

## **Informal Peace-Building Enhancers: The Role of Women in Colonial Uzairue Land, Nigeria, 1897-1960**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines women's roles in the maintenance and sustenance of a peaceful society by developing informal socio-economic institutions in colonial Uzairue land. It notes that the roles played by women in this regard have not received adequate scholarly attention. It further explores a socio-political overview of colonial Uzairue land, women in Uzairue worldview, and gender (women) theories, stereotypes and roles in Uzairue land. It uses the qualitative historical method, which is narrative, descriptive and analytical. The data used for this research were derived from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were derived from oral interviews through oral discussions and interactions (by this researcher) with selected interviewees during Uzairue land fieldwork. The secondary data were obtained from relevant published materials, including books and journal articles. This research examines women's role in Uzairue land in providing a peaceful society and the encouragement of socio-economic progress through healthcare services, occupational and economic ventures. It views the concept of peace-building as efforts, techniques and approaches aimed at preventing conflicts, achieving durable peace, and stabilising society politically and socio-economically. This study concludes that women's instinctive roles as caregivers, comforters, peacemakers, and home keepers, and their respective participation and specialisation in providing health care services, among other socio-economic ventures, undoubtedly encouraged the mutual and peaceful development of colonial Uzairue land. Therefore, it demonstrates that women are intrinsically linked with the peace-building process and overall development of society and should be accorded high regard even in the contemporary period.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Generally, the female gender has always been part of the development and peace-building dynamics of societies globally. However, their roles have over the decades been overshadowed by the patriarchal nature of many cultural settings (Porter, 2007; Youssef, 2013; Klaa, 2020; Akyeampong & Hippolyte, 2013) such as that of colonial Uzairue land, located in Southern Nigeria.

A contemporary study conducted by the National Population Commission (Nigeria) in 2013 on the demographics of women development reveals that 45 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men aged between 15 and 49 are educated. Meanwhile, 38 per cent of women and 21 per cent of men have no education. Also, the study reveals that in contemporary Nigeria, tradition and women's low socio-economic status limit their ownership of assets. (NPC & ICF International, p.10).

Klaa (2020) opined that women are globally considered one of the main pillars of economic development. They also constitute half of the total population of Africa. However, despite the seemingly improved status of women, they still suffer from an unjust, discriminatory social heritage, including gender equality or inequality (Akyeampong & Hippolyte, 2013; NPC & ICF International, 2013; Youssef, 2013).

This paper examines women's role in colonial Uzairue land to enhance peaceful coexistence and development through socio-economic endeavours. Uzairue land people belong to the Etsako ethnic group located in present-day Edo State, Southern Nigeria. Uzairue land, among other constituent parts of Nigeria, was colonised by the British. Colonial Uzairue land covered the period between 1897 and 1960.

While the first date marked the year the colonialists made their incursion into the area under study, the latter date marked the year colonial rule was brought to an end in the area and the country. Uzairue land comprises many distinct communities that include Apana, Ayogwiri, Elele, Uluoke, Idato, Iyuku, Imeke, Ayoghena, Ugbeno Jattu (Harunah, 1991, pp. 25-26). Each community traditionally practised a gerontocratic political system of government, despite the variances in their respective cultural practices. During the period under consideration, Uzairue land, just like other African communities, practised subsistence socio-economic activities.

On the one hand, past works, such as those of Ikpe (1997), and Olurode (1990), basically understood women's activities and experiences in Nigerian society. Harunah (1991) notably provided a rather general and laconic view of the origin, migration and settlement patterns of the Uzairue people. Only fragmentary evidence on the impact of women on developing their societies was presented in these works.

On the other hand, recent works on women or gender roles, such as those of Youssef (2013), Klaa (2020), and Akyeampong & Hippolyte (2013), present an over-generalised analysis of the crucial and prospective roles of women in African societies, primarily through the development of socio-economic activities. These works also underscore recognising the roles of the male folks over

those of females in African societies and the inherent challenges towards gender equality and women empowerment.

### **Gender (Women) Theories and Stereotypes: An Overview**

The duties of women in Uzairue land were primarily found in the home, family, and immediate accommodating environment. These included the socio-economic ramifications. This rather “caretaker” role is similar to the traditional role of women globally. However, the men are traditionally occupied with more physical “things-oriented, competitive occupations” (Lippa et al., 2014). The classification of both genders into social roles and the inferences it prompts about both genders brought about the concept of gender stereotypes in scholarly discourse (Koenig & Eagly, 2014).

