

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF WOMEN ORGANIZATIONS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

By

Duru, Fidelia Amara (Mrs)

Department of Sociology
Abia State University, Uturu
feliaduru@gmail.com
08036596924

Abstract

Peace is the most valuable and highly pursued phenomenon which remains a yardstick for achieving socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious development of local, national and international communities. Yet, it is often eluded. The paper, therefore, examined the social implications of women's organizations in conflict resolution in some selected communities in the South East, Nigeria. It was guided by four specific objectives and their corresponding research question variables which included finding out if women were involved in conflict resolution; if their involvement in conflict resolution had restored peace; brought about development and the challenges encountered in those communities. The population was 300 while the sample size was 200 was randomly selected. Two communities from each of the selected states were purposively chosen which include Imo, Abia, Anambra and Enugu for equal socio-cultural and organizational representation. The method was a cross-sectional design. Mixed method was used, both quantitative and qualitative methods which included questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion to get information from these women. They used to incorporate the opinions of both useful literate and illiterate respondents. A Structured Questionnaire was used to collect data from the randomly selected women while FGD was carried out on leaders of those women's organizations. Data were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences version 20.0 which includes simple percentages, and frequency distribution tables. The chi-square statistic was used to test the hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 significant level. One of the findings was that women were involved in conflict resolutions which served as a ground for social, economic and cultural developments in those communities. Social responsibility theory was the theoretical framework adopted. It was discovered from the study that women have various groups in their communities where they participate actively in conflict resolution arising both at intra and inter-group levels and the communities at large which resulted in restoring peace and corporate existence among members of these communities thereby serving as the basis for establishing some developmental projects. However, irrespective of these laudable imprints of development made by these women, the study discovered that these women encountered some challenges which included cultural inhibition, unnecessary influence of patriarchy, suspicion of wives by their husbands and poor financial prowess among other challenges. Some recommendations made include eroding some cultures that exclude women from the decision-making process. The finding of this paper is that south-east women brought socio-economic and cultural developments through these social organizations in their respective communities.

Keywords: Community development; Conflict resolution; Enugu; SouthEast Nigeria; Women's organizations.

Introduction

The role of women in conflict resolution and developmental efforts globally cannot be ignored. Sometimes they are not given due recognition for their contributions in these areas in their nations. Ayo-Sobowale (2005) acknowledges this when he expresses that women have been excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, political, cultural and social life of their communities. Therefore, their prominence is recognized as home keepers, fetchers of water and hewers for firewood. Okoli (2011) describes an African woman as a fetcher of water from a stream and searches for firewood with which to cook. This assertion remains a true description of Igbo women without recognizing that no nation or local community achieves meaningful progress in the presence of violence, strife or disagreement for which these women set to achieve. For instance, “Iyom Di” in Akawa Nneato ensures peace in their families by demonstrating against men who constantly beat their wives to avoid transferring aggressive behavior to their children.

Based on this, Igbo women organize themselves into social groups as tools to embark on resolving conflicts through negotiation, mediation, community building and other forms of non-violent approaches aimed at achieving a measure of development in their various societal values. Such social groups include the Umuada socio-cultural organization, Women’s Annual Home Coming or August Meeting, Iyom Di, and Catholic Women Organization among others. For a better understanding of the work, the explanation of some concepts can help fully understand the roles of these women in their various organizations.

Conflict resolution refers to the approach adopted to address the conditions that led to the conflict situation which targets addressing and ending the fundamental causes of the conflict (Duru & Nwizu, 2018). Community development on the other hand entails those developmental strategies that create favorable environmental change for enhancing the living standards of people in rural communities. To these women, the peaceful existence of any society which paves the way for socio-economic, political and cultural development is a cherished collective responsibility of both males and females in Igbo society. The study contributes to knowledge by closing the gaps in the literature by exposing an in-depth understanding of the strategies employed by Igbo women which is their organizations in conflict resolution which has not featured in the existing literature. It is therefore, against this background that a study of this nature is provoked to highlight various ways women in Igbo land have engaged themselves in settling conflicts and in addition, contributing to the political, economic and cultural lives of their respective communities.

Objectives of the Study

These objectives guided the study

1. To find out if women are involved in conflict resolution in my community.
2. To find out if the involvement of women in conflict resolution has restored peace among members of my community.
3. To find out if the activities of women have contributed to development in my community.
4. To find out if there are some socio-cultural challenges facing the women in carrying out their activities in my community.

