results of the organisation union conflicts in the last few decades[6].
4. Conflicts that play roles in social changes which guarantee interpersonal and inter-group dynamics stay fresh and insightful of contemporary interests and realities, in such a way that it adds diversities to personal organisational lives. Otherwise, occupational/vocational lives would be tedious and boring.
5. It facilitates mutual understanding of the issues among people in conflict and triggers improved coordination among managements and individuals. Furthermore, it improves intergroup relations and accords by permitting channels for group members to reason and argue their necessities in the groups. The wellbeing of the group generally degenerates without intragroup conflict.
6. Conflicts amongst groups generate fragments among the groups and enhance collaboration as they are making efforts to actualize general aims of the groups for the outcomes of these conflicts[6].
7. Motivate creativity: conflicts are utilised by various organizations as an opportunity to explore for efficient solution to problems. Group members can as well be motivated by conflicts through innovation, while taking into account problems from various viewpoints.

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8. Respect and share thought: It is an opening for group members to give their perspectives with people of other groups. Conflicts can unite members of a group to vigorously pay attention to one another and share ideas and encounters.
9. Conflicts serve to discourage premature group decision making.
10. Conflicts allow for the understanding of the concerns of parties, causing agreements that benefit the interests of both parties with their organisations and relationships[6].

With the above items, it is now clear why conflicts are not entirely negative. Conflicts help in bringing peace to societies as far as they are well handled.

2.1.2 Concept of Negotiation as a Means of Conflict Management

Conflict management simply means an approach of involving the conflict stakeholders and actors to comprehend their differences[3]. Contextually speaking, conflict management involves mediation and negotiation. Negotiation is a kind of conflict management strategy whereby the conflicting parties teach one another regarding their interests and needs, with the aim of unearthing a way out that will benefit the two parties[7]. Generally, negotiation can be seen as a voluntary bargaining. Consequently, negotiation, point towards the establishment of interaction between the conflicting parties, recognising issues to be tackled, and deciding the way deliberations should be done and pursuing how to motivate individual party to achieve fulfilment in order for them to arrive at ultimate endorsement for agreement and implementation[1].

However, a negotiation can break down, once one of the parties make attempt to obtain information from the opponent for undertaking arbitration or litigation, thus breaching

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methodological agreements and engage in lying[1]. Negotiation is a peaceful means of resolving conflict. According to Article 33 of UN charter, negotiation is one of the preventive diplomatic tools for amicable settlements. Others in this category are as follows: enquiry, good office, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, and regional arrangement[8].

Negotiation is normally a talk between conflicting parties with the intention to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement. It is very important to note that negotiation must not be face to face according to International Alert[9]. It other words, negotiation could be via phone, zoom and other social media.

2.1.2.1 Twelve Important Negotiation Skills

1. Communication (nonverbal cues and verbal skills;
2. Active listening;
3. Emotional intelligence (ability to control one's emotions and recognise others' feelings);
4. Expectation management;
5. Patience;
6. Adaptability;
7. Persuasion (a negotiator should be able to persuade the other party to agreeing to his or interest);
8. Planning;
9. Integrity;
10. Rapport building;
11. Problem-solving;

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12. Decision-making[10].

2.1.1.2 Principles of Negotiation

From Harvard Approach that was developed, there are four principles that guide Negotiation[11]. They include:

1. People: separate the people from the problem
2. Interests: focus on interest (needs, desires, expectations), not position
3. Options: generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do
4. Criteria: insist that the result be based on some objective standard, such as law, custom as kinds of criteria to be used.

2.1.2.3 Negotiation Strategy

There are three basic strategies accordingly[12]. They are as follows:

1. Competitive bargaining: This is also called hard bargaining, distributive, positional zero sum, or win/lose bargaining. A domination strategy in which the competitive bargainer tends to treat negotiation as a kind of contest to be won. It focuses on immediate gain and is less concerned with the future relationship with the opponent.
2. Comprising bargaining: This is also known as cooperative, soft bargaining, win some, lose some, or give and take bargainer only compromises because he has to, the comprising negotiator does so as a matter of principle, and concerned with the future relationship with the opponent. The negotiators must in this context, trade off something in order to get something with both outcome and process.
3. Collaborative bargaining: This is also called integrative or problem-solving bargaining, interest bargaining or positive- sum or win bargaining. Both parties

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seek maximise creatively not only their own gain but one of the other parties as well by exploring mutual action that can satisfy their respective interests without anointing to compromise if possible.

2.1.2.4 Negotiation/Mediation

Mediators assist parties in conflict to find solution to their differences. Mediation is the involvement of an acceptable third party in a negotiation or conflict who has restricted or no authorisation or power to make decision but helps the conflicting parties to reach a voluntarily and jointly acceptable settlement of issues in dispute[13].

Three types of mediation have been outlined as follows:

(1) Social network mediators: These are people who are requested by invitation to interfere due to their close relationships to the conflicting parties;

(2) Authoritative mediators: Due to their status of authority, i.e. positions of respect and recognition in the society; and

(3) Independent mediators: These are 'independent' as implied, they are unbiased, impartial and neutral, of which their objectivity should be skilled since they do not know any of the conflicting parties, thus, they are supposed to be much more professional[13].

In general, mediation and negotiation are connected. Mediators do assist in the negotiation procedure especially when there is a bottleneck or gridlock. Regardless of the category of mediators as stated above, all of them essentially target a goal and that is to assist the conflicting parties in finding solution to their dispute.

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2.1.2.5 Negotiation in the Context of Multi-Tract Diplomacy

In what it is called Multi-Track Diplomacy, there are suggestion of nine tracts for peacebuilding to be effective[14]. They comprise government, non-governmental/professional organisations, private citizens, business, research, activism, training and education, funding, religion and communication.

Peacebuilding comprises having structures put in place for eliminating the root causes of conflict as it has been summed up as aiming at establishing economic, social, political and environmental strategies essential to make long-lasting peace feasible. This is not questioning the construction of make-shift or provisional shelter[1].

Peacebuilding may be pre-conflict or post conflict. The pre-conflict attempts to avert a conflict from occurring. While the post conflict is responsive and comprises reconstruction of societal infrastructure, the rehabilitation of people who are displaced and reconciliation or joint collaboration. Peacebuilding is fundamentally non-coercive and includes all attempts needed to make the environment conducive in order for peace to reign[15].

Due to its non-coercive measures of interference, it presents the conflicting parties the opportunity to come together and deliberate on ways of adopting peace. Although peacebuilding is perhaps the best approach that aims at procuring peace in the world, this strategy has not been properly looked after in international relations[15].

Peacebuilding could be explained as the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in non-violent ways and to transform the structural conditions

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that generate deadly conflict. Peacebuilding is not primarily concerned with conflict behaviour but addresses the underlying context and attitudes that give rise to violence such as unequal access to employment, discrimination, unacknowledged and unforgiven responsibility for past crimes, prejudice, mistrust, fear, hostility between groups. It is therefore low-profile work that in theory can continue through all stages of a conflict[4]. Though, likely to be strongest either in the latter stages after a settlement and a reduction in violent behaviour or in earlier stages before any open violent has occurred.

Peacebuilding is utilized in description of work that has peace –enhancing outcomes, and it attaches great importance to how things happen[16]. Put differently, it is about the processes as well as the activity itself and its outcomes. Taking a case study of rebuilding of a bridge in Kabul after it was destroyed during a fight. It could be described simply as reconstruction. However, the UN agency involved saw the opportunity and set out deliberately to develop the peacebuilding potential of the situation by involving the previously conflicting parties jointly in the planning, the physical work and future maintenance and control[15].

2.1.3 Women

In the biblical and historical accounts, women have been the causes of conflict on one hand, and on the other hand, have been part of resolving the conflict for the good of their families and societies they found themselves. Women therefore, have been part of peacebuilding from the very beginning. Accordingly, conflicts are caused by these four factors: opposing value system, struggle over scarce resources, emotional needs of individuals and groups and mismanagement of information[1].

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In support of Peacebuilding, the Platform for Action and the Beijing declaration adopted at the World conference on women in 1995 described itself as an agenda for women's empowerment. Under its section on women in Armed Conflict, six objectives aimed at increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision levels were fully stated. It has urged governments, regional and international institutions to integrate gender perspective in the resolution of armed/other conflict and foreign occupation[17].

In the same vein, Millennium Development Goals –stresses on the importance of nations, taking cognizance of the goal three of (MDGS) which hinges on gender inequality and the empowerment of women. The prime target of the achievement of these goals are the inclusion of women/girls in education, equal access employment, recruitment and representation of women within decision making positions. Though in spite of the fact that Millennium Development Goals did not specifically address questions of violence and conflicts, Heads of states had recognized that positive post conflict intervention and by implication post conflict disaster are essentials to progress towards attaining the MDGS thus, women remain veritable tools in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding[17].

Furthermore, the United Nation Security Council held on October, 31st, 2000 promotes peace and security from women perspective. The UNSCR 1325 Resolution addressed women's role in conflicts and peace processes, the impacts of war on women, and as well advocates for the protection of women's and children after conflicts. It is vehemently against gender-based violence, impunity in diverse states, and calls for the prosecution of those responsible for genocide, and other sexual related crimes against women and girls. It encouraged states to consider women's inclusion in post –conflict

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reforms like disarmament, security, judicial, constitutional and electoral processes. The resolution recognizes for the first time, the role of women in conflict not as victims but as actors in the prevention and resolution of conflict with the chance of equal participation in peacebuilding and decision making[17].

In same vein, (CEDAW), Convention on Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women, an international convention adopted by the United Nations of General assembly on December 18, 1979 is supportive of women movement towards peacebuilding. It is regarded as international bill of rights for women. The Convention is actually divided into six sections with a total of 30 (thirty Articles). It was established on September 3, 1981, and has been ratified by 189 states. And by signing the convention, nations agree to adopt a number of steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women including - (a) to incorporate the principle of men and women, their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women, (b) tribunal and other public institution, to ensure effective protection of women against discrimination and (c) to ensure the elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by organizations or enterprises[17].

CEDAW and Resolution 1325 fit together as the first provides the overarching legal structure for the inclusion and protection of women while the latter enforces gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding, and seeks to expand the mainstreaming into a sustainable structure for the advancement of women. “CEDAW enriches resolution, 1325 by providing sustainable normative guidance on 1325-relative interventions. Moreover, Resolution 1325 can broaden the scope of CEDAW’s application by clarifying the relevance of women’s human rights standards among State who are in

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conflicts though not parties to CEDAW or in relation to non- state actors and international organizations"[18]. Notably, women in diverse countries of the world have grossly developed the habit of engaging in peacebuilding in their social, ethnic, community, religious, political, economic, sets-up so as to restore peace, normalcy, and promote equitable treatment among human race in general[19].

Peacemaking embraces a conflict resolution strategy that matches into asymmetric conflict through which powerful actors put in possessions and resourcefulness into the conflict[9]. On the contrary, peacebuilding is perceived as an affiliated method in which structures that remove causes of conflict must be found, peacebuilding is usually time-consuming due to the involvement of slower procedures of psycho-social rebuilding and planning of ex-combatants and parties for forgiveness and reconstruction. Reconciliation may be difficult to accomplish in a period of, maybe five years'[10].

Peacekeeping turns out to be a success when these four features are attended to: values, personnel, functions and context. This implies that the personnel need to be fully equipped and received by their hosts; the rules and the directives ought to be clearly spelt out, which need to be fundamental to the conception. The responsibilities must be in order with UN guidelines which involves being the guardian of peace during the period of ceasefire.

Regarding the context, there is need for a qualified and capable authority to make the decision to create a peace keeping operation and make prepare necessary provisions.

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In addition, the consent of the hosts must be sought before peacekeeping becomes binding. The proposition of host nation consensus also functions in reverse, that is the withdrawal of consensus usually necessitates the withdrawal of the peacekeepers[20].

In order for conflict not to reoccur, it is the responsibility of peacebuilding. The United Nations (UN) and continental institutions such as European Union (EU), African Union (AU) need to be more insightful and proactive. Traditional leaders in the instance of Nigeria also need to be engaged, not standing by until a dispute arises that would consume the people.

Conflict does not really mean war. It means lack of cooperation between two persons or parties. When two persons fail to cooperate, the possibility abounds that they may reconcile when the conflict is resolved amicably. It however, lingers if it is not well handled; thereby necessitating fight or waging of war as it were.

Peacemaking embraces a conflict resolution strategy that matches asymmetric conflict in which powerful actors put in possessions and resourcefulness into the conflict. This is contrary to peacebuilding which is affiliative in method, implying that peacebuilding examines the root causes of conflict and proffer alternate means to conflict.

Peacekeeping is purely a military presence whereby the conflicting parties must have agreed on a ceasefire so that the soldiers' duty will be to enforce a temporary peace while negotiations are going on. Peacekeeping helps in avoiding the degeneration of conflict situation. The personnel need to be fully prepared and received by their hosts. The rules and principles must be spelt out which must be fundamental to the conception.

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The roles of the peacekeepers should be in order with UN principles, which comprises being the guardian of peace during the period of ceasefire[20].

In Multi-Track Diplomacy, there are nine tracts which have been suggested for peacebuilding to be successful. They comprise government, non-governmental/professional organisations, private citizens, business, research, activism, training and education, funding, religion and communication[14].

3 **Government:** The government is very necessary because it has the law enforcement agencies like the police and related bodies to make investigations and recommend what measures should be taken for peace to reign. The government cannot manage alone[21].

4 **Non-Governmental/Professional Organisations:** The government needs the goodwill of non-governmental/professional organisations like NUJ, NMA, ASUU, in fact, of all professionals. They are expected to give technical advice and suggestions to government that will lead to sustainable peace[22].

5 **Business:** Business men and women in the private sector are always there to help the government in fighting conflict. They donate where and when necessary, in order to maintain relevance in the society. Banks and big private industries have helped in providing equipment to the police for conflict management and policing[23].

6 **Private Citizens:** Private citizens also play a vital role in conflict resolution. They give personal advice and financial lift to the government or the masses to help handle one conflict or the other. These private citizens could be retired presidents, civil servants and just very wealthy citizens[23].

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7 **Research, Training and Education:** Research, training and education are vital for development. In fact, they are proactive in the sense that when research is done, it helps to prevent conflicts. When people are trained and retrained in their given skills and professions, the society gains more as less conflict is recorded. So goes, to education. When a people are well educated, they are wiser and think better and difficult to be misled even by the politicians[24].

8 **Activism:** Activism is important to remind the government of its responsibilities. Activists must not be seen as troublemakers. They should be seen as troubleshooters because they are really fighting for peace. Some governments of the world, Nigeria inclusive do not act till they are pushed through protests on the streets by unions and citizens – requesting for their rights[25].

9 **Religion:** Religion is very powerful because many citizens see their religions as their second life. For easier conflict resolution, the government liaise with the traditionalists, Muslim, and Christian leaders to encourage them to preach and urge their faithfuls to embrace peace. They, the religious leaders have the power and position to preach for peace and justice. None of the religions preaches hate and violence, at least on paper[26].

10 **Funding:** Conflict management is an expensive venture that requires heavy funding. The funding to execute conflict and war is so huge that the government sometimes demand for external funding from local and international donors. The essence of this tract is that money is like blood in the business of conflict resolution. Take an example of executing peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and even negotiation[27].

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11 **Communication:** The media comes to mind here. The radio, television and print media are to be relied on to give impartial reports of events of things during the process of managing conflict. Of course, in the recent time, the New Media (also called the social media) has added a lot in the dissemination of information though a lot of persons abuse it with fake news which in itself causes conflict[28].

On the tract one, a given government irrespective of the type – presidential, parliamentary, monarchical is basically a group that comes together to make positive changes so that things will be much better for the citizenry that elected them to office. The president or prime minister or king or queen does not impose changes on the people. Rather, they brainstorm with the ministers, or parliamentarians or advisers. In the course of doing this, opinions are exchanged, disagreements are recorded. However, at the end, it is the final resolution after all the long hectic processes that matters as far as the brainstorming session or sessions have yielded fruit that will affect the subjects much positively socially, economically and politically. Government is the world of official diplomacy, policymaking, and peacebuilding as expressed through formal aspects of the governmental process. In the course of policymaking and peacebuilding mechanisms, be it, pre or post, it is evident that an act of brainstorming is going on in the bid to making positive change since change is dynamic[21].

For track two, (non-governmental/professional organisations), the people involved engage in conflict resolution, attempting to analyse, prevent, resolve, and manage international conflicts by non-state actors. This suggests the fact that change should not be left alone for state-actors alone, for instance, the government and its security agents like the police and the military and other paramilitary agencies. Tract three, (Business),

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is very key since it deals with commerce, a sector that comprises like minds whose contributions in peacebuilding which counts as integral part of brainstorming, provide economic opportunities, international friendship and understanding, informal channels of communication, and support for other peacemaking activities[23].

It is common to see private citizens (tract four) forming different groups based on their expertise all for the purpose of positive change to the entire state and the world at large. Tracts five and six (5. Research, training and education; 6. Activism respectively), are themselves umbrellas of individuals who come together to brainstorm on how learning, on one hand, and advocacy, on the hand could aid a better world. That translates to positive change without which the society may not move forward technologically, socially and politically.

Religion, which is put as tract seven has helped immensely in transforming the world in its own way – morally, especially. Irrespective of what religion, it is normally a set of persons who believes that through their beliefs, they could effect positive change for the society at large to benefit. In Nigeria, for instance, religion though having been used negatively on many occasions by selfish leaders and their adherents, has no doubt contributed to the growth of the country's moral and social upbringing. Through religion, the citizenry are educated on the needs to be law abiding. So, religion plays a vital role by ensuring that peace reigns by preaching peace and harmony to the government in power. Because religious leaders are influential, oftentimes, the world leaders listen to their advice. The pontiff in the Vatican has always used his good offices to preach peace to the world[26]. That counts as a change to the world.

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The track nine, Communication, encompasses, 'Communications and the Media, or peacemaking through information. This is the realm of the voice of the people: how public opinion gets shaped and expressed by the media – print, film, video, radio, electronic systems, the arts.' In this twenty-first century, the social media no doubt is counted and it is arguably the most used of all the media. The traditional media mentioned in the quote are becoming more and more useful in the common time. The elders in the society still depend on them for their daily information gathering. The good number of the global population now use the social media. The positive changes social media – Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and their likes have made in the recent times outshine their demerits. Everyone witnessed the local and international outcry that was raised against the administration of President Buhari when he recently placed a restriction on Nigerians using the Twitter. It is argued that the Twitter platform is a very effective medium for current news while they are still very 'fresh and hot' for the traditional media (TV, radio, and print, the three that help make a lot of information available for the elderly and those who are not quite internet prone)[28].

The Igbo have a common proverb, 'If many urinate in unison, it forms more form'. The Igbo use a lot of proverbs in the course of brainstorming. It is a cultural way of conveying messages in a way the people understand it most or best. It is usually done by a group of kinsmen, the *umunna*. The cultural significance of this segment of the paper is explicated in the notion that '*Ama ala* actually implies the 'kindred', meanwhile *umunna* signifies the kinsmen. So, *Ama ala* simply means the place wherever the people dwell, while *umunna* denotes the people themselves[29]. To put it differently, the location where a people inhabits and the people themselves are equivalent to each other.

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This could be corroborated in Achebe's trilogy where the kinsmen meet in different occasions as a group with a uniform aim of/for the purpose of making a significant change that will suit the entire community. This could be seen in *Things Fall Apart's* Umuafia when the kinsmen meet from time to time to brainstorm over how the white men could be tackled. For *No Longer At Ease's* brainstorming sessions, we see the kinsmen in Lagos of Umuafia's Progressive Union brainstorming in few occasions on the plight of their son, Obi Okonkwo who had involved himself in bribery on his return from England having been sponsored by the Umuofia Progressive Union on the ground that Obi would later pay them back after sometime. Same is on *Arrow of God's*Umuaro's kinsmen meeting from time to time to brainstorming on the rumoured white men coming to Umuaro and much later, brainstorming on how their chief priest, Eze Ulu can be bye passed culturally for the good of the community of Umuaro[30].

In each of the examples given in the Achebe's trilogy, the kinsmen's series of brainstorming (in the form of meetings upon meetings held in market squares except those in *No Longer At Ease*), the outcomes of the meetings are usually changes that benefit the worldview for the various communities of the Igbo domain that Achebe wrote about[30, 31].

On the research taking to ethnographic perspective, it is important to make some explication of what ethnographic research implies. Ethnography was invented from the Greek complex terminology 'ethnos graphein' which means 'folk/people' and 'writing'. Ethnography is an investigative ploy usually employed in the social sciences, particularly in a number of divisions of sociology and anthropology. Ethnography involves empirical data gathering on different cultures and human civilisations. It

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furthers equivalently claim that the collection of data is usually carried out via interviews, participant observation and questionnaires[32].

Therefore, ethnographic researches seek to learn about the place in which the people dwells and the development they have contributed to that place. The enquiries about the way and manner individuals make provision for housing, food, water and energy are likewise part of the studies. The custom of marriage and definitely, the kind of language the population converse with is also part of ethnographic research methodology[33].

Meanwhile, ethnographical study is not assessed in the sense of logical perspective, positivity and emotionality, for instance, there is no universal agreement on the standards of evaluation. There are five conditions that may assist ethnographers in their investigation study which comprise:

(1) Substantive contribution: This is questioning the contribution of research to the knowledge of social life;
(2) Aesthetic merit: The way at which the research is successful aesthetically;
(3) Reflectivity: These are answers to the question about the way the researcher got his report. By reflexivity, the question is whether the researcher possess sufficient self-exposure and self-awareness for the people reading to pass their judgments concerning the perspective;
(4) Impact: This concentrates on the emotional intellectual implication of the study on the ethnographer. and
(5) Expresses a reality: This searches for ways to deal with the cultural credibility, individual/communal and social intelligence of the veracity of the people[34].

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A usual type a researcher can embrace is genealogical technique of strategy in transcribing data from the interview. By genealogical technique, an ethnographer uncovers and documents connection of kinship, descent and marriage, with the aid of symbols and diagrams. Questionnaires are being used to assist in the discovery of native philosophies and perspectives. This is a form of authentic instrument for the measurement of variations in people or groups researches. According to a scholar's opinion which says that there is no reasonable report of data which can be accomplished without excellent control of the language of the communities of research, an ethnographer that does not have an excellent control of the language of his area of research is compared to a researcher who studies ancient clans of Japan or China or even on the life of Mohammed in Arabia and not proficient in Japanese, Chinese and Arabic languages respectively. It has been concluded that such study cannot be authoritative[35].

This study agrees with the above, simply because the dependence on translators might not be as productive, which might be due to the translators finding it hard to transmit effectively for the parties involved, those being studied and the researcher.

In some way, the above has been corroborated with the rationale that the major concern of a linguist in research circumstance is not what speakers say, but on pragmatics and semantics. This simply means that with an excellent control of any particular language, prominence will not be laid on syntactic, instead in connotation of words and contextuality too. Furthermore, this means that the researcher ought to be vast in the culture of the population of the study as their cultural qualities which have effect on their thoughts, body languages and realities. This submission was aptly underlined when in

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semantics, directly reflecting the substances of culture that was found, whereas in the discipline of pragmatics, cultural behaviour is directly dealt with[36].

Qualitative research is usually employed for policy and programme assessment study because it can respond to specific significant interrogations more effectively and efficiently than quantitative methods. This is the specific case to understand why and how particular results were accomplished (not only whatever that was accomplished), but providing answers to questions that are important concerning importance, unintentional impacts and effects of programmes like: how reasonable were the expectations? How did the processes operate? Were major actors capable of carrying out their responsibilities? Were any unintentional impacts on the program? Qualitative methods possess the benefit of consenting to more diversified responses, also the capability to adjust to innovative developments or concerns in the course of the research procedure itself. However, qualitative research can be costly and slow to carry out, numerous disciplines of research engage qualitative methods which have been particularly established to offer more cost-efficient, succinct and timely results[33].

Qualitative data is concerned precisely with individuals' encounters, also about their feelings and clarifications of the circumstances they get involve in. therefore, qualitative technique opposes quantitative technique which is concerned majorly with numerical configuration, permitting patterns, trends and correlations to be identified[37]. Qualitative technique utilises primary and secondary data. Primary data comprises interviews, questionnaires and observation methods; while secondary data includes information and figures generated by other write-ups from newspapers, private companies, books, television, diaries and letters. Qualitative technique examines the reasons for and how

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decisions are made, not only where, when and what. Qualitative research is a system of examination arrogated to numerous various fields, conventionally in the social sciences, and as well as in market study and further perspectives. To conclude at reasons for and how decisions are made, qualitative researchers seek to collect in-depth knowledge of human character and the motives that control such character[37].

There are different ways to observing and participating in research. The means of participating and observing are different extensively from one setting to another. Participant observation is an approach of reflexive understanding, not a particular approach of observing.

Observation technique can be likened to other methods of collecting data and it is more beneficial due to the documentation of information regardless of a circumstance, an incident or community as the possible occurrence. The shortcomings of observation technique were examined and the conclusion is that a subject might put on hold the activity that the researcher observed leaving the investigation unfinished and disadvantageous to the study thus causing restriction to information[38].

