

## Women and the maintenance of peace in Nigeria's rural communities: A study of Oshi Ekwa Leka of the Eziobodo people

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**Abstract:** Women all over the world and in Nigeria play vital role in the maintenance and nurturing of peace in homes and in the society. Despite this, in times of conflict, women are not represented in peace negotiations and in planning and execution of post- conflict reconstruction efforts and strategies. Women's participation and strong influence in peace building and maintenance bring about an immediate agreement. The influence of their intervention processes positively correlates with a great likelihood of the agreements implemented. Peace agreement, including women in reconstruction, rehabilitation, and negotiations for peace improves the quality of agreements made and increases the likelihood that they will be carried through. This paper examines the role and place of women in the maintenance of peace in rural communities in Nigeria. The paper adopts womanism as its theoretical framework as it looks into the activities of the Oshi ekwa leka, a women's group of the Eziobodo Alachara Mgbowo of Awgu Local government Area of Enugu state, Nigeria. The study employed the survey method, where key informant interviews or in-depth interview (IDI) was used to collect qualitative data from the women leader and chairman of the community. The paper identifies the activities of the women in the maintenance of peace in their community and advocates women's inclusion in peace negotiations at round tables.

**Keywords:** Eziobodo people, Nigeria, Oshi Ekwa Leka, Peace maintenance, Women, Womanism

### 1. Introduction

Any activity by women that aims to create a culture of peace is referred to as "women's peace building activities" (Sheila & Meredith, 2001 in Ochieng, 2019). Women's participation in the upkeep of peace in rural communities entails individual and group accountability as well as a process of reconciliation that helps to curb and prevent violence. It strengthens women's capacity to advance nonviolence, equality, justice, and respect for human rights for all in the local community. An immediate accord is brought about by women's involvement and significant influence in establishing and maintaining peace. A high likelihood of the agreements being carried out is positively correlated with the influence of their intervention processes. Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) contend that including women in the formulation of peace agreements and rehabilitation projects improves the quality of those agreements made and increases the likelihood that those agreements will be carried through. It will take a significant representation of women, not just a few, to get things done at the negotiation table. It is consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which calls for greater involvement of women in peace processes.

The process of gender awareness and women's emancipation in the relevant rural areas in Nigeria will be included in a comprehensive approach to peace building and maintenance that incorporates both men and women. Previous studies show that women remain underrepresented in post-conflict reconstruction initiatives and tactics, as well as in peace discussions and their planning and implementation (Puechguirbal, 2005;

Agbalajobi, 2000; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002; Adeniyi, 2015). In Nigeria, women are crucial to maintaining and fostering societal and domestic peace, despite this, women are underrepresented. This paper investigates how women might contribute to the preservation of peace in Nigerian rural communities as it examines the activities of the Oshi ekwa leka, a women's group of the Eziobodo Alachara Mgbowo of Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu state, Nigeria. The article adopts womanism as its theoretical framework. The report details the contributions made by women to the upkeep of peace in their neighborhood and promotes their participation in roundtable peace talks.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Womanism theory**

Womanism is a social science theory based on history and everyday experience of black woman. It was coined by a black American activist Alice Walker in 1983 within one of her publications, "In search of our mothers". But the term was first mentioned in her 1979 novella, "Coming Apart". Womanism theory places attention on the narratives that are particular to black women, men and families. It is a type of feminism geared on experience, situations and plights of woman of different colours. It appreciates the integral aesthetics and potential of black womanhood and relationships and cohesion with black men. The word womanism reveals African-American feminist cognizant wellbeing that crosses the border of race, social class and sexuality. It cherishes, consolidates and incorporates black women's culture and the community of women while antagonizes a dogma that may station or install black women against black men. Generally, womanism theory did not believe in feminism that places attention on gender discrimination, but womanism fights prejudice against women in areas of race, class and gender. In all, womanist work to ensure the well-being of all humanity, that is, male and female. In this study, womanism means that women help in the peaceful co-existence in the society rather than just being a feminist, they incorporate genders, race, tribe and social class.

### **2.2. The role of woman in conflict resolution and peace building**

It has been argued that special consideration must be given to the various experiences of women and men in order to construct a successful conflict management and peace building program. Therefore, we critically analyzed the part that women play in post-conflict peace building and the challenges they now encounter. Conflicts and catastrophes frequently need women to band together and carry out tasks that intervene. These initiatives unquestionably contribute significantly to the creation of enduring peace. Government at all levels and local authorities must make sure women are included in significant peace initiatives for these reasons and more.

