

**REDEFINING BLACK VIOLENCE: A STUDY OF
SELECT NIGERIAN FICTION**

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by

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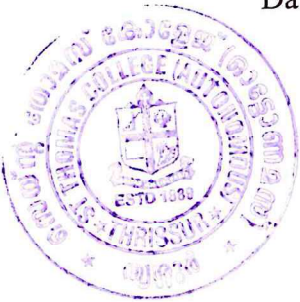
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in the thesis entitled “**Redefining Black Violence: A Study of Select Nigerian Fiction**” is based on the original work done by me under the guidance of Dr Sanil Raj J, Professor & Research Guide, Research Centre and PG Department of English, St. Thomas College (Autonomous), Thrissur, and has not been included in any other thesis submitted previously for the award of any degree. The contents of the thesis have undergone plagiarism check using software at C.H.M.K. library, University of Calicut and the similarity index was found within the permissible limit. I also declare that the thesis is free from AI-generated content.



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Sandhya George

Abstract

The study is based on the Nigerian narratives comprising *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe, *Efuru* (1966) by Flora Nwapa, *Bride Price* (1975) and *Joys of Motherhood* (1980) by Buchi Emecheta, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* (2018) by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani. The texts chosen for the study have been analysed in the light of the theoretical framework of violence by Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon and Cathy Caruth. The introductory chapter gives crucial insights into the dynamics of Nigerian violence and a background study on the theoretical aspects of violence. The first chapter is analytical and it enunciates the cloistered and controlled spaces creating identity crises in the lives of the characters in the text *Purple Hibiscus* in the light of the Foucauldian idea of power and Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Chapter two analyses the seminal text by Chinua Achebe in the light of the theoretical insights of Frantz Fanon. This chapter also examines the complexities and internal conflicts of the characters in the purview of frustration aggression theory proposed by Dollard. The third chapter is analytical and the first half of the chapter engages with the war of Biafra and a close reading of the text *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, under the purview of the trauma theory proposed by Cathy Caruth. The second half of the chapter analyses the human rights violations addressed in the text *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, in the light of Differential Association Theory by Edwin Sutherland. Chapter four examines the process of transition of the women characters in the selected texts by applying the intersectionality theory proposed by Kimberle Crenshaw. Chapter five focuses on the ways by which the women characters experience, survive and navigate the continued spheres of gender based violence in Nigeria.

Keywords: Survival, Trauma theory, Human Rights Violations, Intersectionality, Identity

പ്രബന്ധ സംഗ്രഹം

ചിമ്പ അച്ചെബെയുടെ തിങ്ങ്സ് ഫാൾ അപ്പാർട്ട് (1958), ഫ്ലോറ ന്യാപയുടെ എഫുരു (1966), ബുച്ചി എംചെറ്റ്റ്നെ ബ്രെഡ് പ്രെസ് (1975), ജോയ്സ് ഓഫ് മദർഹൂഡ് (1980), ചിമമാമൻറ എൻഗോസി അഡിച്ചിയുടെ പർപ്പിൾ ഹൈബിസ്കസ് (2003), ഹാഫ് ഓഫ് എ യെല്ലോ സൺ (2006), അഡോബി ട്രീഷ്യ ന്യാബാനിയുടെ ബരീഡ് ബെനീത് ദി ബാവോബാബ് ട്രീ (2018) എന്നിവ ഉൾപ്പെടുന്ന നൈജീരിയൻ ആഖ്യാനങ്ങളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയാണ് പഠനം. മൈക്കൽ ഫുക്കോ , ഫ്രാൻസ് ഫാനോൺ, കാത്തി കാരൂത് എന്നിവരുടെ സിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങളുടെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത പഠനങ്ങൾ വിശകലനം ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. നൈജീരിയൻ മനുഷ്യാവകാശ ലംഘനങ്ങളുടെ നിർണായക ഉൾക്കാഴ്ചകളും സൈദ്ധാന്തിക വശങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പശ്ചാത്തല പഠനവും ആമുഖ അധ്യായം നൽകുന്നു.