Research Questions

The following research questions are used:

1. Are women allowed in conflict resolution in your community?
2. Which ways have the involvement of women in conflict resolution restored peace among members of your community?
3. Which ways have the activities of these women led to the development of your community?
4. Are there some socio-cultural challenges which these women face while carrying out their activities in your community?

Conceptual Clarifications

Umuada or Umuokpu Socio-cultural Association

The term Umuada or Umuokpu which are interchangeably used, is an Igbo socio-cultural association of all daughters of a given clan either married within or outside their area. In Igbo land, every daughter is called Ada. Whether married within or outside their communities or villages, one important thing is that they maintain a common historical or geographical affiliation by forming an association that identifies one another as the daughters of their various communities. Agha (2010) refers Umu to many while Okpu means everlasting daughters. These women organized themselves into institutional groups of Umuada or Umuokpu. Anyanwu (1989) defines the Umuada association as a union of daughters married away to other villages. Umuada association generally refers to a union of daughters born within a given village, community or clan who are at the same time married within or outside their areas.

This traditional association of daughters is highly respected in Igbo land and, as a result, wields a great influence in the social, political, economic, cultural and religious lives of their natal communities. Uchendu (1993) expresses that they are at times regarded by some as the guardians of the tradition and the village elders did all they could to avoid any confrontation with Umuada. Orjiakor (2008) maintains that Umuada intervenes in murder, manslaughter, poisoning, theft, adultery teenage pregnancy cases and family matters.

During the focus discussion session, in one of the groups, Mrs Ifeome Ikpeka said:

Sometimes women intervene in such cases where our husbands in the community display nonchalant attitudes and incompetence in addressing which threatens our corporate peaceful existence by assigning appropriate punishment to a culprit. Then, if the offender on the other hand fails to obey the punishment spelt out against him or her, Umuada could rally their members for stringent options such as excommunication or decide not to attend to any invitation from the culprit whether alive or dead. The socio-cultural implication is that the offender has been rejected among his people while alive and the ancestors would equally follow suit in rejecting him in the land of the dead. Other ways of enforcing compliance with the erring members are by Umuada visiting the offender's house, desecrating the house, and dropping leaves in heaps in the strategic locations of the building and cursing him or her. The socio-cultural effect is that premature death, lack of progress and tracks of certain illnesses would continue to hunt the family until the offender comes to consciousness to placate the anger of Umuada.

The interpretations of the dropped leaves and desecrating the house are that culturally they signify bad omens should no urgent steps be taken to placate them. The point remains that these daughters are highly respected. It is believed in Igbo land that if you incur the anger of Umuada, you pay costly to calm their anger. Based on this notion, everybody becomes conscious of it and tries as much as possible to avoid provoking them to anger. Also, one of the participants in the focus group discussion Mrs. Happiness Obasi said ‘Sometimes Umuada are troublesome in their demands especially as it affects their rights during burial night wake keep where they demand costly foods and other items to be given to them. For instance, they include going with plates and cups used to serve them tea brands. Nwoye (in Nwobia, 2015) asserts that Umuada exercise remarkable power in their natal homes as peacebuilders, more so than in their marital homes. According to Agbasiere (in Agha, 2010), Umuada is involved in checking deviant behavior in their natal lineage and the settlement of quarrels at various levels, disciplining disobedient wives of their relatives and even their men in various ways. It is in recognition of the vital roles of Umuada and women in general that Nwoli (2004) extol the women in Umunebo and Umuokuzu communities in Obinze, Owerri Local Government Area of Imo state for organizing themselves in the crisis moments, taking a position and coming out en mass to initiate a dialogue between the two communities or parties.

Ndi Iyomdi or Umundi Iyom (Married Women)

This is also known as Otu Umundi Iyom or Nwunyedi in the Igbo community which could be interchangeably used. It is an association of all married women into a given village, community, clan or kindred who are culturally under the influence and control of their husbands. Osuoha (in Orjiako, 2008) maintains that oral tradition has it that the association of these women started as a result of ill-treatment meted out to them by their husbands. By implication, the association serves as a conduit or forum through which these women articulate and discuss issues affecting them and resolve to mount stiff opposition to protect them against their male counterparts otherwise called their husbands.