For obvious reasons, women are important to the process of peace building. For one, they make up half or even more of every community. Therefore, the difficult task of peace building must be collaboration between both men and women. According to Agbalajobi (2000), Women are also the central care takers of families and everyone is affected when they are excluded from peace building processes. Women are also peace advocates, peace keepers, relief workers and mediators. Women have played prominent roles in peace processes in the Horn of Africa such as in Sudan and Burundi, where they have contributed as observers". The foregoing underscores the roles and importance of women's participation in peace building processes. However, efforts to foreground perspectives of women in peace processes have met stiff oppositions and setbacks; a situation which has also limited the success of the struggle to prevent gender- based violence.

Discussions to include women in decision making structures of peace and security have assumed a higher decibel within the past two decades. Prominent among the successes are The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and United Nation's security (United Nations 2000). These two documents emphasized the importance of women's equal participation in maintaining and promoting peace and security not only in the

secular society but also in religious circles. Even in the religious circles, women have been acknowledged as having made significant contributions in peace-building and conflict resolution. There is no shortage of evidence showing how influential women in religious organizations have been in a variety of professions, bringing about major change and altering society's perceptions of women.

The African Church is urged by Benedict XVI in *Africae munus*, the post-synod apostolic exhortation, to identify elements of African culture that uphold the gospel values. This immediately makes me think of how women contribute to peace, justice, and healing. In African culture, women are associated with the importance of life because it is they who bear children, and it is their responsibility to safeguard and preserve this life. According to Rop (2012), women in Africa have a specific role reserved for them that allows them to prevent war or purge warriors after a conflict.

Over the years, women's contribution to peace-building across the globe has been significant. Their contributions in peace-building have never been particular. It has been felt across the different segments and strata of the society. However, despite being the guardians of culture and the caretakers of families throughout Africa and maybe the rest of the world, women are underrepresented at the peace negotiation table and in post-conflict community reconstruction initiatives. (Puechguirbal, 2005; Adeniyi, 2015). In other words, women have not participated very much in efforts to negotiate for peace or rebuild communities after violent conflicts. This is true everywhere, including Africa. In the world, women make up less than 10% of peace negotiators and only 3% of peace treaty signatories (UN Women, 2002). These statistics paint a bleak picture for women because, during conflicts, they suffer the brunt of violence through rape, kidnapping, and slavery.

### **2.3. Towards sustainable women maintenance of peace in rural community: The role of communication**

For sustainable maintenance of peace in rural communities, one cannot do without communication. Scholars such as; Bernard Berelson cited in Schramm (1960) defined communication as the transmission of symbols via the major medium of communication ; radio, Tv, newspapers, films, magazines, books and major medium of private communication – personal conversation. Bengé (1972) quoting Dood cited in Obasi (2007) says that communication is inseparable from tribal culture and without it, culture is inconceivable. MacBride et al. (1981: 1) sees communication as a;

Motor and expression of social activity and civilization; it leads people from instinct to inspiration, through variegated processes and systems of enquiry, command and control; it creates a communication pool of ideas, strengthens the feeling of togetherness through exchange of messages and translates thought into action, reflecting every emotion and need from the humblest task of human survival to supreme manifestation of creativity-or -destruction. Communication integrates knowledge, organization and power and runs as a thread linking the earliest memory of man to his noblest aspirations through constant striving for better life.

In view of the above, it is obvious that communication is the life wire of human existence without which social interaction will not be possible. One may begin to ask, what then is the usefulness of communication in peace development? According to Roberts (1982), "Communication also makes art, science, literature and politics possible and comprehensible." Through communication man circumvent abandonment of solitude and finds a way of gratifying his demands. McQuail (1972) noted that; ability to communicate is like living inside a transparent box or canister; you can see what other persons are doing but cannot communicate to them. It represents a most basic kind of isolation. Communication therefore remains central to peace building, social interaction and integration and it started from the earliest of times and has continued to take different forms as modernity or civilization continues to grow.

## **2.4. Indigenous communication and modern mode of communication**

Indigenous and modern communication systems in most traditional African societies have varieties of uses which help in communicating peaceful co-existence. African traditional communication system however are classified into; verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. Verbal communication includes: town crier, visits, marketplace, village square, worship place or church. Non-verbal traditional communication systems are: Idiophones, Aerophones, Membranophones, Objectifies, Colour scheme, Signals, Music, Extramundane exchanges. The modern mode of communication is the mass media which includes; the broadcast media (radio / television); the print media (magazines, newspaper, leaflets, and flyers). The Digital media includes; ICTs and all the internet facilities.