Regarding other methods of survey (questionnaire and interview) and their effectiveness, it's been noted that the main flaw of the questionnaire method is the data it offers in correlation to any research question is restricted to the penned down answers of the respondents to predetermined inquiries. This is different from an interview whereby both the presence of the interviewer and the interviewee has the operational benefit of making sure that questionnaire is well conveyed and comprehended before the answers of respondents are recorded'[38].

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With the inadequacy of questionnaire, it is nonetheless very significant in gathering information that concerns individual beliefs, perceptions, motivations, feelings, anticipations or plans for the future and past behaviour. The is due to the reality that a questionnaire may be transmitted by mail or be circulated from person to person, not even having the researcher physically available. Conversely, questionnaires have larger respondents and are cost effective. Anonymity is an added advantage of questionnaire in the similar sense as interview's value which does not limit illiterates from partaking in a researcher's evaluation. However, questionnaire requires capability to reason, read and write, likewise interviewees can be translated for in the instance the researcher does not converse in the same language[38].

2.1.3.1 Women's Human Rights Globally According to Amnesty International

According to Amnesty International, New Zealand was the first country in the world that gave her women the right to vote in a national election in 1893. This movement grew to spread to all other parts of the world. Today, women's suffrage has become a right under the Convention on the Elimination on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)[39].

However, despite this development, there are still many parts of the world where women do not have the right to vote and be voted for. For instance, in Syria, women have been effectively been cut off from political engagements. In Pakistan, though voting is a constitutional right, yet in some areas, women have been prohibited from voting due to powerful person in their communities using patriarchal local customs to prevent them from exercising their suffrage right. And in Afghanistan, authorities have decided to

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introduce mandatory voting screening at polling stations, hence making voting difficult for women in conservative areas where most women cover their faces in public[39].

On sexual and reproductive rights, Amnesty International supports that women and girls should have sexual and reproductive rights. This entails they are entitled to equal access to health services like contraception and self-abortion to choose if, when and who they would marry or will marry and as well decide if they want to have children, how many, when and with whom. Women should be able to live without fear of gender-based violence inclusive of rape, sexual violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), forceful marriage, forced pregnancy, forced abortion or forced sterilisation[39].

Although there is a long to go for women to enjoy these rights, for instance, many women and girls globally are still unable to access safe abortions, yet in several countries, people who want or need to end pregnancies are usually forced to make an impossible choice.

As it lies, in Argentina, Amnesty International has campaigned with grassroots human rights defenders to change the country's strict abortion laws. There have been some major steps forward but women and girls are still being harmed, which means they cannot make choices about their own bodies. Amnesty International has also campaigned successfully in Ireland and Northern Ireland where abortion was recently decriminalised after decades of lobbying by Amnesty and other rights groups[39].

In the case of Poland, as well as over 200 human and women's rights organisations from across the globe, Amnesty has co-signed a joint statement protesting the 'Stop Abortion' bill. What Amnesty and other organisations try to achieve is the fact that every woman

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has the right to abort if such a woman feels that she does not have the desire to have a baby at a particular point in time. In other words, women's rights also include the women determining how their bodies and life generally should be managed[39].

In the area of freedom of movement, the right to move around freely as one pleases not just within one's country but also to visit others should be encouraged for women who over the years have been subjected to being checked by their male counterparts for religious reasons, for instance. A case study of Saudi Arabia, where recently there has been a successful campaign for women to drive which was previously banned for several decades. But despite this huge progress, the authorities in Saudi Arabia still persecute and detain many women's rights activists who protest peacefully for their rights[40].

2.1.3.2 Women in Peacebuilding Around the World

Colombia: Women and Peacebuilding

The country Colombia was in war for over 60 years. The beginning of the conflict was at the period of *La Violencia,* a time when the two major political groups, the Conservatives and the Liberals, proclaimed war against one another which left many people dead, and this resulted to displacement, hence leading to new owners occupying the land[41].

The time of *La Violencia* terminated with the establishment of *El FrenteNacional*, a politically motivated arrangement where power was distributed between Conservatives and Liberals. A scenario where the influential entered into a pact, though many persons were left out of the arrangement, resulting to some of the members of the previous

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liberal guerrilla utilizing arms, while several new guerrillas emerge in the sixties and seventies[41].

And so in order to react to the aggression, the government and the landowners made the decision to establish and prepare through training of self-defence armed groups. This was done with the connivance of the Colombian Army. The outcome resulted in higher intensity in the violence and continually grow, because self-defence groups were engaged with people dealing in drugs. The supposedly self-defence groups transformed into paramilitaries and shortly became uncontrollable. After that, roughly 1998, the paramilitary troupes became united under the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia). In the 1980s and the first part of 1990s became particularly fiercely aggressive basically due to trafficking of drug which has increased drastically. This made the state declaring a war against drugs, and the response from those trafficking drugs was very harsh and this resulted to the death of many civilians[41].

By the late 80's, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) who took part in the trade of drug via the dominance they had on the coca-producing areas, which intensified the armed conflict much more. The ELN (National Liberation Army) attempted to avoid being involved in trafficking of drug till afterwards year 2000. In the light of this scenario, several rounds of peace talk were held between the president of Belisario Betancour and that of Andrés Pastrana in 1982, but women remained extremely left out from the official negotiating roundtables. One woman who got involved within their formal negotiations was Maria Emma Mejia, and that was in the course of Pastrana peace talks[41]. Nonetheless, she was merely a member of the government bargaining team and later removed from such process not quite long

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thereafter. Above all, it was not evident that in the course of her short term at the negotiating roundtable, she asserted any specific agenda on women or applied a gender-sensitive method to peacemaking[41,42].

A number of these peace processes became a success particularly in disarming and demobilizing personal armed groups. Some Guerrilla groups like the M-19 (The 19th of April Movement) and the EPL (Popular Liberation Army) were reinserted into society, due to a conduction of an election, that elections were conducted for a Constituent Assembly and the M-19 triumphed. Numerous women were involved in the Constituent Assembly, with some M-19 one-time soldiers. The pioneer effort at the negotiating table with the FARC similarly underwent some achievements previous to the ultimate break down. The guerrilla troupe concurred to an agreement of bilateral ceasefire under the presidency of Belisario Betancur in 1984. Nevertheless, no durable pacts materialised, because the government was not ready to put into action the projected modifications and FARC refused to concede its weapons[41].

Notably, the Qiintin Lame guerrilla and the EPL movements became demobilized in 1990, and a few part of the ELN, the *Corriente de RenovaciónSocialista*, was similarly demobilized in 1994. Although, the bulk of the ELN as well as that of FARC could not reach a compromise with the government reach, hence the armed conflict with these troupes increased all through the 1990s, and all attempts at making peace with the ELN and FARC from 1998 to 2002, in the Pastrana years similarly collapsed. Thus, at the end of irregular peace attempts in the course of 20 years, the government could merely declare fractional achievement in the demobilization of a number of the smaller troops for several previous peace processes did not result in a lasting peace[41].

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Notwithstanding, when President Alvaro Uribe was elected, after the year 2002, his administration made the decision to utilise the whole of its military force in attacking and defeating the guerrillas. And due to this application of strength, the guerrillas became relegated to some other terrains, but were not fully demolished, therefore still had a powerful influence on the nation. The government of Alvaro Uribe likewise established a process of demobilization with the paramilitaries, however the procedure was not actually a success. The paramilitaries continually used their power to intimidate citizens, operated using diverse identifies, still their configurations continued to be actually similar[43].

Further, when Juan Manuel Santos replaced Uribe the former president, he promised to carry on with the harsh policies of Uribe concerning the guerrillas. And he however championed his course Uribe hardline policies, but he surprised his people, for he created laws that helped victims redeem their self-esteem and restored properties to people who were compelled to abscond their territories. Simultaneously, President Santos started off directly with peace discussions with the FARC. In the discussions, the matters of victims and became fundamental concerns and gender component, still President Santos negated the inclusiveness of women in the government negotiating team[43].

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2.1.3.3 Women as Peace-Builders

Years of conflict toughened the women of Colombia to coordinate themselves further, for they in oneness voiced out their renunciation opposing the various modes of violence meted on them and had used diverse measures to, protest in opposition to the destruction which the armed conflict inflicted on their whole populace, and upon women most especially[43].

These women from their ethnicities, political parties and religion independently protested as mothers and united against war. Ruminating on others, they adopted a respectful speech for human rights and life which brought a principled element to political deliberations on the usage of violence[43].

Having organized themselves from local level to the national level, they stopped their sons from being recruited at local level for the paramilitaries. They equally established non-violent measures, which includes dismantlement of military stations with no usage of coerciveness so as to make armed troupes get out of their region. They created certain national and international network, among which is the National Women's Network that advocated for the women inclusion all through the levels of political involvement, in order to end gender-based violence amongst others[43].

These women were also forerunners in the arrangement of nationwide demonstrations to ensure their opinions are expressed and heeded. One of the members of INDEPAZ, Gloria Nieto, stated that in their pioneer large demonstrations that happened in the year 1998 and 1999. The women led the processes and the strategy was meant to be in resistance through the demonstrations with a voice which symbolised the complete social spheres for peace[44].

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Severally, these, women had constantly protested in order to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflicts. On May 1990, one of their pioneer enormous demonstrations happened and it was termed *"Exorcicemos la MuerteyAlumbremos la Vida"* (i. e. to allow exorcism of death as well as putting a bit of light in live). Also, other occasions too, the women were able to urge conflicting parties to come for negotiations, but irrespective of the continuous pressure and constitution for peace-building, they remain rejected by the government and guerrillas from every high-levelled peace negotiations[44].

And though, the government of Pastrana had a short-term exemption when it named Maria Emma Mejia a negotiator at the commencement of the Caguán Peace discussions. However, Mejía was soon withdrawn shortly before the peace process began. While in the course of the Caguan discussions, the FARC solitary appointed a woman, (Mariana Perez) to team up with others in the peace process, though a non-member of the official negotiations, but merely coopted as a thematic committee, which at the end had not much control over all the peace processes. For she, Perez was merely incorporated in the peace discussions following the pressure the women in Civil Society had put on the FARC on their ill-act of negligence on the inclusion of matters concerning gender-based violence in their thematic Committee[41].

Notwithstanding, it is significant in noting that regardless of the little parts played, the women along with a number of others included in thematic committees turned out to make the negotiators to sketchily centre on women. While the peace discussions progress, for instance, they pressed for the inclusion of an exceptional public hearing on women's matters as fragment of a larger agenda of pubic discussions which were organised between the civil society troops and the FARC. It was in June, year 2000 that

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the public hearing happened and it assisted in showing women's strengths and competences in resolving conflicts in Colombia[43].

It is noteworthy that women were able put forward more subdivisions of civil society to the roundtable, because, as history had it, neither the government nor the FARC regarded the requests of civil society as essential to the processes of the negotiation, nor had there ever been an event invented to grant expression to women's requests as well as viewpoints on peace. It is of great significance, due to the fact that civil society is once again left out from contemporary negotiation roundtables, also, some openings are being allotted to them for participation. Among such openings are a website for the populace to make comments regarding the negotiation which took place in December 2012 at the National University, and this gave the citizens opportunities to make their contributions on matters for discussion by the FARC and Colombian Government[42].

The elongated procedure of armed conflict and peacebuilding allowed for women the capability to ponder on civic culture, democracy, forbearance, conflict resolution via the application of dialogue, the right to be distinct, the acceptance of pluralism and where institutions should be located, were all laid bare before them[44]. The new responsibility of women did protect people that ponder and took steps that resulted in the assembling of 25,000 Colombian women in a demonstration in the year 2002, when the negotiations with the FARC and President Pastrana was futile. One of their slogans was "No single man, nor a single woman, nor a single cent for war. We demand negotiations now!"[43]. This showcases a change in mentality of women since they had had a first-hand information of what their inclusion of being part of the resolution of peace in Columbia would add towards the development of the state.

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In their protest, these women put pressure on both the armed troops and the government, reiterating their disagreement with how the negotiations were terminated, and that they would persist to mount pressure until they guarantee peace was restored. These women therefore were head bent, still minding diverse obstacle they encountered went ahead to develop peaceful events and advocated for the termination of the conflict. They continued to pressurise the government for several years until the government was more engrossed in a military approach that would terminate the conflict. The strategies, and advocacy for peace, and in several instances had quite a number of outstanding achievements. Prominent among these achievements was the realization of past Senator Piedad Cordoba as the pioneer Afro-Colombian woman to be chosen Senator in Colombia. This singular woman did not finally utilize her position for selfish aggrandizement or interest rather she in that feat constantly negotiated with the FARC for the release of hostages, and the general restoration of peace in Colombia land[43].

And though these endeavours by senator Cordoba was paid for at a high cost, for she was finally on many occasions threatened, even to the point of being alleged of being part of guerrilla troupe in Colombia. The allegations resulted in her being removed from Congress when the Inspector General discovered that she was collaborating with the guerrillas. But in all these adopted mechanisms to silent her, she remained the advocate for peace restoration in her Colombian land[43].

However, it is difficult to verify a direct connection between the women pressurising the existing peace processes and the conflicting parties, even though there exist sufficient proof to put up an argument that the effort made by the women influenced the decision of Santos' government to make a move in the direction of a peaceful resolution of the

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conflict. It is particularly apparent concerning the work done by Senator Cordoba, who quietly worked to ensure that tons of hostages were released as well as getting the view of peaceful negotiations into the news, whereas the majority of the media supported the continuation of the war[43].

2.1.3.4 Women and Peacebuilding in Rwanda

The country Rwanda is divided into two main ethnic groups namely- Tutsis and Hutus. The duo shared a history, language, and culture, thus had minimal differences. The Hutus were farmers while the Tutsis were cattlemen and regardless all things, they intermarried one another. Notably, their differences in ethnicity meant little or nothing, till the 1890s, in the course of their colonization by Germany. The Germans capitalized on their differences in ethnicity to indulge the Tutsis while it discriminated against Hutus. Rwanda was handed over to the Belgians in 1918, and continued the discrimination. The Hutus spearheaded a revolution and secured the country in 1959, therefore, there was a reversal in the abuse making the Tutsis to turn out to become the discriminatory objects. Lots of the Tutsis escaped to Uganda not too long in 1962, thereafter, Rwanda got her independence. By 1973, Major General Juvenal Habyarimana through a coup d'état. took over the nation, thus establishing a single party government system; which allowed just the members of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) take part in elections[45].

With the continuation of the discrimination against the Tutsis, those Rwandan Tutsis that were in exile began to oppose the formally authorised discrimination and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was established by the Ugandan refugees. The pioneer attack

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happened 1st of October, 1990. And it was the beginning of the Rwanda's civil war. A counter attack was started by Habyarimana's Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR). This armed conflict was ruthless and led to lots of causalities, resulting to one-half of the population of the country fleeing, while about two million Rwandan citizens left for other countries[45].

However, violence towards the Tutsis did not stop, due to this, a major attack was launched in 1993, and the French were supportive of Habyarimana leading to increase in the militarisation and finally, in August 1993, it resulted to the ratification of the Arusha accords. This resulted to a termination of the violence, yet there were still ethnic tensions. And in an attempt in addressing the problems, President Habyarimana had a meeting with the other presidents in Africa which resulted to them agreeing on a transition program and schedule to reinforce the peace accords. Unfortunately, when the President was returning to Rwanda, his plane crashed[46]. And barely one hour after the unfortunate incidence, the death of the President, the Hutu militia groups extremists reacted with systematised assaults on the Tutsi populace, followed by activities of Tutsi sympathizers, and human rights defenders[45].

On this note, the killings were responded to by the RFP and began to move towards the direction of the city's capital, with time, the Hutus government fled, therefore by July between 500,000 to one million people had been murdered. From analysis, serious atrocities were committed by both Hutus and the Tutsis but most of the victims were Tutsis. The genocide started in April 1994 and ended in July 1994 after the RPF took control of Kigali[45].

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Later on, the RFP established a coalition government and the reconstruction of the country began. The Women of Rwanda actually played diverse roles in the era of Rwanda Genocide as well as in the reconstruction of their country. Majorly, these roles executed by these women towards Rwanda peacebuilding, are categorized as follows:

i. **Rwanda Women Denigrated as Victims:** The genocide crime in Rwanda was disgusting and disturbing. During this notable era and incidence, women in Rwanda were mercilessly raped. According to Human rights organizations population, about two hundred and fifty thousand to five hundred thousand (250,000 - 500,000) women were victims of rape. It was stated that rape was used as a tactic of genocide and it was encouraged by the mass media and the officials of the government. For instance, Radio stations were advertising the rape and slaughter of Tutsi women. These activities were best exemplified during the genocide process when the Hutus were granted the opportunity to consider women partly as their war loots[47].

   Furthermore, men from Hutu who were married to women from Tutsis were alleged of being traitors, and were meant to believe that wives from Tutsi were bad, therefore women from Hutu were encouraged to prevent members of their family to get married to the Tutsis. Thus, the greater part of the casualties all through the genocide were women from Tutsi, for this ill-target of women from Tutsi began, previous to the genocide as Hutus were urged to do so due to their mythical beauty. The myth was utilised to make men from Hutu to be killing women from Tutsi so as to have access to the men. For ordinarily, several times, once a Tutsi marries a Hutu, RFP members usually murder their husbands, when

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such act is perpetrated, Tutsi widow would be forced to marry the RFP members who would automatically acquire the land of the deceased (husband) Hutus. Women from Hutu were likewise victims, they were made targets for marrying the Tutsis and were compelled to become pregnant so as to facilitate the reproduction of the Hutus. They were similarly raped, also, at several instances, their loved ones and husbands were killed[45]. Women especially the Tutsi suffered seriously during the period of genocide for both the RPF and the FARC allotted an extreme level of inhumanity on their personalities.

ii. **Rwanda Women Functioned as Perpetrators:** As stated by a report from USIP, a sizeable number of women inclusive of young females, were participating in the slaughtering in uncountable ways, they were mercilessly wreaking monstrous brutality on other men, women and children. The Rwandas Women's roles equally later shifted from directly participating in the genocide, to providing services to armed fighters, formenting the armed conflict and so on. Although some of the women did not get involved directly in the genocide, still they were unable to utilise their indirect influence over their sons and husbands to avert the cruelty[48]. And due to above stated act, "as of March 2010, almost two thousand women in Rwanda were imprisoned having been convicted of genocide-related offences"[48].

Women took part in the genocide through looting of the properties of the Tutsi, killing, disclosing the hiding locations of Tutsis to the executioners and giving their men folk support in order to perpetrate violence[47,48].

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Above all, women who were leaders such as the wife of Habyarimana, equally took part in the Genocide, she helped with developing policies to eliminate the Tutsis, as it was notable that the Rwandas women joined their male counterpart in the propagation of genocide in Rwanda.

iii. **Women in Rwanda as Peacebuilders:** The composition of women of Rwanda in the period of the genocide was very little. It was majorly because of an existing hostility between Tutsis and Hutus women. There were imagined hostilities between the women of Hutu and Tutsi due to different ways they were being treated and societal status (founded on their relationships with women), men, as an entity, did not totally unite as one to work towards putting an end to genocide[49].

Be it as it may, such mindset changed at the aftermath of the conflict, in that after the gruesome period of genocide, women jointly realized they needed to speak with one voice so as to generate or bring positive change into the country Rwanda. On this very scenario, they were later fully supported by their government in rebuilding their nation. And due to this, fifteen thousand and four hundred (15,400) women groups were brought into formation, and they later focused on providing economic stability, identification of diverse community needs and maintenance of stable peace[50].

With the above development, the Rwanda´s disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process kicked off in 1995, and about fifty-four thousand (54,000) combatants were demobilised and reintegrated into the society. Though women percentage as combatant in the conflict was in-decimal, less than 1%,

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making their marginalization a significant possibility, yet the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) was promoted, at least rhetorically, there was a necessity of "paying particular attention to women" during this process[51].

But in all these support process that the government promoted for Rwanda women, in the practical sense, no serious or special identifiable backing was given to soldiers who were females, for findings had it that just three hundred and forty-six (346) combatants that were females took part in the DDR process[52].

iv. **Levels of Institution of Justice in Rwanda:** In order not to close eyes to all atrocities committed during the period of genocide, an international special tribunal was instituted. This tribunal was of extreme importance to international law, it outrightly "brought forward the first case of rape as a war crime[53].

"In taking responsibility for crimes against women, Rwanda and the ICTR have proved an extraordinary awareness of the gendered dimensions of conflict"[54].

Upon the fact that liberty to rape as a strategy of war was persistently on the high side within the country, even though there exist rhetoric support and a bit of progress was achieved, the experience can nevertheless equal to the kind of justice the women of Rwanda expected and justly deserved[47].

In Rwanda, local justice mechanisms were effected, an instance of these are the *gacaca* courts. The memorable courts created a scenario where perpetrators, survivors and eyewitnesses to ascertain the truthfulness of the happenings were brought together. On this very process, those found guilty were arraigned with

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varieties of community service as measures of providing restitutions and helping their reintegration back to the community, be as it may, sexual torture and rape did not come under the *gacaca*courts' legislation due to their not being considered as severe violations of human-rights. Consequently, in spite of the developments made by the ICTR and the *gacaca* courts, the duo organizations do not have the capability to take legal action on every crime perpetrated in the period of the genocide, hence the rate of impunity continued to be high[55].

v. **Some Resultant Effect on Household Structure:** The genocide period in Rwanda shifted household structures, and as it was noticed according to records that women constitute between 60% and 80% of the population, they turned out to start working in the field, providing for their diverse families, which was a job ordinarily meant for men. This kind of shift in social constructs was exceptionally complicated scenario why because before the period of genocide, there were no rights for women to inherit or own land. The connection of Rwandan women with tenure of land was actually dependent on the relationship they had with men. Government of Rwanda worked on changing gender inequality particularly concerning owning lands. An instance is the law of 1999, 2/99 which permits both girls and boys to inherit land from their parents[56].

With the aim of dealing with these latest demands, women of Rwanda began to coordinate themselves politically. This coordination process was viewed, for instance in the formation of some new Non-Governmental Organisations in Rwanda. These women were able to receive backing from international communities, such as "Campaign for Peace" in Kigali. This coordination

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specifically focusses on the critical needs of women in the post –conflict, it further collaborated with Pro-Femmes so as to be further successful[57].

As time proceeds, women in Rwanda started to access important political positions. Within the period of 1994 till 2003, women occupied about 25.7% of the positions in the parliament and at that same year of 2003, experienced the adoption of new constitution which brought positive changes for women´s rights. Definitely this became glaring in the parliament, as women held 56% of the lower house positions and 34.6% of the upper house in Rwanda[55].

The above women representation politically was majorly because of the contribution of the government of Paul Kagame. The Government of National Unity (GNU) willingly declared that women's participation in governance and peacebuilding is considered to be vital for peace to be sustainable[57].

To further substantiate the involvement of women in Rwanda peacebuilding, some innovations were initiated so as to ensure the inclusion of women in peace process. Such innovations as women inclusion as judges in *gacaca* courts, Gender Ministry and the enactment of quotas so as to ensure that high level decision making included women. In addition, a new political and an innovative system of triple balloting for local elections was designed to allow youth and women to stay on different ballots from conventional candidate[58,59].

President Paul Kagame implemented gender attention entirely in Rwanda. He made sure that the needs of women are incorporated into decision making. Notably, such endeavour was bestowed not just to the development of women,

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but likewise to integrating gender into every policy and to acknowledge that the same inclusion of both women and men was essential for sustainable peace and successful development[58]. Thirty percent (30%) quota was designed so as to ensure that women could have access to decision making positions quota, this of course worked out well, and presently, Rwanda is a nation that has the greater level of women representation in the world[59].

Women within every political group in Rwanda had worked collectively to ensure inclusion of gender. Legislation was made to advance the rights of women and address the needs of women. Women had likewise been substantiated to be hard working in ensuring the society is reunited and is reliable to a large extent because generally, women were not really incriminated in the killings[55]. Rwanda has been peaceful for quite some number of years and elections have been held on various levels with the exception of presidential elections which was conducted in 2017, and there is economic growth. Even though, Rwanda never went through any negotiations on peace, but the government of Kagame ensured that women were incorporated in every level of decision making thus, empowered women and included their demands has aided the maintenance of peace in Rwanda.

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2.1.3.5 Women and Peacebuilding in Liberia

Till around 1980, former American liberated slaves governed Liberia. They comprised five percent (5%) of the populace and ruled out every other ethnicity in their decision making. This ruling out resulted into a coup d'état in 1980 and Samuel Doe seized the

reign of power in the country. Further, elections were conducted in 1985, however, they were regarded as deceitful thus, Samuel Doe was re-elected as President[60].

As at 1989, the regime of Doe began to collapse while a former member of Doe's government, Charles Taylor, utilized that opportunity to establish a rebel troupe, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) as he settles in Ivory-coast. Simultaneously, Prince Johnson established the National Patriotic Front of Liberia[60].

The United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO) which was the fourth group, was supposed to be part of the conflicting groups in 1991. The civil war in Liberia formally began on 24th December, 1989, when the NPFL advanced into Liberia, human rights advocates and the Armed Forces of Liberian government were incapable to restrain them[60].

