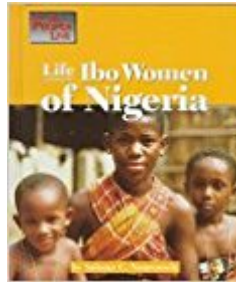




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The Way People Live - Life Among The Ibo Women Of Nigeria



Synopsis

Before contact with Europeans, the Ibo people of Nigeria possessed a social structure that gave equal power to both men and women. English colonizers of the region, however, removed women from positions of economic and political authority.

Book Information

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[Nigeria](#) #3621 in [Books > History > World > Women in History](#)

Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up-The author draws on the extensive studies of the culture, creating a detailed account of women in a "traditional" African society. After a thoughtful introduction, she moves on to traditional Ibo (Igbo) society and women's roles in the political system, economy, and family. Nnoromele also uses primary-source documents to show how the women's rights and responsibilities in this society as well as the participatory, decentralized ways of governing fascinated and rather shocked class-bound, patriarchal turn-of-the-century Europeans. The author's command of the history is not as firm as her knowledge of the anthropology; yet her discussion of the impact of trade with the Europeans; missionaries; and, after the late 19th-century, colonial rule is on target in showing why these women lost political and economic power. Footnotes show a respect for the need to consider evidence, but the added source attributions and frequent quotations from scholarly studies slow the flow of text. In all but the chapters on marriage and motherhood, the level of abstraction may be daunting. The black-and-white photographs include portraits with captions relating to the society but not necessarily the individuals pictured. One illustration and a boxed segment are from entirely different countries. Still, many libraries will want the thoughtful depth found in this book, despite its

significant limitations. Loretta Kreider Andrews, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, MD Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 4⁺-7. Nnoromele, professor of English and storyteller at Eastern Kentucky University, was born and raised in Nigeria. In straightforward and graceful language, she delineates the structure of traditional Ibo society and how women functioned within it: although polygamy was practiced, each wife had her own home; women had separate but equal councils and political power and a certain amount of economic independence, though male and female tasks were strictly divided. British colonialism, slavery, and the coming of Christian missionaries are treated, and she is careful to note the effects of each without condemnation. Illustrations, sidebars of quotations from primary sources, notes, and an excellent bibliography make this a model for books of its kind. More than that, however, Nnoromele's clear language will make research a pleasure and understanding a given.

GraceAnne A. DeCandido

In this book, young readers can learn quite a lot about Igbo-speaking women in southeastern Nigeria. The author has taken care to introduce her audience to the realities facing contemporary Igbo women as well as to a picture of Igbo women's lives in the years immediately before colonialism. As an anthropologist who works with Igbo-speaking peoples and who is interested in gender studies, I was pleasantly surprised at the diversity of topics covered in this short text. For example, the author discusses women's roles in indigenous religious practice as well as in the Christian churches so prevalent in southern Nigeria today. She also is not afraid of addressing the problems of contemporary women as they struggle for more equal access to schools, the law and economic success. Well-chosen photographs abound, although sadly in black and white, showing Igbo women's contribution to the arts, their fabulous fashion sense (both in the past and in the present day), and their general importance for all parts of Igbo society. There are also several useful maps, and a series of side boxes which contain quotations from primary and scholarly sources. The bibliography will be key for any student who wants to write a report on Igbo social life, or a nice resource for librarians who wish to help middle and high school students begin research on Nigerian topics. My only quibble is the use of the old spelling "Ibo" in the title and throughout the book. Otherwise, this is highly recommended! The author has done us all a great service.

this book is very interesting for those who would like to know more about the general aspects of Ibo culture. this book tells about the language, education, work, and marriage rituals of women. totally

recommended for people who would like to learn more about africa

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