

Elements of Colonialism, Identity, Culture, Politics in the Novels of Chinua Achebe

Guddy Yumnam¹, Dr. M. Bidyarani², Dr. Sujeta Beishamayum³

¹Research Scholar, MIU

²Faculty, MIU

³Faculty, Ng. Mani College

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to show the efforts Chinua Achebe had done in restoring the old African identity. After colonialism, Africa lost their identity, myth, culture, folklore due to lack of writing language, tradable sea routes and pittance for human labor. The main objectives of this study are focus on Achebe's works on how he raises a strong voice for African literature and how he utilized colonizer language and education to regain his people's racial equality, superior culture, social structure and traditional value brought down cunningly by European. The study present various descriptive style of writing focusing on how Achebe's portrayed a clear imaginary picture of exploitation in the minds of reader. He had done a great work in shedding off inferiority complex from the minds of African. Thus, Achebe's and his works are great contributions in liberating African people from imperialism.

Keywords: Identity, Colonialism, African Literature, Exploitation, Imperialism.

ACHEBE AS A NOVELIST

Achebe is a Nigerian Post colonial novelist. He deals with anthropological, sociological and political concerns of postcolonial Africa. He also criticizes the idea of racism, struggle for the identity of Nigerian people. He is a great postcolonial writer. His works are also dealt with qualities of human nature. In his works he explores the impact of colonial exploitation on African society. He wrote in English language because language is one of the instrument colonizers used for colonizing the Nigerian people. Language plays a huge role in expressing folktales, myths, proverbs, history etc. Achebe attempted to use. His main purpose of his writing is to bring out colonial myth of the myth of the primitive African identity and culture. His main focus to make Western reader known that Africans has its own myth and to remove the feeling of inferiority from African 's mind.

The novel 'Things Fall Apart' is based on a story of a tragic hero of a rich cultured society of Igbotribes. Achebe focus on culture aspect before the arrival of white missionaries. He highlighted the consequences of white missionaries on that society norms. This novel came as a reaction against many novels that depicted Africa and Africans as a primitive, uncivilized and underdeveloped. He wrote to convey a fuller understanding about African culture, to give a voice to exploited natives and colonies. He thinks that the writer should do his best to achieve social justice, political freedom, even if this means acting as a severe critic who denounces any kind of problem ideologies. He creates the life of an Igbo village communities where White missionaries' officials were first penetrating Eastern Nigeria. The invasion of Great Britan to his space changed traditions and values to its people and had to adjust

normal lifestyle to fit the colonizers. As a part of British colonialism, many villagers and tribes fall apart, families started to break away as well.

Colonialism is one of the major themes of the novel introduced in this novel. When Okonkwo returns from exile to his village Christianity has already spread so far. The entire tribe is facing trouble due to new religion and civilization. He knew that missionaries started teaching the natives how to read and write. Several norms and tradition have been abolished calling them savage way. However, it happens that the Igbo people become furious over their cultural onslaught but not all of them. This transformation of the locals spread chaos and changes the indigenous culture but at the cost of destruction. This novel deals with battle between progressive social transformation and tradition. Most people including Okonkwo do not accept the new religious and social order brought by the British missionaries. Similarly, most of the villagers are caught in the struggle between social and religious changes and their tradition of the society pondering over the dilemma whether to accept the new reality or struggle to their old-fashioned way of lives. Colonialism has caused acute problem and exploitation of European countries to African valuable natural resource made its poor in content which is widely believed even by African themselves. He criticizes colonialism and negative influence exerted by Europe on African culture therefore to give voice to exploited natives and colonies. Major Purpose of his writing his novel is to write back to European who have long been misrepresenting African through their fabricated stories about African's long practiced traditions and culture. He raised voice for African, reflect their own social cultural values crumbled down. Identity is important aspect to Achebe contemporary African cultural life has been highly influenced by colonialism create a strong African identity, he was deeply affected by Political influences social, cultural norms of his time His novel depicts the life within a particular historical background, and conveys a sense of instabilities unrest within Nigerian society. Achebe do his best to achieve social justice and political freedom.