ഒന്നാം അധ്യായം വിശകലനപരമാണ്, കൂടാതെ ഫുക്കോൾഡിയൻ ആശയത്തിന്റേയും ജെറമി ബെന്താമിന്റെ പനോപ്റ്റിക്കണിന്റേയും വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ പർപ്പിൾ ഹൈബിസ്കസിലെ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളുടെ ജീവിതത്തെ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഐഡൻറിറ്റി പ്രതിസന്ധികൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുന്ന വിവിധ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളെ ഇവിടെ വിശദീകരിക്കുന്നു. ഫ്രാൻസ് ഫാനന്റെ സൈദ്ധാന്തിക ഉൾക്കാഴ്ചകളുടെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ ചിമ്പ അച്ചെബെയുടെ സെമിനൽ ടെക്സ്റ്റിനെ രണ്ടാം അധ്യായം വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഡോളാർഡ് മുന്നോട്ടുവച്ച സിദ്ധാന്തത്തിന്റെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളുടെ സങ്കീർണ്ണതകളും ആന്തരിക സംഘർഷങ്ങളും ഈ അധ്യായം പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു.

മൂന്നാം അധ്യായം വിശകലനപരമാണ്, അധ്യായത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യ പകുതി ബിയാഫ്രയുടെ യുദ്ധവും കാത്തി കാരൂത്ത് മുന്നോട്ടുവച്ച ട്രോമ സിദ്ധാന്തത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. ചിമമാമൻറ എൻഗോസി അഡിച്ചിയുടെ ഹാഫ് ഓഫ് എ യെല്ലോ സൺന്റെ സൂക്ഷ്മ അവലോകനം നടത്തുന്നു . എഡ്വിൻ സതർലാൻഡ് മുന്നോട്ടുവച്ച

സിദ്ധാന്തത്തിന്റെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ അഡോബി ട്രീഷ്യൂ നവബാനിയുടെ ബരീഡ് ബിനീത് ദി ബാവോബാബ് ട്രീയിൽ മനുഷ്യർ അഭിസംബോധന ചെയ്ത മനുഷ്യാവകാശ ലഘുനങ്ങളെ, അധ്യായത്തിന്റെ രണ്ടാം പകുതി വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. കിംബർലെ ക്രെൻഷാ മുന്നോട്ടുവച്ച ഇന്റർസെക്ഷണാലിറ്റി സിദ്ധാന്തം പ്രയോഗിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളിലെ സ്ത്രീ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളുടെ പരിവർത്തന പ്രക്രിയയെ നാലാം അധ്യായം പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു. നൈജീരിയയിലെ ലിംഗാധിഷ്ഠിത അക്രമത്തിന്റെ തുടർച്ചയായ മേഖലകളിൽ സ്ത്രീ അനുഭവിക്കുന്നതും അതിജീവിക്കുന്നതും സഞ്ചരിക്കുന്നതുമായ രീതികളാണ് അഞ്ചാം അധ്യായം അവലോകനം ചെയ്യുന്നത് .

സൂചികകൾ: അതിജീവനം, ട്രൗമ സിദ്ധാന്തം, മനുഷ്യാവകാശ ലഘുനം, ഇന്റർസെക്ഷണാലിറ്റി, ഐഡന്റിറ്റി

A Note on Documentation

I, hereby, would like to acknowledge that the documentation in the thesis is prepared in accordance with the style format suggested by *MLA Handbook* (9th Edition).

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Introduction

Violence can be defined as emotional, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse experienced by a human being in his/her lifetime. Individuals have experienced various forms of hostilities and oppression in Nigeria, and it has predominant significance in the lives of Africans from time immemorial. While singular causes cannot fully describe violent behaviour, various factors often contribute to its manifestation. Violence studies identify the phenomenon of aggression on the micro and macro scale, tracing the historical trajectory of violence in Nigeria from the colonial era to the recent times. World Health Organization defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. The term "Violence" is from the Latin word 'Violentia,' which means force, as it implies excessive force and constraint. The intricate challenges of violence in African society are, therefore, broad, including physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, collective, and epistemic manifestations of violence.

Nigerians have endured tyranny by the colonial powers beginning from the period of colonial encounter, and there is inherent aggression towards the colonizer in the psyche of the native Africans. The colonizers played a pivotal role in the subjugation of the native African people, and they left an enduring imprint on the continent. As an extensive study of colonial aggression discusses the necessity for further reflection on this area, the discipline embarks on heterogeneous facets of the representation of violence. Specifically, in relation to the perspective of subjugation, the thesis elucidates the historical overview of colonial hegemony and the roots of instability. This thesis becomes an attempt to explore the intersection of gender,

identity, and violence experienced by the characters in the selected texts. It also attempts to examine how various forms of violence impact the identity formation and identity crisis of the characters. This thesis becomes an integrated approach to explore the overlapping of various forms of violence experienced by marginalized groups in the communities.