The conflict went on till 2003, having a short period of peace in-between 1997 and 2003, which was experienced due to various peace treaties, such as the Abuja Peace Accords which were ratified by each and every one of the conflicting parties due to pressure from the international community and the civil society. The pressure from women was very momentous, hence leading to the signing of Accords in 1996 in Nigeria and in 1997, democracy was established. Also, in July 1997, elections were conducted and Charles Taylor was victorious, having about seventy percent (75%) votes[61].

The elections were conducted not implementing a complete disarmament and demobilization procedure. Be as it may, there were numerous fighters that were not demobilized but persisted in the violence. More so, the Abuja Accords were violated by Taylor and retained the NPFL armies as part of the nation´s armed forces, which further

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place the country's security at risk. Consequently, the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) group came into existence in 1999, and it began to confront northern Liberia so as to seize power in the country. In reaction to these confrontations, the RUF who were loyal to Taylor began to launch assaults on Guinea from Sierra Leone and Liberia. And Liberia being in the midst of a three-way dispute with Sierra Leone and Guinea: the two countries were in support of the LURD whereas Taylor was in support of the opposing parties in the two countries[62].

More commotion was to be included put in the violence since the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) evolved in the south, and was totally backed by the Ivorian government.

Obviously in 2003, the northern part of Liberia was controlled by LURD, the MODEL, in charge of the south, while Taylor pioneers the affairs of the remaining one third. With time, the rate of aggression was quite excessive that the international community started pressuring for negotiations. And due to the pressure, which was much, particularly from women groups, all parties consented to start negotiations in Ghana. This further resulted to the signing of Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement leading to the forceful resignation of Taylor who went into exile in Nigeria. Liberia, thus began operations of peacebuilding by 14th October, 2003, and a transitional government was put in place to run the country's affairs till 2005 elections, when Ellen Johnson-Sirelaf was elected president[63].

The Liberian women showcased activeness in peacebuilding process since its conflict as exemplified in the rise of women compositions in the period of the war. A teacher named Mary Brownell, chose to mobilize women from the start of the armed conflict for

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she organised an assembly on the radio, hence more than four hundred (400) women turned up. And as the initiative of Liberian women came into being alongside some other organizations, they pushed and pressurised men into signing the peace accords. The women organizations adopted diverse mechanism like holding peacebuilding workshop with combatants, which granted them international and national contacts in pushing further. Liberian women began to reunite the country even during the period of the war, bargained with the conflicting parties in order to get them to seat at the roundtable. These women engaged in corridor -lobbying which involved waiting in the corridors to talk to negotiators as they enter and exits their room in the 1984 Accra Conference. And this act resulted to Liberian women being coopted or designated to be formal members of the negotiation on the 3rd day of the peace talk[64].

In spite of this, they were discriminated against during the participation but this did not hamper them from continual advocate of peace even when the first Peace –accord failed. Women adopted sex strike and mobilization of women across religion, ethnicity and social class who speaks with one voice to drive home their demands. Ultimately, following many years of meetings and pressures alongside every of the culprits, women succeeded in getting the contending parties to have a round table discussion. They cautiously supervised the processes of the negotiation and continually demonstrated so as to make their opinions known and ensure that men were dedicated to sign the accords. Women from Liberia did create international and national alliances, worked alongside NGOs, refugees and governments, to make the conflicting parties committed to peace[64].

Women suffered abduction, not only rape, but likewise forced and coopted to take part as wives of commanders and sex slaves, they were further compelled to get pregnant or

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contaminated with HIV. Several girl child combatants were compelled to carry out sexual services and men in power were perpetrators, Charles Taylor for instance once ordered his soldiers to rape women. Due to the rate of atrocities meted on women, answerability for sex criminalities was reviewed in the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreements and it was resolve to incorporate sex criminalities in the truth and reconciliation commission. This singular commission was established in 2006 and mandated the investigation of hideous human rights violations, inclusive of rape. Out of the nine positions of commissioners, four was reserved for women so as to contend with gender-based violence. In 2009, the report of the truth and reconciliation was finished and this comprised a segment committed to women and conflict[65].

The report made recommendations which stated that there should be culture change so as to put an end to gender-based violence. Furthermore, the TRC made recommendations concerning women who suffered sexual violence, that state should make provision for reparations to the inclusive of getting trauma counselling, free medical services, scholarships for the children of women that their spouses were killed, and personal reparations on case-to-case basis by every woman who testified to the TRC[65].

Furthermore, a fresh law which categorised rape as a crime was established, but in spite this law, rape continued at an alarming rate in Liberia. Notwithstanding, a small number of culprits were brought to justice[66].

i. **Women as Perpetrators:** In the course of the 1st and the 2nd civil war in Liberia, women took part as combatants and offered logistic assistance to the armed

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troupes. The assistance moved from the provision of water facilities during the war to forced marriage and sexual slavery.

ii. **Women as Participants in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Procedure:** In Liberia, the 1st segment of demobilization procedure began in the course of Abuja accords. In February 1997, nearly twenty-four thousand and five hundred (24,500) of the approximated thirty-three thousand (33,000) combatants were disarmed and demobilized"[67].

Meanwhile, four thousand, three hundred and six (4,306) of the fighters that took part in the demobilization procedure were underage. This is disturbing due to the fact that child soldiers were underage as they were realized to include combatants from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand (15,000 – 20,000). Young females consisted a substantial figure of the fighters, still it was difficult to ascertain what proportion due to the DDR procedure that did not disaggregate the records by gender[67].

The 2nd DDR procedure was implemented by the transitional government in Liberia, by various NGOs and many UN agencies. Beginning from 2003, a comprehensive DDRR program i. e. disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration was undertaken by Liberia, to make sure that there is complete compliance on the sides of every group and to make provision for required assistance to ex-combatants[67].

At a particular period, the disarmament procedure was going to crash but women cautiously looked after it so as to ensure the procedure became successful[68]. At first, they were ignored by the UN Mission in Liberia (UNIMIL)

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due to their unprofessional and inexperience, nonetheless the women peace advocates were not discouraged. They involved the combatants, went into cantonments, took and demolished weapons such as AK-47s. They similarly pressurised senior commanding officers so as to ensure they would adhere to the DDR procedure and closely work together with the UN in order to ensure the success of the process[64].

In 2007, the programme came to an end with the effective rehabilitation of ninety thousand (90,000) fighters, out of which twenty-two thousand, three hundred and seventy (22,370) of them were women, ten thousand and seventy-two (10,072) were children, and of which two thousand, seven hundred and forty (2,740) were young females. As part of the procedure, hundreds of women became educated. A little stipend was likewise given to them for their support via them transforming to civilian lives, but despite this lots of women were still not included in the DDR procedure, reason being that immediately the DDR began, lots of women in Liberia were not ready to identify with the fact that they were combatants during the war. And due to this, they refused to be part of the DDR process[67].

iii. **The Outcome of the Liberians Women Peacebuilding Process:** The Liberian Women consistently put in place measures to assist in rebuilding as well as in the reconciliation of their country. They prudently observed the execution of the peace accords and make sure fighters were demobilised and reintegrated into the society. Furthermore, they assisted in the reconstruction of the country's economy[67].

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During the elections in 2005, analysis had it that twelve percent (12%) of women made up the House of Representatives as well as seventeen percent (17%) in the Senate. Even though, it is the highest political representation of women in the history of Liberia. The figure is still somehow small as just 13.5% of the parliamentarians elected were women. Furthermore, Liberia has 90th position in ranking, in the world´s parliamentarian representation of women. And Liberia elected a female president in the year 2006, who combated corruption and executed increment of literacy especially that of women, though women still remained undermined when compared with their male counterparts[69].

Generally, Sirelaf, the Liberian woman President pushed women inclusion to cabinet to a reasonable number, yet they remained under-represented in the parliament. The inequality showcases amidst male and female in Liberia led to the creation of bill that will allow 30 percent women inclusion yet several parliamentarians who are males remain an opposition to the bill, neither did political party take concrete action to empower women. With the above development, judicial system in Liberia were dominated by men, thus making women to be confined to household responsibilities while their men make household decisions. This singular lack of inclusion of women in affairs of Liberia resulted to absence of economic openings and prospects which stops women from taking part in peace processes. However, peace has been maintained in Liberia in more than a decade now and Liberian women are gradually gaining ground of inclusiveness in the decision making process[69].

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2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Snail-Sense Feminism Theory

The study is built on Snail-sense feminism theory. The propunder of the theory is a Nigerian woman writer and professor of English at University of Lagos, Nigeria. She has written series of novels, and children's poems. She is concerned with women liberation as described in her trilology[70, 71, 72].

Snail-sense model is based on the result of her research on the Nigerian woman from the pre-colonial and colonial periods to the present. The theory adopts the habit of the snail to 'negotiate' or 'dialogue' with its environment to be able to get round obstacles on its way with a 'well-lubricated tongue' – which is known as 'ire oma' in Igbo language – whether the obstacles be rocks, thorns, or boulders. The theory states that the Nigerian woman adopts this strategy in her relationship with men, just as the woman of the past did in her interactions with people in her community. When a snail moves, it is slow but steady[73]. The theory apparently sees women from metaphorical perspective of being patient even though they might be 'slower' in getting results. Women hardly rush in making their investigations. In the course of negotiating, they are always careful, listening as much as possible and they hardly make mistakes because they have taken time in finding out the root causes so that they would be in a better position to resolving it. They put these instincts to peacebuilding as the theory argues[74].

The snail-sense model could be further explicated in the propunder's trilogy where she celebrates the power of women through their slow but brilliant approaches. The trilogy are as follows:

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1. **The Last of the Strong Ones**

This book celebrates rare amazons of women whose deeds are so great that they work effectively with their male folks. They are fearless, patriotic and warlike. An eloquent narrator with her group of observers and listeners who serve as custodians of history and culture records and reports all the proceedings, including interviewing the four amazons in the novel[70].

2. **House of Symbols**

It centres on the aftermath of the lost war of Umuga in the first novel. There is religious conflicts where the Catholics and the Anglicans and of course, the traditionalists fight to be relevant in the running of Umuga. Ugonwanyi (Eaglewoman) is the present protagonist, wild and intelligent as her grandmother, Ejimnaka. Eaglewoman and her husband, Osai are Anglicans and hated and plotted against by Moses and Sorenje their friends that are Catholics. Okwudiba, the dying old woman who is a great friend of Ejimnaka is an unrepentant traditionalist who believes in reincarnations and core traditions. Ezenwanyi, the brilliant seer of Umuga who is synonymous with the title, mixes tradition and religion as she is vast in the bible and cultural norms[71].

3. **Children of the Eagle**

This is the concluding novel of the trilogy. In five parts comprising twenty-five chapters, this novel celebrates the brilliance and achievements of Eaglewoman's six children: five daughters and a son[72].

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2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1 How Women's Rights are Being Violated

One of the ways women's rights is violated is through gender-based violence. This is a process where violence acts are committed against women and LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) individuals on the ground of their gender identity, sex characteristics or orientation. Gender-based violence occurs to girls and women in unequal figures.

Furthermore, girls and women in conflict are particularly at the expense of violence, and all through historical records, sexual violence has been utilised as a weaponry of war. For instance, there is a documentation, of the number of women that escaped the attacks of Boko Haram in Nigeria who were put in danger of rape and sexual violence by Nigerian military[75]. Global wise, an average of 30 per cent of women that were in relationships suffered sexual or physical brutality perpetrated against them by their partners[76].

Another means of violence against women is workplace discrimination. In this perspective, females are often the focus of gender-based marginalisation at their various places of work. A singular means of proving this is looking at the pay gap within gender. The same pay for equal work done is a clear human right stand, but many times females have been deprived of having access to equal and fair income in their workplaces. This has led to a long time of economic inequality for females, thereby preventing their exercise of independency and ways as higher risk of lack in future[77].

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2.3.2 Philosophers of Old as Conflict Managers

i. The Ionian/Miletus Philosophers of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes

The trio of Miletus philosophers were so much determined to convince the world the source of all things. While Thales concluded water was the source of all things, his former discipline, Anaximander disagreed. Another disciple of Thales, Anaximenes settled for air as the primary element. Let us hear these terrific men postulate their deep thinking about the cosmos.

Thales: Thales was known to have lived 625-547. According to legend or history, on one occasion, he fell into a well while enveloped about the wonders of the sky, thrilled by the constellation of the stars; he was always in the habit of studying his environments wondering what could have been the source of all things. By this curiosity, Thales was led to the conclusion that all things in the universe were made from water, that is, all things emanated from water. Thales was also a scientist in the right sense of it. He predicted 'an eclipse of the sun which is believed to have actually occurred in 585 B.C.'[77]. This goes to solidify the assertion that early philosophers were themselves scientists.

Anaximander: Anaximander, a disciple (student) of Thales is believed to have lived c 610-547. Convinced on plurality of things, he vehemently refused to toe the line of Thales that the primary origin of all things is water. First, Anaximander could be called a world-class geographer. He is believed to have been the first map maker who claimed that the earth was not flat, but cylinder in shape. To Anaximander, all possible elements that could be the sources of the all things are in conflict so that none could be the primary source of all things on earth. In the words of an author '…for Anaximander, it

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was “the unlimited” or “the indeterminate boundless”[78]. To Anaximander, ‘This world is not the only world that exists, for there are many worlds and this world of ours is just one of them’[77]. The planets known today support Anaximander’s position.

Anaximenes: Anaximenes is another disciple of Thales who was himself ambitious to prove that there must be a primary source of all things. He did not support Thales’ position that water is. To Anaximenes, air is the original source of all things. Anaximenes argued that the earth ‘is flat and rests on air’[78]. In Anaximenes’ argument and explication to prove his belief in air being the sole source of all things, he said that through the condensation and rarefaction of the air, it turns to fire, then cold, wind, cloud, water, earth, and then stone. It was rather a complex explication. However, the crux of the matter is the fact that **air** is the primary source of things to Anaximenes[78].

Sadly, Anaximenes was the last of the Miletus School before its destruction in 494 B.C. by the Persians. However, it is crystal clear that whether **water** or **Air/fire** or the ‘indeterminate boundless’ as posited by the trio from Miletus, Miletus continues to be in history as having contributed immensely to philosophy some 2,700 centuries after: 6 Century B.C. to 2022 A.D. One thing must be noted, that the Miletus School of philosophy was centred primarily on the cosmos.

The above philosophers are conflict managers because they did all they could to search for the true source of creation. That in itself is conflict management. This till date, this conflict still continues. While the religious believe that God created everything in the world, the evolutionists think otherwise.

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2.3.3 The Golden Age of Greek Philosophy

The triumvirate Greeks of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle constitute the Golden Age of Philosophy. Athens, the glorious citadel of learning and democracy was the triumvirate's base. It must be noted that while Socrates and Plato were Athenians, Aristotle was never an Athenian citizen even though he spent most of his life in the great city of Athens, 50 years, according to records.

2.3.3.1 Socrates

Socrates was born about 470 BC and was a man of character. He was an Athenian soldier who showed lots of resilience. Socrates was a moral philosopher who taught by dialectics. Socrates was in his life time eccentric – a good number of times, found in trances as explained in Plato's book, *Symposium*.

To Socrates, the act of philosophising was a vocation. To him, it was a celestial duty from God so that he never compromised with it. For instance, he was asked to jettison the teaching of philosophy during his trail. He declined absolutely. Socrates taught the Athenians the value of virtue over their personal interests. In his dialectic method, i.e. acquiring knowledge through questions and answers, Socrates also utilised inductive reasoning (applying unique cases and concluding with universal knowledge)[79].

Even though Socrates knew so much and was once declared as the wisest man on earth, he vehemently said he was ignorant and knew nothing and was striving to know. This is sometimes called 'The Socratic Irony'. Socrates saw knowledge as virtue and that ignorance was the cause of wrong doing, wickedness and corruption, being good examples[79].

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The death of Socrates was arguably due to his moral uprightness in the Athenian world of his era. For his stance against a corrupt society, he became unpopular and was conspired against by the powerful figures who were afraid of his strict moral principles. Even his former disciples who became power drunk joined the conspiracy. Socrates was eventually accused of being anti-gods (atheism) and of corrupting the youth. He was found guilty of the accusations and was sentenced to death – to be executed in a month's period. His trusted friends planned his escape from prison to exile. Socrates turned down their plea arguing that it was against his principle! His argument was that having enjoyed Athenians' protections all his life, he was also ready to obey the Athenians' verdict over him. While awaiting execution, Socrates kept on discussing philosophy with his friends. He believed in the eternity of the soul and was not afraid of dying. He was executed in 399 BC hemlock (poison). Without being forced, Socrates took the hemlock and drank it willingly and died[79].

2.3.3.2 Plato

Plato was very prolific unlike his former teacher, Socrates who was a great talker. Plato was born around 428/427 BC and is credited with these books: *Republic* (arguably the most popular where he recorded the questions and answers of Socrates), *Apology*, *The Symposium,* and *Allegory of the cave*.

Theory of forms is his main philosophical input to humanity. Plato founded the Platonist school of thought and the Academy. For Plato, Forms (ideas) cannot be comprehended or known through sense perception. That is, ideas or forms are beyond the senses. Plato opined that the real things are basically the objects of the true knowledge which can only be possible by dialectical reasoning which only philosophers could decipher. So then,

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Plato argues that of all Forms or Ideas in the world, the Form of Good is dominant. This is because all other Forms are dependent on unifying principle of Good Form as it were[80].

Plato was quite influenced by the following earlier philosophers: (1) Pythagoreans, for Plato ardently believed that the soul pre-existed prior its union with the body; (2) Socrates, because Plato concurred with Socrates' ethics that happiness is man's apex or ultimate goal[80].

2.3.3.3 Aristotle

Arguably the most eclectic of the triumvirate, Aristotle, a student of Plato, founded Lyceum, the Peripatetic school of philosophy, as well as the Aristotelian tradition. Aristotle was born around 384 BC in Strageira but spent most of his life in Athens. His philosophy touches a wide range of disciplines: physics, biology (his father being a physician), zoology, metaphysics, logic, ethics, aesthetics, poetry, theatre, music, rhetoric, psychology, linguistics, economics, politics, meteorology, geology and politics[81]. He was therefore a polymath!

Aristotle's Metaphysics counters Plato's metaphysics on the latter's world of Forms. While Aristotle agreed with his teacher's position that the objects of true knowledge are the quiddity of things, he disagreed with Plato's position that these objects of true knowledge 'are not separate entities existing separately from the things themselves of which they are essences'[77].

Being a polymath, Aristotle traversed all the spheres of philosophy and is said to be teacher to Alexander the Great.

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From the foregoing, one can see that the Athenian based philosophers, Socrates and his former disciples, Plato and Aristotle surely were influenced by the Athenian realities. Their philosophies were society based. In fact, their philosophies sought to interrogate the relationship between the state and the citizenry. In Aristotle's social and political philosophy, he said that man 'is by nature a political animal'[81].

2.3.4 History of Conflicts in the Middle East of the Modern World

The modern Middle East comprises the following countries:

1. Cyprus;
2. Lebanon;
3. Syria;
4. Iraq;
5. Iran;
6. Israel;
7. Jordan;
8. Saudi Arabia;
9. Kuwait;
10. Qatar;
11. Bahrain;
12. United Arab Emirate;
13. Oman; and
14. Yemen.

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Apart from the main 14 countries, the Middle East can also be loosely extended to the following countries because of their proximity and somewhat historical backgrounds: Afghanistan, Comoros, Dibouti, Maghreb, Pakistan, Sudan and Somalia. In other words, the Middle East as an appellation is sometimes vague. Egypt and Turkey are technically of the region of the Middle East even though they are from Africa and Europe respectively[82]. Geographically, Turkey is situated in South-eastern Europe and South-western Asia. With the collapse of Ottoman Empire which used to be a Christian stronghold (now of Muslim), Turkey has been seen as being partially of Middle East, though scholars argue she is not fully of it[82].

The Middle East is a volatile region that has experienced a series of violent crises due to divergent historical and cultural as well as religious differences. For security reasons, Israel does not associate with her fellow Middle East members, rather associates the more with the United States for security reasons. In sports, football to be specific, Israel does not belong to Asian League, rather to European League for qualification to World Cup. This goes to tell how volatile the Middle East is to Israel[82].

The Middle East therefore, comprises a lot of regions and ethnic groups especially of Asian continent. The Arabs are the largest of the ethnic groups. That is a big factor. In terms of religion, Islam is the largest religion in the region as it were. It must be noted that the three most popular religions in the world: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have their origin in the Middle East[82].

The dominant language in the Middle East is Arabic. The other popular languages are Persian (by the Iraqis who in history are also known in the olden days as Persians), Kurdish, Hebrew, and Turkish[82].

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2.3.4.1 Israel Becoming a State in 1948

The United Nations approved a plan to partition Palestine into a Jewish state in 1947 but the Arabs rejected it. However, on May 14, 1948, Israel declared itself a state. This was done by the head of the Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion. The same day, the president of the U.S., President Harry Truman endorsed the declaration. The Soviet Union On 17th May recognised the new state of Israel. Poland, South Africa and others also endorsed the Israel new status. The entire Arab States were not comfortable with the declaration[83]. Few days after the declaration, seven Arab nations declared war against Israel. These Arab countries are:

1. Lebanon;
2. Syria;
3. Iraq;
4. Jordan;
5. Egypt;
6. Libya; and,
7. Saudi Arabia.

Israel won the war after much bloodshed. This victory made the returning home to Palestine of the Jews more effective. It is on record that after the 1948 war, some 700,000 Jew immigrated to Israel and settled along the borders and in former Arab lands as Israel had expanded its territory having being victorious in the war[83].

The Holocaust (Shoah) between 1941 – 1945 must not be forgotten. In this genocide, European Jews during the World War II were killed by Nazi Germany. History has it that about six million Jews in German-occupied Europe were affected. With this dastard

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act, it is not surprising that many Jews in Europe were very eager to come 'Home' and settle in the new state of Israel for pride and safety. The holocaust was a conspiracy by Nazis led by Hitler and his conspirators to murder or eliminate all the Jews in Europe[83].

The 1948 War had been preceded by series of conflicts of 30 years between the Jews and Arabs when Britain was colonising Palestine. Under the League of Nations which preceded the United Nations, Britain had planned some conditions towards creating a Jewish National Home in the area. It was on this basis that it was Britain which handed to UN the decision to partition Palestine between Palestine and Israel[83].

The declaration of statehood by Israel which was sanctioned by UN has been a source of conflict in the Middle East. United Nations officially admitted Israel as member on 11th May, 1949[83].

2.3.4.2 Arab-Israeli Conflicts: Who are the Hamas in Palestine?

HAMAS is an acronym for 'Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (Islamic Resistance Movement). Hamas was founded in 1987 as a political and military organisation governing the Gaza Strip of the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories. Its headquarters is in Gaza. It is an Islamic Resistance Movement and of Sunni worldview. Hamas believes that Israeli-occupied territories belong to Palestine and should be ceded to Palestine. This desire has been a cause of conflict between Hamas and the Israel. From inception, this Palestinian militant group which now governs Palestine has struggled to oversee Gaza and she has remained steadfast to violently resist Israel[84].

Its surprise attack on Israel on 7th October, 2023 has been the immediate cause of the ongoing war which has claimed thousands of lives from both camps. Gaza or Gaza Strip

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is the centre of the ongoing war. On the eastern coast by the Mediterranean Sea, Gaza is bothered by Egypt on the south-west and Israel on the east and north. This is the reason Egypt has been at the receiving end of the war as she has received many refugees seeing attention from the Red Cross and from the entire world[84].

The Gaza is an impoverished coastal area which used to be in the hands of Palestine till Israel occupied it since 1967. However, the Gaza has been in partial Palestinian self-administration since 1994[84].

Hamas, therefore believes that Gaza is theirs and should be administered by them. On the other hand, Israel believes that what she occupies remains hers having been ceded to her (Israel) by the UN in 1947. In that year, the newly formed UN issued 'Partition Plan for Palestine' which split the land then called Palestine, into an Arab state and a Jewish state. For the area belonging to Israel, it afforded them the opportunity for Jewish homeland and migration to a specific place from different parts of the world[83].

The UN decision has not gone well with the local Palestinians as well as Arab population and surrounding Arab states. They see the decision as imposition and injustice to the Palestinians as a whole. It is on this basis that Hamas has been fighting and waging war with Israel at the moment. It appears the war must go on as the two sides seem not interested to stop, especially Israel who believes it is time every Hamas fighter died as according to Benjamin Netanyahu who on 12th October, 2023 vowed that every member of Hamas must die so that the conflict would end for good[85].

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Of importance like Gaza to the Palestinians is the West Bank, the other territory part was ceded to Israel. In West Bank, Fatah party is control of the Palestinian National Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank[84].

In 2006, Hamas which the US and other nations see as a terrorist organisation won the elections to control Gaza. It beat its rival, Fatah party to emerge winner. However, there have not been any other elections since the 2006 victory. Having taken over political control, Hamas ever since does not want to recognise the presence of Israel in Gaza and has severally called for Gaza's blockade and cease of its occupation by Israel. Hamas has also called for the destruction of Israel without mincing words[84].

2.3.4.3 The Modern Middle East in World Politics

Despite the fact that the Middle East is ever in conflict, it is noteworthy to note that it plays a significant role to world politics and trade. For instance, the Middle East is an important route to Europeans. Russia for instance, would always depend on the Black Sea via the Mediterranean Sea as a route that would navigate her ships past the land held by the Ottoman Empire. Another example is Britain and France depending on Egypt's Suez Canal and navigating via the Middle East to their distant colonies in India and southern Asia.