### **Verbal Traditional Communication Systems**

- **Town crier:** Town crier is the voice and instrument that cries in the early time of the dayspring or quiet twilight of the evening when the home begins to rise or the works of the day begins to get rested. The town crier is an authority in the rural setting. Ugbaojah (1977) observes that a village gong man represents an ideal communicator who is saddled with the duty of giving out needful information and urgent cultural messages. Town crier also allows the audience the opportunity to ask questions and get feedback as well.
- **Visits:** Africans see paying visits as a tradition. Okonkwo (1982) noted that visits enhance peaceful co-existence between allies and kinsmen. They come together to talk, eat, gossip, discuss issues, get the latest gist about this or that family member, friends or town's man. Visits are veritable modes of information circulation and dispersion. It is a part of the social fabric that welds the community together, gives a sense of family, unity and brotherhood and also gives a chance to talk and share news.
- **Market place:** The market is where individuals from diverse parts of the community assemble for the purpose of buying, selling and can also be a place where information is shared. However, the market is a center for the convergence and dispersal of news, information and occurrences.
- **Village square:** The village square is the public forum in the communities. People gather at the village square to deliberating and brainstorm on important issues that affects the village. Mostly, village square is a place of relaxation. As people relax, they share and exchange a lot of formal announcements, official information, symbolic exchanges, and culture display. The village square is a central processing point of dispersal for the cultural heritage of the indigenous people.
- **Worship place;** Before the coming of the missionaries and the merchant colonizers, the natives had their places and patterns of worship. Such places include hallowed grounds beneath a huge and great tree providing a canopy of shade and a measure of secrecy, a semi-circle beside a community stream, a dedicated center in a family compound or groves in the forest. Here, members of a community relate with their ancestors and the spirits. At these worship centers are people from neighboring areas. Thus, communication happens at both interpersonal and group levels at these worship centers or churches. Churches are acknowledged centers of socialization where religious values are imbibed, attitudes and norms are preached, fashions and etiquette are learned. The church, mosque and religious centers propagate news and information within and around the local community.

### **Non-Verbal Traditional Communication Systems**

In tracing the origin of communication, MacBride and his associates submitted that:

human beings discover a whole range of non-verbal method for transmitting messages: music and dance, drum messages, signals, fires, drawings and other forms of graphic symbols, including, the pictogram...