The global landscape is fraught with conflicts, with Africa emerging as the primary target of terrorism. Ongoing Wars in Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan, the tension between Ukraine and Russia, along with the Taliban taking over power in Afghanistan, the recent geopolitical shifts such as Azerbaijan taking control of Nagorno Karabakh, wars in Libya, Yemen, and Syria highlight the pervasive nature of violence all around the world. Conflicts across the globe range from Israel to Sudan and Myanmar to Columbia, while the aggression of Israel on Gaza and unabashed combat in Ukraine have contributed to further tensions. 2024 has already been declared the year of war in the framework of the Gaza crisis, as the simmering unrest could worsen the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The economic disputes in Sri Lanka have led to grave medical, food, and fuel shortages. In contrast, the civil protests erupted in Lebanon as their leaders did not address the day-to-day necessities of the country's population. In addition to Civil wars, global tensions, state collapse, and external interventions often continue to rage on multiple continents; agitations in Gaza, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Haiti, and Armenia highlight this ongoing conflict. War is an expression of human violence and often turns out to be the result of human choices and decision-making.

Nigeria is a dominant force in Sub-Saharan Africa and is often regarded as the African powerhouse by policymakers. Comprising 36 states, it is a federal republic with a bicameral legislature (109-member Senate and 360-member House of

Representatives). The country gained independence in October 1960 with an estimated population of 130 million. Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation, and the unstable government and human rights violations have made the country a hub for human trafficking and International Crimes. The central traditional states in Nigeria comprise the Igbo states of eastern Nigeria, the Hausa city-states of northern Nigeria, and the Benin kingdoms of western Nigeria. The southern border of Nigeria faces the equatorial Gulf of Guinea, which extends to the Sahel region in the north. Nigeria had its system of religion and government, with tribal kingdoms that would later become British colonies. The arrival of Europeans leads to significant trade in spices and natural resources and, tragically, to the inhuman slave trade. Enslaved Africans were forcibly removed from their homes and shipped across the Atlantic, treated as mere commodities to be sold in the market. It is estimated that the number of Africans enslaved ranged from nine million to twenty-two million, and many of these were war captives from centralized states, often sold into slavery by the members of royalty using their positions of power.

Slavery has become an institutionalized practice, and it resulted in one of history's most significant migrations. The transatlantic slave trade produced a culture of doubt and oppression, with men outnumbering women; it is believed that the continent lost half of its population due to this horrific trade. The Caribbean and the eastern coast of Latin America had received a substantial number of enslaved Africans, who were transported through an extensive trade network. Klein says,

People always entered into slavery by an act of violence which stripped them of their social identity in their kinship system, to be integrated into an alien kinship system. Precisely, the danger that an enslaved person might escape in

the area where they had social linkage was an important reason why enslaved people were transported and traded across societies. (601)

People in the African societies had exercised indigenous slavery, and campaigns against enslavement emerged under the authority of evangelical Christian activism. With over eighty thousand people transported throughout that period, the Mozambique island in Portuguese remained the crucial trade spot. Christianity and Islam were prevalent, and Christianity was dominant in the south, while Islam was prevalent in the north. Chancellor William states,

It was, therefore, in the societies without chiefs or kings where African democracy was born, and the concept that the people are sovereign was as natural as breathing. Moreover, this is why, in traditional Africa, the rights of the individual never came before the rights of the community. These self-governing people do not have a utopian society in any idealistic sense. Theirs was a practical society in every way. Their laws were natural. Order and justice prevailed because the society could not otherwise survive. Theirs was, in fact, a government by the people, and it was, in fact, a government for the people. That this kind of government did pass from the earth is another fact we now call modern progress. (115)

Colonialism left a sense of confusion and displacement among the natives as it questioned their fundamental sense of belonging. Nigeria, a British colony in 1861, was prone to the British political structures. Precolonial Africa was noted for its traditional community structure, especially the clans. By the early 1900s, Africa was divided into distinct territories under the European administration.

