



NIGERIAN WOMEN MOBILIZED AND GENDER HISTORY: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

By

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Abstract

The theme, structure, ramifications and narratives of women and gender history in Nigeria are indicators of progress in the historical field concerning women and gender since the 1980s. The central task in this discourse is to understand the intellectual process that has determined the trajectory of Gender history since the pioneering publication of Nina Mba's Nigerian Women Mobilised in 1982. The sheer mass of material now available has been very impressive and must be identified by their themes, focus and concerns. It is with this process that our concerns lay. Over the last forty years, Nina Emma Mba's contributions to the History of women and gender have enhanced our understanding of women's agency, activism, and participation in Nigeria's political and social activities. Writing women into History had been made popular from the 1980s to recover a neglected group – women – in historical works. Following Mba's heels, Bolanle Awe's edited volume, Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective, catalogued great women in Nigeria's History. While scholars of Women's History in Nigeria have published great works on women agency, Feminists who established themselves in the intellectual firmament have over time shifted the emphasis from Women's History to gender history. This shift emphasised the theme of the oppression of women and how they responded to discrimination and subordination. This chapter provides a critical assessment of historical writings of and on women and gender in Nigeria since Nina Mba's seminal publication. It looks specifically at how Women's History has metamorphosed over the years and the implications for historical scholarship.

Keywords: *Nina Mba, women, gender, feminism, history, and Nigeria*

Introduction

In Nigeria, the articulation of women's past did not happen until the 1980s. The writing of History in Nigeria began in response to the Eurocentric view that Africa had no history. Thus, professional historians from the 1950s started writing an African perspective of History. These historians focused on the creation of nationalist historiography (Falola & Aderinto, 2010). Nationalist History is akin to what Joan Scott describes as "general history" or political and national History (Epple & Schaser, 2009). Women empowerment, gender inequality, inequity surrounding resources and rewards, and women agency have been critical themes in Nigerian women's History and historiography. The book by Nina Mba is a well-conceived work. It was situated to present a history of 'women's political action and organisation in southern Nigeria from 1900 to 1965 (p. ix and p. 290). In the author's desire to understand and underscore women's efforts to influence the allocation of resources and values in their communities by appeals to the leadership and their participation in that leadership, she has opened for all to see women agency in a patriarchal society. These efforts were, unfortunately, not well represented in the literature. This then encouraged her to raise the validity of studying women as a separate segment of society rather than members of the diverse socioeconomic groups in society.

There is a lot to showcase of the Nigerian woman. Writings on Nigerian women by Nigerian women is a very vast field. Writers like Nana Asmau, Hafsat Abdulwaheed, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Zulu Sofola, Mabel Segun, etc. had written on issues affecting women in Nigeria. However, their works were fiction. The articulation of women's past in Nigeria did not happen until the 1980s. In twentieth-century Nigeria, the writing of History began in response to the Eurocentric view that Africa had no history. Thus, professional historians from the 1950s started giving an intellectual perspective of and on African History. These historians focused on the creation of nationalist historiography (Falola & Aderinto, 2010). Nationalist History is akin to what Joan Scott describes as "general history" or political and national History (Epple & Schaser, 2009). General History pays attention to a particular male group and pays little or no attention to women or gender history. The relegation of women to the far less significant or supplementary position is not the making of Nigerian historians; it is, in fact, the nature of History. It is no wonder that mention was not made of the role played by Nigerian women in the development of Nigerian and African societies by two important works of the 1980s, namely: the *Groundwork of Nigerian*

History – a standard text on Nigeria's History – published in 1980 and the eight volumes of UNESCO *General History of Africa* published in 1981 (Awe, 1991). Epple and Schaser (2009) have asserted that in the writing of History is a deliberate exclusion of women from historical narratives. They asserted that:

The professionalisation of historiography in Europe and the U.S. during the past 200 years has meant ignoring the fact that women have a past. As a result, women were also disqualified from writing so-called professional History. Those who wrote History nonetheless were left out of the traditional historiographic canon. The comparison may seem extreme, but it is apt nevertheless: the exclusion of female histories ... The marginalisation of female historians and their histories are also deeply affected by the traditional canon written by male historians, which was based on exclusionary practices and covered almost exclusively male-gendered subjects.