- **Idiophones:** They are the traditional media of communication that can be explained as self-sounding instruments. Examples of idiophones include 'Ogene, 'Ichaka' or 'Shekere' and 'Ikolo'. The 'Ikolo' is huge and is normally housed at a strategic place in the village. Idiophones do quite a lot of things: they pass messages about passages of great men, announce emergencies, and alert the people about invasion or war.
- **Aerophones:** Examples of aerophones are 'oja', 'opi' 'Kaakaki (Hausa), 'Vuvuzela' (South Africa). Aerophones work by vibrations and movement of air columns. Air is blown into or through the instrument and, depending on the shape, length and manner of -blowing the air, sound is produced which gives its own message. It is blown by men only. The 'oja' is the flute carved and made hollow from wood. The 'opi' is the big and hollow elephant tusk with a small rectangular slit near the center for blowing. The 'opi' is an instrument of the wealthy and appears during festivals or special occasions. Its presence and sounds signify wealth / title.
- **Membranophones:** Membranophones educate, inform and entertain. Ugboajah (1977) noted that, "drums communicate from a verbal basis through signals, speech and dance. Examples of membranophones are: 'igba', 'ikpirikpe 'gbedu' (Yoruba), 'oji' (Itshekiri) 'okha' (Edo). Membranophones are drums, hollowed woods covered on one or both ends with animal skin or drums parchment stretched and tightened with ropes, metals or wooden stubs. The talking drum in Yoruba land is a highly regarded membranophone. When properly handled and struck, they can call names, make statements and arouse emotions.
- **Objectifies:** Examples of objectifies are 'nzu' (native white chalk), kolanut, 'otom' (palm frond), charcoal, white hen, white pigeon, empty calabash etc. Objectifies are about representation, symbols, and assigned roles. He uses the objects extend meanings and significance beyond what they are. Every culture uses some objects to convey specific messages or ideas. In traditional African societies and in Igbo land specifically, certain animals, parts of trees, minerals etc. are used to tell friends and foes about one's state of mind and the way things are in the environment at a particular time. The objects presented or exhibited can tell whether there is trouble, whether one is welcome, whether there is joy or sorrow in the vicinity. Some objects and what they stand for in the Igbo part of the African society are: Kolanut presented welcome, brotherhood, 'Nzu' presented to guests – welcome, acceptance, 'Nzu' to foes – peace, 'Nzu' applied to eyelids – oracle of the gods, communes with spirits and ancestors, 'Nzu' on body for women & others – birth, joyful events, White hen – innocence, sacrifice, White pigeon – peace, purification, Charcoal, ashes – bereavement, mourning, calamity, Omu 'between lips – speech forbidden, 'Omu' tied to land – trespasses forbidden, 'Omu' tied to vehicle – conveying the dead, 'Omu' round a business building – death of owner, 'Omu' to foes – prepare forward, 'Omu' in a pot of palm wine - rejection of the bride or divorce.
- **Colour scheme:** Colours carry meaning and arouse feelings, break barriers of language to convey decisions, attitudes, desires and status. However, some colours do not mean the same thing for all people in all cultures. For instance, some cultures use white for mourning whereas for others wear black. In Igboland, different colours send particular messages: black talks about bereavement, loss of a husband by a wife, white shows innocence, chastity and purity, red is danger and a need to be cautious. Even, in this modern world, colour schemes play a crucial role. For example, the youth interpret purple to mean love, while green represents life. In some culture, green is plant life, red is animal and human life, purple is royalty, white is peace and surrender.
- **Signals:** Signals in traditional communication include smoke, gun shot, cannon shot. When people within and outside the traditional communities see the rising column of smoke or hear the rings of the gun shot or the booming of cannons, they could tell there is danger, there is death or there are social ceremonies of importance. These are quickly understood pattern of signal communication in South-eastern part of Nigeria.



- **Music:** Traditional societies use music to tell stories, express their mood and transmit their histories from generation to generation. Among the Yoruba, traditional music was used for religious festivals and social events like coronations, funerals and naming ceremonies. In Hausa land, music is used during ceremonies like Durbar. In Igboland, songs can also be used to criticize or satirize. For example, in Awka area of Anambra State, night masquerades (Onyekulie) through songs satirize or criticize people who indulge in negative behaviour in the community.
- **Extramundane exchange:** In the Igbo cosmology, life does not end at death. There is still a tie between the living and the dead and the communion between both is seen in extramundane communications. Libations are poured, prayers are made, incantations and chants are intoned, sacrifices are made to the gods and protectors, the dead are buried with material objects for comfort in the afterlife, festivals are held to thank the gods and make dedications and pledges in expectation of greater abundance in the coming year. These forms of communication in the traditional society show continuity in existence for all members of that society. Modern forms of extra mundane communication are found in obituaries, memorial notices published in newspapers and magazines, or broadcast over radio or television.

### **The Mass Media**

The mass media are regarded as those media that make use of technology to reach their diversified audience that exhibits different characteristics. The mass media include the broadcast media (radio / television); the print media (magazines, newspaper, leaflets, flyers) and more recently the ICTs and internet facilities, social media and among others can contribute a lot in creating awareness on peace building in Nigeria. The media acts as the message and the messenger and it is regarded as a powerful tool that can never be ignored (Macbride et al., 1980). Nowadays, the scope of communication has been broadened. Thus, the various channels of communication such as newspaper, television, radio and more recently the internet and its attributes are in the process of transforming the basic information education and promoting knowledge and knowhow.

Lerner (1963) saw the media as filling the need of empathy. That is, the psychic mobility that was the prerequisite for the social and economic mobility that development required. Mass media plays a crucial role in sustainable development goal vision 2030 by ensuring; proper enlightenment and education on issues of peace and development. Peace ambassadors carefully select medium or media mix that can help them to communicate adequately to the target audience. In any case, UNESCO advises against reliance on one medium because the rural dwellers might depend solely on radio because of its affordability and reachability.

Describing the benefits of mass media today as immense, Farag (1991) proclaimed the media had never in the history of mankind had such a significant impact on our lives and behavior due to modern technology or inventions. The researcher argued if children from childhood would sit in front of the television watching the succession of pictures for hours, it becomes imprinted on their minds. In this way, attitudinal change that can effect peaceful living might be learnt. Nevertheless, newspapers provide People with news and testimonies about peace and nation building, thereby communities, nations learn and apply knowledge they learnt from other nations.