An overview of some of the theories and gender stereotypes regarding women's context includes the feminist theory, standpoint theory, structural functionalism, and the intersectional theory. The Feminist Theory examines inequalities in gender-related issues. It uses the conflict approach to examine the maintenance of gender roles and inequalities. The Structural Functionalism perspective argues that gender roles were established well before the pre-industrial era, when men typically took up responsibilities outside the home, such as hunting. Women typically took care of domestic responsibilities in and around the home due to their biological makeup of caring for children.

The Standpoint Theory explains women’s gender roles from the viewpoint and realities of their lived experiences in everyday life's immediate local settings. Imperatively, the Intersectionality Theory argue that there are multiple overlapping identities, such as religion, ability, gender, race, ethnicity and occupation, among other variables that can oppress a person or group of people. These identities are considered together in the context of women in society. This is because they overlap or interconnect when it comes to oppression and power. However, this theory or perspective seems to be loaded with variables and, based on identity markers, stereotype people (women) into categories, not considering each individual's peculiarities regarding their unique experiences.

### **METHODS**

This research is based on the qualitative historical method of collection, evaluation and analyses of relevant data. It is narrative, descriptive and analytical. The data used for this research were derived from both primary and secondary sources. On the one hand, this researcher's primary data was comprised of oral interviews obtained through oral discussion with selected informants by this researcher during fieldwork in Uzairue land. The interviewees were adult males and females who were over 65 years old. Notably, ten (10) interviewees participated in this study.

This age group's choice is justified because the interviewees were likely participants and witnesses in Uzairue land to the socio-political and socio-economic dynamics of the colonial period and beyond. This category of interviewees was selected across adjoining Uzairue communities. Their occupations included farming, trading, and traditional healing, among others. Both open-ended and direct questions, which articulate the dynamics of the socio-economic and developmental activities of women, were asked by this author, using the Etsako dialect.

The interview sessions were electronically recorded using an electronic device, transcribed, and eventually translated into the formal English Language. The information derived from these interviews was contextually evaluated to reflect the main themes, focus and purpose of this study. In some cases, however, the oral interviews were quoted verbatim to reflect the interviewees' direct views based on the researcher's questions. The logic behind the questions is principally to ascertain or confirm the extent to which women performed peace-building and socio-economic developmental role in colonial Uzairue land.

The responses provided by the majority of the interviewees on the subject were logically validated by this author. These validated oral responses formed the viable primary data used in this study's overall results and discussion. On the other hand, the secondary data were derived from extant publications such as books and journal articles. Relevant data that examined the themes involving women's role in society, peace-building, social development, and Uzairue land were derived from secondary sources. Qualitatively, the data were carefully selected, reviewed, and applied in this study's presentation and analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Colonial Uzairue land: A Socio-Political Overview**

Both primary and secondary data suggest no recorded significant incidence of intra or inter-community dispute in colonial Uzairue land. However, there was the innate and constant need to ensure peaceful societal coexistence, especially by the indigenous and colonial political structures. An informant, who reacted to the question, "Was there any major communal conflict in Uzairue land during the period under consideration?" opined that, "I can not recall any major outbreak of war or conflict between our community and her immediate neighbours... not even among the other adjoining communities that make up Uzairue land during the colonial period." (Agunu Michael, 87 years old). A similar view was expressed by three other elderly indigenes of Uzairue land, namely Iyoma Dada, (81 years old), Hannah Samari, (78 years old) and Uwoma Ikwumi, (88 years old).

Despite the colonial hegemony, Uzairue land generally received slim Western influence on the socio-cultural and socio-economic infrastructures. The reason for this was not far-fetched. Uzairue land was not "a cynosure of urgent colonial attention", unlike Benin City, which eventually became the Edo state's administrative capital or headquarters. Moreover, the British colonialists' Indirect Rule system did not also help the rapid westernisation of colonial Uzairue land.

Thus, aside from the introduction of conventional currencies of exchange (Ogunremi & Faluyi, 1996), the influence of the Catholic church, tarred road, and elementary school, which was only attended by a very few numbers of male students, no other Western influence was articulated in colonial Uzairue land. Informants noted that there was virtually no female student enrollment into the "modern" elementary school, as the traditional society preferred the female gender to be primarily home-keepers.