The inclusion of women in historical narratives began in the post-1960s. The exclusion of women was not peculiar to Nigeria or Africa; it was a global phenomenon that endured until the post-colonial world. In Gouda and Clancy Smith's (2010) words:

Empire was imagined as a global chess game whose players were almost exclusively European men, often hailing from elite backgrounds ... Millions of different ethnic peoples populating colonised societies were virtually absent from conventional political or diplomatic narratives ... (while) women, whether European or non-European, were rarely singled out as deserving special scrutiny in this older scholarly tradition. The historical narratives detailing international politics or the global dissemination of European culture, written before decolonisation altered the world's map, were regarded as immune to gender analysis.

Women were underrepresented, misrepresented and relegated to history books' background, perhaps because they were depicted as historically unimportant and incapable of contributing to society outside of the private sphere (Chiponda & Wasserman, 2011). The earliest publications on women in Nigeria were the articles authored by Adetowun Ogunseye, "The Role and Status of the Women in Nigeria" in 1960; Bolanle Awe's piece on traditional Female Institutions amongst the Yoruba in 1977; and, Osinnulu's "Religion and the Status of Nigerian Women". According to Bolanle Awe, the first full-length synthesis in book form of women's role in Nigeria's History is Nina Mba's *Nigerian Women Mobilized* (Awe, 1991). Falola and Aderinto (2010) also supported

the view that serious scholarship on Women's History in books did not begin until Mba's *Nigerian Women Mobilized*.

The writing of Women's History was, perhaps, inspired by women because of different happenings around the world from the nineteenth century to the latter part of the twentieth century. Before the second wave of feminism, from about 1900 to the 1960s, women historians had seized the opportunity of the golden age of social and economic history to include women in the historical records. This would deepen the understanding of the political, social, economic, and legal structures that shaped "women's unequal place in social, economic, and political life" (Downs, 2010). Close to the last two decades of the twentieth century was the United Nations declaration of 1975 as the Woman's International Year that further intensified women's interest.

The development of Women's History as an academic subject and focus of research in Nigeria has profoundly impacted history. From a historical standpoint, Nina Mba's book, *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965* (Mba, 1982), appears as a uniquely significant contribution to Women's Studies in Africa. Panata et al. had argued that gendered inequalities had been a fact of Nigerian life (Panata & Zancarini, 2016). In writing the book, Nina Mba's views had intersected with the position adumbrated by El-Malik on "how women's intellectual energies and writing practices get harnessed in defining political problem and in defining a response" (el-Maliki & Shiera, 2013).

From a critical interpretation of women's experiences in a milieu that was characterised by the vexing challenges of women and socio-political relations, Nina Mba successfully traced the pedigree of various women's political mass movements in southern Nigeria from the dawn of colonial rule to 1965. Her work has revealed the complexity of how women's political energies have had to cope with the boundaries set by colonial hegemonies. Since the 1980s, Nigerian scholars' constructions of womanhood and female agency have not only become more profound, but they have also achieved the process of moving discourse on women from the periphery to the centre of historical discourse. Mba has authored an important interpretation of women in a complex society through a narrative that features the distinctions between men and women. The work tackled one of the most understudied themes in Nigerian History and paid keen attention to the contradictions and tensions affecting gender relations. In a unique approach to understanding

women's role and position in society, she delved into the pre-colonial period's historiography to trace women's structure and functions in society. What drove Mba's inquiry was women's political activity in Southern Nigeria from 1900 to 1965. The personal anguish that she expressed in her work on 'the imbalance in the treatment of Nigerian women in Nigerian historiography' (p.x) is what made her elaborate on women's theme so effective in ensuring the development of interest in this theme. She convincingly argued that in pre-colonial southern Nigeria, "women's world was not subordinate to that of men, but rather the two worlds were complementary" (p.290). There is no doubt the book offered the first extended discussion of Nigerian women's initiative, leadership, and involvement in conventional political parties (Ubochi, 1983).

This book has provided scholars of her age and the ages after that with the most comprehensive portrait of women from the colonial period to the post-colonial period. Using extant archival and secondary sources in the writing of the book, the author travelled uncharted territory. An important subtext to this argument was that she was the first to write on women and politics. Although Mba's interpretive focus is on mobilising popular political elements, the book is still a traditional historical narrative devoid of political struggles' usual ideologies. The book nevertheless raises several potent historiographical and methodological questions.