In the First World War, the Ottoman Empire thought allying with Germany to war against the allied forces of Britain, France, Russia, and the United States would be to its advantage. The 'allied forces' victory brought about the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. The Middle East is yet to recover from the wounds of the First World War. In 1991, the United States invaded Iraqi for trying to annex Kuwait. That is how weak the Middle East had become in 20th Century[86].

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The Middle East is strategic to the world's connectivity and by extension, geopolitics. The Middle East geographically connects Africa, Europe, and Asia (even though it is basically of Asia continent).

At the end of the World War II in 1945, Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States and their allies defeated Germany, Italy and Japan. With this development, many Middle Eastern countries were hoping that would fasten their pursuit for independence. But that did not happen as Britain and France which had been having relations with them for decades were not ready to continue with their administrations. They quickly withdrew from the region in 1945. This decision by Britain and France gave strength to some political forces that had been suppressed by European dominance. So then began new popular political movements in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq[86].

It is argued that the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1991 hugely affected the political and economic growth of the Middle East the same way it did affect other regions of the world. Even though the two big nations had fought alongside each other in the World War II, the Cold War was based on ideological issue. While the Soviet Union felt that the world is best with communism, the United States thought it would be much better for democracy to guide the globe. Hence there were two blocs in the world for the period the Cold War lasted: the Pro American or Pro Soviet. These two blocs were active in the Middle East using incentives like loans and Aids to entice them[86].

From the foregoing, it becomes crystal clear that the modern Middle East is volatile and very central to world peace. In the recent years, the Middle East has given lots of concern to world peace so that its restiveness becomes global worry. The current Hamas

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(Palestine)/Israeli war is a good example of how war in the Middle East could affect the world. The ongoing Hamas-Israeli war is very delicate. It looks like a religious war, on one hand, and again, it appears to be a war between the Arabs and the Jews. Whatever perception it is, it is a war that has abused ethics of war as innocent persons are killed[86].

2.3.5 Some Notable Women Activists in Nigerian History

2.3.5.1 Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti

Chief Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti was the first Nigerian woman to drive a car. She was the mother of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the outspoken late musician and activist. She was one of the first girls to attend Abeokuta Grammar School, after which, she attended Wincham Hall School for Girls in Cheshire England. On finishing in England, she dropped her two English names (Frances and Abigail) and began to use Fumilayo as her real name. This could be interpreted as her first sign of anti-colonial stance[87].

In November, 1947, Fumilayo led thousands of women to the Alake's family singing and dancing in protest. They were against an imposition of tax on women in Abeokuta. Her action in the palace made people to nickname her 'Lioness of Lisabi'. Fumilayo's revolt with other women led to the temporary abdication of the Alake in 1949. She remained a great light in the Abeokuta Women Union for a long time. She used the union as a platform for her activism. She used the market women to protest. She later got into real politics and made a mark where men were seen as untouchable[87].

Fumilayo knew that her education alone would not be enough to fight injustice in the land. So, her using the market women and other women of low education helped in her activism course. In all, Fumilayo was an Amazon who did not fight injustice alone,

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rather believed that fighting together with her fellow women no matter their status in the society would make a difference.

2.3.5.2 Margareth Egbo

When discussing the history of activism and political development during Nigeria's fight for independence, Lady Margaret Ekpo's contribution cannot be ignored. She is credited as being one of the first female politicians in the country, a feminist who fought fiercely for gender equality, pioneering the women's rights movement, and dedicating her life to achieving greater female representation in politics of the First Republic.

Lady Margaret Ekpo was born July 27, 1914, in Creek Town, Cross Rivers State, and was from Aguluzigbo, Anaocha LGA Anambra State, of Igbo and Efik heritage. Her father, Okoroafor Obiasulor moved to Calabar in the early 1900s. She reached Standard Six of the School Leaving Certificate in 1934. However, because of the sudden death of her father in 1934, aged 20, she put her education on hold. She started working as a teacher in elementary schools[87].

While working as a teacher she met and married John Udo Ekpo, an Ibibio man who was a civil servant and medical doctor. She moved to Aba with her husband in 1946. She was a very driven woman and sought to pursue her education. When the opportunity arose to obtain a degree in Dublin, she took it. In 1948, she achieved her Bachelor's degree in Domestic Science at the Rathmines school of Domestic Economics, now known as the Dublin Institute of Technology[87].

When she came back to Nigeria, she put her degree to good use and established a Domestic Science and Sewing institute to train young women in home economics and

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skills like dressmaking and crafts in Aba, Abia State. Her plan to financially empower women in Aba was right on time, as Aba was becoming a booming trade and commercial centre in Eastern Nigeria. Her ambition to secure political power for herself and other women was driven by the powerful speeches she heard by activists and politicians including Mazi Mbonu Ojike, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Herbert Macaulay at rallies and meetings in Aba. These politicians were urging and encouraging Nigerians to fight for independence and freedom from colonial rule. She started attending meetings that discussed the oppressive practices of colonial authorities in Aba[87].

She founded the market women association in her 40s, an organisation that fought colonial oppression and aimed to protect women's affairs and economic rights and encourage female unity. They fought for women's rights to political participation, especially market women and female traders. Margaret Ekpo wanted more women to join the association, however a lot of men didn't want their wives to be involved. So, she came up with a plan[87].

Shortly after World War II, the world was still recovering from shortages of essential commodities like salt. Margaret used the salt scarcity to her advantage. She bought all the bags of salt in Aba market and gained total control of its sales. She ensured no salt was sold to any woman who wasn't a member of the association. Every woman had to register as a member of the association to be sold salt. Margaret's plan to mobilise women worked. Households could not live without salt, so men had no other option but to give in and let their wives register. This clever plan marked Margaret as a skilful political player[87].

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This association, along with a few others helped spread anti-colonial messages and sentiments and helped to prepare the nation for Independence. Margaret also joined the Nation Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NGNC), which was established to fight decolonisation and speak up for marginalised groups. In 1949, Margaret joined forces with Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, another prominent female politician to protest the murders of 21 miners. They were members of the Nigerian Africa Mineworkers Union at the Enugu Colliery, a British-owned coal mine in Enugu State. The workers were protesting oppressive colonial practices and were murdered on the 18th of November 1949. The two Women organised a day of mourning for the victims which drew nationwide and international attention[87].

During their time together, Margaret and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti formed a powerful alliance and mobilised and encouraged more women to be involved in politics and have a voice on national issues. Both women toured the South-Eastern region of the country to achieve their aim. The efforts of these two women not only brought more political awakening, but their efforts were integral to Nigeria's journey to independence[87].

In 1950, Margaret marched to Enugu prison with women of Aba to seek justice for a female prison officer who was murdered for turning down the romantic advances of a colleague. In 1953, Margaret was nominated to the regional House of Chiefs by the NGNC. By 1954, she had established the Aba Township Women's Association which soon became a political pressure group thanks to her influence. Her mobilisation strategies helped create a powerful women's socio-political authority. Women secured

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leadership seats at the Aba Urban District Council, shattering the male-centered political monopoly and securing a voice in city politics[87].

Her success in organising and encouraging female involvement in politics led to female voters outnumbering male voters in city-wide elections. Margaret was one of the few female politicians representing women's interests in meetings and conferences that shaped the Nation's future. In 1961, she won a seat to the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, but her tenure was cut short by the Nigerian civil war. During the war, she was detained by the Biafran authorities for three years. At a point during the long detention, she became ill from malnutrition[87].

In 2001, the Calabar Airport was named after her. It is the only airport in Africa named after a woman. She died on Thursday September 21st 2006, at The University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Cross Rivers State at the age of 92[87].

During a time when women were still viewed as property and nothing more than 'helpmates' to men, the persistence and determination of women like Margaret Ekpo is not just commendable, but awe-inspiring. Her uncompromising perseverance and fiery determination helped put women in politics and mobilised women across the nation. Mentally astute women have always been criticised and even punished, but Margaret was a passionate activist who didn't mince her words and always spoke up for women, even when the world didn't want to hear her.

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2.3.5.3 Amina of Zauzau

Amina was born around 1533 in Zaria. She lived approximately 200 years prior to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate federation that governed Nigeria during the period of British colonial rule following the Islamic *jihad* (holy war) that overtook the region in the 19th century. She was born to the ruler, Bakwa of Turunku, who lived in the city state of Zazzau. The family was wealthy as a result of trading in imported metals, cloth, cola, salt, horses and imported metals. When her father died in 1566, the crown was conferred upon Amina's younger brother, Karama. Although her father's reign was characterised by peace and prosperity, Amina nonetheless chose to spend her time honing her military skills with the warriors of the Zazzau cavalry. This led to her eventually emerging as a leader of the Zazzau cavalry, during which time she accumulated great wealth and numerous military accolades. Upon the death of her brother after a 10-year rule, Amina had matured into a fierce warrior and earned the respect of the Zazzau military, so she was able to assume the reign of the kingdom[88].

Queen Amina of Zaria was the first female to be the *Sarauniya* (queen) in a male dominated community. She extended the region of the people of Hausa in north Africa to its biggest boundaries in history. Lots of history about Queen Amina is grounded on reports in relations to the *Kano Chronicles.* Additional information is taken from the verbal Nigerian traditions. Due to this, Queen Amina's memory has presumed legendary proportionalities in her indigenous Hausaland and beyond[88]. The contemporary nation of Nigeria has eternalised Amina by constructing her sculpture, with spear in her hand, seated on a horse, in the heart of Lagos. In some institutions in Nigeria, some female

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hostels are named after this woman activist. A good example is Queen Amina Hall at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Queen Amina's context of leadership was before colonialism in Nigeria, whereby males never felt any threat whenever females were in positions of power, because it was generally recognised that women merited the positions by the reason of kinship, age or merit, not gender. Females had the capability to even overthrow men that were not functioning in their responsibilities effectually. Though economically and socially, the Nigeria before colonialism obviously outlined men's and women's responsibilities and this never prevented women from affirming their authorisation or themselves[89].

Simultaneously, during the reign of Amina, Zazzau was positioned at the crossways of three main trade walkways of north Africa, linking the Sahara with the secluded markets of the south jungle lands and the western Sudan. The rising and falling of the influential and additional prevalent people of the Songhai and the resultant contest for dominance of trade channels, instigated incessant conflicts among the people of Hausa land and their bordering communities in the course of 15th and 16th centuries[89].

In the continuous contest for supremacy within the Hausa societies, Zaria temporarily accomplished prevalence under Queen Amina. She commanded her pioneer armed forces some months after taking over power. For the remaining part of her thirty-four (34) years rule, she continually fought and expanded her empire to its largest in history. Commanding up to a military of twenty thousand (20,000) males, she attempted to seize numerous neighbouring metropolises to Nupe, as well as ruling Katsina and Kano at the expense of thirty-four (34) years of virtually continuous armed conflict. The purposes of

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her annexations were in two ways: expansion of Zazzau outside its immediate boundaries and reducing captured metropolises to vassal position[88].

The extension of Amina's empire caused it to be the trade hub for every southern Hausaland, which span the conventional east to west trans-Saharan areas and ensuring the prosperity of Zaria. Amina brought about unbelievable kind of prosperity to the communities; a report referred to a tribute imbursement of ten thousand (10,000) kolanuts and forty (40) eunuchs. She advanced her empire's power and wealth with new crops, slaves and gold. Due to the talents of her people in metal work, Amina instituted metal armour, which included chain mail and iron helmets, to her army[88].

Furthermore, Amina got the credit for the invention of sturdy earthen walls throughout the metropolis, which were used for the model in reinforcements deployed in every Hausa society. She constructed several of the reinforcements, which was later recognised as *ganuwar Amina* or 'Amina's walls', about several defeated cities[88]. Majority of the walls still exist till today.

Walling became an absolutely essential reflection in the African development of urban existence. Walls defined communities and averted irrepressible sprawl. There was further provision for physical and psychological security. In periods of instability, they were able to get protected against destruction or theft, and in the periods of peace, they regulated entry and exit.

Likewise, politically, walls were viewed as prestigious, the magnitude as a yardstick of the ability of a ruler to control the labour of his or her citizens. The walls built by Queen

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Amina of Zaria not just shielded Hausa marketplaces from outward dangers that emanated from the south, but similarly turned out to be a lasting testament of her magnificent rule. History has it that Amina declined to get married and rather got herself a provisional spouse from the multitudes of defeated enemies after each battle [88].

It is believed that she passed on in the course of a military crusade at Atagara close to Bida in Nigeria. Her achievements made her to be referred to as 'Amina, daughter of Nikatau, a woman as capable as a man'. Her illustrious exploits became the exemplar for the television series *Xena: Warrior Princess*. Presently, her remembrance signifies the strength and the spirit of womanhood[88].

Queen Amina undeniably was able to make and inscribe an inheritance which opposes every typecasts of leadership of women in patriarchal African societies, whereby the discrimination women experience touches almost every aspect of their lives. Substantial proof shows that women were permitted to contribute amply to the economic, political and social structure of their people before colonialism in Nigeria, nearly as much as their male counterparts. In situations of preventing them from being publicly active, women made use of gaps innate in the social constructs to benefit and uphold some degree of power. This was modified to a great level with the arrival of Islam and, subsequently, British colonialism, making women to experience significant setbacks[89].

The hindrances women face in Nigeria and throughout Africa may continue, still the examples and legacies of women like Amina aim towards the probabilities which are in existent for women of Africa to restructure the fates of their communities and societies.

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Queen Amina till date stands tall as a woman Amazon who showed courage and vision in male dominated Hausaland of her days.

2.3.6 Igbo Conflict Management

Judicial issues in Igboland are *ad hoc* matters where the party injured undertakes the innovation by pleading with the compound head of the criminal or to a group of conciliators for reparation. If this collapses, the party injured can summon the *Ama ala* i. e. the kinsmen by beating the village drum. The exclusive acquaintances of the complainants are summoned to assist to solve the issue. Additional organisations that may be petitioned for opinion on judicial matters comprise the *dibia* fraternity, the age-grade society, and different title giving groups. Human tribunals may take away jurisdiction and give to such supernormal tribunals as the oracles. The final appeal court, are utilised once all tribunals of the community fall short to offer the complainants satisfaction[90].

An insight has been given into what Igbo conflict management comprises. Leader of the Ọfọ men is always consulted by the parties involved men, who reveals to them the requirements which Ọfọ has compelled on them and which must be satisfied before Ọfọ listens to whatever the complaints they are making. Typically, for the resolution of any land issue, all the contending parties are required by Ọfọ to bring a dog (male), a cock, four alligator pepper, four cola nuts, a bottle of home-made gin, four jars of palmwine, and eight plates of fufu[91].

In what is termed the crisis of distinctions, *Ọfọ* and *Ogu* have been described as: two unique traditional symbolic representations which, due to their usual usage together,

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seem to be the same and one symbol. In this obvious marriage of symbols, Ogu, as part of daily life of the Igbo, even though, not many know this, lean towards being engulfed in Ọfọ, to which it offers spiritual force[91].

Ọfọ is a chunk of wood that symbolises a sign of power. *Ọfọ* men are respected as upstanding men whose utterances are true. They are viewed as exemplifying the ancestors, because the Igbos believe in a particular culture that whosoever disobeys the law has not just infuriated the people but the gods and the ancestors[92]. An Igbo man sees the *Ọfọ* as *a* divine supremacy that controls the issues of men all around the globe. *Ọfọ* is always involved with its twin sister*, Ogu. Ọfọ* is accorded precedency as the first born. However, whosoever holds *Ọfọ* automatically holds *Ogu*[91].

The *Ọfọ* holder, who is, in this context, a peacemaker, represents the Igbo language and cultural identities. Because the *Ọfọ* system is the central base of Igbo justice, its custodians are looked upon to manage conflicts effectively in line with the custom and tradition of Igbo people and their philosophy[91].

The powers and relevance of *Ọfọ* and*Ogu* have been explicitly highlighted in Igbo people's conflict management. Both *Ọfọ* holder and of the *Ọfọ* itself are revered. They are seen as sacred. But the questions that are yet to be addressed are the issues of how the *Ọfọ* and *Ogu* are related with. Does the *Ọfọ* holder speak English or Igbo to the gods? And what is the significance?

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2.3.6.1 Umuada Group in Igboland

In Igbo culture, women have some say in decision making. A good example is the League of Umuada. The Umuada is a traditional sociopolitical kin group in the south-eastern region of Nigeria, and it comprises the first daughters of each family, called the *Ada*. It is given the utmost respect and granted 'male' privileges and responsibilities[93].

In the current era, the Umuada League is no more reserved for first daughter of families. It is now extended to all women who are married outside their communities. What now obtains is the fact that women married outside their fathers' community can come home in unison to help make peace where there has been conflict. Again, the Umuada have a say in issues pertaining to burials. They are given special attention[93].

The Umuada has historically served as a forum for women to voice their concerns, needs and desires. It is a vital pillar of the community, acting as an arbitration and de-escalation force and performing cultural roles men cannot. Furthermore, working closely with patriarchal institutions and occupying key cultural functions have allowed the Umuada to adapt to changing times and maintain a strong level of agency and respect in the community. These findings recommend the Umuada as a model of peacebuilding to women across Nigeria and beyond. The formal coordination and leadership of Igbo communities rests with the traditional indigenous cabinet that oversees the peacefulness of daily living. At the apex are the *Igwe* and the *Igwe-in*-Council (the king and his cabinet members)[93].

Despite male predominance, the governance structure in the individual communities consists of men and women grouped by gender into various associations, trades, or age-

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grade systems. These subgroups, including the Umuada, are all sites where power and decision-making can be practiced. Every Igbo woman belongs to at least one of these village-based groups irrespective of creed or social status. Although men hold the more visible leadership positions, major decisions, conflict resolution and intercommunity dialogue also include women and youth. The Umuada is an example of such a subgroup. It is a formidable power system and decision-making body respected by the king, his cabinet and the entire community. The Umuada are given 'male' privileges, such as sitting in cabinet and can convene community and kindred meetings and participate in decision-making within the family, even when married outside their birth community[93].

Linguistically, Umuada is a compound noun formed from two Igbo words, '*Umu*' and '*Ada*'. *Umu* is a generic plural that conveys the sense of many. *Ada* is a name and means daughter. In general usage, every Igbo woman is '*Ada*' and is recognised as such in her matrimonial home. In its particular usage in the Umuada, *Ada* refers to the first female child born of a family. Umuada denotes, therefore, 'many first daughters in a social group of the same lineage'. These lineage ties can be a basis for claims to land and other kinds of property, to mutual assistance in the pursuit of common interests, to authority over others; they also entail obligations that complement these claims. The Umuada are different from the *Ndinyom*—or, the married wives—and are positioned above them in terms of status. Women who marry into the community from another community must respect the Umuada sometimes even more than they respect their husbands[93].

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2.3.6.2 Ozubulu in Igbo Culture

The origin of Ozubulu as an autonomous community and a corporate entity in Igboland can be traced since the beginning of the 16th century to where it emanated to around the Omambara River of Agulueri in the present-day Anambra State of Nigeria. As it were in that era, the son of the famous Chief called Eri was gaining tremendous influence in the social spheres and gathering political momentum. As his influence grew, he grew apprehensive and began to feel uncomfortable from safety standpoint in that river line community of Omambara. His son Eziomo had a priest dwarf in nature called Akanhi who was his political adviser. This dwarf priest advised him and his followers to cross over to the other side of the Niger where there would be an overall more favourable conditions to consolidate his political power and clout[94].

At the narrowest point of the Niger in the Omambara area, there was a large "Akpu" (silk) tree that was suffering erosion as a result of corrosion and encroaching river line. Under this Akpu tree, the dwarf priest established a shrine where he performed rituals and said prayers for the welfare of Ezimo. This eroded Akpu fell across the Niger at the narrowest point, and the dwarf priest again advised Ezimo and his family and followers to cross to the other side of the Niger using the trunk of the fallen Akpu tree. On crossing over the Niger, Ezimo, his family and followers socialized and interacted with the receptive people of Ubulu Okiti (Wine Tapper), the religious headquarters of Ubulu. Ubulu people were magnanimous and warm to Ezimo and his fellow migrants so his adviser Akanhi, the priest dwarf again advised Ezimo to take the Ozo title in Ubluland which he did. At Ubulu, Uno was shrine which is worshipped by all Ubulus. Ezimo was blessed with a son and he named him Ozodumekwu. Ezimo and his followers

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participated in the politics of the Ubulus, although they retained their historical identity, unity and solidarity. Because of friendly relationship of the Oba of Benin, the Oba supplied him with weapons, resources and logistical support; hence the Obi Ubulu Uku wielded much influence politically and further tended towards autocracy[94].

The other Ubulus gradually became afraid of him. And finally with the death of Ezimo, Ozodumekwu became the leader of his father's group and changed his name to Ozo, though some called him Oza. Ozo grew up to be powerful and bold, and started challenging the Obi of Ubulu Uku. Ozo got wind of the plot that Obi of Ubulu uku wanted to eliminate him, so he rallied their followers and then decided to trace their root back across the Niger from where they migrated to Ubulu who had earlier on migrated across the Niger (The Ubulu Ihejiofor and Ubulu Isi-uzo)[94].

For their crossing over the Niger, Ozo popularly known as OzoUbulu (a name that eventually became Ozobulu) decided to cut Akpu fruit and tie them together and seal them in bulk crossing. Before the great escape, a dwarf priest helped them to get a chip of the Udo Chalk as a security guide for their sojourn. This chip was wrapped with a piece of cloth to hide it from their enemies. It was called Udo Ekwulu where Ekwulu meant a cover. Nhike, one of the followers of Ozubulu brought the Ana Emblem of which he was the head and carried all the way through the journey. Before crossing the Niger on the Akpu trunks, some had fears that it would fail. The foremost among the grumblers was named Oche-Uce (a timid person). Eventually, after crossing the Niger this name was retained as Osuche[94].

On successfully crossing the Niger with the Akpu trunks, they decided to get a young Akpu plant and put it in a clay basin to follow them in a new place in respect to the

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Akpu tree that facilitated their migration to and from Ubululand on the other side of the Niger. The movement to the Eastern part of the Niger was successful. After a long and tedious journey, they became tired and rested and the spot where they rested was same spot where the young Akpu plant carried along in a clay basin with them rested and that spot was named Oku-Akpu till date in Uzo-Olu farms. After the rest, some of the sojourners could not proceed further, rather they decided to pitch their tents around the area and opted not to continue to UbuluIhejiofor and Ubulu Isi-Uzo. OzoUbulu and those who agree to move with him move further eastward and reached the present location known as Ozubulu. They carried along Udo Ekwulu and the young Akpu plant in the clay basin, while Nhike carried the Ana emblem. On reaching the spot, they found some people recovering from cerebral spinal meningitis. These were the Akputu and Ikono people that make up the Ozubulu[94].

Today the Akputus are living in Enugu Ozubulu, while the Ikonos are living within Nza Ozubulu. The Ana Emblem was hoisted at a spot in Amakwa after Nhike as Ama-nhike. The Akpu placed in the clay basin was planted eat a special place known today as Akpu Ozubulu the present OlieAkpu. The Udo Ekwulu was planted at the present spot of Ndekwulu Ozubulu to ward off possible attacks from the Ubulu Uku's[94].

i. Series of Developments in Ozubulu

Having settled at the present spot, Ozubulu fought it out with neighbouring towns such as Oraifite ,Ihembosi, Nnewi and Atani to assert her autonomy and right to exist. Having subdue these towns, Ozubulu gathered roots and power and established a booming trade with the riverine area like Ogbaru, Osuche, Oko Ogbede and Oko Oma. The trade was in foodstuffs, gun and wine from the European; fish and elubo. Then after some time, some

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group of people from Amakwa migrated to Neni and today are known as Amakwa Neni, a village that produced the fame Power Mike. Some group from InyabaUmudim Nnewi also migrated into Ozubulu and settled at the present Inyaba Egbema[94].

At the beginning of twenthieth century (20th century), the Christian missions entered Ozubulu and brought the light of western civilization into Ozubulu, inclusive of Christian religion. Further in 1905, a Catechist was sent by Church Missionary Society (CMS) on the Niger into Ozubulu to nurture the communities on catechism but later a church was set up at where the present-day Saint Mathews Anglican is situated. In addition to the above, in the year 1906, a catholic church was established at Eziora Ozubulu, and a school was opened in1909. The institution of both church and school in the area helped to produce responsible men and women like, Chief Jerome Udoji, and Ben Nwosu who made the dreaded Ogbunigwe missile that Biafran deployed to great effect during the Nigerian Civil war, to mention just a few[95].

Today, Ozubulu has gone far in development, and amidst all are- Ozubulu joint hospital, and several private hospitals, monastery, official post office, a customary court, magistrate court, convents, police headquarters, community banks, fertile land which made it to be known as food basket of Ekwusigo Local Government. Raw materials such as Kaolin –soft clay which is an essential ingredient in the manufacture of China and porcelain is found in industrial quantity in Ozubulu, just to mention but these[95].

ii. Some Cultural Activities of The Ozobulus

Just as towns are differently located so are they beautified with different cultures, hence below are some the Ozobulu's.