Responding to the question, "Were girls/women educationally empowered in colonial Uzairue land?" Eramah Feli opined that "it was not fashionable to send a female child, or ward to modern

school during the colonial period... the modern school was meant for the boys. Girls and women were oke-ape (home keepers), and they have always remained like that at the time.” He further expressed that “girls and women only started going to schools because of the over-adoption of western civilisation especially after the 1960s.”

However, the present situation has been immensely transformed since the 1970s. Socio-economic activities and institutions are now prominent in Uzairue land. There are modern banks, Police station, hospitals and tertiary institutions, among others. Presently, over twenty schools (both public and private) in Uzairue land have multiple female attendances. Qualitatively speaking, more women are now formally educated and are professionals in their fields of endeavours. Some of whom are lawyers, educationists, entrepreneurs, and medical doctors, however, preferred anonymity for this study.

### **Women in Uzairue Worldview**

From the performance of their natural maternal roles to the organisation of markets and other occupational and humanitarian ventures, the female gender in Uzairue land, just like other African communities, had always performed subtle developmental roles in their societies. However, this is not to downplay the political, administrative, and physical ventures engaged in by the male gender. Although this research's focus is invariably to extol and underscore women's peace-building tendencies through their socio-economic ventures, it should be mentioned at this juncture that women could also adequately ignite intra or inter-communal violence/conflicts. The communal conflict in 2017 between the Hausa and Yoruba in south-west Nigeria provides an excellent example of the role women could play in the dynamics of conflict. (Ogundipe, 2017)

They are known to play crucial roles in mobilising varying degrees of violence globally. (Parkinson, 2013). Whether acting solely or in collaboration with their menfolk, women performed such roles as informers, propagandists, violators, logisticians or even combatants in any warfare, dispute or conflict. For this study, however, no primary or secondary data suggests that traditionally, colonial Uzairue land witnessed any form of intra or inter-communal conflict/violence.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that women occupied a special place in the socio-cultural setting of Uzairue land. Women in Uzairue land were not only engaged in roles such as housekeeping, advisers, educators, trainers, farmers, and traditional healers, amongst others, they were indeed indispensable in ensuring that these endeavours were adequately geared toward ensuring the development of their society. When asked the question, “What was the nature of women’s human and social or customer relations in colonial Uzairue land?” Awawu Neli, (79 years old), an informant, opined that “women traditional healers and traders in Uzairue land will stop at nothing in ensuring that they establish cordial customer relations with their clients, no matter the kind of items or services they rendered.” This, therefore, reveals that intrinsic cordial and warm gestures were exhibited by women in attending to visitors and guests.

Traditionally, women in Uzairue land were mainly considered to be subordinates, in varying degrees, to their men counterparts. They were also seen and regarded as keepers of their environment, feeders, and family caregivers (Porter, 2007; Ikpe, 1997). They were also regarded as cooks for both the young and old since they prepared domestic and public consumption meals.

Women's role as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and friends, among other considerations, placed them on a high pedestal as comforters of their offspring and their male counterparts within the patriarchal society.

Women as sisters and daughters to the men invariably indicate that with regards to the existing bonds of consanguinity, they should be given the necessary protection and required respect, as they performed home chores that were enabling and mutually beneficial to the family in particular, and society in general. Regarding their maternal instinct, women as mothers were regarded as comforters and protectors (*ovhue*) to their husbands and children. Interestingly, local traditions in colonial Uzairue land collectively attest to the view that women own humankind's future through their offspring.

Their maternal instincts could generally influence their environment and their male counterparts, even if the latter were a warrior, traditional healer or king. It is pertinent to note that motherhood responsibilities cannot be overemphasised. The mere production of offspring as future generations, feeding, protecting the young ones and training them in the correct mode of behaviour remains a landmark societal role that ensures the continuous peaceful coexistence of peoples and cultures (Ikpe, 1997, p. 247).

With her psychical and bodily enticements, women, as wives, got what they needed from their husbands through cajoling and other seductive approaches. They could psychically influence a man to change his decisions in community matters. Using such approaches, interviewees in Uzairue land agreed that women's subtle intervention successfully averted some situations that could have led to conflicts between individuals or communities during the period under consideration.