It is through this pressure group that their voices could be heard by maintaining a common front towards protecting their rights. The decision to take a common stand is informed by the fact that it is only when a harmonious relationship prevails in an environment that socio-economic, political and cultural developments in the area can be achieved. Through this association, they exert a lot of influence thereby serving as watchdogs in their respective communities. Uchendu (1993) explains that Out Ndi Iyom are the watchdogs of the constitution and their leaders promptly convey a general meeting when anything appears to be going wrong in the community. They also wade into areas such as premarital sex, unwanted pregnancy among unmarried youths and extra-marital cases, among other outlawed behaviours in their settings. For instance, any girl caught in premarital sex or unwanted pregnancy is given a fine or derogatorily labelled a name that makes other members of the community look down on her as a way of disapproving of the observed behaviour. Iyomdi or Nludi association in many places tries others for stealing, committing adultery, having sexual relations with brothers-in-law or with an osu (an outcast), even speaking highly to men about matters of child--birth or for listening to the conversation of a husband with co-wives at night (Meek in Orjiako, 2008). These married women engage in community development setting out a day in a week or month in which every woman must be involved in clean-up exercises such as marketplaces and arteries of roads leading to streams. They also contribute to empowerment programs for their unemployed youths.

Chuku (1985) maintains that Oguta women are organized into age grades in which the elected members or leaders subscribe periodically to a common fund which was used to hold community development projects. A similar observation was made in Ohafia in Abia State. According to Chuku, in Ohafia, the Ukeabuo Ndi Iyom (women's executive arm) had executive and legislative functions in which a joint age grade for both men and women assisted members in the development of their town. IN Ngwa land, they are called "Ndem" who ensure that these married women live in peace with their families such as intervening in cases between husbands and their wives, daughters and mothers-in-laws. Ojiakor also explains that in the Aku community in the Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, the role of women elders' council known as Ndiomu-Aku exercise considerable power and influence in the dispensation of justice or settlement of disputes. Also, this women's Elders' Council remains the highest court of appeal in traditional Aku society. Okoye (2003) expresses that these women contribute to the maintenance of social order and engage in progressive community development projects in their communities. It is therefore observed that these married women contributed to the stability and development of their various communities through their membership in the association.

Women's Annual August Meeting

The month of August remains memorable and exciting among women in the Igbo society of Nigeria. This is because it is a period when women of Igbo extraction converge in their respective communities as a demonstration of solidarity among the women folk. It is a period in which they discuss issues that affect their welfare, familiarize themselves and pursue the development of their various communities. Odinakachukwu (2014) maintains that the primary aim of establishing the August Meeting is to have a forum for settling women's disputes. This they achieve by embarking on peace education where seminars are organized for rural women on how to avert signs of conflict.

Odinakachukwu in addition explains that they resolve community and family conflicts which include extra-marital cases, abortion cases, and deviant behavior among other social anti-behaviors that undermine the development of a community. This annual homecoming is a forum both for women living at home and abroad to interact on a common ground aimed at making their impact felt in their social environment. This women's association is made up of all married and unmarried women of interdenominational consideration. During their meetings, consciousness is raised among the women that the success or failure of any family, community or village rests on them and as such, members are sensitized towards taking their positions as builders of their areas. During the period of focus discussion, the leader of the August Meeting in Okigwe Imo State, Mrs. Osuoha states thus:

During our meetings, an education interactive forum is created in which resource persons are invited to enlighten women on health-related issues, and skill acquisition programmes and women raise funds for various development projects like building schools, churches, markets and settlement of disputes among other members.

Agha (2010) observes that seminars and workshops are organized which cover a range of issues such as home management, health, domestic activities, modesty in dressing, and economic self-reliance among others. A period is set apart for fundraising meant to help the local church, widows, social welfare and community development.

In another focus discussion held in Umunneochi, Abia State, the late Mrs. Perpetua Obasi, states: “Experts from various self-reliant empowerment programs are invited to educate women on how to make soap and detergent, cake, buns, popcorn, among others to help them become economically self-reliant than depending on their husbands.” By implication, the August Meeting has helped its members by changing the psyche of an average local Igbo woman that days are gone when women sit at home and waited for their husbands to cater for their socio-economic needs. Hence all hands should be on deck for the realization of the socio-economic needs of their families.