Nina Mba's Publications

Writing women into history was made famous from the 1980s to recover a neglected group – women – in historical works. The narratives on women and gender history in Nigeria emerged as the preserve of women. This new genre was an indicator of progress in the historical field. In 1982, Nina Emma Mba led this new field of research in Nigeria in a book-length publication when she published her PhD thesis in her pioneering work entitled; *Nigerian Women Mobilised: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria*. Over the last forty years, however, Nina Emma Mba's contributions to the history of women and gender have enhanced our understanding of women activism and participation in the political and social activities of Southern Nigeria and opened intellectual frontiers for that vital subject.

In this book, Nina Mba interrogated women's political activities in Southern Nigeria between 1900 and 1965. This period highlights the colonial experiences of women of Southern Nigeria. By

political activity, Mba refers to 'women's efforts to influence the allocation of resources and values in their communities by appeals to the leadership and their participation in leadership. She went further to establish women's political and economic position in pre-colonial times, how their status was influenced and affected by colonialism, their reactions to colonial rule, and their participation in Nigerian political parties. Mba accomplished so much in so little space. In a clear and concise narrative, Mba provided the reader with an excellent overview and framework for women studies' development. The text has given a clear indication of how women's status evolved since colonial times. Her ability in accomplishing the focus of the book in 344 pages is highly commendable. In the pre-colonial picture, Mba painted a picture of how women were politically involved in the decision-making process and some societies' administration in Southern Nigeria. In her analysis, she identified women's roles among the Igbo and Oyo, Egba, and Benin's kingdoms, where women served as regents and rulers (pp. 2-3). In the Benin Kingdom, women played a less critical role in society's administration, though the Queen Mother and female palace officials performed important rituals and administrative functions. Among the Igbo, women sat on state councils, controlled markets, and regulated women's activities. While among the Yoruba, they were involved in society's political, social, and economic fabric. They were involved in the political structure of their societies. This is most remarkable because the work touched upon women's importance in a life-affirming and creative way. Several of the earlier Eurocentric works on these areas were written as though women were non-existent.

Other books written by Nina Emma Mba include *Khaba and Khaki: Women and the Militarized State in Nigeria* (1988); *Ayo Rosiji: Man with Vision* (1992); *Nigerian Women in Politics, 1986 – 1993* (1996) – jointly published with Osinulu, Clara; and *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* (1997) – a book jointly authored with Cheryl Johnson-Odim. These publications were very well received in the academic world. The Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC) WorldCat Identities – the world's most comprehensive library collections database to promote cooperation and libraries worldwide showcased Nina Emma Mba's publications from the 1970s to 2011; nine years after her demise in 2002. Mba's most famous works were *Nigerian Women Mobilised: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria* and *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria*. Between 1982 and 1997, ten editions of the former were published and held by two hundred and thirty-eight WorldCat member libraries worldwide.

The latter four editions were published and preserved by three hundred and eighty-four WorldCat member libraries worldwide (World Cat, 2021).

Writing Women into Nigerian History

Nina Mba's *Nigerian Women Mobilised...* has remained a classic on women's political mobilisation in Nigeria. Following Mba's heels, some of the works began flowering ten years after (1992). Bolanle Awe's edited volume, *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*, contained a catalogue of great women in Nigeria's History. The women analysed in this book are not confined to one geographical area of Nigeria. They are women leaders who contributed to Nigerian society in the past. This book articulated the status of women in the cultures that make up Nigeria since the 7th century. These women included Queen Amina of Zaria, Nana Asma'u, Iyalode Efusetan Aniwura, and several others. In this edited volume, Awe methodically gathered the authors' works who examined women's contributions to human and societal development in Nigeria.

In 1997, Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Mba came out with the work: *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria*. This was an engagingly written analysis of the role of a woman of substance associated with Nigeria's political and social development. In this book, the authors analysed the life and activities of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, who had fought for women's right to vote and equal rights for her compatriots long before the second wave of the women's movement in the United States of America (USA). Alongside these important history books on women were several articles on women. Other scholars' efforts to expand their scholarship have expanded the scope of work on Nigerian women.