Responding to the question, “were women in Uzairue land strong enough to influence the decisions of their husbands in dispute situations? Peter Ikamate, a community leader in the Ayogwiri community, stated that “women are naturally empowered with psychic powers which could be manipulated to change men’s decisions and actions. This is usually done subtly.” He went further by recalling an event that could have led to a Uzairue land crisis during the period. This involved a disagreement over land matters between two men in Apana and Ayogwiri communities. According to the interviewee, “the wives of both men, who had been friends since their childhood days, held a secret meeting to separately cajole their estranged husbands into avoiding a dispute which was capable of causing inter-community conflict over a land boundary. Eventually, a truce was reached, thanks to the wives in question who also solicited the prompt intervention of other notable personalities (both men and women) in Uzairue communities.”

The high regard for the opposite sex further cemented the bond between the husband and wife toward achieving a happy home, except in disputes between them. Such disputes could be caused by several factors, including insubordination on the woman's part towards her husband, the influence of witchcraft, taboos, and violation of abominations, among others.

### **The Context of Women and Peace-building**

The term “peace-building” connotes such efforts, techniques, and approaches to prevent conflicts, achieve durable peace, and stabilise society politically and socio-economically. The concept

enunciates the betterment, growth and positive development of society. A cursory look at the concept of peace-building essentially connotes the mechanisms employed by stakeholders that seek to prevent and avert conflicts or disputes from developing in the first place, thus enhancing society's peaceful coexistence.

The dynamics of these mechanisms were embedded in women's activities and the informal roles they performed in colonial Uzairue land through the provision of health care services and engaging in occupational and economic ventures, among others. Extensively, peace-building in any society is centred on the protection of the three pillars of sustainable peace. These include economic recovery and reconciliation, social cohesion and development, political legitimacy, security and governance (Porter 2007, 184). Besides, peace-building connotes efforts, measures, techniques, and approaches aimed at conflict prevention and strengthening other mechanisms capable of creating or supporting the necessary conditions for sustained peace (Brabant, 2010).

Suffice it to say that women actively created, maintained and supported sustainable peace, albeit at a subsistence and traditional level, in the socio-economic and socio-cultural institutions of Uzairue land. Ranging from their natural roles as mothers, wives, educators, advisers, comforters, health care providers, coordinators of economic and occupational associations, to oke-ape, among others, women were best described as the actual peacebuilders in colonial Uzairue land. Many male counterparts and interviewees in Uzairue land attest that except in quite abnormal isolated cases, women always preached cooperation, assistance and peaceful coexistence to their children, wards and husbands, and in whatever situation they found themselves.

The narration given above by Peter Ikamate about how women could help avert communal conflict remains a notable example in the ongoing discourse about the peace-building and developmental roles of women in society. Their conduct as mothers and caregivers and how they organised the socio-economic activities in their domain, and as already highlighted above, confirm their subtle and informal roles as peace-builders in Uzairue land.

This had a far-reaching effect on the psyche of the male counterparts. In this direction, the woman could influence the man's decisions and, invariably, the socio-political system's operation, and that. Tradition has it that women are better negotiators in conflict resolution and the attainment of societal peace. Responding to the question, "to what extent were women regarded as peacemakers in colonial Uzairue land?" Sanni Obozuwa opines that "potentially chaotic incidences bordering on the issue of land disputes between Apana and Ayogwiri, on the one hand, and Jattu, Ayoghena, Ayogwiri and Apana on the other hand, were all averted by the active and passive roles played by women in cajoling their male counterparts on the need for peace." Imperatively, this view is similar to that of an earlier mentioned interviewee. To this end, colonial Uzairue women were nonetheless seen as agents of peace-building and societal cohesion.

Uzairue women participated fully in realising a conducive society for all and peaceful home for their families. Interestingly, women could voluntarily marry or be given out for marriage by their parents to secure political benefits, reward, social status, or cement mutual community relations, hence ensuring peaceful coexistence. Women helped in maintaining laid down socio-cultural rules and regulations mostly set up by the men.

It follows that no woman, in any sane situation, willingly went against such sacrileges that could hinder the progress of her home or lead to the death of any member of her home. They ensured that this social order was transmitted to their offspring through education and house chores training. Social activities such as festivals, ritual rites, naming ceremonies, and marriages were not complete without the women's efforts. These efforts ensured mutual, cordial and peaceful coexistence of society's inhabitants, predominantly colonial Uzairue land.