Clans were the basic units, and the power and court systems were hierarchical in organization and structure. The clans had their customs followed in the Nigerian land, and harvest ceremonies, initiation ceremonies, and marriage ceremonies became a part of it. Even though they celebrated their customs and rituals on the one side, violence was even rooted in spirituality and religious practices in Nigeria. There were periodic conflicts between religions, and ritualistic killings were prevalent in Africa. The influence of European colonial powers subjected Nigerians to vicious cycles of violence, regardless of gender. The colonial administration ultimately stripped the territories' autonomy, though they had often met with native resistance. When hostility and warfare become the predominant reason for exploitation in Africa, there is no liberation from aggression for the commoner. There was always a culture of dissent among the native Africans, and simultaneously, the colonial authorities had a propaganda-driven approach. Their colonial propaganda portrayed itself with a civilizing mission, covering the colonial and post-colonial phases, and colonialism has been carried to the socio-political context of Africa. The Colonial Powers often possessed two-thirds of Africa. It is a case of staggering irony that when guns and machines regulate the social hierarchy, the rhythm of the native society is lost. The colonial expansion gained emphasis from thinkers and scholars, and the prominent theoretician in this regard was Frantz Fanon. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon quotes, "The thing colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees himself" (Fanon 37). Decolonization is a significant phenomenon; thorough scrutiny is indispensable to understanding its impact on Africa. The settlers' exploitation of the natives became evident, and during decolonization, colonies gained autonomy from the established colonial powers.

Regional tensions escalated in Nigeria that, culminated in violence during the 1964 elections, and the ethnic tensions finally led to civil war. Violence has a political purpose: to dominate, to resist domination and oppression, to create conditions for negotiation, and to target people and the symbols of power. If one party- the colonialists- saw violence to achieve, conquer, and ensure domination as “legitimate,” the other party- Nigerian groups- saw it as one aspect of resistance. Thus, to both sides, “the use of violence was legitimate, and each side parted the other as aggressive” (Fayola, 10). The Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70 remains an episodic event in the history of Nigeria as the armed combat unfolded between the secessionist state of Biafra and the government of Nigeria, resulting in tragic deaths. The Massacre of thousands of Igbo soldiers and the eruption of violence contributed to a strong Igbo secessionist movement. Countless children, pregnant women, and mothers had been through starvation as there was widespread famine in Biafra, food shortage and recurrent regional issues had enhanced, and the war became a black-on-black genocide.

In 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Emeka Ojukwu declared independence from the region, adopting its name, "The Republic of Biafra." By January 1970, crushing the Biafran revolt, Nigerian forces declared victory, and in that civil conflict, millions of Nigerians died. Nigeria experienced significant bloodshed during the civil war, and afterward, General Yakubu Gowon occupied power, setting the nation on a progressive path. The concentration of oil wealth and power can be a probable reason for the 1967 Civil War. On 29 July 1975, Brigadier Murtala Ramat Muhammed gained power as the new military head of state. The 1950s to 1975 was the epoch of colonialism in Africa, while the post-colonial phases of Nigeria had episodes of repression, political corruption, and pervasive injustice. It highlights the establishment

of military rule during the phase of the first republic (1960-66), whereas civilian rule came back in the second republic period.

The tenure of Nigeria's new regime under General Murtala Mohammed, while impactful, proved tragically transient. The assassination of Ironsi and the subsequent ascension of Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon transpired within this context.

General Murtala Muhammed's rule continued until his assassination in 1976. After that, General Olusegun Obasanjo occupied power, ultimately transforming the nation from military rule to a democratically elected government. The second republic choose Shehu Shagari as Nigeria's first democratically elected president (1979 -1983).

There was an intense economic crisis during the ruling period of Shagari as the oil prices were falling. The National Party of Nigeria dominated politics during the Second Republic. Shagari turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance, and Military rule returned from 1983-1998. Military rulers imprisoned political agitators and journalists, and Muhammadu Buhari came into rule in 1983, and his regime concentrated severely on anticorruption campaigns. The military came up with General Ibrahim Babangida during the 1985 period. He had plans for economic recovery and the privatization of public corporations, and they sought the assistance of the IMF. He insisted on forming the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention. They controlled the press and made Nigeria a member of the Islamic conference organization, and he formed the interim national government. Later, Sani Abacha was also included in the Babangida regime and took power through Nigeria's sixth coup d'etat. It was the worst rule ever in Nigerian history, making it an oppressive state, and its external debt was above \$100 million. Sani Abacha did a biased trial and sentenced Ken Saro-Wiwa to death, and he

oppressed human rights but launched the National Human Rights Commission to protect the country's reputation.