Language is a very powerful tool in building of perspectives. Writer insists on writing certain words and phrases in Igbo because certain nuances could be lost in translation. Another theme explore is role of religion and its influence. Religion has its way of shaping how people in a given community perceive several concepts, from death to criminality to essence of life itself. He inserts Igbo words in English it seems he accepted the imperialism of language. First part of novel shows the social fabric of the Igbo people. It also discloses how it starts disintegration and family into a new social set up. Whole social fabric falls apart as the tribes accept a new way of life. The invasion by the foreign language and foreign culture have eroded the very values of Igbo people. These reasons drove Okonkwo to kill the messenger and commit suicide.

Sense of justice and dispensation of justice gives stability to society as shown by Things Fall Apart. Igbo people have different tradition for dispensing justice to the people. When arrival of English has destabilized this system, the Igbo system seems old and barbaric in comparison to it. Their tradition falls apart due to the fast institutionalized religion and governance of white people. Therefore, it provides a sense of justice that prevails in the end in which Okonkwo commit suicide.

No Longer at Ease is a novel by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. It is a story of an Igbo man, Obi Okonkwo who leaves his village for a British education and a job in the Nigerian colonial civil service but struggle to adapt a western lifestyle and end up taking a bribe. In this novel Achebe, portray that with arrival of white man there is a loss of indigenous values communal harmony, placing society above.

Tempted by western education well paid employment, the Nigerian nation does not hesitate to bend

down to the levels of corruption and dangerous nonjudgmental attitude. Achebe focus mere major themes is corruption. It's a story of honest man trying to survive in a dishonest Nigeria later led him to corruption. In this novel he focusses on government corruption and religious superstition, reject the tradition Ibo religion of his village. Obi's identity is shaped by two dual forces, western culture and values and Igbo culture and values. According to this novel 'No Longer at Ease' 'Corruption is an integral part of Nigerian culture in order to get a job or scholarship bribery seems to be necessary step. Achebe enlighten the readers with the struggle facing many developing African countries and village. Obi finds himself in identity crisis between his traditional heritage and modern European society. Achebe teach sharp contrast separating African and European.

Return from western education, Obi stands strong against receive cash and sexual bribes. Achebe uses the downfall of Obi as an opportunity to justify the corrupt. Thus, main theme of Things Fall Apart is Corruption.

CONCLUSION

Achebe raises a strong voice for African literature. Through his writing, he brings identities to African people and tries to shed off the idea of inferiority complex from natives African. He always been trying to create a New Africa, which is closer to reality. He had a strong political commitment. He believed that African writers could be alienated beings from their own society. The period of subjection to alien races has brought disaster upon African psyche. People of African stills suffer from the traumatic effects of colonial subjugation. He involves in projecting identity of his culture and society, he attempts to restore the old identity. He has chosen the idea of subversion rather than rejection. He recreates a culture of past which levied in a world of oral sounds and traditions, festivals, rituals, and all. He focuses on establishing the truthfulness of the revisit to history and the study investigates the untold introspection in the roots of modern milieu Nigeria such as religious conflicts and competition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Azad Jahid Md (2022), "The Colonized Fall Apart": A Post Colonial Analysis of Achebe 's Things Fall Apart. Volume 4, 116-122.
2. Alam. Mahbulbul Md (2014), " Reading China Achebe Things Fall Apart from the Post Colonial Perspective", Research on Humanities and Social Science. Volume 4, 165.
3. Cranesan V and Sivasanker K, (12 Dec). Chinua Achebe, " An Exemplar in the Post colonial Colonial Epoch" Volume 41, International Science and Research.
4. Hadija Mohammed Umar, (2022), Elements of Post Colonial Literature Studies in China Achebe's "Things Fall Apart". Volume 10 .5
5. Said, Edward (2001) W. "Orientalism ", London: Penguin Books.
6. Sengupta, S (2018), " Things Falls Apart Chinua Achebe critical studies", Penguin book publication.