August Meeting as a social organization has positively impacted the lives of its members as it wields and challenges the obnoxious policies that are traditionally meted out to their members especially as they affect dirty widowhood practices and marginalization of women in Igbo land. These giant strides made by these women create consciousness in their counterparts on the protection and adherence to rights of women as spelt out in the 1995 Belgian Conference. Considering the social impact of August Meeting as a social organization, they serve and augment the services rendered by social welfare agencies in their various areas or communities thereby bringing about the development of their various areas due to the peaceful environment they cultivated.

Catholic Women Organization (CWO)

This is directly an offshoot of the World Union of Catholic Women Organization whose existence was traced to the International Association of Catholic Women Organization (WUCWO) that was established in 1910 to bring about a social reform for the benefit of women under the principles of the church (Rossler & Fanning in Agba, 2010). The point is that after the general August Meeting which is interdenominational in composition, the Catholic Faithful Women organize their separate August Meeting after the general August Meeting of to sensitize their members on the need to contribute to evangelism, enhance church projects, uphold the dignity of women, promote family life, inspiring faith among women and to tackling problems confronting them generally. This association visits the wretched widows in their midst with gifts as a demonstration of love and oneness. This powerful organization also plays an important role in resolving conflicts among the members and their respective Christian families. During the focused group discussion Mrs. Ekeghalu said “The CWO St. Mary’s Okigwe, built a flat for Mrs. Megdaline”. We also bought food items and clothes for her and the poor among us”.

Okpa (2006) says thus”

The Catholic Women Organization being part and parcel of the church has contributed much to the growth of the church in the areas of evangelization, upkeep of church projects, maintenance of the parishes and their priests, and made laudable contributions towards education and child upbringing.

Theoretical Orientation

The study adopts social responsibility theory which is associated with Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919). It is based on the principles of charity and stewardship. Freeman and Liedtka (1991) who modernized theory said the more fortunate assist those who are less fortunate and that the rich hold their money in trust for the rest of society, using it for any purpose society deems appropriate. Therefore, the concept of conflict analysis tool of social responsibility theory is considered useful for explaining the reason why women's organizations must be involved in conflict prevention. This

theory puts a lot of responsibility on women who act under the guise of groups instead of on an individual basis to cause a change in the ideology, perception and behavior of their members. It gives a theoretical explanation of women's involvement in conflict prevention through the organization of programs that would promote tranquility and development.

The thrust of the theory is that conflict can be prevented if the stakeholders especially women can take peace education, and advocacy as part of their institutional responsibility and that women have the task of putting community interest above their parochial self-interest. Every society expects women's input in getting rid of social evils, educating people, and criticizing government policies and exposing other wrongdoings in their various social environments. Also, through the involvement of these women in various settings to resolve conflicts both at the family and community levels such as condemning extramarital sex which has been a source of conflict between a wife and her husband by placing sanctions on the erring wife thereby bringing social unity, marital stability and development of these families and communities above their interests. Social responsibility entails the necessity for women to keep society's interest as a top priority (Middleton, 2009, cited in Ohaegbuchi, 2014).

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The use of this method is justified given the similar characteristics of the respondents irrespective of their locations. The work was limited to married women between 30 years and above. This is because they possess experience of the realities of their communities and may have acquired various leadership positions in their communities that make them contribute information to enrich the study. The population of the study was 300 while the sample size was 200 using Taro Yamane statistical formula. The instruments for data collection were questionnaire and a focus group discussion. The questionnaire was served on the educated women while the focus discussion was conducted on leaders of these organizations. This is because the educated members can fill in the information needed in writing. Then, those in leadership positions could use their experience to give unbiased information because they are social practitioners in terms of issuing orders and their execution. 204 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, and 48 respondents were engaged in focus group discussion, that is 12 from each state for equal representation. Then, 4 copies of the questionnaire were considered invalid. The consents of the participants and other respondents were sought and they were assured of the confidentiality of the information provided as it was meant for academic use.