Abdulsalami Abubakar followed the period of Sani Abacha, and he established the National Electoral Commission, which became a remarkable aspect of restoring democracy in the Nigerian land. Abubakar handed over the authority to Olusegun Obasanjo, and it was during the ruling phase of Abubakar, the country returned to civilian rule after the military despondency. Obasanjo initiated anti-corruption practices, and his rule also helped bring democracy back from the clutches of military rule. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua became the president of Nigeria after Obasanjo, and he launched the Seven Point Agenda to resolve national issues in the long run. The presidency of Goodluck Jonathan followed him as the fuel subsidy corruption scandal came out in 2012, and the corruption scandal during Goodluck Jonathan's administration came out in 2015. It was evident that 2.2 million dollars were mismanaged during Jonathan's regime. After the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammad Buhari ruled for two continuous terms as the president of Nigeria. The challenges faced by Buhari's regime were numerous, including the Boko haram insurgencies and the covid pandemic outbreak, and he left the office, transferring the power over to Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the current president of Nigeria. The Nigerian state is the custodian of security, and the deteriorating education standards, erratic political atmosphere, economic recession, corruption, poor wages, and living contexts have signalled the failing state.

Democratic spaces began to shrink, and over the decades, the millennium development goals stayed in vain hopes. The absence of genuine democracy has broadened the gap between the rich and the poor as monarchism, military dictatorship, and party government led to more virulent violence in the system. The governments

only spoke the language of pure force, and they turned out to be the perpetrators of violence. The insurgent groups in Nigeria include the Niger Delta People's volunteer force, the movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta, the movement for the actualization of the sovereign state of Africa, and the Niger Delta revolutionary crusaders.

Biafran war of the 1960s, the oil wars of the niger delta region, the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the Sudanese civil war, and ethnic tensions in Kenya all point to the certainty of aggression in the country. Boko haram insurgency has surfaced in the Northeast, and Abubakar Shekau was the leading figure behind the insurgency as the insurgencies in Shekau's reign have uprooted more than two million people. There were various conflicts with gunfire incursions primarily revolving around the Nigerian hemisphere, and various secessionist groups organized the protestors for the conflicts. Fulani herdsman Nigerian conflict was the tussle between farming communities and Fulani nomadic herders and the Niger Delta conflict was the dispute over the control of oil resources, and the insurgency was under the banner Movement for the Emancipation of the niger delta, and operation crocodile smile was launched by the Nigerian army. The conflicts in Sudan, Congo, and Somalia, the criminal attack, and the rape of the victims exhibit the patterned violence existing in the country. There was an upsurge of aggressive crimes in Nigeria, and it comprises trans-border crimes, scattered violence, violence between political parties, electoral struggles, witchcraft violence, abduction, rape, robbery, and terrorism.

Disagreements by the political elites, manipulation by the officials of the state and corresponding leaders, combats, and disputes in the name of land are recurrently perceived in the land. They initiate the internal reformation of the states, eventually ending up in incessant battles and persistent conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, and Nigeria,

which are indicators of the humanitarian crisis that Africa is a part of. Nwobu writes about Achebe's judgment on Nigeria,

Achebe's testament of lousy leadership by successive Nigerian leaders remains timeless, and looking around Nigeria, I see nothing but colossal failure. From local government councilors to the presidency, the only business of government is the monumental looting of the nation's coffers. At the same time, the huddled masses dive into abject poverty and destitution. Nigeria is a nation for sale, hijacked since independence by thieves, bigots, mass murderers, war criminals, unpatriotic opportunists, election riggers, and other such vermin who have run the nation through unnecessary civil war, corruption, and total despoliation. (Nwobu 242)

In the systems of governance and the routine lives of an average Nigerian, corruption becomes customary among greedy public officials and becomes the driving force of violence. Corruption is the abuse of power in the hands of the authorities for individual and political gain, and it pierces the vulnerable side of the state and social relations. "Samuel Huntington set a benchmark in this area in his article Political Development, where he reviews the functions of corruption in the delayed political order" (23). Corruption in Nigeria constitutes an impediment to effective governance, and it has become a full-blown cancer that consumes the state.

There is also a bureaucratic form of bribery, which helps in nepotism in appointment, promotion, and rewards in public sectors. Corruption diminishes the government's credibility and public services, and strengthening anticorruption legislation in the mainstream of governance is vital. Corruption includes the mismanagement of public funds through fraudulent procurement of contracts and

tenders, election rigging, and disbursement of non-existent funds. Various acts of corruption are prevalent across countries and can be categorized into upper- and lower-level corruption. Ministers, legislatures, and high-ranking officials constitute the upper level, while the lower-level corruption is typically attributed to civil servants. When civil servants accept bribes in exchange for the services, it becomes a bureaucratic form of corruption.