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a. Iku Izu: The Eziora in Ozubulu is known for their annual cultural festival Iku izu. The four communities that make up Ozubulu town have their dinstinct annual cultural festivals through which they exhibit their rich cultural heritage. Amakwa and Egbema communities are known for Asala, Nza community is known for Ima Oku, while Eziora is known for Iku Izu. Iku izu also known as Izu Eziora is apex annual cultural festival that unites men and women of all works of life[95].

b. Iwaji Festival: The iwaji festival translated in English is the celebration of new yam festival in Ozubulu community in Ekwusigo local government in Anambra State. It is generally celebrated in a grand style in the entirety of the community and at the palace of the king specially. The occasion usually attracts dignitaries/traditional rulers/ government officials, illustrious sons and daughters of Ozubulu both at home and in Diaspora. The festival showcases the rich cultural heritage of Ndi-Igbo and offers opportunity for a re-union and equally encourage the community as well as the entire Igbo nation to consolidate their culture. Yam in Igbo-land is celebrated because of its specialty among all crops, it is the most sacred seedling that is regarded as a taboo when stolen[96].

2.3.6.3 Mbano in Igbo Culture

The name **MBANO**, like Nigeria, is said to be a colonial creation. The area was originally known as **MBASAA**. The British colonial rule Balkanized Mbasaa through its administrative creations. Mbasaa comprised seven clans namely, Ehime, Osu, Ugiri, Mbama, Isu, Ugboma and Obowo. As traditions of origin of Mbano indicate, the people migrated from the general area of Orlu and settled in their present location. Some

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neighbours of Mbano equally share the same common ancestral and belong to another larger Isu-ama clan of Igbo-land. Mbano is found in Imo State, which appears to be the only community that shares boundaries in Orlu, Okigwe and Owerri which constitute the three geopolitical zones of Imo State - the Igbo heart land, occupying an expanse of land of more than 205.30 square kilometers. Mbano consists of Osu, Ehime, Mbama and Ugiri clans[97].

The Mbano people are predominately farmers, they are known for the production of palm wine known in Igbo language to be (mmanya –ngwo, and mmanyankwu from the raffia tree/palm tree, palm oil and kernels, cassava, yams, three leaved yams known as Una in Igbo language, Coco-yam (Una), Coco-yam (ede), Native plantain (unereojii) and so on[97].

They are equally good at planting and eating diverse vegetables like pumpkin, popularly known as (ugu), akwukwoofe or akwukwoanara, ugbogiri, ahihaara, utazi, utashi, achara. The Mbanos as well, keep livestock like goats, sheep, dogs, duck, fowls, pigs, which are often sold when need arises, or killed for meat to augment bush meat like rabbits, antelope, gorilla, etc., supplied by hunters. Generally, the people's involvement in agriculture fluctuates between subsistence and commercial production. This expresses that while most Mbano- farmers engage in subsistence agriculture to produce their daily farm produce which went along way into helping them to subdue daily hunger, others got involved on larger scale or business production of same. And those farmers who engaged in commercial or mechanized farming has greatly helped to create employment for many who could have been redundant in the society but busy fanning the amber of social vices[98].

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The Mbano's like other Igbo groups, were adherents of Igbo traditional religion, several of them are of the habit of according respect to deities and other gods. They believe in the most Powerful God who reigns in the affairs of man who in Igbo translation is regarded as Chiukwu or Obini-Igwe. But aside him, some believe in paying obeisance to other smaller gods who they feel had jointly existed to preserve them and make things work out well for them in life[98].

Therefore, very often the adherents of these traditional worshippers in a bid to communicate and worship these deities, gods/spirits tends to buy down some items like fowls, goats, kolanuts, gins or palm wine, etc and take down to a native doctor known as Dibia who serves as intermediary between them and the gods who would now do a sacrifice, appeasing the gods and as well taking their request to the shrine which represent the god or spirit. In the course of these acts, the fowls or goats are slaughtered, oblations made and some declarations are made by the priest or Dibia in-charge after which the worshipper would be assured that his prayers are answered and should go in peace[98].

All these processes were the medium to commune with the gods by the Mbanos until Christianity began to gain ground among the people of Mbano. Christianity as a religion in Mbano hinges on believe in God the Almighty and in his son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Thus, many people have resolved to embrace it especially as it expresses that there is a place of consolation at the end of the suffering in these worldly affairs. The adherents therefore belong to different denomination which uphold further tenets connected to the religion. Notwithstanding their diverse tenets and certain conflicts that

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are resolvable, many of them still support one another in some of their celebrations like marriages, child bearing dedications or thanksgiving[99].

The origin of the name Mbano was during the British administration of Umuduru native court created in 1906. A separate native court was established to serve Obowo, Onitsha Uboma, Etiti clans and their neighbours. The Umuduru native court of jurisdiction has four clans, namely, Osu, Ehime, Ugiri and Mbama. Therefore, it was during the court at Umuduru, that the name Mbano, meaning four clans naturally began to be used sitting by the warrant chiefs into court's jurisdiction[98].

Mbano without hesitance had appeared in British colonial records before it was recognized as Mbano federated Native Authority in 1956. It was carved out of Mbaasa for easy administration. The traditions of origin of Mbano indicates that they migrated from the area of Orlu and settled in their present location. Some of the neighbours share from their ancestral origin and belong to the larger Isu-ama clan of Igboland. Therefore, it is common to hear Elders in Mbano often saying, "Anyishiuzo Orlu biaebea", which when translated in English means, 'We came here from Orlu area[98].

As a town is not an island, therefore, she relates with neighbours like Ahiazu Mbaise on the West, Ikeduru/Mbaitolu on the South, Okweele with zone. Some contagious communities that form neighbours of Mbano are Eziama in Ekwereazu Mbaise, Inyisi, Amaimo, Atta and Okwelle, in Onuimo, Atta, and Umudim in Ikediri, Etiti, AbajahIsu, Ogwa, and Okwelle in Onuimo. The Mbanos had always maintained good neighbourliness and as boundaries is often seen as a thing of the heart, her borders villages cross her borders for purposes like trade, religious, cultural and educational activities and so on. Trade-wise, the Igbo people operate market days mainly known as

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Eke, Orie, Afor, Nkwo. For instance, there is a particular market known as Oriagu situated in Umuakagu in Mbano of Imo State which is always traded every eight Orie day, attended by populated neighbours who live within and outside the environs of Mbano. It is highly regarded and attended by people mainly because all necessary market items needed by households are sold at considerable prices, thus the notion of "You better attend the market and buy market items at cheaper rates or you go Kingsway on daily basis" has sank into the sub-consciousness of the market attendees[100].

On the day of the market, Oriagu often witness the influx of people with bags of rice and beans, Garri, truck- loads of harvested cassava, yams, cocoa-yams from farms, kegs of red oil, groundnuts oil, bags of fresh and dried tomatoes, dried and frozen fishes and meats, life domestic animals, kitchen utensils, clothes, foot-wears, pharmaceutical stores wide opened and several restaurants that have all-ready prepared food, etc. The market arrangement is so superb that hardly will you look out for anything meaningful for household usage that would not be available and to make it more attractive, every stock of trade has a mapped-out area for easy location[100].

In the aspect of cultural activities, the people engage in Iri - jii/jiiaro (new yam festivals) Iwaakwa (wear/ring cloth festivals), Iku- mmanwu (masquerade festivals), Mbom –uzo (street/road clearing), Iku-nwa, and Ima-ghenkwu. Amidst the afore-mentioned, Iri jii (celebration of new yam festival is respected among all in Mbano. This is because yam in Igbo land is regarded as kings of other farm produce, the Mbanos therefore added value to its kingship by dedicating a particular period of the year to celebrate new yam in Mbano communities. During this occasion, communities concerned would invite dignitaries and different guests from diverse places to grace the occasion. Special

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preparation would be made prior the D-day, these would be inclusive of proper sanitation of the communities, preparation of special dishes by celebrant's family, as well as some people making sure that there are sounds booming in their different families to keep every warm as the celebration goes on[100].

At a particular time agreed by the communities, for all to converge at the market square all celebrants will be mandated to move to the agreed venue where the exact occasion would take place, preferably at the community market square. At this juncture, different communities would be given opportunity to showcase and dance around with some tubers of yam from their farmlands which connotes capabilities in farm work. In line with these, gun-shot would be released at interjection with the music rhyme that would be projected by women from those communities. And in some communities, young girls who are specially dressed in traditional attires are utilized to showcase traditional dance for entertainment of the guest who in return of a good gesture may contribute towards the development of the visited communities. In the course of these activities, people could take pictures, while others may see it as an opportunity to look inwardly and search out for a dependable house, wife amidst the young entertainers. And conclusion of the entertainment, more food and drinks could be given to guests and prayers would be rendered on the communities and the entire partakers of the celebration, after which people can retire to their different homes[100].

Next to this is the Iwa-Akwa (wearing cloth ceremony). This celebration often involves male youths born within the same age limit or bracket of three years, for example- male youths born within 1914, 1915, 1916 regarded to belong to same age group. Therefore, on the D-day, the age group are expected to all appear in a uniform traditional wrapper,

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possibly with beads round their necks and long beautiful decorated atheistic feathers in their hands coupled with traditional caps on their heads. On the mentioned attires are required to boldly be accompanied by friends, female counterparts of same age, family members and all well-wishers to notable places like market squares, and every nook and crannies of the communities with incessant gun-shot, dinning and winning galore to announce their manhood to the entire community[98].

To attach seriousness to this occasion, some siblings at home usually stand in for any of their brother in diaspora, they usually devote their time carrying their wrapper and dancing around other celebrants in representation of the person in diaspora. At the conclusion of the occasion, gifts are given to celebrants and the quests are lavishly taken care of as far as dinning and wining is concerned. At completion of the festival, the celebrants are properly and legally adopted as full-fledged men into the community forum, thus they would be seen as both part of decision-making body as well as agents of developments in their communities[100].

Aside the narrated, Iku-mmanwu is another cultural festival highly celebrated in some parts of Mbano, which when translated in English means the festival of masquerade. On the day of such celebration, diverse masquerades would be seen dancing and been paraded about in retinue of chanters following them round the village in commemoration of the celebration. The make-up of the masquerades on ground which is inclusive of the oke-mmanwu and other mmanwu that would represent certain communities would show-case the powerfulness of each community or his diabolic nature. Thus, at the end of such celebration, certain communities would come to the realization that may not be toyed around with. It could as well bring both mutual cooperation and suspicion. Most

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often than not, community members are fore-warned to trade with caution in such celebration so as not to invite the wrath or evil declarations of the masquerade because some believe that such represent evil omen[98].

Iku –nnwaa as a cultural celebration, where certain communities believe that children born in same period of time at a particular age in their lives would be dedicated, brought out and celebrated and as well performed certain rituals for all in the name of traditions towards securing their safety and continual existence in the community. Families of celebrants are required to prepare cooked maize which will be prepared with fresh pepper, red oil and salt for the witnesses of the programme[100].

The ima-ghenkwu culture is a cultural activity where the concerned community reach an agreement that palm fruits of the entire community should not be harvested for at least a period of 3-5months so that individual both in and outside the community should register with a stipulated amount for the development of that community before they would be allowed at the expiration of five months to participate in such harvest. On the date of the harvest, every legally registered harvester should converge at the community hall and important announcement pertaining to the rules and regulations of the palm fruit harvest is made, then the town crier would openly declare the harvesting of the palm tree formally. Here, harvesters are fit to enter any part of the community to cut down any palm fruits of their choice, but people are equally cautioned not to interfere with other peoples' belongings in the process of this exercise[100].

2.3.6.4 Umuahia in Igbo Culture

Umuahia is the capital of Abia State. Its neighbours include Ngwa, Bende and Ikwu-ano in Abia State, Obowo in Imo State and Ikot Ekpene in Akwa-Ibom State. Umuahia is

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made up of two local government areas, namely Umuahia South and Umuahia North. Umuopara, Ibeku, Ọhụhụ, Ụbakala and Olokoro are the five clans that make up the Umuahia people. First and foremost, *Umuahians* speak the Igbo language, though with different dialects which are mutually intelligible. As the dialects differ, so also are the customs and traditions of the constituent clans. But the people have a common culture with regards to conducting of marriage rites and burial rites, farming traditions, music, attires and grooming, conflict management and food[101].

There are lots of spirituality in marriage tidings between the two families involved. It is a covenant between the two villages involved, not just the couples. Goats are slaughtered, drinks are drunk and *okazi* and *achara* are cooked to cement the covenant. And of course, the men pay dowries and other things. If the father of a girl to be given out in marriage is late, an extra goat is provided by the husband to be for a special sacrifice[102].

During burial rites*, Umuahians,* like other Igbo, bury the dead in their compounds. Cemeteries are literarily not available in the towns or villages. For a dead woman, it is her paternal people that will eventually put her in the grave which is dug by her husband's people. But in a situation where the woman dies without her dowry paid, her corpse is buried in her father's compound[103].

When an old man dies, the burial rites will depend on his age, status and the society he belongs to. For example, if the deceased belongs to the *Ọkọnkọ* secret cult, the final burial dance is at the market square, where different masquerades parade to usher in the soul of dead ancestors. It is usually a solemn occasion when the children of the man file in procession to dance. The first son leads with a cock. All of them dress traditionally.

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Farming is the people's main occupation. It is subsistence farming where yam, cassava and corn are grown. The people also produce lots of palm oil and palm-wine. Hunting is a popular engagement among the people too. Cultural dances are part and parcel of the people of Umuahia. Each of the clans and even villages have their peculiar music. Some of the used musical instruments are local drum, gong, bell, *oyo* and some others. The dances are normally danced barefooted and tying only wrapper dressing. The dances add colour to marriage, burial and childbirth ceremonies[102].

The Umuahia people are known for *okazi* and *achara* soup. It is the only soup eaten during marriage and burial ceremonies. It is served with *eba* or *akpu* (fufu). The soup is the cultural trademark of the people and they are proud of it[102].

Conflict management and peacebuilding activities take place at town halls, market squares, and even on farms if the conflict is over a piece of land for farming dispute. For the latter, the preliminary conflict management may be in town halls and market squares. But the farm or land in dispute must be visited. The verdicts sometimes are on the farm or land. When a particular conflict lingers on so much and no breakthrough is in sight, the *Ọkọnkọ* secret cult is consulted for spiritual interpretation and oath taking. It is the last option. The two parties in conflict swear before the oracle. Sometimes, it is the accused that swear, calling on the oracle to kill him before a year if he or she is guilty as accused. The accused dies within a year should he be guilty. But surviving beyond the period specified in the oath exonerates him of any accusations. The survival is normally celebrated by the oath taker and; his family and friends[103].

Of all the above-mentioned cultural beliefs of the *Umuahians, Ọji*, the kolanut plays a significant role. No celebration is done without consulting the ancestors. Doing this

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entails breaking of the kolanut and pouring of libation using palm-wine. Consulting of ancestors during burial rites, marriage ceremonies and festivals are done with *Ọji-Igbo*, not *gworo*, that the Hausa normally eat. *Ọji-Igbo* is smaller in size yet strong in spirituality. One could contain as much as seven lobes. The more the lobes of broken *'Ọji-Igbo'* for any incantation, the more successful the occasion. This is the people's belief[102].

Dressing has a place in the lives of the people of Umuahia. The women dress like every other Igbo woman – a scarf, a blouse, and two long wrappers, one tied with a rope while the other is placed on top and can be adjusted at will. Women of Umuahia are fashionable. They always have one uniform or the other for occasions. Umuahia's men's pattern of grooming differs from those of other Igbo men from Enugu, Onitsha, and Owerri. A titled Umuahia man wears a special cap with a tail that flings. This is against other Igbo men's caps that look like European Cowboy hats. To attend important occasions, an Umuahian man wears a singlet with a tied George wrapper and staff. The youth normally wear European wears. However, the girls and the boys emulate their mothers and fathers during weddings and special occasions. That is why an Umuahian girl leaves to her new husband's home in full Umuahia woman's attire; while the groom dresses like the real men he has joined[103].

New yam festival is common in the entire Igboland. But it is unique in Umuahia. The reason is the fact that the festival goes with the *Ekpe* cultural dance. The beating of *Ekpe* is like a war song. The youth and the elderly participate. The youth dance and run around, while the elders, who must belong to the *Ọkọnkọ* cult, do the spiritual aspect of the dance. The climax of *Ekpe* in any clan of Umuahia is the *Ekpe* masquerade cutting of

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the head of a goat. It must be at once. Immediately the masquerade cuts off the head, the jubilant youths hang the head on a strong stick and begin to dance with it through all the villages. It is a symbol of victory and ancestral approval for the new yam to be celebrated. But, if the masquerade fails to cut the head at a single attempt, gloom envelops the people as it is a bad omen[102].

The annual New Yam Festival takes place every August. The event attracts a large number of well-wishers and visitors. New yams are harvested. They are used in preparing pepper soup (*mmirioku ji*) or pounded yam for consumption with *utazi* soup which is the most popular soup on the day. The yam can be roasted too and eaten with raw palm oil, especially by the elders. Other supplementary refreshments like palm wine, kolanuts, stockfish, meat, oil beans, and garden eggs are served lavishly[102].

The event is heralded with gun shots the night preceding the day of the New Yam Festival. These shots assure or confirm that the festival must take place the following day. Early in the morning of the festival, the traditional rulers, along with their aides kick-start the event in their palaces. Thereafter, the event starts in every home. The five clans choose different days for their festival. In the course of the fieldwork, more facts shall be got on the 'culture' of *Umuahians*as a subset of Igbo culture[102].

Writing on the people of Umuahia conflict management procedure, conflict management and peacebuilding activities take place at town halls, market squares, and even on farms if the conflict is over a piece of land for farming dispute. For the latter, the preliminary conflict management may be in town halls and market squares. But the farm or land in dispute must be visited. The verdicts sometimes are on the farm or land. When a particular conflict lingers on so much and no breakthrough is in sight, the Ọkọnkọ secret

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cult is consulted for spiritual interpretation and oath taking. It is the last option. The two parties in conflict swear before the oracle. Sometimes, it is the accused that swear, calling on the oracle to kill him before a year if he or she is guilty as accused. The accused dies within a year should he be guilty. But surviving beyond the period specified in the oath exonerates him of any accusations. The survival is normally celebrated by the oath taker and; his family and friends[104].

In all of this said, it appears the women do not have much in the conflict management of the Igbo people. This is very misleading. This is because, the umunna and ama ala have always concentrated on the men. The women are not allowed to be in the midst of men to deliberate, expect when specially invited by the men. In Igbo culture, women do not break the kola nut even though they eat it. Despite all this, the women still have relevance in the southeast.

2.3.7 Language and Culture

Language is believed to be much more tangible than race or religion. Some scholars see race to be a fiction – belonging to one another group is more a social and historical matter than a biological one. It may be difficult to determine the ethnicity or nationality of a person on examination. A South African white, as matter of fact, may look like a Russian or an American. But the story will be different when it comes to language. For the simple reason that the two or three languages see reality from different ideological angles, a Chinese, a Greek and a Hebrew may disagree regularly[105].

Language diversity is often portrayed as incendiary and it has been metaphorically referred as the 'Tower of Babel', an allusion to the biblical account about the genesis of

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multilingualism. The above metaphor has been buttressed when the story of a Kurdish rebel's leader in Turkey, Abdulah Ocalan was told. A certain judge was told that the restriction on the Kurdish language was the principal motivating factor for the war against Turkish rule[106]. The implication suggests that language grievances are a spark that can all too easily set off ethnic wars or violence. Language grievances, when compounded by religious grievances, may breed violent conflicts. Reducing a language's status or banning its use may lead to erroneously armed conflict which may be blamed on religious, ethnic or political factors[107].

The use of Nigerian languages in Nollywood movies with particular interest in Igbo language has been reviewed and one wonders why Igbo films in Igbo are not common as those of Yoruba. The truth remains that there is a comparative advantage in local movies, if carefully produced in group among the Nigerian movies industry, however, that of Igbo language films indicates that Igbo films have systematically become films acted by the Igbos in English language[108].

The fact that is being derived from the above statement is the relegation of Igbo language to the background. This situation does not contribute to the social well-being of the Igbo people. In other words, there is a call for the promotion of Igbo language by Igbo film producers. It is therefore, very important not to forget so soon that it is Living in Bondage – that popular Igbo film produced by Okey Ogunjiọfọr for NEK Videos Ltd in 1992, that ushered in many of the famous home videos that form what is today known as Nollywood. It was so well produced that the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) rated the film high in the world at the time[109].

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What is been driven at is the fact that UNESCO can as well recognize and commend what is done in Nigerian local languages. The film then was in Igbo but subtitled in English, as done by Yoruba films. The single object of this sentiment is that Nigerian mother tongues, especially Igbo language, can be developed, both for social and cultural benefits.

It is now very glaring that the symbiosis between language and conflict is not to be underestimated. The two are interwoven in light of the arguments already made above. Language and conflict are therefore, phenomena that must be mindful of, phenomena that are capable of mending, or destroying a given group. There is the belief that the less the number of languages is despised (i.e. those ones the standard languages see as inferior), the less conflicts will be experienced.

Language and culture in society and conflict, from what has so far been discussed are invaluable in the sense that, without language and culture, there will be no society. Additionally, conflict can be caused and managed by the use of language and its unique culture. There is no way a user of a language can effectively communicates without recourse to culture. In support of the intertwined relationship between language and culture, a speaker acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner[110].

To have a better society and conflict free situation, various contextual variables have been identified[110]. They are as follows:

- Setting
- Participants

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- Ends
- Acts
- Key
- Instrumentality
- Norms
- Genre

Many at times, conflicts have arisen because speakers refused to give considerations to the SPEAKING. In the context of the acronym, it is defined in phrases:

Setting – the place of a speech event.

Participants – the actors and their relations with one another.

Ends – the general goals and individual aims.

Acts – whether an individual asks questions, criticizes, clarifies.

Key – the tone, friendly or hostile, humorous or serious.

Instrumentality – the medium and the channel-speaking or writing.

Norms – behaviour that accompanies language, how loudly should one speak, should there be interruption or not?

Genre – deals with category of language: riddles, praise poems, proverbs, and idioms[110].

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Every language situation or activity type has its own SPEAKING. The way the Europeans reason and conduct themselves differ from the way or manner Africans, or Asians do. In essence, society affects language and culture vice versa.

In order to avoid conflicts, one must be mindful of his utterances. Apart from the utterances, one must understand and strictly follow the cultural norms guiding proceedings. This is why conflicts always emanate when two parties of different languages and cultures are in business. English cannot be appropriate for an Igbo man and a Hausa man (especially when both do not have good grasp of English) in resolving their differences. This is why it is believed that the Igbo language can effectively play a significant role in conflict management and peacebuilding among the Igbo people. The people understand the Igbo language and its culture and tradition. Language and culture can therefore cause obscurity and ambiguity on one hand, and clarity of purpose on the other hand.

Discourse theory, which deals with the real context of language usage, pays serious attention to appropriateness, purposefulness and coherence. Discourse involves utterances made in one place or the other. It is verbal. Utterances are therefore, activities in discourse because when utterances are made, language and thought are at work. The appropriateness, purposefulness and coherence of an utterance made in private or public plays a great deal of role in handling of issues, especially conflicts. Discourse theory brings to fore, the fact that speaking of a language is part of an activity, or form of life. When one speaks in a gentle manner, it quietens anger, while the opposite is the case when a harsh tone is used. It stirs anger[111].

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There is a strong support for the view that language is indispensable. The indispensability of language, in many's understanding, is because Language is the prerequisite for the accumulation and transmission of other cultural traits, language is not only a necessary condition for culture, it is itself part of culture[112]. What this assertion means is the fact that the society cannot do without language. Because negligence of language means, negligence of culture and this amounts to clashes of interests. Put simply, language and culture must be respected. In doing this, efforts must be made to use words appropriately so that what is said is what is meant.

It has been argued that the problem of meaning must be taken into consideration, else there will be problem of effective communication. The philosophical worldview of the language must be of paramount importance, so that there will not be misrepresentation of thoughts[113]. To bring this segment of the review to an end, it is now established that language and culture are interwoven. When one talks about a language, he indirectly refers to the culture of the people; the same way reference to a particular culture can be done with adequate direction to language.

Language and culture are important in the discharge of peacebuilding. This is because, communication and understanding are based on a people's language and culture. In this context of the study, Igbo language and culture are instrumental. It is believed that culture, like an individual, is more or less a consistent pattern of thought and action[112]. Since language and culture are indeed interwoven, as each affects the other, it becomes logical that since culture influences language, the latter has a vital role to play in conflict management, as the people involved are involved in culture and tradition. When two people are from different cultures, they see language and reality in different

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perspectives and this plays a role too, because the actors in the conflict should be made to realise this by the conflict managers in order not to misunderstand the thought of the other.

The thinking, feeling, and acting of a set of people are embedded in their culture. Culture makes the human experience look significant: It refers broadly to the forms through which people make sense of their lives[114].

The suggestion here boils down to the popular saying that culture is the identity of a people. There is no doubt that people express their beliefs and their values through language. In this view, culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meaning, embodied in symbolic forms, by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life. The keyword lies in communication. Without communication, knowledge cannot be spread. Conflicts may continue to flourish, because enough efforts have not been made to really appreciate that some conflicts in our world today are culturally based[115]. Culture offers a grammar for acting in and reinterpreting the world.