Likert measuring scale was adopted. The data collected were analyzed using statistical formulas for social sciences such as tables, and simple percentages. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses because it is a test of the relationship of variables. The test of hypotheses is carried out here because the results add value to the study by augmenting other findings and research questions of the study.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Data of the Respondents

State	LGA	Respondents	Years of Marriage			Academic Qualification			
			25-40	41-55	56+	FSLC	Secondary	1st Degree/ Equivalence	Masters/ Ph.D
Imo	Okigwe	50	19 (38)	20 (40)	11 (22)	5 (10)	20 (40)	18 (36)	7 (14)

	Onuimo	42	12 (28.57)	16 (38.10)	14 (33.33)	4 (9.52)	13 (28.57)	19 (45.24)	6 (14.29)
Abia	Umunneochi	44	18 (40.91)	12 (27.27)	14 (31.82)	7 (15.91)	14 (31.82)	16 (36.36)	7 (15.91)
	Isuikwuato	48	14 (29.17)	18 (3.75)	16 (33.33)	6 (12.50)	16 (33.33)	17 (35.42)	9 (18.75)
Anambra	Orumba	49	20 (40.82)	17 (34.69)	12 (24.49)	6 (12.24)	16 (32.65)	20 (40.82)	7 (14.29)
	Aguata	37	10 (27.03) (40.54)	12 (32.43)	15	5 (13.51)	15 (40.54)	13 (35.14)	4 (10.81)
Enugu	Nkanu West	34	13 (38.24) (29.41)	11 (32.35)	10	4 (11.76)	11 (32.35)	14 (41.18)	5 (14.71)
	Nkanu North	56	21 (37.50) (30.36)	18 (32.14)	17	10 (17.86)	20 (35.71)	16 (28.57)	10 (17.87)

The above table indicates that in Imo State, Okigwe Local Government Area has 50 respondents. Out of this number 19(38%) fall within 25-40 years of marriage; 20(40%) 41-55 years of marriage whereas 11(22%) are for those within 51 and above showing that the respondents within 25-40 years are more than others. As it affects their academic qualifications, FSLC 5(10%); Secondary 20(40%); First Degree and its equivalence 18(45.24%) while Masters/Ph.D holders are 7(14%) indicating that those with secondary school qualification are more in number than others. Onuimo Local Government is 42. Out of this number, 12(28%) falls within 25-40 years of marriage; 16(38.10%) 41-55 years of marriage whereas 14(33.33%) are within 51 and above. It then shows that the respondents within the married age of 41-55 are more than other categories. Then, as it affects their academic qualifications, FSLC 4(9.52%); Secondary 13(28.57%); First Degree and its equivalence 19(45.24%) while Masters/Ph.D is 6(14.29%) showing that those with first degree outnumber others.

In Abia State, Umunneochi is 42. Out of this number, 18(40.91%) falls within 25-40 years of marriage; 12(27.27%) 41-55 years of marriage whereas 14(31.82%) are within 51 and above. This means that respondents within 25-40 years of marriage are more than others. On their academic qualifications, FSLC 7(5.91%); Secondary 14(36.36%); First Degree and its equivalence 16(36.36%) while Masters/Ph.D holders are 7(15.91%) implying that respondents with first degree and its equivalent outnumber others. Isuikwuato Local Government Area has 48. From this number, 14(29.17%) fall within 25-40 years of marriage; 18(3.75%) 41-55 years of marriage whereas 16(33.33%) are within 51 and above showing that those from 41-55 are others. On their academic qualifications, FSLC 6(12.50%); Secondary 16(33.3%); First Degree and its equivalence are 17(35.42%) while Masters/Ph.D holders are 9(18.75%) implying that the respondents with a first degree are more in number.

In Anambra State, Orumba is 49. Out of this number, 20(40.82%) fall within 25-40 years of marriage; 17(34.69%) within 41-55 years of marriage whereas 12(24.49%) are within 51 and above showing that the respondents within the ages of 25-40 years are more than others. On their academic qualifications, FSLC 6(12.24%); Secondary 16(32.65%); First Degree and its equivalence 20(40.82%) while Masters/Ph.D holders are 7(14.29%), indicating that those with a first degree are

more than others. Aguata Local Government Area has 37. From this number, 10(27.03%) falls within 25-40 years of marriage; 12(32.43%) 41-55 years of marriage whereas 15(40.54%) are within 51 and above. On their academic qualification, FSLC 5(13.51%); Secondary 15(40.54%); First Degree and its equivalence 13(35.14%), while Masters/Ph.D holders are 4(14.71%).