### **Occupational and Economic Ventures**

Colonial Uzairue women played supportive roles in establishing and furthering their societies by embarking on the formation of *ilogo* (traditional associations or unions). Contextually, *ilogo* connotes a group of individuals who interact to attain specific goals. Moreover, *ilogo* was an important aspect of the Uzairue social structure. It was formed to serve as a response to the particular needs of a community. Generally, they provided the mechanism by which women relate to the environment around them. While some *ilogo* extended to cover several decades, others were short-lived, terminating with the attainment of set societal development goals (Shoremi, 1985).

*Ilogo* were not based on kinship ties. Like the occupational, religious and economic associations, most of them were based on the agreement principle between the interested members. Membership was generally made open to interested and qualified women who could meet the terms of the agreement set by the *ilogo*. These terms were generally informal, but once agreed upon, they became binding on the members. The terms included do's and don'ts, entry requirements, rewards and punishments for actions for or against the *ilogo*, and the association's general rules and regulations. Agreed terms must not be violated, or else the violator incurred the ancestors' wrath or deities upon herself.

To some extent, *ilogo* were believed to have the backing and support of the ancestors and deities of the communities involved. This was part of the Uzairue belief system. Both the men and women *ilogo* were involved in such a traditional belief system.

Aside from the men, Uzairue women also practised different crafts and organised themselves into the community or clan-based guilds to enhance their occupation status and uniformly serve as agents of protecting their practitioners from other crafts. Thus, female herbalists, dancers, weavers, and singers varied from one Uzairue community to another. Hence, for instance, practitioners from Apana were distinct from those of Idato, Ayogwiri and Jattu. Nevertheless, each *ilogo* engaged in communal interaction with those of their contiguous neighbours. Interestingly, some clans adopted the systems of their neighbours and, in-turn, re-modified theirs. Occupational associations, which also involved women, enhanced participants to exchange and diffuse information on their ventures. In this regard, *ilogo* served as an agent of social control and development. Disputes in matters relating to the crafts within and outside each community were settled amicably within the *ilogo*.

Informants noted that women-based *ilogo* in each community set the apprenticeship rules. This was carried out mainly in kind. Thus, among Uzairue communities, informal exchanges of apprenticeship were highly encouraged. New techniques and specialities were derived from such exchanges. This thereby improved the social dynamics of the respective communities. Reacting



to the question, “was ilogo one of the factors which encouraged mutual coexistence among Uzairue communities?” Grace Uwifeli, (89 years old) stated that “among the various ilogo which involved women, certain rituals were performed before an apprentice could graduate. Both male and female members from adjoining Uzairue communities were invited to witness the rites and initiation of the apprentice involved.” The dynamics of this traditional practice had encouraged and further cemented the mutual coexistence of Uzairue land positively.

Members of the respective traditional political hierarchy invited their counterparts from the other communities for merriment during festivals. It was also in this aspect that women played important unifying roles. Suffice it to say that these festivals and ceremonies were held in open market locations and other public places. Examples of such festivals included Ukpe-Ogbe, Esi, and Eda-Nokhua. Since such festivals called for merrymaking and enjoyment, it was the exclusive reserve of women responsible for preparing food delicacies, the feeding of guests and other participants. Some delicacies were exchanged among Uzairue communities and elsewhere to complement those of the host community.

Although Uzairue women were subordinate to their men in the traditional socio-political context, the former relatively got what they needed from their husbands through cajoling and other seductive gestures. This further cemented the bond between the husband and wife towards a happy home. During festivals and other ceremonies, women naturally shared their experiences. These women invariably returned to their various communities to practice, for example, new methods of food preparation which might have been discussed earlier among the women. Collectively, this was crucial for food security, preservation and socio-economic development in colonial Uzairue land.

Uzairue communities' contiguousness encouraged mutual commercial activities in markets, trade, agriculture, labour, et cetera. Each Uzairue community distinctly held its markets at periodic intervals. Women from the various communities traded with one another during the period. The trade articles included foodstuffs like groundnut, corn, pepper, yam, beans, and cassava. Imperatively, the process of holding markets since the pre-colonial period in Uzairue was also observed during the colonial period in strict accordance with the traditional lunar calendar. Mostly, day-to-day trading in marketplaces was dominated by women, while men engaged in more physical-economic ventures like hunting, felling of trees, digging wells, decision making, et cetera. Markets generally brought about the exchange of goods and services.