It is also believed that language conflict is the bane of world conflict in the light that when one does not understand the other's language, he concludes their personalities and values vary. This is evident between the races of the world: the Arabs, the Jews, the Asians, the Europeans, the African, and the Americans.

Language and culture rub off on each other. They are crucial to proper interpretation of a discourse or decoding of a message. Lack of knowledge about cultural traits in a language prohibits full comprehension of the message being passed across. In other

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words, no meaningful discussion of language can be fully achieved in absolute neglect of culture. Language and culture as a means of conveying thought (including in conflict management and peacebuilding) situations, is capable of having psychological impact on things people communicate about. Even expression of emotion in the face, body and mode of speech shows that bodily expression (language) of emotions varies across activities[115].

This goes without saying that conflict managers should be watchful in the course of their duties as 'little' things like the body movement and the state of the actors' faces could indicate whether talks are being negative or positive. The mental imagery experiment varies from one culture to the other. This implies, that no two cultures may view things the same way[116]. Language plays a role too in emotionality of man and human physiology. Because they are a part of an integrated system which determines one's behaviour at a particular situation[117].

Furthermore, it has been posited that it is possible for metaphorical thoughts to be relevant to an understanding of culture and society. Supporting this claim, it was suggested that human emotions like love, fear, anger, envy and shame are not constant but are dependent on the cultural background. For instance, expressions of emotions in Greek are at variance with that of other parts of the world[117].

The above has been corroborated by stating that it is not pain that is frightening, rather those things that portend it, for example, a poisonous snake or a poised spear. The tract of a snake in the sound, or a rattling sound, is frightening in turn because they indicate that a snake is nearby. Fear involves knowledge and inference[118].

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The implication of the above statement is that one expresses his sentiment as a result of how his culture views particular things. This sentiment can be measured in that owing to one's perception of a phenomenon, one becomes subtle or aggressive when discussing it. All this hinges on language and the roles it does play in the course of building peace.

Igbo language is a tonal language and comprises various dialects. Of these dialects, Owerri and Umuahia groups belong to the central Igbo standard which are accepted by missionaries, writers, publishers and Cambridge University[119]. More light is shed on the language as it is also one of the three Nigerian languages recommended in the National Policy on education to be taught both as first and second languages in the secondary school system. Furthermore, it is available as a language of a study in many tertiary institutions in Nigerian and outside Nigeria. It is also one the three Nigerian languages for which Microsoft Corporation is developing necessary Information Technology (II) Software[120].

A culture is sensitive to change. No culture is better than the other but cultures influence each other, the knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures amounts to acculturation which may bring both positive and negative changes. For instance, the western culture of dressing, marriage, governance and even worship has positively and negatively influenced African cultures. Cultural sensitivity therefore underscores the fact that there exist differences and similarities among cultures. When this is understood, the interpretations of how peoples behave and act become more realistic. On the dynamics of culture, the zeal to explore what does not exist in one’s culture leads to advocacy for a change. The dynamism of culture makes it a near impossibility for a people to see

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themselves as not needing ideas from other worlds. So culture is also a historical study[115].

Igbo culture comprises the customs, traditions and beliefs of the people. In borrowing the popular saying, culture to the Igbo world is the total way of life of the people. In other words, the culture goes a long way in determining how the conflict resolution mechanism is taken care of for the common good of the people. Everything that happens in Igbo land is hinged on culture so that, culture can be seen as the 'Unwritten Constitution' which everybody is expected to know and commit to memory in order not to infringe to other persons' rights on one hand, and on the community, on the other hand. Language in question is not only linguistic. It includes semiotics and proverbs, two aspects of language that help a lot in shaping the meaning of culture and the people's worldview.

Taboos in Igbo are a source of conflict. It must be mentioned here because taboos checkmate a culture. More light is shed about Igbo taboos: 'Taboos in Igbo culture have some international acceptability. For instance, it is a taboo for blood brothers or sisters or simply put, blood relations to have sex (incest) or to marry. The Igbo religious customs also vehemently frown at every ramification of murder – suicide, infanticide, matricide and patricide. On peculiar taboos in Igbo culture the following are common:

- Abortion;
- A woman dying in pregnancy;
- A person dying on Eke day, a day seen as an evil day;
- A woman eating the gizzard of a hen or cocks; as it is preserved for men alone;

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- Whistling at night;
- Cracking perm kernel at night;
- A man failing to kill instantly a cock that crows at night[115].

From the above, it is evident that common international 'taboos' like suicide is not supported by Igbo culture. The story of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* is very key. Okonkwo, despite his popularity commits suicide and is deprived proper burial[30]. On the rest of taboos itemised above, it must be said that some are no more being practised because time has overcome them. For instance, a woman dying in pregnancy and one dying in Eke day in some parts of Igbo world can be argued against. Science and common sense have helped in expunging some cultural beliefs that are not in tandem with reality. This study however, is not going to dwell on the so called, 'bad' cultures as it were.

On Igbo conflict resolution, the concept of *umunnab' ike* (the kinsmen are power) is strong in the culture of Ndi Igbo. The ethics of the Igbo society are imbibed in the *Umunna* mechanism. In other words, the *umunna* are the essence of Igbo ethics so that anything that the *umunna* are not in the know is null and void. Hence, in Igbo, funerals, traditional weddings, and many other events (including the *Idunshi, Inuiyi,* and *Igbandu*are with the consent of the *Umunna* who act as witnesses or observers)[31].

It must be noted that apart from the *Umunna* (the male kinsmen), the women also gather for deliberations from time to time to discuss the welfare of their households. Women are part of the cultural richness of the Igbo. The women deliberate from time to time to brainstorm on the welfare of their communities. However, the women cannot involve in

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oath taking without the *Umunna* in the know. The Igbo culture is therefore, patrilineal in structure[31].

However, in support of women being part of Igbo culture, the women, in Igbo culture, have a lot of roles to play in the success of a traditional wedding rite. They contribute some items for the mother of the bride, do the cooking, the dancing, and the dressing of the bride[104]. A reliable voice on the role of women and *Umunna* is in "*Things Fall Apart*" discussing the traditional ceremony in the home of Okonkwo's bosom friend, Obierika[30].

Another very important aspect of the Igbo culture recognises a calendar of four days making up a week and till date determines market days. Each of the days is significant in the culture of the Igbo. Some names of persons and markets derive their names from these four days: Eke, Orie, Afo, and Nkwo. Each Igbo community identifies with one of the calendar days and this determines when the particular community's spiritual events must fall, including main market day[31]. Proverbs are a part of Igbo culture with which resolutions are tackled. It has been said that Igbo language and by extension, culture is replete with proverbs. Igbo has a rich history and cultural pedigree. The role of proverbs cannot be overemphasised in the Igbo culture and conflict resolution. There are Igbo proverbs for war, peace, love, hatred, friendship, and of course, marriage[121].

The following selected peace proverbs, ten out of thirty generated in a fieldwork will help in explaining cultural beliefs of the Igbo people and their faith in them[104].

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Table 2.1: Some Igbo Conflict Management Proverbs

1. *Ọkụkọnnọnuhuanaghi aha mara, yabụọ ne ezi, ya ha mara*	A home chicken does not produce fats at home, but does so when it is outside.
2. *Nkpisinnweeze, ma ezeya*	A toothpick knows the teeth that fit it.
3. *Oguanaghiavo anu*	The hoe does not dissect a dead animal.
4. *Nkunnọnambaneherewe ji*	A people use their local firewood to roast their yam.
5. *Onyeozianaghiatuilu*	A messenger does not speak in proverbs.
6. *Ndi nwe ala, ne eji ala*	Those that own the land, control the land.
7. *Mbiarabiaamaghinga ala ruru*	A stranger does not know where an abomination occurred.
8. *Onyeajujuanaghiefuuzo*	He that asks questions does not miss the way.
9. *Nteotuukwu ne site naotutunaaatuonu*	A one-legged cricket begins to make earlier move to make its hole for inhabitance.
10. *Ugo eberulenangbagbu*	The eagle has perched to be shot dead.

Source[104]

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Critical look of proverb number 6 shows that it cannot be men alone who own the land. The women are partakers of the land. For instance, during traditional marriage rites, women have roles to play without which, there will be problems. In proverb number 4, it could still be alluded to women as being a means or instrument for peacebuilding in the context of this study.

There are some proverbs that depict a mother and her baby in a manner it helps great image of what a woman really is made of.

The Igbo language does not do without proverbs as seen in various scholars' works where Igbo proverbs are used to portray much clearly the cultural thinking of his people, especially in his trilogy: *Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease*, and *Arrow of God.* Collaborating this, Igbo language is replete with proverbs[122].

Furthermore, in another submission, a proverb is a condensed wisdom drawn from experience[123]. There is a strong belief that this position is logical because proverbs are normally due to experiences and observations of a people or peoples overtime. Proverbs increase from time to time depending on the seriousness of a given people to harness the wisdom of their poets and drummers. Proverbs in Igbo more often than not come from great poets, hunters, and very elderly.

There are Igbo proverbs for war, peace, love, hatred, friendship, and of course, marriage. Some of such proverbs about women and babies are examined.

i. **It is only the pregnant woman who can say how many times the baby in her womb has kicked her:** There is a unique relationship between the baby in the womb and its mother. This proverb posits that not even the doctor or midwife –

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traditional or western, can tell how many times a baby kicks in a woman's womb. As a proverb, it can be seen from figurative perspective. The wisdom in the proverb goes to argue that it is only the woman who knows where it pinches when the issue of baby in the womb is discussed. The fact remains that in real life, no woman can even tell how many times a baby in her womb kicks in a day. This is because, while a pregnant woman is asleep, the baby might not be sleeping, but active and kicking.

The essence of the proverb is therefore, to say that since it is the woman who is carrying the baby in her womb, it is logical to say that she knows best how the foetus reacts and behaves during the antenatal periods. Even during the postnatal period, one can rightly argue that it is the woman, now the nursing mother who can really interpret the actions of a sucking baby, for instance. It is believed from traditional Igbo thinking that when a baby is sucking the breast and kicking happily, that the baby is actually reacting to the musicality or beating of the heartbeat of its mother. Traditional thinking in Igbo say that the heartbeat and musicality are the same to what the baby is used to when still in the womb – maybe still coming from the same heartbeat of the mother[121].

One can also go ahead to opine in support of this proverb the belief that a mother is really superior (Nneka) in the matters of raising a child since it is the woman who bears the baby for nine months in the womb, breastfeeds the baby for some months and even baths and feeds the baby while the father is busy looking for money to take care of the family. This is sense in this present argument. For instance, the burial of a woman in Igbo land is very broad and expensive. Her

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paternal people must be around and of course the husband's kinsmen being the hosts. In parts of Igbo land, it is the woman's paternal kinsmen that will lay her to the grave and fill it with sand as part of respect. It is however the youth of the husband's kinsmen that are responsible for the digging of the grave[124].

ii. **A baby that prevents its mother from sleeping will not sleep itself:** This is a common proverb in Igbo. It is normally in the context of postnatal period. The argument is that when a baby disturbs at night so that its mother cannot sleep, the baby itself will not sleep. But one can counter it straight. It is common to see a baby who after preventing its mother from sleeping at night now sleeps in the morning while the mother is busy washing and cooking for the entire family.

If one takes it prenatally, it still makes some sense in the issue of *wombiture*. When the baby in the womb is too playful or active to allow its mother from sleeping, say at night or anytime, the baby itself cannot sleep. The reason is that it is when a pregnant woman is relaxed and resting, a baby can take the advantage to sleep[121].

Of course, this proverb is deeper than it sounds. It could simply imply that a baby whether pre or post-natal is at the centre of conflict and peace. A baby is capable of being a source of sorrow on one hand, and on the other hand of succour. This is so in that, when a baby is doing well in the womb, the mother and the society are happy. But when a baby is not doing well health wise, the mother and the society are not happy. It is based on this that the world has fought and still fighting infant mortality rate – that it should reduce to its lowest per cent.

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iii. **When a woman is running for her dear life, she forgets to hold her dangling breasts:** Literally, this is true. But we are not looking at it from the physical angle of a woman not being mindful of her dangling breasts in time of chaos that necessitates she runs for safety. This proverb may be in the context of looking at the excruciating pains women go through during childbirth or even prior to that very moment. Despite the pains women go through in pregnancies and childbirths, this proverb suggests that they still do not desist from becoming pregnant for a number of times not minding the discomforts[122].

To put it more clearly, in the Igbo society and to some extent everywhere in the world, a woman, especially one who is married, always hungers to be a mother. To achieve this feat of being called a mother, she endures the pains of pregnancies and childbirth, be it by operation or vaginal (natural).

iv. **Who dares say that his mother's soup is not sweet?** Wombiture in the context of this proverb implies that every culture of childbirth is unique. So far, Igbo culture has been explored as it relates to marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth. So, it is in that context that one can say that this proverb is relevant to the present discourse of wombiture. Soup here may metaphorically stand for a baby. Every clime is excited when a baby is born because it ensures that the future of that society is certain. What is been said here is the fact that, for the Igbo, a baby in the womb is a complete being so that its arrival to the world is with lots of funfair[121].

Because a baby is seen as very significant for the continuity of a people's history, in Igbo culture, a name is very vital. Naming a baby is the summit of the coming

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of a baby to the world. The names given to new babies help define who they are, what they should be, and to whom they belong to.

v. **When you see a king, you think he never sucked the breasts of his mother:** The proverb silently argues that no matter how elitist one looks and does things, he or she was first of a woman and fed by the breast of a woman. The breast here is what matters to us. This is because the breast in the Igbo culture is not merely physiological; it is a symbol of succour, love, and fecundity in general. So, the instance of a king being linked to his mother's breast is very significant. It means that no matter how great one becomes, the mother (who is being represented by a synecdoche, breast) cannot be underestimated.

2.4 Conceptual Model

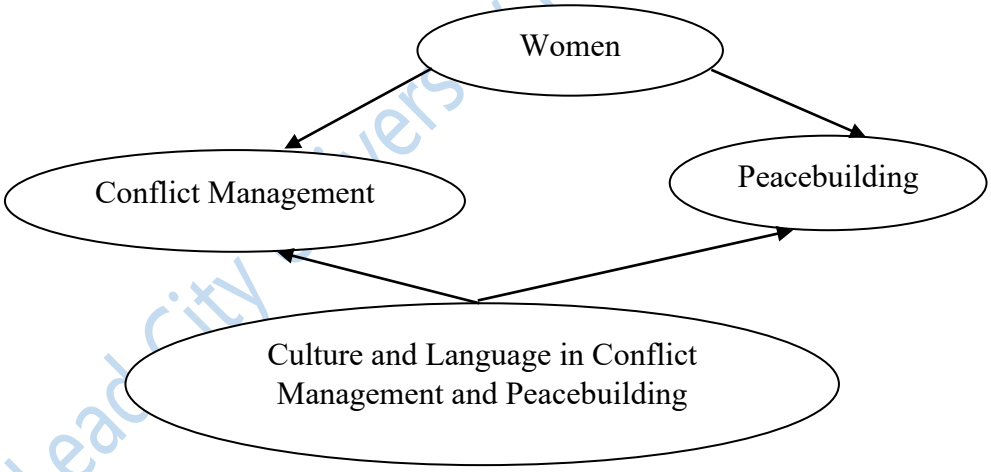


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model on Women, Conflict Management and Peacebuilding

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2023

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Women's participation in conflict management and peacebuilding has been undervalued especially in parochial societies, where women's roles are assumed to be limited to domestic affairs. However, examining women's roles in post conflict situations, they have been at the forefront in the sustenance of families, caring for the wounded and the sick, ensuring that structures are put in place for the survival of their communities.

In many developing nations such as Nigeria, many believe that women are not relevant in conflict management and peacebuilding, but that narrative is changing in the contemporary times and culturally speaking in Igbo land, women play a great role in conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives contrary to the belief of many. The roles of culture and language cannot be overemphasised in these conflict management and peacebuilding efforts of the Igbo women. The communities are benefiting greatly from these efforts as peace is being sustained by their efforts and that has also helped in the progress of the communities, as there cannot be any reasonable progress without peace in any given communities.

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2.5 Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

Women are seen as agents of conflict management, resolution, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The fact that women are usually involved in one way or the other in the progress of their communities, shows that having peaceful societies would be paramount to them. In many patriarchal cultures, it is believed that women should be silenced and restricted to the kitchen and labour rooms, however, this is contradicted in Igbo culture, as women are seen and are part of the conflict management and peacebuilding agents in

their different communities. This has been reviewed in extant literature in this section above.

The literatures have identified in this study the fact that in Igbo culture, the women have a place in the administration of the community. This is evident in the historical contributions they have had in the past and still having. The women from history are very strategic in their ways of doing things. Reading various works has helped in the definition of the Igbo world, including their women. Many scholars have explained the Igbo spirit and language and culture to the world in the 20th Century.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study made use of exploratory research design. This is in order to directly understand people's experience, feeling and interpretations in the situations they find themselves in. Primary and secondary data were used. For primary data, in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD) were used. The interviews were conducted in Igbo language. For the secondary data, the researcher depended on journals, books, newspaper, internet sources, etc.

An exploratory research design was adopted because of the investigation into an area of study that is poorly understood like this study that women are perceived to be back benchers and are not allowed to be involved in progressive processes in their communities. The objective of the researcher was to evaluate the respondents' responses on what roles women play in intergroup conflicts and peacebuilding.

3.2 Population of the Study

Three communities in Anambra, Imo, and Abia States in the Eastern Region of Nigeria were selected for the study. They include, Ozubulu in Anambra, Mbano in Imo and Umuahia in Abia. The three states were chosen because of their proximity to each other.

3.3 Sampling and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used in this study mainly because of those women that have been involved in conflict management in the communities of study and those that are

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available and ready to participate in the study. Purposive sampling means the researcher's resolve to select those that best meet the purpose of the study. The sample respondents for this study consist of women residents of Ozubulu in Anambra, Mbano in Imo and Umuahia in Abia with a total number of 12 respondents for the interview (those available and willing to participate), 4 from each of the communities and 3 focus group discussions (1 from each community), each comprising of 8 members in each of the group.

3.4 Description of Research Instrument

The research relied on both the Primary and Secondary sources of data. Hence, the research instrument used are In-depth Interviews and Focus Groups Discussion guides for primary data collection. These were conducted in Igbo language and consisted of the research questions and some probing emanating questions. While for the secondary, books, journals, articles, internet, etc. were used.

3.5 Validity of the Research Instrument

The validity of the instruments was carried out by the researcher. This was achieved with credible reliability owing to the fact that the researcher conducted the structured interview by herself without any interpreters. The researcher further sought the expertise of professionals within the fields of study in ascertaining the validity of the instrument with regard for its relevance. Both content and construct validity of the instrument were obtained. There were also the inputs of the researcher's supervisor. The research

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instrument is therefore valid because of its being ideal for measuring what it is designed for; that is, measuring the relationship between women and peacebuilding.

3.6 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The research instrument used was pre-tested, interviews were conducted with some group of women in Ozubulu, Anambra state, for its reliability with the purpose of determining its dependability, predictability and stability which was consistent with the results from this study. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Cronbach Alpha Formula to be 0.75. Additionally, internal consistency measures, Cronbach's alpha, was employed to ensure that the questions within the interview schedule are internally coherent. Also, the reliability of the research ensures that the interviews, reports, articles, journals and so on gathered and studied were consistent with the theme and objectives of the research.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

In-depth interviews and focus group discussion were adopted by the researcher. The interview questions were structured; this is to restrict the respondents to specific terms of reference. The research questions earlier outlined were adhered to, to align with the objectives.

Interview: 12 interviews were conducted in totality (4 from each community of study). An interview provides a researcher the opportunity since it is an interactive encounter to explore issues much better than in the administration of a questionnaire.

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Focus Group Discussion: This type of qualitative research instrument encourages discussants to open up with a researcher on issues on ground. The discussions were held in community halls. The researcher had 3 Focus Group Discussions, one each in the three selected communities having 8-10 people in each of the group.

For each of the discussions, 90 minutes was spent to enable the researcher enough time to introduce the discussion, purpose of the discussion and ground rules for order to reign.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Content data analysis was used to analyse the data. The interpretive technique was employed in ascertaining the real validity and reliability of the research findings. The researcher also juxtaposed all the voices of the 12 in-depth interviews and the three focus group discussions with the view that identified their beliefs and relevance to the Igbo language and culture, on one hand, and to the people in general.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are processes or procedures that ensure appropriate practices in research and for this research, they incude the following:

i. Confidentiality: Participants were ensured that their privacies were protected, and personal information are kept confidential. Researchers also ensured that data is stored securely and only accessed by authorised personnel.

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ii. Informed consent: All participants were fully informed about the nature of the study, their participation, and any potential risks or benefits. They were also given the opportunity to freely give their consent to participate in the study.

iii. Voluntary participation: None of the participants were coerced or pressured to participate in the study. They were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

iv. Protection of participants: Participants' safety, well-being and rights were well guarded and protected by the researchers all through the research process.

v. Respect for cultural norms and values: Researchers took into considerations the cultural norms and values of the communities of study and they were well observed and respected. This includes obtaining appropriate permissions and approvals from community leaders and ensuring that the study is conducted in a culturally sensitive manner.

vi. Minimization of harm: Researchers took steps to reduce any possible harm to participants, both physical and emotional. They were also provided with appropriate support and referrals for participants who might have experienced distress or needed additional assistance.

Ethical considerations are essential in ensuring that research is carried out in a responsible and respectful manner. By considering ethical issues in the research design and implementation, researchers can minimize potential harm to participants and maximize the benefits of the research.

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Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents the result of the data collection in line with the objectives of the study. The study relies on both primary and secondary data, combining interview and focus group discussions with members of three communities of study and documentary from newspapers, articles, journals and various published and unpublished works. A discussion follows to juxtapose the findings with existing studies and highlight the gaps filled by current studies.

4.1 Presentation of Data Analysis

4.1.1 Analysis of Research Questions (Interviews)

Research Question One: What is the Nature of Conflict Resolution Done by Women in Southeast Nigeria?

The respondents from the three communities gave similar responses that they look into cultural related issues. They do not get themselves into matters that are reserved for the police. In other words, an issue like murder is not among the conflicts being managed by women of Igbo.

One respondent said that women get involved in matters that concern them directly or indirectly:

> "We are interested in resolving conflicts that involve women in general. We women are concerned with women living in peace. This is because, when women are not in peace, it affects the family and the community at large. That

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> is why, when we get reports of problems within women, we go into it to solve it" (IDI, Februrary 28, 20240.

This is in corroboration with some literature earlier reviewed that it is not all cases or conflicts that the women in Igbo land get involve in[1,2].

According to another respondent, they basically deal with conflicts that include stealing and land dispute and that they do not jump into conclusion so that they take time to investigate and come up with creditable solutions:

> "We basically look into conflicts that dwell on stealing, land dispute. We do not just jump into conclusions. We allow the two parties to give us their accounts before trying to resolve. For instance, that one has been accused of stealing does not automatically mean he or she is guilty. We do not pass judgement without our investigations and evidences. Our husbands support us in bringing peace to the land because there cannot be progress without peace. In other words, we work hand in hand with our husbands to make peace in our land" (IDI, March 2, 2024).

The following instance was given by the respondent to clarify the manner in which women go about their conflict resolutions which is also in line with what some authors revealed in the review about offenders getting punished in different ways which include fine, sacrifices, among others[2,3].