Politics in Nigeria turned out to be a means to expand assets, and the misappropriation of state resources has hindered the country's economic growth and development. Ill-equipped hospitals, deteriorated roads, and an inadequate power supply remained over time, and politicians and officials engaged in corrupt practices and looted state coffers. Yagboyaju says, "Ethnic and personal misuse of office for accumulation of wealth, unauthorized sale of government property, illegal hoarding of essential and critical commodities, favoritism, nepotism, purchase of loyalty by an illegitimate or outrightly illegal regime through inducement for supporters and victimization of opponents and critics, election rigging, falsification of election results and examination of malpractices are among others" (3). Transparency is necessary for any form of government, and efficient governance must enable the state to function well in the service of the public good. Corruption, ethnic hostility, and intolerance have engulfed the country's social fabric, which is made complex by a set of behavioural and social factors.

Violence can be operated in personal, institutional, fictional, or nonfictional aspects, particularly in the scope of literature and biological reasons, neurological factors, situational factors, and social environment have links between violent behaviour and the mental state of an individual. There is an intricate relationship between violence and the mental health of an individual since violence can make the

human body fragile, and the victims of aggression experience physical and psychological trauma. According to the First World Report on violence and Health from the World Health Organization,

Violence has probably always been part of the human experience. Its impact can be seen in various forms in all parts of the world. Each year, more than a million people lose their lives, and many suffer non-fatal injuries as a result of self-inflicted, interpersonal, or collective violence. Overall, violence is among the leading causes of death worldwide for people aged 1-44 years. The human cost of grief and pain, of course, cannot be calculated. Much of it is almost invisible. While satellite technology has made certain types of violence – terrorism, wars, riots, and civil unrest- visible to television audiences daily, much more violence occurs out of sight in homes, workplaces, and even in the medical and social institutions set up to care for people. Many of the victims are too young, weak, or ill to protect themselves. As with its impacts, some causes of violence are easy to see. Others are deeply rooted in human life's social, cultural, and economic fabric. Recent research suggests that while biological and individual factors explain some of the predisposition to aggression, more often these factors interact with family, community, cultural and other external factors to create a situation where violence is likely to occur. (World Health Organization 3)

The trauma experienced by an individual becomes disturbing as it can further lead to long-term psychological distress like PTSD, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies. It shatters the well-being of the mind and the body and thereby creates a lack of sense of security for the respective individual. The perception of disconnect inflicts serious

harm on the mental health of the individual while addressing the circumstances of violence.

Perpetrator aggression stimulates trauma, and this aggression tends towards amplification rather than diminution. The research raises direct and indirect references to the experiences and episodes of violence. Aggression can be recognized as a form of manipulation to regulate a particular scenario, and the circumstances can vary with time and space. Aggression causes psychological harm to another individual, as hostile behaviours of aggression typically involve the expression of anger. Aggression and anger affect the lives of millions of Nigerians, and it has repercussions on their health and mental stability as well. When people are raised observing aggression as a routine phenomenon, it becomes a learned and fitting way of behaviour.

When power and control become the underpinnings of aggression, the act of violence restricts the fundamental human rights of the affected people. Assassinations, police torture, brutality, and political executions become part of human rights violations, and an all-inclusive assessment of the violence throughout the various phases becomes necessary to evaluate the risks and criminal offenses in society. This incorporates antisocial behaviours, verbal abuse, and criminal offenses comprising bribery, corruption, terrorism, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Nordstrom says in *Contemporary Studies of Violence and Culture* that,

Violence is also an intricately layered phenomenon. Each participant, each witness to violence, brings his or her perspective. These testimonies can vary dramatically. The political reality is power brokers' doctrines, deeds, and behind-the-scenes machinations. There is the military reality: the strategies, tactics, and loyalties of commanders, the camaraderie, actions, and briefings of

soldiers. The intellectual reality is forged in the coffee shops, the halls of academia, and the journalists' world of gossip and frontline vignettes. There is also the psychological reality: the fear, the anxiety, and the regression and repression among refugees and prisoners of war. And then there is the reality of life on the front lines: the stories and actions of people as disparate as perpetrators and casualties, advisers and arms merchants, mercenaries and doctors, criminals and relief workers. (3)

Torture manifests in various forms, and it is not limited to a single method; it takes transitions from time to time and eventually becomes an instrument in the hands of the perpetrator. Violence in Africa requires thorough examination as it plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and well-being of future generations. The contemporary world is noted for its progress in technology and technical prowess, but unfortunately, along with the technological development, there is the vast expansion of destructive weapons and armaments.