The Interface of Women, Gender and Feminist Scholarship

In the late 1980s, other works began to emerge that focused on women's historical roles and positions in society. Ifi Amadiume, a Nigerian Sociologist, in her 1987 work entitled *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (Amadiume, 2015), argues and analyses the notions of masculinity and femininity. In this work, she argued that women's economic activities were the essential basis of their power. By the late 1990s, Women's Studies was being redefined to construct a new intellectual community that began to expose its ambiguities

and even contradictions. Nigerian Scholars started exploring ways of making and interpreting women issues in women studies, gender, and feminist scholarship. In 1997, a sociologist – Oyeronke Oyewunmi – in her book *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (Oyewunmi, 1997) analysed the distinction between gender discourses in the West and Africa. The author argues that there is a considerable gap between gender discourses and gender roles in Africa and the West. The author argues that gender was based on seniority and not sex among the Yoruba. This work lays credence to Falola and Aderinto's (2010) assertion that "women's history in Nigeria emerged as a counter-discourse against the assertion that all women of the world share the same experience of patriarchal exploitation and from the need to correct the error of using Western ideas to examine the experience of African women".

According to Olufunke Adeboye (2019), initial writings on gender in Africa was mainly about women and by women as the concerns of Feminist scholars were focused on the positions and situations of women and their near exclusion from previous scholarship. In the 1980s, scholars of women's studies attempted to articulate the construction of gender relations by studying the processes and structures through which "women and men's identities and relationships were defined." (Adeboye, 2019). But gender studies in Africa concentrated on the intellectual analysis of women as subjects than on men. In the words of Adeboye (2019), "behind women's and gender studies is a feminist agenda that entails the subversion of oppressive gender hierarchies and promoting the production of knowledge that would empower women in their struggle for social transformation." Adeboye notes that local and global roots elicited the rise of women's and gender studies in Africa. The local roots were engrained in the desire by feminist scholars to rescue African women's lives from academic oblivion. She went further to identify the global sources as adumbrated by Pereira (2004). Pereira stated that:

Intervening in international fora from the early 1980s onwards, leading African feminists became increasingly aware of the need to voice their distinct concerns and interests within the international women's movement.....[especially in response to] misrepresentations of Africa and African women's lives and realities that prevailed in the western media and among western feminists alike.

From Women's History to Gender History

While Historians of Women's History in Nigeria and women in other humanistic fields published these great works, Feminist Movements had shifted the emphasis from Women's History to gender history. This shift emphasised the theme of the subjugation of women and how they responded to subordination and inequality. This arose from the prolonged interdisciplinary conversations between historians, anthropologists, psychologists, and multidisciplinary discussions among historians, political theorists, psychologists, anthropologists, etc. Over the search for a single universal account of women's lived experiences of oppression, gender analysis is a social organisation's central axis (Downs, 2010). Scholars began to look at gender roles, gendered divisions of labour, reproductive labour, productive labour, effects of patriarchy on society, and the various constructions of the separate spheres ideology (the public and private spheres).

Since the 1980s, gender continued to evolve as scholars deployed it in conjunction with other social analysis categories to produce histories where gendered identities are not universal but understood as continually shifting elements in larger social organisations (Downs, 2010). One of those who partook in this revolutionary cutover was Mary E. Kolawole, a scholar at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. An accomplished scholar and a founder-member of the Network for Women's Studies, Prof. Kolawole published extensively locally and internationally. Her publications include "Womanism and African Gender Consciousness" (1997); "Women and Yoruba Culture"; "Multiple Inscription and the Location of Women in Chinua Achebe's Fiction"; "Re-conceptualising African Gender Theory: Womanism in Africa and the Arere Metaphor," and "Transcending Incongruities: Rethinking Feminisms and the Dynamics of Identity in Africa." In some of her works, Prof Kolawole has argued for "womanism" that is rooted in African values and not concerned with some of the sexuality questions that are central to Western feminist theorising.

The Rise of Feminist Scholarship

To widen the scope of Women's History, the views of feminists began to spread as writers, activists, and intellectuals became more pronounced in academia. Between 1970 and the beginning of the new millennium, studies on women and gender had increased. *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan (Friedan, 1974) incited a significant revolution in world history. Here, Friedan

addressed many issues that many people were either not aware of or afraid to discuss at this period. The work examined women's position in the world and how women could be liberated from subordinate positions. This book was written a few years before the International Women's Year. It created a strong awareness for women, especially American women, on the roles they had been playing and the issues they needed to bring to the table at the women's year. Though this book does not discuss women in Nigeria, specifically, it gave impetus to studies on women. It aided the understanding of women from a feminist perspective and prepared women in Nigeria for engagement in the United Nations (U.N.); Equality, Development, and Peace.