In Enugu State, Nkanu West is 34. Out of this number, 13(38.24%) fall within 25-40 years of marriage; 11(52.35%) 41-55 years of marriage whereas 10(29.41%) are within 51 and above showing that those within 25-40 years are more in number. On their academic qualifications, FSLC 4(11.76%); Secondary 11(32.35%); First Degree and its equivalence 14(41.18%) while Masters/Ph.D holders are 5(14.71%) showing that those with first degree outnumber others. Nkanu North Local Government Area has 56. From this number, 21(37.03%) falls within 25-40 years of marriage; 18(32.14%) 41-55 years of marriage whereas 17(30.36%) are within 51 and above. On their academic qualifications, FSLC 10(17.86%); Secondary 20(35.71%); First Degree and its equivalence 16(28.57%) while Masters/Ph.D holders are 10(17.87%).

Table 2: Responses of Respondents on Substantive Variables of the Study

S/N	Variable Statement	Percentage Responses				Total
		SA	A	D	SD	
		4	3	2	1	
1	Women are allowed to resolve conflicts which include spouses, mother/daughter in-laws, and inter-family issues.	102 (51)	82 (41)	5 (2.5)	11 (5.5)	200
2	Umuada socio-cultural organization exerts more influence on compliance to decisions than other women organizations.	63 (31.5)	67 (34)	32 (16)	38 (19)	200
3	Involving women in conflict resolution stabilized life and brought about peaceful coexistence among members of the Igbo community.	95 (62.5)	56 (25)	23 (6.5)	26 (6)	200
4	There are certain conflicts women are not allowed to come into such as secret cults, masquerade cults among others.	125 (62.5)	50 (25)	13 (6.5)	12 (6)	200
5	Youth empowerment by various women organizations in Igbo society has reduced deviant behavior.	70 (35)	60 (30)	32 (1.6)	38 (19)	200
6	Iyom di play the role of watchdog between mother and daughters-in-law in Igbo society.	54 (27)	66 (33)	35 (17.5)	45 (22.5)	200
7	During August Meetings, rural women are empowered through almsgiving and skill acquisitions.	113 (56.5)	50 (25)	27 (13.5)	10 (5)	200
8	There are some cultural challenges that hinder conflict resolution and development efforts of women in Igbo community.	111 (55.5)	80 (40)	5 (2.5)	4 (2)	200

The information provided by the above table shows that 184(92%) of the respondents agree that women resolve conflicts which include spouses, mother/daughter inlaws, and inter-family issues whereas 16(8%) disagree. As it affects whether Umuada socio-cultural organization exerts more influence on compliance to decisions than other women organizations, 130(65%) agree with the statement while 70(35%) disagree showing that Umuada exerts influence on compliance to decision making other organizations. On whether involving women in conflict resolution brings about peaceful coexistence among members of the Igbo community, 151(75.5%) agree with the statement while 49(24.5%) disagree. It then means that the involvement of Igbo women in conflict resolution brings about peaceful coexistence in Igbo land. Also, on whether there are certain conflicts women are not allowed to come into, 175(87.5%) agree while 25(12.5%) disagree with the statement showing that women are not involved in all cases.

With respect to whether youth's empowerment by various women organizations in Igbo society has reduced deviant behaviour, 130 (65%) agree whereas 70 (35%) disagree. Also, on the issue of Iyom Di playing the role of watchdog between mother and daughter in laws in Igbo society, 120(60%) agree while 80(40%) disagree with the statement. As it affects August women empower rural women through almsgiving and skill acquisition programmes, 193(96%) agree whereas 37(18.5%) disagree with the statement. Then, 191(95.5%) agree that there are some cultural challenges that hinder conflict resolution and development efforts of women in the Igbo community. However, 9(4.5%) disagree. This implies that there are some cultural inhibitions of conflict resolution among these women.

Test of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested:

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant relationship between involving women in conflict resolution and peaceful existence among members of my community.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between involving women in conflict resolution and peaceful existence among members of my community.

Table 3. Relationship between Involving Women in Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Existence among members of the Community.