The expansion of science and technology could not put an end to war and violence, and Africa took the predominant position in the number of armed confrontations. Even with technological progress, the intensity of violence has aggravated to a considerable extent, and there is a constant surveillance mechanism in the contemporary world. Although technologies act as an apparatus for repression and rigorous surveillance created and used by humans, technological progress is utilized as an observation instrument. Military forces, nuclear and chemical weapons, explosives, aircraft, battleships, and missiles become the methods to deal with the conflict. Violence turns out to be the core aspect of the police, army, and prison system, and these mechanisms of power scrutinize the most abominable acts of brutality and intimidation faced by the victims. These agencies of power act as a

direct contributor to hate, anger, and aggression, and the body of the victim becomes an involuntary recipient who witnesses the violence inside the power structures.

The response of some Nigerian states to escalating violence has, since around the early 2020s, been to establish anti-crime groups, such as Operation Amotekun, a network of security outfits deployed in the country's Southwest region. Data from Nigerian Watch, an organization that has monitored violence in Nigeria since 2006, points to an acceleration and geographic diffusion of instability. From 2012 to 2015, the surge in deaths was driven by escalating Boko Haram violence concentrated in the North East. Nigerian watch recorded almost double the deaths in six years that followed the peak of the Boko Haram crisis between 2013 and 2015 than during the six-year period that preceded it. 54, 438 deaths between 2016 and 2021 compared to 25,025 deaths between 2006 and 2012. (Bish 8)

The exposure to violence within the surveillance spaces like police stations and prison systems varies from each other. The physical abuse and injuries affect the victims, and the psychological repercussions it brings about address the mental health issues endured by them in the near future. The ineptitude to resist the trauma stemming from the institutional mechanisms can even contribute to anxiety issues and suicidal tendencies in the victim.

The suffering experienced by the victim creates a snowball effect, and lack of social assistance is identified as the subsidiary risk factor that intensifies the layers of emotional angst in the victims. The intrusive memories and flashbacks of the victim can connect the instances of brutality, as it aligns with the past occurrences of aggression experienced by them. Memories of brutality and aggressive experiences

endured by them become a pivotal factor of trauma in the victim. Even if the victim frequently contemplates prevailing in a violence-free locale compared to that of his forefathers, the circumstances of institutional surveillance prevail around various aspects of his/her life. Apart from institutional violence, collective violence becomes a predominant factor, and the escalation of armed combats, terrorist acts, and hate crimes becomes the focal point of collective violence. It also includes planned violent behaviour, including lynching, riots, pogroms, genocide, and wars. Aggressive behaviours are exhibited by individuals in the name of groups and organizations that support violence and torture, and individual participants within the groups are reinforced by the leaders of the group to propagate aggressive behaviours.

Individuals distinguish themselves as members of a specific group and acquire their preferred objectives employing these violent natures. Brutal behaviours carried out by the group members could lead to gruesome suffering of the victim. For instance, groups similar to Boko Haram and Al-Shabab constantly recruit new members to their group and spread their propaganda extensively. The rising concern over this phenomenon is that the perpetrators do not identify the consequences of their actions when they are integrated into such significant groups, and individuals who do not have social attachments also become prone to associate with these groups. Their sense of aggression shifts into restlessness, and they harass and punish other individuals. The threat established by the individuals in the group can be perceived in various forms across space and time.

Collective violence, often the outcome of long-standing intergroup instability and social fragmentation, can inflict substantial harm on individuals. Serious acts of violence involve punching, hitting, and stabbing, and all acts of violence and aggressive behaviours utilize adequate physical force, further resulting in injury and

trauma. Aggression can be further subdivided into verbal and emotional components, and verbal aggression includes screaming, name-calling, and intimidation. In contrast, emotional aggression could lead to mental health conditions like PTSD and brain injuries, as they tend to be linked with brain chemicals. Although men and women could be the victims and perpetrators of aggression, individuals could come across multiple forms of violence in their routine lives, and various forms of violence can be split into sexual violence, structural violence, collective violence, political violence, autotelic violence, group violence, institutional violence, and expressive violence.

Violence constitutes anything that violates the integrity of an individual, and regardless of the sex of the victim, men are more likely to be the perpetrators of the aggression. For instance, exposing workers to hazardous working conditions is a form of violence, while emotionally draining an individual is an alternative form of violence. Sexual violence becomes the attempt to obtain a sexual action through aggression despite the relationship with the victim. In contrast, collective violence is the instrumental use of violence by a group of people to gain various objectives. The acts of terrorism in Nigeria serve as examples of collective violence as they necessitate the mobilization of resources to instil fear in the societies and intimidate the ruling governments.