> "We fine women who fight each other. Some are meant to pay as much as N10,000 to N20,000 or may be asked to bring some items to us as a means of penalty. All this is to deter women from going into any kind of conflict. Some may be asked to bring as much as a goat, seven big yams and drinks. Any woman that fails to pay fine is expunged from our meetings. Women frown at a woman who leaves her husband and sleep around with other men. When a report is given to us in this respect, we investigate it. If it is true, we fine such a woman N50,000. We also call the woman and sternly warn her to desist from such act of infidelity" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

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On the part of one 80-year old respondent who herself was once woman leader many years ago, explained that:

> "Here in Mbano, women try to resolve conflicts relating to stealing, women's infidelity, false accusation from one woman to another. From when I came back from Cameroun in 1975, I served as an executive in the community and we did all we could to resolve lots of issues. We were accountable to financial dealings in this community. So, women are concerned with resolving family conflicts for progress" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

Another voice from Mbano, gave a detailed account of related recent occurrence as a case study to the kind of conflict women engage in in Mbano and by extension, the entire Igbo:

> "We look at many conflicts. Anything in the community that does not go well, we women take it as a responsibility to look into it. To do this, we use the *ogene* to summon the women for us to meet to deliberate on issues. When one steals, we fine such. That is a way to warn others from stealing. A good example of the kind of conflict we handle is a recent happening in this community when few days after we women went to rejoice with a family over the birth of a new baby, we suddenly discovered that the woman and her husband connived and sold the baby for a million naira to a motherless baby home. The couple lied that the baby was dead and could not show any proof because we did not see a dead corpse. Women here met and with the support of the youth, went to the motherless babies' home at Mbaise to recover the baby. We made the couple to return the money to the orphanage home even though they had taken N100,000 out of the money. We punished the couple by insisting they do some sacrifices to enable us to reintegrate them to the community once again. What they did, was an abomination" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

Adding to this:

> "We normally look into cases of people who have stolen, backbitten, fought, and gossiped. There was a particular family where the first son was dragging land with the

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> younger one. Though the men had earlier looked into the case, we women in our own little capacity, encouraged our husbands to quickly resolved the case because we discovered that the rate at which the brothers were going, the land may claim their lives. They were very violent. Our men listening to our advice, ended up inviting the maternal relations of the two brothers to help talk to their 'sons'. This move helped in bringing peace to the family and the community at large" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

Another respondent stated that:

> "One of the areas women look into is looking into young girls being pregnant outside marriage. Women frown at this. We encourage such girl to bring some items so that we go to the shrine for her to be prayed for so that she will have safe delivery. Stealing is another area women frown at. Another aspect is infidelity of our women. We punish them by public disgrace. On one occasion, women had to visit some churches and plead with spiritual heads to help preach to their women to stop infidelity. In other words, women work with the church and the men to fight against vices" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

On the part of another respondent, also from Ozubulu, the following are what obtains in Ozubulu:

> "One of the conflicts we try to look at is infidelity of women against their husbands. When a woman is caught with another man, we call on her to provide some things for purification – *oseoji*, (alligator pepper) goat, and some financial fine for sacrifices. The sacrifice is aimed at making her clean so that her relationship with us furthermore will not affect us. If she agrees to do the sacrifice, she will be reabsorbed into women folk. But, if she refuses, she is ostracised from joining us in anything we do" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

The sacrifices are some forms of cleansing for the offenders so that evil things will not start to happen, not only to them but the community at large. This was supported in a previously reviewed literature that some offences need sacrificing for total cleansing of

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the culprit and the land[4]. The oldest woman in Ozubulu, who is 96-year-old has this to say:

> "The kind of conflict resolution we engage in includes disputes between husbands and wives (especially as it concerns barrenness). We also look into situations where a man has sent out his wife due to bad character. We also look into cases that concerns stealing, land disputes, especially if a woman brings the matter to us fellow women. We also look into conflicts among kindreds" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

With the above voices from the three communities visited by this researcher, it is now clear what kind of conflicts women of the Southeast engage in. They do not struggle with their men for conflict management that is reserved for men alone. Again, women in the Southeast are more proactive than reactive in nature, although they are involved in both.

Research Question Two: How do Women get Involved in Conflict Resolution in Southeast Nigeria?

A respondent said that her fellow women do not like conflict and that they do everything possible to resolve it for the progress of the community:

> "We do not like conflict. We normally do our peacebuilding meetings in halls within the community. We do not meet in people's homes. We are very discreet in our deliberations. Our husbands respect our decisions and see us as agents of peacebuilding. To get a conflict resolved, we ensure that the two persons involved are listened to. After this, the women excuse them to brainstorm on what they have heard from the women in conflict. We later call them in and educate them on the need to be at peace. Where necessary, the party seen to be in the wrong is asked to pay some compensation or apologise to the wronged person or party" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

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Furthermore:

> "Our husbands support us in our peacebuilding efforts. Sometimes, our husbands also use their gong, *ngbo* to invite men to further discuss what we, women have started so that both of us, women and women could come up with a better resolve" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

One of the respondents earlier said that:

> "We do not agree for conflict to come in. Because conflict brings about destruction of the family: husband, son, daughter, everybody. When a woman is too stubborn, women make her to respect culture by making her look irrelevant. We have some cultural ways of ostracising a woman who thinks she is greater than the entire community. And when the women in conflict do not take to our advice to live in peace, we go to the extent of alerting other women in general using ekere to summon them to the market square or hall for a more intensive peace talks so that the conflict will not escalate to something much dangerous" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

From Ozubulu, another respondent mentioned that:

> "When women are consulted to look into a case, we first ask the parties in conflict to pay consultation fee of N10,000 each. After which, we investigate the matter as thoroughly as possible with the intention to finding out the culprit. These persons are meant to bring to us drinks and so forth. At the end of our deliberations, the winner is given back her consultation money while the loser will lose both consultation money and drinks. Lest I forget, we use our community halls for our deliberations. It is central and very spacious for this purpose" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

Furthermore:

> "Sometimes, we use the church ground and this is used because most of us go to the same church, Catholic Church. We also use our chairlady's house and again, the village hall. It shifts depend on the number of persons being expected for any resolution of conflicts. The effect of our conflict management is that we get better place to live since

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> peace is the ideal thing for any right-thinking person" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

Another respondent has this to say:

> "We normally have women's meetings and we have lots of rules and regulations guiding us. The essence of the laws is to prevent conflicts and for our people to know how they should behave so that they will not be in the bad book of the community. For instance, as women, we must not fight whether at home or in the public. To get involved in the conflict management, women come and lay complaints to us during our meetings so that we could find time to look into their conflict with the intention to bringing peace to them and to the community at large. Whoever is found guilty is fined to be a lesson to other women" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

This angle from Mbano community to the discourse:

> "When conflict occurs, we women are intimated by the beating of ogene (a special women's kind of gong) so that women can gather at obi ama, the community hall. It is at the hall that the parties in conflict will give us the sides of their account to enable us advise on the way forward" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

Additionally:

> "Women go to the women's leader to make complaints on what conflicts they have encountered with one another. It is the women's leader that will summon the community via ogene for a meeting at the obi ama. Women fine anybody that is found guilty of stealing, fighting between women, false accusation and other bad vices that can bring setbacks to our community. By these fines, we are relevant in the community peacebuilding. An example of how we come in to resolving conflicts is this. Recently in this community, a certain man was fun of stealing and which was affecting everybody. He was also denying. So, women invited him and warned him to desist from stealing because all eyes were from then on him. He knew that we were not playing. Since then, the stealing has stopped" (IDI, March 28, 2024) .

A case was mentioned of a certain man who was going out with another man's wife which is an abomination in Igbo. The women met and deliberated on the issue and

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warned the two to desist from their acts else, the women would bounce on them. The man in question had not married at the time of the conflict. The women told him that if he did not remove his hands from another man's wife, he might never have the grace of having his own family. The researcher observed that she related her accounts with lots of passion.

> "When conflict occurs, it is reported to the women if the family concerned cannot handle it. Whoever is at fault is fined. If there is a report that somebody killed his or her relation spiritually, and the men go through the processes and discovered that it is the truth, we the women are notified so that we could go to the man who had done the evil with our green leaves. We form a heap with the leaves. That signifies bad omen. In case the evildoer is a woman, we women will tell her to go back to her father's house for a period of time as punishment. Our conflict resolutions take place in community halls for privacy and ample space" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

From the foregoing, one can appreciate the role of communication. This was largely discussed in the literature as conflict management and peacebuilding cannot be effective without communication and language[3]. Women in the Southeast rely heavily on information to get involved in peacebuilding. Their ogene or ekere (that is the special women's gongs in Igboland is still being used to alert women of an issue in the land. It is also these ogene or ekere that are used to summon the women to gather at appointed venues for conflict to be resolved so that peace can take place.

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Research Question Three: Which Kinds of Peacebuilding do Women Engage in: Proactive or Reactive?

The first respondent to this question in Umuahia put it as follows:

> "We normally summon the entire women in the community by going round the villages and informing them with women gong (ekere). This summon is compulsory that every married woman should gather at the market square of a specific hall for all of us to critically look into the case that has been before us. We in Umuahia believe that it is better to avoid conflicts before they erupt hence, we do everything to forestall by making sure that efforts are made to make persons in conflict to see reason to settle issues amicably without recourse to violence" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

One of the previous respondents said:

> "We do not agree for conflict to come in. Because conflict brings about destruction of the family: husband, son, daughter, everybody. When a woman is too stubborn, women make her to respect culture by making her look irrelevant. We have some cultural ways of ostracising a woman who thinks she is greater than the entire community" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

Furthermore, response from Umuahia concerning the question:

> "We have laws that when a woman defaults, we expect such to pay fines. When such a woman fails to do so, she has started conflict with us and such is disciplined no matter how highly placed. Our Sessions normally take place in halls and market squares. We prefer these places because they are spacious and more inviting than private homes" (IDI, March 28, 2024) .

Another expressive answer:

> "We have guidelines. Our peacebuilding takes place in the market squares. We also use the halls. We use *ekere* to summon women to attend peacebuilding session. When women are summoned to meet for a resolution of a particular quarrel between two women, that quarrel must

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> stop while discussions are taken on it. Women here punish any woman who commits abomination of any sort. Again, when a woman becomes a drunk, that woman is punished by us because she is a bad example. A woman fighting in public is against the laws of the women here in Umuahia" (IDI, February 28, 2024) .

Additionally,

> "We first and foremost preach against conflict. But when it does come up, we fight it and resolve it without sentiments. When a woman steals in the farm, women go to the farm to verify if it is true. If it is true, the woman is punished heavily. And when women fight and naked themselves, we women do not take it slightly with such. Women normally take some cases to our men to continue the resolution because we respect them as much as they respect us. So, when we cannot go on with a case, we involve them and they do not disappoint us. To tell you how close we are to our husbands, during New Yam Festivals, we stay together and celebrate together and put heads together on some vital issues in the community" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

It was discovered from many of the respondents that the women engage in both proactive and reactive peacebuilding:

> "We engage in both peacebuilding aspects. We warn people to desist from anything that will bring about conflict to avoid high BP as it were. For proactive method, we have fines that must be paid should a woman engage in one vice or the other. This helps greatly in curbing conflicts in our land as nobody will like to spend his food money for fines. On the reactive aspect, if the conflict is too much for us to handle, we refer such to our men to help us. For instance, if two women have had violent clashes over land borders, we meet over such not to resolve it but to hear them and then refer such to our men for resolution. In Igbo culture, women do not discuss land. And this kind of strategy works perfectly. When we women conclude with a particular resolution and the parties in conflict do not accept it, or one of the two does not accept it, we refer the case to respected elders to help. And when this fails, the last stage is taking the case to the traditional rulers, the Obi Eze" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

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In another contribution:

> "In our proactive peacebuilding efforts, we occasionally in our meetings preach to ourselves the need to run away from conflict so that peace can reign. This strategy has worked for us because we women now better realise the consequences of involving ourselves in conflict of any sort. For the reactive peacebuilding, we ensure that we do all we can to bring peace back after a conflict has occurred. For instance, in the earlier example whereby we encourage a woman that has been caught in infidelity to do some sacrifices and pay fine so that she can be purified and be reintegrated to the society. Our peacebuilding efforts have been productive over the years. This is because, we find out that the women have resorted to peace than conflict. In the older days, women were more involved in infidelity against their husbands, they got involved the more in some vices. But today, we have less occurrences of these vices" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

A very passionate explication:

> "Before conflict occurs, we women try to prevent it. This is done by leaning on our rules and regulations which stipulate that some fines must be paid when one goes against the laws of the land. For instance, there are some fines that are N10,000 to N20,000 and even more depending on the magnitude of the crime committed. When people remember such fines or penalties, they think twice before they engage in anything that will bring about conflict between them and any other persons" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

Furthermore:

> "In reactive conflict, we women are reported to and we do all we can to bring the parties in conflict to see the good reasons why they must live in peace for the growth of our community. For instance, there is a situation where a man was in the habit of beating his wife. This was reported to us. The women in number went to the family and prevailed on the man to stop beating their fellow woman. Our presence was effective as the beating stopped till date. Another example is on a certain man who concluded to divorce his wife. Women went to the man and listened to him on why he wanted to divorce his wife. We pleaded with him to rescind his plan and he listened to us. Today, they are living

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> in peace and we women a happier for it" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

From Mbano's perspective, a respondent explained that:

> "We engage in both. To help prevent conflicts which is proactive, we actively engage in frequently reminding ourselves in our meetings those deeds that must not be engaged in. For instance, stealing, infidelity and so forth. And when a conflict has unfortunately occurred, the parties in conflict consult us to look into their matter. Whoever is found guilty is meant to pay some fine" (IDI, March 2, 2024).

Collaborating that Mbano engages in both proactive and reactive peacebuilding, this was added:

> Before conflicts erupt and after it must have erupted, we women engage in both. For proactive peacebuilding, for us to prevent conflicts, the church has been of help. We go to church and listen to the word of God and this helps us in avoiding vices that could trigger conflicts; like gossiping, backbiting and other negative vices. We reiterate all these admonitions in our village meeting and I must confess, it has been rewarding" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

Furthermore, the respondent discussed the reactive peacebuilding:

> For reactive peacebuilding, we ensure that we engage with the parties in conflict with the intention to bringing peace among them for the progress of the society. A good example of how we resolved a problem recently was an issue whereby a man and his wife had been having fights to the extent that the man sent his wife packing for no just cause. The man at a point had to do a birthday party for himself and invited the entire community. We women declined to attend and decreed that any woman that went would be fined N20,000. The man was compelled to bring his wife back home and peace has reigned since then. This has served as a lesson to other men who maltreat their wives for no good cause" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

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The women of southeast engage in both proactive and reactive peacebuilding. Their rules and regulations take care of the proactive aspect as the laws are there to help prevent conflicts from taking place. But for the reactive peacebuilding, women from the voices above ensure that conflicts that have already broken out do not escalate, rather are de-escalated, so that peace can be restored for the progress of the communities[3].

Research Question Four: How Has the Roles of Women as Agents of Peacebuilding Influenced the Southeast Nigeria?

A respondent replied to this question thus:

> Our men sometimes gather us from time to time and ask us how we have gone in solving some certain issues they know of. We brief them and they give us their advice on how best we can solve problems for the betterment of the society. Our husbands support us and are proud of us. We will not be happy if we are not respected as peacebuilders by our husbands. Also here in Umuahia, our husbands respect our decisions and praise us and also give us their support. We are partners in progress. We do not agree for conflict to come in. Because conflict brings about destruction of the family. We have some cultural ways of ostracising a woman who thinks she is greater than the entire community" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

A respondent also agreed with the above statement and gave reasons which include that they work with their husbands and youth to maintain peace in the community. In her words:

> "We know we are under our husbands, yet we are those that make the community move well. We normally intimate our husbands in what we do and give them feedbacks if the case in hand is technical. So, we communicate well with our husbands. Women here engage with our husbands and youth in making peace" (IDI, February 28, 2024).

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Another respondent from Ozubulu believes women in Ozubulu are agents of peace because their men support them.

> "Despite the fact that men are seen as the main peacebuilders, we here are very appreciated as peacebuilders. We are seen as aid to our men and this goes a long way in speeding conflict resolution and thereby bringing more sustainable peace. We help our men a lot. For instance, we help in making sure that the communities are clean. This to me is part of conflict resolution as cleanliness is next to godliness which I equate to peace in this context" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

This was corroborated by another respondent, a fellow woman from Ozubulu, who said that:

> "We are appreciated being agents of peacebuilding. We sometimes hold peacebuilding meetings with our husbands to enable us give people advice on the need to run away from vices or conflicts that will bring our community to disrepute or bring hardships to individual families" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

This was added by another respondent in support that their men encourage and back them up in their peacebuilding efforts:

> "Our men support us fully and that is why we have women forum in our community. Generally, we are seen as agents of peacebuilding and we are happy to be, because we have discovered that our interventions have contributed to the growth of peace in our community. The men now see the positivity of the women's forum and they give us support whenever we seek it. Sometimes, we women and our men do have combined meetings where we brainstorm together for the progress of our community. This practice in itself is a kind of peacebuilding" (IDI, April 2, 2024).

A respondent in her assessment of the questions said:

> "Yes, we are seen as agents of peacebuilding. Our men and children appreciate what we do. Women in the whole of the Igbo land are strict and do not condone nonsense. We

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> women in Mbano are not different. We are agents of peacebuilding because we do all we can to make peace rule in our community" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

A respondent said this in support of what have been said above claiming that their men are proud of them:

> "They see us as partners in progress and very proud of us for helping them resolve some conflicts that will bring peace to our community. We, on our part feel fulfilled that we are not idle, rather, we are up and doing in ensuring that our community is of peace and not full of conflict. Occasionally, we do have combined meetings with our husbands during which we collectively deliberate on top issues that can bring sustainable peace to our community" (IDI, March 28, 2024).

4.1.2 Analysis of Research Questions (Focus Group Discussions)

Focus Group Discussion Conducted in Umuahia on February 28, 2024

In Umuahia's focus group discussion at Okwu Community Hall, Olokoro, the eight voices reiterated what had earlier been said by their fellow women in the In-depth interviews. All the voices concurred that women in Umuahia focus on matters that affect women and the entire land and that they do so with the cooperation of their husbands.

Research Question One: What is the Nature of Conflict Resolution Done by Women in Southeast Nigeria?

From the focus group discussion, one of the participants mentioned that they look into conflicts that affect women and go for justice. They do not look at faces but maintain a standard where they are mindful of posterity. She further said they do not take bribes but ensure that the guilty is brought to book so that it will set an example for others to follow (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

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In addition to what have been said, another participant from the focus group discussion stated that women do not select the type of cases to look into. They discuss issues concerning married women, their girl child and boy child, and even their husbands. She further mentioned that the only two kinds of conflicts they do not look into are issues that relate to murder which the police have the right to investigate for the state, on one hand, and on the other, technical or spiritual matters reserved for only men alone to resolve. For instance, she specified that it is the men alone who can resolve boundaries of lands for parties in conflict because they have their special way of doing so (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024). This corroborates an author's stand that some issues are handled by elderly men in the community[6].

Research Question Two: How do Women get Involved in Conflict Resolution in the Southeast Nigeria?

One of the respondents from the focus group discussion in Umuahia indicated that there is no single way they get involved. It is natural they get involved when consulted by the parties in conflict. Once they come to women for help in resolving the conflict, the women appreciate them for believing in them and then set a day to look into their matters in the village hall (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

In addition to what other woman have said, women do not actually wait till they are consulted. If it is a very serious case, women are attracted by the noise or shouts of fights and step in immediately. In other words, women are ever ready to intervene in conflicts in the land whether invited or not (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

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The women sometimes act on rumours. When there has been a consistent rumour that some serious conflict has been brewing in the neighbourhood, women begin to investigate with the intention to bring whoever is culpable to his or her senses. It is believed that there is no fire without smoke. So, some rumours are indicators that women should stand up to protect the community. In Umuahia, women are said to be soldiers. They protect their environment physically, mentally, and even spiritually by organizing occasional prayers in the halls where every woman is mandated to attend (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

Research Question Three: Which Kinds of Peacebuilding do Women Engage in: Proactive or Reactive?

According to the respondents, they engage in both proactive and reactive peacebuilding. The proactive peacebuilding is inbuilt in their rules and regulations where they specify the punishments that will be meted on any person who goes against the laws of the land. For reactive peacebuilding, they deal with them when needs arise. An instance was given about a woman in Okwu who stole a grandchild and women continued the issue to the conclusion till the woman was sent away from the village. Women do not rush things. they take their time to investigate and then act collectively. They keep their secrets so that their plans do not leak (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

Another example was added by another respondent of reactive peacebuilding done by women. A woman, who recently took knife and stabbed her landlord in Umuahia, was taken up by women themselves as they matched to the place and ensured that the woman was locked up by the police. And when the woman was released after settling her case

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with the police, the women agreed as a move of proactiveness that the woman must leave the community. And it was so. Their men supported them because they knew the women were protecting their interests too. The woman in question does not hail from Olokoro, but from another clan of Umuahia (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

Research Question Four: How has the Roles of Women as Agents of Peacebuilding Influenced the Southeast Nigeria?

An example was given in answering this question, when there is a big problem in the land and women cannot handle it and it is on women, there is an instrument in Umuahia called Okonko Cult. Whenever this Okonko steps in and uses its gong to call for calmness, nobody talks again. It is after this that the conflict can now be looked into by the men with women's participation. Women in Umuahia are peace loving and they practise peace because it has no alternative. They support every instrument that can be used to have peace in their community. Okonko cult is the best in resolving issues pertaining to land. So, women can also consult them to help resolve boundaries issues. One cannot do such if you are not an agent of peace. Even though women do not belong to the cult, they believe in them and obey their verdicts for peace to reign in the land (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

To further assert that women are agents of peace in Umuahia, another instance was given about a woman who stole money from another woman, a sum of ₦300,000 (Three hundred thousand naira). The owner reported this stealing to the women and they swiftly stepped in and made deep investigations after which it was discovered that the accused woman really stole the money. The accused woman was made to pay the money and was

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heavily punished in a way that it was an example to others (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

In Umuahia, when a person, be it a man or woman goes to the farm to harvest cassava or firewood on a wrong day, women accost such person and collect fine. It is our responsibility to protect the farm products from being stolen (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

There is a good rapport within the women in their efforts to make peace in the community. The men from time to time, support the women with money and personally buy ingredients to enable them entertain themselves for all the good work they do, to support the men in achieving peace in the community (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

In Umuahia, every village has a special day they sweep or weed their environments. If a woman fails to come out for such without good reasons, such a woman is heavily fined. This is because, women see cleanliness as a very important part of living. They see any woman no matter how well placed who does not come out for cleanings as an enemy of the land. So, women are agents of peace because peace entails cleanliness and orderliness. It is viewed that women who have these two virtues are very helpful in keeping peace in the community (Focus Group Discussion: Umuahia, February 28, 2024).

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Focus Group Discussion Conducted in Ozubulu on April 2, 2024

Research Question One: What is the Nature of Conflict Resolution Done by Women in Southeast Nigeria?

In the focus group discussion in Ozubulu, a respondent asserted that their engagement in conflict resolution revolves in women's engagement in infidelity. She expressed the diverse lasting negative effects the indulgence of this singular act has caused families of perpetrators (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

The women of Ozubulu frown at theft and heavily fine any woman caught in the act of stealing either in the market or farm. (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024) In addition, another respondent concurred to the earlier submissions and further highlighted that their involvements extend to women condemning women engaging in fights with fellow women or even with the men in the community. Saying that it is tantamount to a taboo for a woman to expose her body in the cause of fighting. In fact, women in Ozubulu see any woman that fights in public as not being responsible (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

Research Question Two: How do Women get Involved in Conflict Resolution in the Southeast Nigeria?

On the part of one of the respondents in the focus group discussion, it was revealed that women of Ozubulu get involved through creating a forum where both women living outside the community and those at home fix a special meeting called, August Meeting. According to her, this peculiar gathering affords the women to engage in series of

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conflict resolution for the progress of the entire community. On other occasions, women who in one time or the other had issues to settle invite the women, privately or publicly, either by going to the executives or presenting it to the general women association to look into the matter. In view of this, such matters could be resolved under the women organization (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

In another woman's analysis on how women get involved in conflict resolution, women organization in Ozubulu is formidable. Because of the women's track records over the years in Ozubulu, their men have supported the women by allowing them to anchor some peacebuilding exercises in the community (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

Women easily observe things and know when the community is having some conflicts. Without being invited, women go into investigation so as to prevent conflict from taking place. Women are consulted by parties in conflict for a quick settlement (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

Research Question Three: Which Kind of Peacebuilding do Women Engage in: Proactive or Reactive?

In reacting to this question, a respondent in the focus group discussion explained one of the measures women take for proactive peacebuilding. To ensure the effectiveness of women engaging in proactive peacebuilding, messages of peace and peace talks are constantly organized for women during their gatherings. In these special sessions, women of advanced age who had had lots of experiences and who are known for their good characters, speak to the younger women who in turn, take these pieces of advice on

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how to live in peace to their respective homes (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

In another contribution in the focus group discussion, it was added that women make sure that when individual or groups are engaged in destructive conflict, the women as a body usually see it as a necessity to build. Also, women are seen as playing the role of reactive peacebuilding because when conflict occurs, women do all they can to bring peace back to the community (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

Research Question Four: How has the Roles of Women as Agents of Peacebuilding Influenced the Southeast Nigeria?

It is believed that women are seen as agents of peacebuilding because men are fully in support of them due to the influence they have had over time and women are even invited from time to time for combined meetings where they brainstorm for the upliftment of the community socially and economically (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

A respondent from the focus group discussion also was of the opinion that women are agents of peacebuilding and they have influenced their community positively. She gave an instance where their men alongside with the men jointly rescued a situation of married couples who fought, wounded themselves and threatened to go on their different paths. But with the intervention of women, the couples were reconciled and today these couples are still together thereby making their families a more peaceful one (Focus Group Discussion: Ozubulu, April 2, 2024).

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Focus Group Discussion Conducted in Mbano on March 28, 2024

The following voices were got from focus group discussion conducted in Mbano.

Research Question One: What is the Nature of Conflict Resolution Done by Women in Southeast Nigeria?

In the submission of one of the participants of the focus group discussion in this community, women look into conflicts that concern husbands and wives and theft in the community (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). This was supported by another participant who said that women should not leave their marriages in trying period but support their husbands (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). From another participant, women make sure that theft issues are not taken with levity. Rather, proper punishment is allotted to any culprit (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). Additionally, from another participant, women frown at women who engage in infidelity and women ensure that such women are dealt with since they bring shame to womanhood. Women were also condemned for fighting in public and concluded that such was a taboo and whoever is caught in such act is disciplined and fined by the women of Mbano (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

Research Question Two: How do Women get Involved in Conflict Resolution in the Southeast Nigeria?