Digital media represents the innovation of technological development and can be used as an extension of oral communication. Social media revolution in Nigerian peace building is real and is taking place very fast with the use of facilities such as; Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok, Telegram, Snapchat, Telegram, LinkedIn which are increasingly used by the masses to express their views on different topics. Social media platforms is being used to gain knowledge, learn about different opinions, issues, topics, events, participate in online conversations without being face-to-face with others. Here, peace building activist uses social media as an effective tool of publicity, this thereby perform the profound function of spreading peace building information across multiple groups in the globe. New emerging digital forms of communication have

changed the way individual's access and use media content. Instead of replacing old media, new forms of media synergize with the traditional media to encourage active media users and content migration.

It is pertinent to note that some people do not have television, radio, internet facilities or social media links, neither do they know how to read, this group can get information from other sources through; interpersonal communication, trade-media, husbands, wives, friends, and relatives, thus communication which simply means the transfer of news / information from a source to a receiver is influential in every aspect of human endeavor, either economic, social, cultural, religion and political. Communication through the mass media is then an indispensable tool in promoting peaceful co-existence around the globe. Thus, it is convincing that; the enormity of the problems in social and political sector and the realization that nothing could be achieved without mass mobilization of the people involved have forced the stakeholders in the peace building to give premium to communication.

### **3. Research methodology**

The study was designed to investigate how women might contribute to the preservation of peace in Nigerian rural communities. As it examines the activities of the Oshi ekwa leka, a women's group of the Eziobodo Alachara Mgbowo of Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu state, Nigeria. The researchers employ the survey method through which information is collected via qualitative data. An in-depth interview was conducted with six (6) women leader and the Chairman of the Eziobodo community and critically analysed.

### **4. Etymology of Oshi Ekwa Leka**

This women group of the Eziobodo Alachara Mgbowo people of Awgu Local government Area in Enugu state was the first of its kind in Mgbowo. The women of Eziobodo were the first to organise themselves in keeping and maintaining peace in their village community. According to the current women leader, Madam Anthonia Uka, it started when she was a little girl growing up in the community. She is the fifth in the line since it started. When one assumes the women leader position, she rules till death. The exception is when a leader declines the position out of personal reasons, which could be health or not being able to take it from the women any longer. According to her, she can leave the position when they start doing things that don't go well with her, if not the position is for life. The group was modified from what it used to be when it started removing some practices that were deemed harmful and anti-progressive. In some way, she affirms that the group instilled a kind of fear in the young and adults and they strive to keep the community "pure".

*Oshi ekwa leka* was instituted with the full approval of the men in the community and this was confirmed by the current chairman of the Eziobodo village, Mr, Uchenna Kenneth Nwangwu. The Men are in full support of the women in their peace keeping and maintenance activities in the village. Womanism as a theory of the black and coloured women advocates solidarity with the men to bring harmony in the society. The term womanist expresses African-American feminist consciousness wellbeing. It connotes an inclusiveness of race, social class and sexuality. It appreciates and embodies black women's culture and the community of women while opposing a separatist gendered (feminist) ideology that may situate Black women against black men. Generally, womanism theory did not believe in the discrimination against men but believes in working with the men in bringing, keeping and maintenance of peace and order in the community. The *Oshi ekwa leka* is hedged on this theory and these womanists in living out their motherhood keep and maintain peace in the village community of Eziobodo with support and in solidarity with the men. According to the chairman, the women do great job in keeping and maintaining peace especially among women and children. He advocates that when there is peace among women in a nation, that nation is bound to enjoy relative peace.

To show their support of the women, the men refer cases to them to handle and when an aggrieved party brings a case to the general assembly of both men and women or to the men assembly, the case is reviewed and

if the aggrieved party is still found guilty, extra charges are levied on them aside that already levied on them by the women. This is of show of respect to the activities of the women to avoid them being looked down upon by any party. This women group is fearless in their operations, as the women leader stated, "We are not afraid to be taken to court or the police", their main concern is to maintain peace and progress in the village.

## 5. Discussion of findings

In any organisation, be it international or local, communication is key. In rural communities' settings, communication is very key to the day to day running of the community. There are several ways of passing information from one person to another, one group to another, from groups to the village community and vice-versa. The different communication modes in the rural communities as reflected above come handy in the operation of the *Oshi ekwa leka*.