Hence, a female indigene from the Apana community, for instance, could go to the Ayoghena community to exhibit what she had to sell or buy and vice versa. During the period, women traders in Ayogwiri, Ayoghena and Imeke communities were known for flooding the Aki-Apana (Apana market) with ugba (seasoning ingredient) and avhi-wudi (palm oil), while those of Elele, Idato, Uluoke, Jattu and Iyhiora flourished in the sales of foodstuffs like groundnuts and dokwa in their various markets. In the above commercial exchanges and process, women especially learnt new techniques of cooking different delicacies.

The cowry was the major currency that was circulated among Uzairue communities before the advent of colonialism. In other cases, barter exchange was used in commercial transactions. However, with the advent of colonialism, conventional currencies of exchange such as coins and

notes were introduced. These currencies were used to pay for services rendered through labour on farms, port carriage or transportation. Generally, profits generated in the process were either stored as capital and/or re-invested in other sectors of the traditional economy.

Transportation was another important economic activity that enhanced cordial intra-community relations among women in colonial Uzairue. Although the men were not left out in this economic sector, goods and services were transported from one community to another through the labour rendered by women carriers. Women were paid in cash or kind to transport loads or goods from one community to another or even to individual homes. These women transported agricultural products, such as groundnuts, corn, vegetables and tubers, among other domestic animals like goat and sheep. It was common practice for a set of women in one Uzairue community to be engaged in the farming activities of that of another. This brought about cross-community farming techniques. Also, vital information concerning the community's social, political or other private matters was disseminated among the various Uzairue communities.

It could be said that it was women's initiative to establish open markets where domestic crops, animals and other commodities were sold during the period. With this arrangement, large quantities of food and other domestic supplies flooded the various markets in Uzairue land. Women also ensured the security and preservation of foodstuff in this regard. Quite uniquely, there were slight disparities in the dialect of the various inherent communities. This was a good way of identifying the particular Uzairue community where traders, sellers, and buyers came from. Once such disparities were observed, prices of goods and services were altered to favour such a buyer. It was the duty of a set of elderly to convene meetings of mutual interests where discussions about traders' general conduct in Uzairue markets were addressed. As a result of trade or commercial transactions, many people from the various communities came together in the open markets. A relationship started between a man and a woman since a conducive avenue for interaction had been established for friendship or courtship.

### **Health Care Services**

Based on oral history and observation during fieldwork in Uzairue land, it was discovered that specialist traditional health care service providers enhanced cordial relations among the various inherent communities. Apart from the men in this regard, women also performed positively in providing traditional medical and health care services. Such traditional medical services included midwifery, orthopaedics, medication, and treatment of patients in general.

In pre-colonial and colonial Uzairue land, women health care providers were generally called iposo ne da negbe. In specialisation, women who were trained in the field of fractures and bone treatments were called iwungwa-ni-poso. In the treatment of mental disorders, traditional psychiatrists were otherwise called enerho-ememe. As mentioned above, there were inter-clan healing practices whereby the specialist, women traditional healers, midwives, and occultists engaged apprentices from other areas around Uzairue land. They were particularly trained in the specialised treatment of those ailments identified above.

Invariably, economic benefits were derived from providing health care services, as the concerned traditional healers were paid for their services. Generally, since each inherent community had its health care specialisation area, mutual interaction was encouraged. With this, cordial and mutual

social welfare and health care relations were encouraged. Importantly, money derived from such treatments was re-invested in other economic ventures by these women. Besides, money derived was used, among others, for the feeding of the woman's family and general welfare. Through these acts of engaging in their society's socio-economic and peaceful developmental dynamics, women in colonial Uzairue land could be viewed as informal peace-building enhancers.

## CONCLUSION

Colonialism did not obliterate women's socio-economic developmental roles as peacebuilders in Uzairue land, especially in the traditional connotation. It is clear from the above that the activities of women, as presented above, were crucial in the enhancement of social development and the maintenance of a peaceful society. The instinctive roles of women as caregivers, comforters, peacemakers, and home keepers, and their respective participation and specialisation in providing health care services, among other socio-economic ventures, undoubtedly encouraged the mutual and peaceful development of Uzairue land. Although the level of societal development recorded in Uzairue land could not be statistically quantified, viz-a-viz contemporary standards, oral sources and other qualitatively verifiable primary data attest to the overall peace-building socio-economic roles played by women in colonial Uzairue land. Although this study extols the indigenous peace-building enhancement roles of women in colonial Uzairue land, there is a need for further scholarly studies on the nexus and nuances in the informal and formal peace-building enhancement roles of women in other sub-Saharan African communities up to the contemporary period.

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