With the U.N.'s International Year of the Woman (1976 – 1985), discourses on women changed mainly from the writing of women into history to writing on issues that prevented women from navigating the theme of Equality, Development, and Peace, thus blurring the lines between history and other disciplines in the humanities (Yalley, 2021). This became a catalyst for developing Nigerian interests in this aspect of the study.

When Men Began to Matter in Women and Gender Studies

By the 1990s, male scholars had begun to matter in Women's History. For male scholars, the encounter with Women's Studies became a robust understanding of society. The focus of men's intervention in the field has involved analysing power structure in society. Ogbomo in his works on women, has granted much credence to scholarship on Women's History as a viable field. In his 1997 work entitled *When Men and Women Mattered*, Ogbomo (1997) undertook the history of gender in Owan society from oral tradition before the advent of colonial rule. He postulated a thesis of development from the perspective of an indigenous matriarchal society. For him, matriarchy is the genuine history of society. He took this thesis further in his 'Women, Power and Society in Pre-colonial Africa' (2005). In this work, he argued that contemporary gender relations in Africa were not a true reflection of Women's exercise of power in the past. This position significantly intersects with Mba's position in the first chapter of the Nigerian Women Mobilized. He had argued that women's marginalised status had given the impression that their male counterparts have always oppressed African women. He then revealed through unassailable evidence from pre-colonial Africa that women played significant roles in society's development. A particular approach that he adopted was by emphasising the power structure among the deities.

He demonstrated women's past successes by highlighting female rule, matrilineal, matrilocality, and a pantheon of goddesses.

As the interest in Women's History began to grow in the Nigerian academy, more men also began contributing to the burgeoning scholarship on women studies. Nnaemeka and Korieh (2011) in their publication entitled *Shaping Our Struggles: Nigerian Women in History, Culture and Social Change*, brought men and women together in an edited volume that provided a critical reconsideration of women's position in Nigerian History and culture. The work explored women's historical, developmental, and socio-cultural experiences together from diverse cultural backgrounds. Korieh's work recognised and indeed emphasised the unity of scholarship on women. The editors skillfully showed how one face relates to another and how both genders can connect and work together. For instance, in the work, Adiele Afigbo addressed 'Women in Nigerian History', while Biodun Adediran and Olukoya Ogen highlighted issues on 'Women, Ritual, and Politics of Pre-colonial Yorubaland. In an unusual organisational technique for the book, the editors in the thirteen chapters of the book made male and female historians address women issues that have helped define Women's History into the future. The book has come alive with great insight. Given the resource's richness, the book raised some fascinating questions about women's historical consciousness and agency forms. Many of the books produced by these authors should prove valuable for history classes on women and gender issues.

Implications of Women/Gender/Feminist Studies for the field of History in Nigeria

Developments in the departments of histories of Nigerian universities attests to two features of Nigerian women's historiography. First, there developed the sheer enthusiasm for a more thoughtful scholarship in women's studies. Secondly, there has developed a serious history in women studies at the B.A., M.A., and PhD levels that have helped expand women's frontiers and gender studies in Nigeria. Unknown to many, Nina Mba's works and Bolanle Awe's pronouncements on women studies had inaugurated one of the most sweeping reforms in women's study and research in the Nigerian academy. The programmes and courses developed by many of the history departments have equally moved between abstract discussions on women and gender studies to the fine-grained analysis of women and gender issues locally and globally. Nina Mba had in 1986 presented a paper at the Nigerian Historical Congress titled: "The Introduction of

Courses on African Women's History into History Departments of Nigerian Universities: A Proposal." In the words of Awe, "Two years after Nina Mba's paper, in 1988, that same congress agreed to set up a panel on Women's History and went on further to elect a woman to its executive body. That congress also saw the effective beginning of a network among historians working in the field of Women's History (Awe, 1991)."