When a case is reported to the women, or the women, notice disturbance that might lead to strife in the community, the attention of the women town crier is called by the women leader. In rural communities, when there is need for an assembly, the services of the town crier are sort. Among the different women groups, there are always women whose jobs are to go around the community in the evening or night or in the wee hours of the morning with her gong. For the women, each group has a pattern of hitting the gong and the sound that it produces is known by that particular group and they can read the meaning and discern the message. The woman town crier then will go about the community hitting her gong in the pattern of the *Oshi ekwa leka* which is always in the morning. At the sound of this, each woman, gets up and ties her wrapper around her waist without food and comes out. They enquire from the gong woman where they are to go and when she gives the information, off they go to adjudicate peace.

When they get to the home or place of conflict the preceding starts. The parties are told the law guiding the community as regards the bone of contention. Each party puts particular amount of money down, then, the case starts. At the end, the guilty party money is taken and the other returned. In the case where a guilty party does not have money or refuses to pay, his or her property is seized. A date will be given for the fine to be paid, failure to pay, the property will be sold by the women. If the case demands certain actions or things be done, the women make sure that they are implemented and that peace ensues.

An aggrieved party can appeal to the men assembly or joint assembly. When it gets to this, the case is brought to the village square where both men and women will adjudicate. If it's only the men assembly, the village square is still the venue for adjudication. Here, the main town crier is called upon to make the announcement. He then, goes about hitting his gong and telling everyone to come to the village square in the morning for a very important issue is to be discussed. In the morning, every grown adult, men and women or only men go to the village square. At the square, the aggrieved party makes their case against the women. After looking into the case and they are found guilty, they will be made to pay another fine for bringing the women to the village assembly.

This women group, the *Oshi ekwa leka* which literally means one who carries her wrapper in her hands, in this case, in an emergency to settle disputes, to keep and maintain peace in the village has been able to solve conflicts that could have degenerated in serious disputes, between individuals, family members and in the village at large. They have been able to adjudicate issues that bring justice and harmony and peaceful co-existence in the rural community of Eziobodo Alachara Mgbowo people. The question remains, why these women who keep and maintain peace would not be allowed to participate in peace talk and peace negotiations.

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge advocating for the inclusion of women in peace negotiation tables. The *Oshi ekwa leka* in its activities of keeping and maintaining peace in the Eziobodo community has shown and proven that women are capable of negotiating at the peace and conflict reconstruction tables.



The implication of the study is that women, as daughters, wives and mothers are in solidarity with the male counterpart and can work with them in keeping, maintaining and negotiating peace in the communities and inter- community levels.

## 6. Conclusion

The advocacy is for the involvement of women in peace negotiations and reconstruction in conflict situations in inter- community levels, an advocacy for gender equality not in sex but in social responsibility and solidarity which demands right for both men and women in the negotiation for peace at round tables. It's a proven fact that with women at the peace reconstruction talks, positive results are reached and implementation carried out both conflicting parties. This is as evidenced in literature and with the case of the Eziobodo women group (*Oshi ekwa leka*). This group in its activities keeps and maintains peace in the village community and this is testified by the chairman of the village community. Their success gave precedence to other village in the town in the formation of its own women group in order to keep and maintain peace. Why deny women, the opportunity to participate in peace negotiations? According to the Chairman, the custom, tradition and culture forbid women to be involved in inter community and town peace negotiations. The women leader attested to the claim that the tradition of the people forbids it. Irony as this is, women, sit in houses of states assembly, women take political positions and assignments in states and federal levels in Nigeria where they make serious and important decisions and yet tradition forbids women to come to peace negotiating tables. Antecedence, have shown Women's involvement in peace talks in other African communities like Somalia, Uganda and others. African women are womanists, who don't seek equality with men but inclusiveness for the well-being of society.

Thus, Womanism, as a social framework, separates itself from feminism. It celebrates womanhood, focuses on black women, and aims at achieving and maintaining inclusivity in the society. Walker defined womanists as black feminists or feminists of color who are committed to the wholeness and survival of the entire people (both men and women). Then, it suffices to say that the inclusion of women in peace talk will be for the good of the people both men and women and for lasting peace. This is the view of the women leader, that it will be of great advantage and the women will accept such responsibility to help in negotiating peace as mothers and wives who suffer most in conflict zone.

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