In this community of Mbano, women get involved mainly when a matter is brought to their notice through the woman leader. The woman leader who of course is the mouthpiece of women makes arrangements to gather the womenfolk so that she could

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intimate them with the complaints brought before her (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). Another participant in the focus group discussion concurred to this submission stating that their head, when she receives such matter, since she is not an island often invites the public relations officer and gives her directive of appropriate time to utilize the local drum (ekere) to gather the entire women of the community to discuss the issues reported (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). In addition, the women get involved in conflict resolution in the Southeast of Nigeria when they sense that there is abnormality going on in the community that showcases that the environment or community is sitting on a gunpowder that might soon explode (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

Research Question Three: Which Kind of Peacebuilding do Women Engage in: Proactive or Reactive?

One participant said that women quickly fling into action for peacebuilding which is proactive so as to arrest the situation and prevent any destructive occurrence when a report is given to them over an impending conflict (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

On this question, one participant expressed that women engage in peacebuilding in the community by pointing out certain vices women should not engage in (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). At this juncture, another participant cut her off gently and mentioned the following as the vices. Fighting in public places, husband snatching, wife/husband maltreatment, theft, and pre-marital pregnancies by the young girls in the community (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

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Moreover, a participant also chipped in that they engage in peace talks in the community whenever problem has not emerged as well as when it has erupted. In her analysis, the essence of their peacebuilding is to instil in the mentality of individuals the dos and don'ts of the community. Concerning reactive peacebuilding, the participant expressed that whenever someone has committed an offence, the women converge to look into the issue. For instance, the woman who maltreated her husband to a point she refused to join him back to relocate to this community when their economic strength could not carry them to continue being in Lagos. As the man relocated to the village all alone, at a point he became very sick. The villagers noticing this were not comfortable, so the women went into action and mandated the woman in Lagos to come back home and take care of her husband (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

The threat of the women worked as the woman came back from Lagos. She however did not stay in the village but took the man, her husband to Lagos saying that she would not leave her business. Eventually, the man died in Lagos due to lack of care. When the corpse was brought home, the women were furious against the fellow woman and heavily fined her for not taking good care of her husband (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

Research Question Four: How has the Roles of Women as Agents of Peacebuilding Influenced the Southeast?

Women are seen as agents of peacebuilding. Women forum is an appendage of the men's forum. Therefore, men always give women directives to handle certain matters when they sense danger in the community because of their influence in the community

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especially in the aspect of peacebuilding. Men know that there are conflicts women handle much better than they men, themselves. She therefore, concluded that women are agents of peacebuilding and have influenced their communities very well, as they work hand in hand with their husbands (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024) .

In the part of another participant, her answer is in affirmative, that is women are indeed agents of peacebuilding and have great influence in this field in the Southeast of Nigeria. She further said that women in her community are highly respected because of critical issues they had handled in the past. For instance, women were at the forefront at realizing the absence of a new born baby that was sold once a time in their community, women went into action and ensured that the sold baby was returned from a certain motherless baby's home outside Mbano (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). The veracity of the occurrence was supported by another participant who said that the way women handled the issue was so much appreciated by the government of the state at that particular time and of course, their husbands (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

Women are agents of peacebuilding in Mbano and their influence cannot be overemphasised because they have limited the excesses of women abandoning their husbands and vice versa (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024). In another participant's opinion, women have without reservation have great influence and have been noted as agents of peacebuilding as they have helped in bringing back couples who had one time or the other, separated from each other (Focus Group Discussion: Mbano, March 28, 2024).

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4.2 Discussion of Findings

Women in the Southeast of Nigeria get involved in conflicts that concern women fighting, stealing and engaging in marital infidelity. They help in a great deal to resolve these issues, sometimes with help of the men in the communities. They can punish the offenders after investigating and realising the culprits in the conflict, they have ways of handling these offenders in such ways that the issue will be resolved to the extent of ostracising any culprit that deserve to be ostracised.

Women get involved in conflict management in Southeast of Nigeria when they are consulted by parties in conflict but sometimes, however, they do not wait to be invited when a taboo has been committed. Since they usually converge for the progress of their communities, and peace is the bane of any progress in any given community, they are involved either they are invited or they get wind of any issue that can dampen the peace and progress of their communities.

Women in Southeast of Nigeria engage both in proactive and reactive peacebuilding and collaborate with their men for effectiveness. From the interviews and focused group discussions, it was discovered that women prefer not have conflict at all, ensuring they try to keep everyone from going against the rules of the land, but once conflicts break out, they look for different ways and measures to resolve it for the progress of their communities.

Women are appreciated in their peacebuilding attempts by their husbands and members of their communities. They have great and positive influence on the Southeast of Nigeria

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as a whole because judging by the numerous cases they have attended to and resolved, their influence can be felt in all their communities.

There are some conflicts that the women fail to resolve, and when this happens, the women refer the conflicting parties to respected male elders and ultimately to the Obi Eze, the traditional rulers in their community.

Women consult their husbands from time to time for advice in the course of peacebuilding exercise and they oblige them.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter is the concluding chapter of this thesis. It entails summary of the findings, conclusion, recommendations, contribution to knowledge and suggestion for further studies. The study relied of In-Depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and documentary evidence to achieve the objectives of the study and the research questions.

5.1 Summary of Findings

In line with the *Snail-sense feminism theory* which is the theory that explained this study, the respondents from the study areas of Umuahia, Mbano and Ozubulu have proved that women are indeed conflict managers and peacebuilders. The voices of the respondents have shown that in Igbo nation, women are invaluable when it comes to finding peace and sustaining it. It is important to note that women from what was got from the field are a cultural instrument in managing conflict and ensuring that peace reigns in the communities.

The women of Igbo nation from what this study has gathered are hardworking and have worked with their men as collaborators in peace matters. They, the women are not seen as second-class citizens when it comes to management of conflicts in their communities. This is evident in the instances given by the respondents and from literatures.

The following summary of the findings is for easier comprehension of what the study has been able to establish during the fieldwork.

Women in the Southeast of Nigeria get involved in conflicts that concern women fighting, stealing, engaging in marital infidelity and other vices. They also get involved

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in conflict management in the Southeast of Nigeria when they are consulted by parties in conflict but sometimes, however, they do not wait to be invited when a taboo has been committed or when they get to hear or know about any issue that can disrupt the peace and progress of their communities.

Women in the Southeast of Nigeria engage both in proactive and reactive peacebuilding and collaborate with their men for effectiveness. They have great influence in the Southeast of Nigeria through their various efforts of peace initiatives and are highly supported and appreciated in their peacebuilding endeavours by their husbands and youths in their communities.

When women fail to resolve a conflict between two conflicting parties, they refer such to respected male elders and ultimately to the Obi Eze, the traditional rulers in their communities. They also consult their husbands from time to time for advice in the course of peacebuilding exercise and they oblige them.

5.2 Conclusion

The study has established that Igbo women are peacebuilders and as a result, agents of peace. The culture of Igbo permits this because the Igbo culture sees women as home keepers, which translates to nation builders and the eyes that watch over the children for the future. These days, one hears of Women August meetings in all parts of Igbo land. This is a new innovation that was not operational years back.

During August meetings, women abroad return home and brainstorm with their women counterparts residing at home. It is in these meetings that conflicts are resolved and

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monies raised for the development of the individual communities. Any woman that fails to attend the August meeting from abroad for no good reason, is heavily fined.

Finally, the study has the information to support the belief that what men can do, women can as well do. This is in positive perspective as the study clearly has found out that women's strength in peacebuilding – proactive and reactive is commendable. This is because, they produce positive results which in turn, translate to peace, the crux of the matter.

5.3 Recommendations

This study recommends the following:

1. Women living in the communities should be given the opportunity to advise those in authority on how peace can be managed in Igbo land. At present, women do not have a voice in what goes on in the east, especially as it concerns the separatist movement of IPOB which makes lives very difficult in the eastern part of Nigeria.
2. The second recommendation is that women themselves should form a league of women in Igbo land to serve as an instrument for getting their voices heard in the region and beyond. This gathering of local women will help bring sustainable peace to the region because women, like the snail are very patient and when they come up with resolutions on issues, such have also been based on objectivity.
3. The third recommendation this study gives is that women be made agents of peace by giving them more support in the politics of the region. This can be achieved by the region giving some percentage of slots to women for the Houses

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of Assembly. This will greatly trigger more participation of women in politics and consequently showcase them in peacebuilding at state levels instead of being village and clans' champions alone.

4. The fourth and last recommendation is that women should believe in themselves and fight for their rights in the communities they find themselves. They do not need to do this by competing with their men. They can rise to more recognition than what they are at present, by pushing the more for girl education. This is the solution for the future political empowerment of women.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The study has brought to light, the much-needed enlightenment that women are capable of doing great things in the country. The study has given a better insight that women often beckon on men for a contribution of better ideology on any conflict that goes beyond their handling. Women are peacebuilders and therefore, agents of peace for sustainable political, social, and economic development of Nigeria. This study will be advantageous to scholars in peace studies, sociology, and in the areas of good governance.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies

This researcher believes that further studies could be embarked upon on the usefulness of Igbo women in bringing back to the youth the lost virtues of honesty and hardwork. As it is now, the youth are not quite focused. They engage in many nefarious acts like

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cultism, terrorism and armed robbery. The women are good teachers and very patient. The women should be depended upon to reengineer the youth to the right paths of life.

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Appendix I

Igbo Translation of the Interview/Focus Group Discussions Questions

1a. Nne-ayi ukwu, olee udi okpukpe udo m'obu ochicho udo umu-nwayi obibi unu n'ele-bakari–anya?

b. Biko, nne-ayi, ndi 'Di' unu m'obu umu-nwoke ebe obibi unu ha kwagidere n'unu ga-esoro na ndi n'gbalisi-ike iweta udo, ma gbochie zogbue-tigbue, m'obu isoro gbasie-mbo –ike- iwegha-chita udo-kpam-kpam, ebe –zogbue-tigbue –weregoro onodu?

c. Ozo, iga akotanwu otu m'obu akuko abuo site na –mbido rue ogwugwu gbasara –ka gina- umu-nwayi –ibe gi bi- na- agbata-obi- unu siworo gbaa mbo ihu-na- achosiri udo ike, wee gbochie zogbue-tigbue'n' ebe -obibi unu, topu odaputa n'etiti mmadu na-ibe ya. Ma obu- n'akuku ozo, kedu ka umu-nwayi unu sigoro jisie-ike weghachite udo n'ebe-zogbue-na- tigbue daputagoro mbu?

2a. Madamu, iga akowata-wurum ka umu-nwanyi ebe obibi- unu siri wee- soro na ndi-n' enye aka-ime ka udo wee-chia-achia-megidi-zogbue- tigbue, n' ebe-obibi-unu?

b. Nne-anyi, ipuru iguputa-nwurum ebe di-iche iche umu-nwanyi unu-jiri-mere-ebe izuko maka icho udo n'ebe obibi unu? Ozo, gini mere ha jiri hapu-ebe ozo n'ile di-iche-iche wee horo ebe a dika-ebe ndozi obodo ha.

c. Madamu, kedu-mkpuru -iweghachita- udo n' amiputa n'ebe ndia n'ese okwu ma-obu ndi n'agabiga zogbue tigbue noo.

3a. Nne-ayi, achorom ima udi ime udo umu-nwayi unu n'etinye kari anya na-ya. Biko, asikwari- n'ighotagh ihem n'ekwu, obu- udo nke igbochi ka esem- okwu nke zogbue-tigbue ghara idaputa n'etiti mmadu na-ibe ya, k'obu nke idozi esem okwu nke banye-goro zogbue-tigbue n'etiti ndi mmadu n ibe ya n' ebe obibi unu?

b. Nwayi-oma, n'akuku nke igbochi ka- ese m okwu- nke zogbue-tigbua-ghara idaputa kpam-kpam n'etti mmadu n'ibe-ya n'ebe obibi-unu, kedu ka umu-nwayi -unu si-ejisi –ike ihuta na nsogbu zogbue-tigbue epuputegh mkpuru n'etiti ndi di ka ha choro idaba na-onodu a, karisia mbe ha n'ekwetegh na-mgbochi zogbue –tigbue nke ana-achoro ha.

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c. Nne biko, iga enyenwum akuko usoro ole na-ole ka umu-nwayi- unu siri kpee ikpe, wee-weghachita udo n'ebe zogbue- tigbue nke –ibibi nduu ma-lalue aku- daputara n'ebe-obibi-unu.

4a. Nwayi-ibem, n'ome n'ala igbo, ahutara umu-nwoke dika ndi putakariihe, m'obu ndi ana-ebuli-elu karia ndi-nwayi, n'ihi nkea biko, achorom imata ka ndi- umu-nwoke unu si –ahuta olu a umu-nwayi igbochi ka nsogbu zogbue-tigbue ghara idaputa.

b. Nnem, o buru na- ndi-umu-nwoke-unu ahuta-ndi-umu-nwayi-unu dika ezigbo-ndi n'eguzosi-ike igbochi-ka-zogbue- tigbue ghara idi, m'obu ndi n'ewegha-chita –udo n'ebe zogbue-tigbue daputa-goro n'ebe-obibi-ha, biko, kedu ka obi ga-adi unu?

c. Biko, nne-ayi, ndi- umu nwayi na-ndi umu-nwoke- ha na-enwekota nzuko ime ka mkpuru-oma n'amiputa na-mgbochi zogbue-tigbue puru idaputa, m'obu nke daputagoro-n'etiti-mmadu na-ibe ya, kwa mgbe na mgbe n'ebe obibi-unu ha.

(The above listed questions were utilized by the researcher on individual interviews/ focus group discussions)

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English Version of the Interview/Focus Group Discussions Questions

Q1. What is the nature of conflict resolution done by women in Southeast Nigeria?

a. Madam what kind of conflict resolution and by extension Peace building do women in your community engage in?
b. Do your husband or the men of the community support your involvement in Peace building?
c. Can you give me an account of one or more Peace building engagement you and your fellow women have executed recently?

Q2. How do women get involved in conflict resolution in Southeast Nigeria?

a. Madam, can you explain how the women of this community get involved in Peace building process?
b. Again Ma, can you tell me the different places or avenues where this Peace building meetings takes place and why?
c. Madam, can you also educate me on how your impact on restoration of peace to the parties in conflict can be?

Q3. Which kinds of peace building do we engage in in Southeast Nigeria?

a. Madam, I will like to know the kinds of peace building you and your fellow women engage in; pro-active or reactive? In case you do not understand ma, pro-active is peace building to avoid a conflict from breaking/starting or kicking off. While reactive peace building is when you work towards peace after a conflict has taken place.
b. Madam, for proactive peace building, how do you mobilize yourselves ensuring that conflict does not break even when the parties in conflict do not co-operate with you?
c. On the part of reactive, peace building could you give us an account or two, of your experiences recently in this community.

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Q4. Are women seen as agents of peace building?

a. Madam, in Igbo culture, men are dominant. I would like to know if your husbands and your men encourage your peace building effort in the community.
b. Madam, if the men see you as true-agents of peace building in your community, how do you feel as a woman?
c. Ma, do you from time to time have combined peace building session with your men for more effective results?

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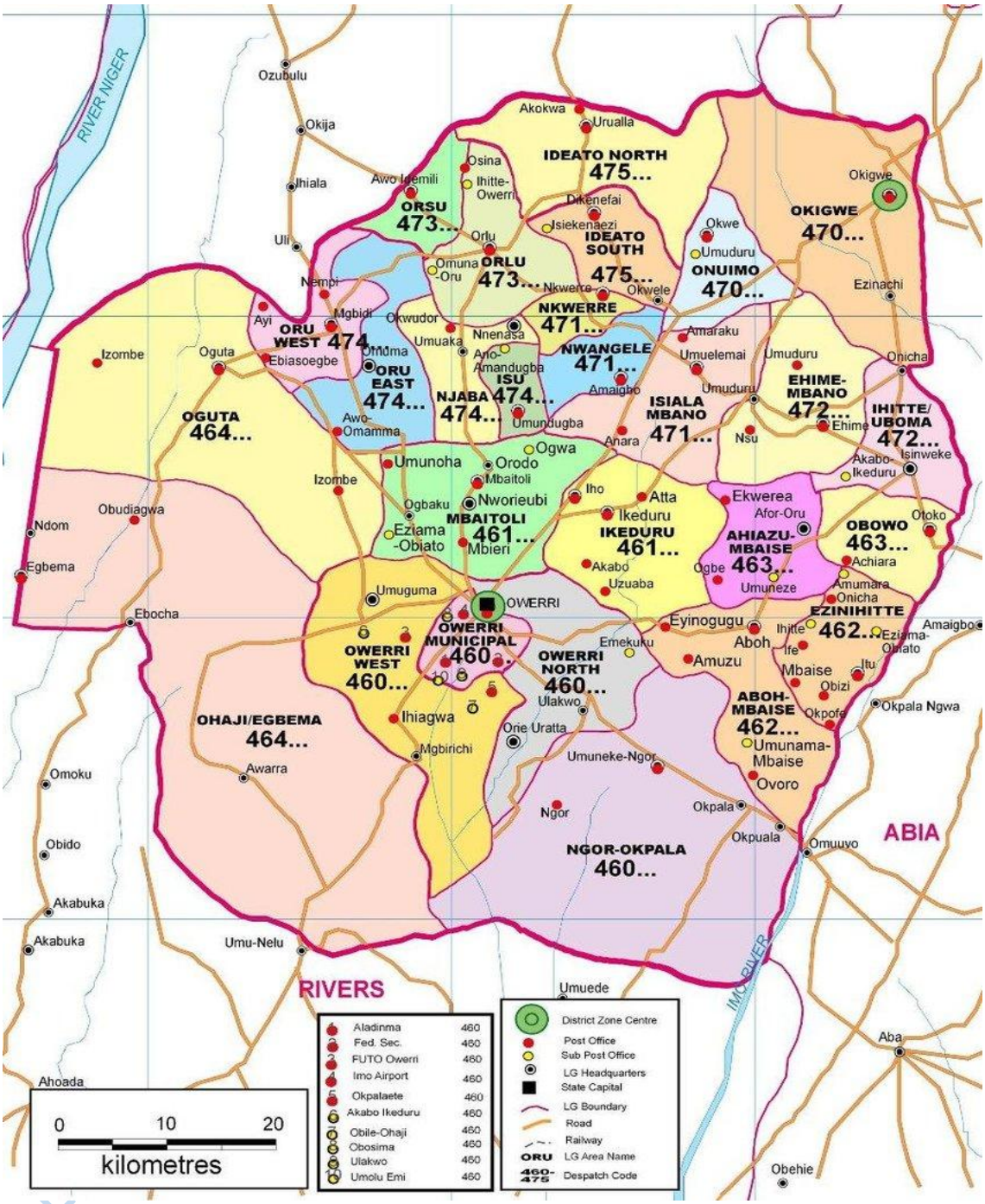
Appendix II



Map of Ozubulu in Anambra State

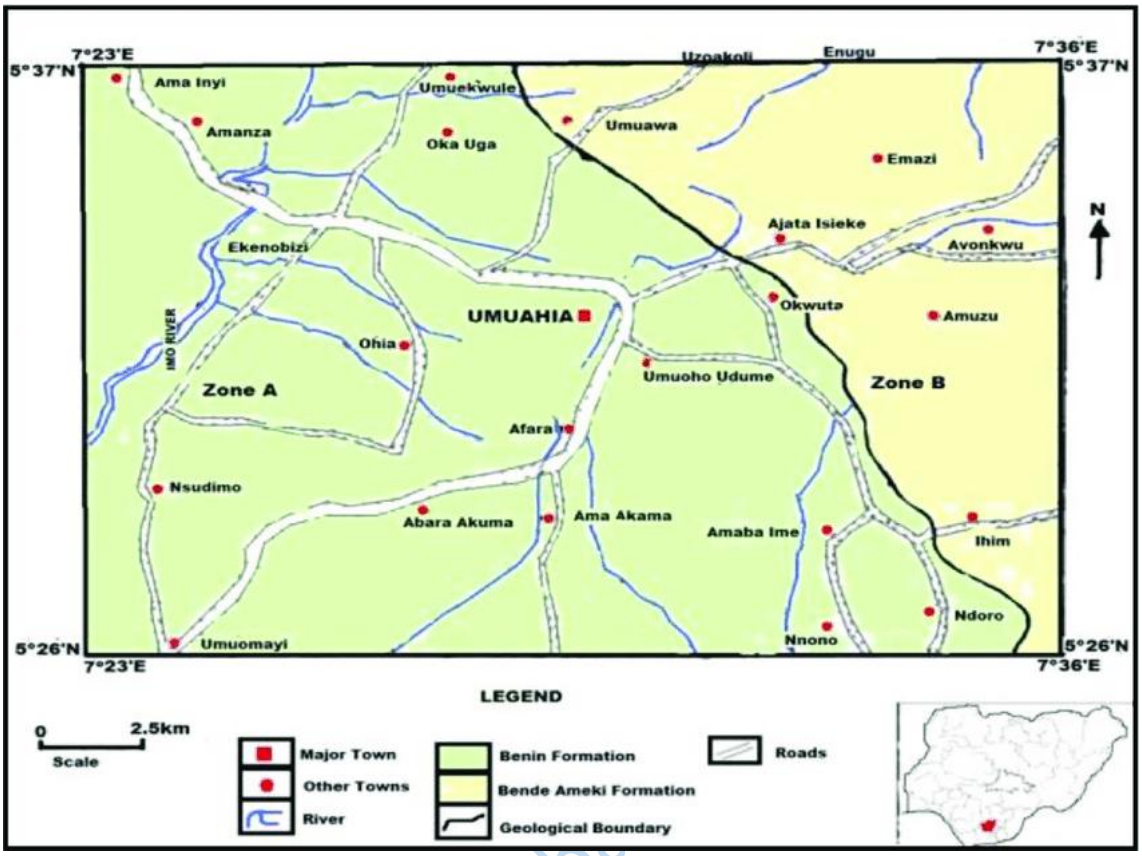
Source: nona.net

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Map of Imo State showing the Mbano communities

Source: Nigerian zip code map



Map of Umuahia in Abia State

Source: ResearchGate

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Bio-data

A. Personal Data

Full Name: Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU

Address: 10, Eken Quarters, Iruekpen – Ekpoma, Edo State.

Email: akhanolulilian@gmail.com

Phone No: +2347030841594

Date of Birth: January 18, 1970

Place of Birth: Imo State

Nationality: Nigerian

Next of Kin: Isaac O. AKHANOLU
10, Eken Quarters, Iruekpen – Ekpoma, Edo State

B. Educational Background with Dates

Educational Institutions Attended with Dates and Qualifications

- PhD International Relations – Lead City University, Ibadan 2025
- Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu 1999- 2001
- Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu 1992-1997
- Ezeoke High School Ehime Mbano 1982-1987
- Ndiama Primary School Ezeoke Nsu 1977- 1982

C. Working Experience with Dates

- Ajayi Crowther University Oyo, Oyo state (Lecturer) – 2020 till date
- Olivet Baptist Height, Oyo, Oyo State (Teacher) – 2014 – 2020
- Over-Comers Secondary School Oyo, Oyo State (Teacher) – 2010 – 2011
- His Grace Secondary School Abuja (Teacher) – 2003- 2005
- Defunct Unical Study Centre Enugu, Enugu State (Part-Time Lecturer) – 2002

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- NGO - Resource Development and Documentation Centre, New Haven Enugu State (Documentation Officer) – 2000 – 2001

- Arabic Secondary School Tudun-Wada Dankadai, Kano State National Youth Service- (NYSC) – 1998

D. Awards and Fellowships

N/A

E. Membership of Academic/Professional Bodies

- Member, African Society for the Study of Sociology and Ethics of Religious

F. Publications

a. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU. *The Nexus Between Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict and National Development in Nigeria*. 2021

b. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU. *Religious Conflict and Development in Nigeria: The Prospects and Challenges*. 2022

c. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU. *The Indispensability of State Actors in World Affairs: An Interrogation*. 2022

d. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU. *Trade Liberalization on the Nigerian Economy*. 2022

e. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU. *The Utility of Early Warning System and Crime Prevention: A Study of Abduction of School Children in Nigeria*. 2022

f. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU. *The Implications of Terrorism on Food Prices in Nigeria*.Wukari International Studies Journal Vol.8(3), July, 2024.

g. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU & Ronald Olufemi BADRU. *Women Involvement in Conflict Resolution in Southeast Nigeria* (Unpublished)

h. Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU & Ronald Olufemi BADRU. *Women as Agents of Peacebuilding in Igbo Culture: Proactive or Reactive?* (Unpublished)

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G. Major Conferences Attended with Dates

i. 1st National Conference of the Department of Political Science, Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State 8th – 11th June 2021

ii. First Annual Conference, Faculty of Social Science Ajayi Crowther Oyo, Oyo State 5th – 8th June 2022

iii. Fourth Biennial Conference University, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan 19th – 21st 2023

iv. 2 Days Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Workshop – Powered by the Centre for Bioethics and Research in Conjunction with Ajayi Crowther University Oyo held at Ajayi Crowther University Oyo, Oyo State 9th – 10th July 2024

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The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that this thesis written by Lilian Nnenne AKHANOLU with matriculation number LCU/PG/2405 in the Department of Politics & International Relations, Faculty of Management & Social Sciences, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, is in full compliance with the approved University format and style.

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