Nina Mba's proposal that Women's History be taught in the Departments of History in Nigerian Universities did not begin until the beginning of the twenty-first century in most Nigerian Universities. While in some universities, particularly in Northern Nigeria, it has not been included in the history curriculum at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Bawa, 2021). The emergence of the idea of teaching Women's History at the University of Ibadan in the 2003/2004 academic session represented a breath of fresh air. A new course entitled 'HIS 704: Women in Development' was approved to complement other department courses. Although there were attempts to regard this as mere tokenism since it was recommended for teaching only at the Postgraduate level, it still represented a significant shift from earlier attempts to teach women's History as a footnote or appendage of other courses at the great Ibadan School of History. The course focuses on gender relations and the challenges of development, the demands on women as producers, and the significant gaps in state policy, which have prevented them from realising their full potential. It also focuses on women as principal actors in Africa's priority sector - agriculture. The course further examines existing cultural restrictions on women, which contribute to discrimination against them in education, employment, and to some extent, politics and decision-making. However, the teaching of the course did not take off until the 2009/2010 academic session. At about the same time when the Ibadan School of History added women's History to its curriculum, the Department of History at the University of Lagos also accommodated the introduction of women's history courses. In 2003, the Department added "Strategic Studies" to its name to reflect its courses' expansion. This led to the introduction of new courses, including Women's History, during the 2004/2005 academic session. These courses include HSS 316: Nigerian women in National Development at the undergraduate level and HSS 931: Gender and Power in the 20th Century at the postgraduate level. At the University of Calabar, there are myriads of courses on Women History and Gender Studies across the postgraduate programme levels. These courses include Women Movement in Nigeria PGD; Gender and Human Rights MA;

History of Gender Studies MA; Gender, Peace Building and Reconstruction MA; Gender and International Humanitarian Law Phd; Gender Relations in Europe and America PhD; Gender Peace and Security in International Relations PhD; and Gender Relations in Developing Countries PhD.

Several other younger universities have also initiated moves to teach Women's and Gender studies. At the Redeemer's University, Ede established in 2005, Women's History and gender studies are taught at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. At the undergraduate level, two courses are taught: HIS113 – Introduction to Gender Studies, HIS 215: Nigerian Women and National Development, and HIS 909: Gender and Development. Introduction to Gender Studies introduces students to the concept and theories of gender and development; Nigerian Women and National Development highlight women's role in the socio-political, economic, and cultural spheres of life in Nigeria since pre-colonial times are taught. In Gender and Development, gender is used as a central category of analysis to study gender hierarchies, stereotypes, and how development processes are gendered. Godfrey Okoye University Enugu also teaches Women's History. Though the university was established in 2009, the Faculty of Arts was not found until 2011. The Department of History, International Studies, and Diplomacy was not established until 2014 and Women's History was not introduced until 2019. It is taught as HID 419: Nigerian Women in History. This is a survey course where women's social, economic, and political roles in Nigerian History are examined. Special attention is paid to such leading Nigerian women as Queen Amina, Queen Idia of Benin, Omu Okwei of Ossomari, Chief Olufunmdayo Ransome Kuti. Other universities where Women and Gender History are taught include (but are not limited to) the Department of History and International Studies at the Kogi State University, Anyigba (HIS 412: Gender Studies). It has been introduced for more than ten years; and the Nigeria Army University, Biu (HIS 216: Introduction to Gender Studies, and HIS 317: Nigerian Women in Political Development).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a critical assessment of historical writings of and on women and gender in Nigeria since Nina Mba's publication. It looks specifically at how Women's History has metamorphosed into Gender history and the implications for History. The book has inevitably

offered much that is worthwhile in the trajectory for women's studies. For all times, Nina Mba's book is much more valuable for the way it deconstructed certain cultural assumptions about women and how she elevated the thinking about them in very significant ways. In this way, she has established sufficient connections to engage others in more detailed studies on women in the developing world. Since the release of the book, studies on women have increased and intensified considerably. Nina Mba's proposal for the inclusion of Women's History as taught courses in the Departments of History has also gone a long way in expanding the teaching of Women's History and, by extension, Gender Studies and History in both old and new departments of History across Nigeria.

Several articles and books were written after Mba's *Nigerian Women Mobilised*. Perhaps, Mba's seminal work occasioned the vast array of writings on Women's History. When the writing on and about women began in Nigeria, writers focused on women's activities in pre-colonial Nigeria, economic activities that involved women, women's political involvement in traditional societies, and women's responses to various aspects of colonial rule in Nigeria.

According to Oke (2001) in her compilation of works on women, *From Conference to Conference: A bibliography of Africa Women and Development, 1980 – 1995*., there were over three thousand scholarly works on women. Most of these works are focused on Nigeria. However, they are not all Women's History but work on women that analyses women's lives in Nigeria. These works were written mainly by historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists. The value and scope of available works on Women Studies/History and Gender Studies/ History have indeed been boosted through its multidisciplinary nature.

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