Variables	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL
1. The role of Umuada in conflict resolution brings about the desired peace in my community.	73 (36.5)	54 (27)	33 (16.5)	40 (20)	200 (100%)
2. Involvement of Iyom Di in settling conflicts between mother/daughter in-laws lead to family peaceful existence in my community.	112 (56)	69 (34.5)	8 (4)	11 (5.5)	200 (100%)
3. August Meeting women's organization settles conflict among its members.	131 (65.5)	59 (29.5)	6 (3)	4 (2)	200 (100%)

Level of significance = 0.05

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(o-e)^2}{e}$$

X^2 calculated = 296.5

df = 12.592

Decision Rule:

If the chi-square calculated is less than the table value or degree of freedom, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, since the X^2 calculated is 296.5 is greater than the degree of freedom which is 12.592, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. That means there is a significant relationship between women in conflict resolution and peaceful existence among members of a community in Igbo society.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Women's Organizations and grassroots development in my community.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between Women's Organizations and grassroots development in my community.

Table 3.2: Relationship between Involving Women Organizations and Grassroots Development in Igbo society

Variables	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL
4. Umuada socio-cultural organization contributes to the development of their natal communities.	66 (33)	82 (41)	30 (15)	22 (11)	200 (100%)
2. Iyom Di Women Association embarks on developmental projects in my community.	109 (54.5)	76 (38)	9 (4.5)	6 (3)	200 (100%)
3. August Meeting women's organization involves itself in various human capital developments.	81 (40.5)	113 (56.5)	2 (1)	4 (2)	200 (100%)

Level of significance = 0.05

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(o-e)^2}{e}$$

X^2 calculated = 299.5

df = 12.592

Decision Rule:

If the chi-square calculated is less than the table value or degree of freedom, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, since the X^2 calculated is 296.5 is greater than the degree of freedom which is 12.592, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. That means there is a significant relationship between women's organizations and grassroots development in Igbo communities.

Discussion of Findings and the Implications

The information provided in this study showed that women in their various organizations in Igbo society were involved in conflict resolution. This was authenticated by the responses of the respondents in Table 2. Also, the result of Hypothesis 1 and Table 3 in which the X^2 calculated 296.5 was greater than the df. 12.592 rejected the null hypothesis showing that women were involved in resolving conflicts ranging from families to their members and community. The social implication is that people live in peace with one another which is a criterion for achieving social, economic, political and cultural freedom in Igbo society. Concerning developmental activities, the study also showed that these women through their various organizations had contributed to the development of both individuals and society at large. These are in the areas of skill acquisition and empowerment programs, and the building of schools, markets and churches for their communities. This was confirmed by the responses of the respondents in Table 2. Also, further proof was shown in Table 4 in which the null hypothesis was rejected because X^2 calculated = 299.5 was greater than the table value which was 12.592, meaning that women make efforts to develop their local communities in Igbo society.

The study discovered that there were some areas where women were not allowed to come into. They include secret cults and masquerade cults among others. The FGD response showed that it is one of the ways men show their supremacy over women and also a show of gender inequality. One of the responses during FDG, Mrs. Ikpe said, "There are some cultural policies which men made against women such as unhealthy widowhood practices, domination and suspicion. However, women are still trying to correct them." The social implication is that irrespective of the global quest for the abolition of obnoxious practices, men in Igbo society still do not want to change from these unwanted and unhealthy cultural behaviors that do not promote gender equality. It was further discovered that women in Igbo society encounter some challenges which hinder their humanitarian and development services in their respective communities. They include the unnecessary influence of their husbands' superiority, some unwanted and unhealthy cultural practices, suspicion of wives by their husbands, and poor financial status of these women.

Conclusion

The paper x-rayed the social implications of women's organizations in conflict resolution and community development in some communities in south-eastern states. The study showed that these women operated under their various organizations to achieve peace by resolving conflict and also embarked on development projects. These organizations include Umuada social cultural organization, Iyom Di, Annual Women Home Coming otherwise known as Women's August Meeting, and Catholic Women Organization among others. The social implications of the activities of these women include creating a peaceful environment, undisrupted social activities, love and achieving development in their respective local settings. This is because in any human environment

that is characterized by crises, no meaningful progress is recorded hence women have tried to close the gap in Igbo land.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made.

1. Husbands should always see their wives as partners in socio-economic and political progress.
2. Those obnoxious cultural practices that subject women to psychological trauma should be removed.
3. The issue of gender inequality which has subjected women to second-class citizens should be done away with through public enlightenment extended to rural areas through their traditional rulers.

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