Johan Galtung coined structural violence in his 1969 article “Violence, peace, and peace research,” which enunciates the roots of modern inequality as institutions and modern structures prevent individuals from accomplishing their goals. It has a profound influence on the personality of an individual, and it is a form of violence where vulnerable groups are exploited and institutions harm people. “There were two orientations to the use and characterization of violence: visible violence, as in the case of attacks, wars, and injuries, and invisible violence, as in the use of violence as a

metaphor” (for instance, nationalists saw their anti-colonial efforts as a form of asymmetric warfare, or what they call battles) (Fayola, 10). Indirect violence is committed on behalf of the state, and they become the victims of government-sponsored violence. In instrumental violence, the perpetrator aims to obtain something from the victim rather than inflict harm, and the goal of instrumental violence is to acquire a specified objective. In contrast, in expressive violence, the perpetrator exploits the victim spontaneously driven by emotions.

Racist violence is accentuated through racial prejudice, and it involves acts of intimidation and abuse. It carries racial domination by the practice of perpetually subjecting the inferior throughout the ages. Perpetrators involved in autotelic forms of violence identify it as gratifying, and they gain satisfaction and pleasure with their episodes of victimization. Occurrences like gang violence serve as examples of autotelic violence. Unprovoked and ruthless violence without a particular motive or agenda is another version of autotelic violence. Gender-based violence becomes the exploitation of women that culminates in physical, sexual, and psychological harm to the victim. Aggression endured by women exemplifies the cathartic experiences of suffering assimilating into their experiences and personal lives. Traumatic experiences of women do have a pattern, and the suffering of the victim is an indicator of the self-affirmation of the perpetrator.

Hostile aggression involves the infliction of pain, physical discomfort, and bodily harm upon the victim. Such means of aggression typically manifests as a forceful, often assaultive, action directed towards the target. Furthermore, perpetrators exhibiting hostile aggression may also display a penchant for destructive behaviour, which includes the vandalism of surrounding property and material possessions. This pattern of aggressive behaviours becomes a part of an individual either by scrutinizing

others or through innate traits within the individual. Physical force and bodily aggression have substantial effects on the lives of the victims, and they leave a scar. It has a propensity to trigger psychological malaise in the individual. Verbal abuse and physical assault endured by the victim in the institutional mechanism affect not only the peculiar individual but the pervasive patterns of violence affect the family members of the victim. While violence frequently occurs in the African continent irrespective of sex and race barriers, the intrinsic truth that is apparent is the brutality by the perpetrator. Apart from causing psychological trauma, violence often results in being the reason behind the mass execution of people, and millions of people have lost their lives to the aggression. Nigerian Watch: The fourth report on violence in Nigeria says, “Historically, law enforcement in the country has been characterized by violence and extrajudicial killings. Since its origin as a consular guard, whose primary function was to protect the economic and political interests of the colonial authority, the security forces have continued to use excessive force, including arbitrary killings, in their engagement with the civilian population” (6). It has direct consequences on people of all age groups, and the latest survey conducted by the Center for Democracy and Development, a nongovernmental organization, claims that a total of 109 election-related deaths were recorded in the 2023 general elections.

Sexual assault is a prominent factor contributing to the pervasiveness of violence in Nigeria. WHO defines sexual assault as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic women’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person, regardless of the relationship with the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home, school, prison, the streets and at work. Sexual aggression has been observed pervasively in armed and modern conflicts throughout history, as it turns into an

inescapable aftermath of warfare. Shame and stigma are often associated with sexual violence, whereas there is the regulated idea of silence about sexual exploitation and mistreatment. Sexual violence refers to crimes and offenses comprising sexual assault, sexual abuse, and rape. On the other hand, sexual harassment is a criminal offense in Nigeria with its legal framework. Section 360 states that any individual who unlawfully and brutally assaults a woman or girl is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for two years. Section 34 of the Nigerian constitution gives the right to dignity for a human being, and it prohibits torture and inhuman treatment directed towards an individual. Instances of sexual assault carried out by the perpetrator become a violation of the individual's autonomy when it takes place without the consent of the victim. Regarding this issue, consent of an individual becomes the critical point of concern, and forcing a person without consent turns out to be rape.

Sexual assault manifests in various forms, including rape, child abuse, bullying, domestic violence, and sexual harassment and silence is often a consequence, a way of coping with the trauma. Rape is carried out against an individual without their will, and it can lead further to trauma responses like helplessness and shame, and anxiety issues in the victim. The long-term repercussions of it end up in mental health conditions like depression and anxiety disorders, including psychosomatic illnesses, chronic pain syndromes, and hypertension. Recurrence of sexual violence in the life of the victim disrupts the psychological stability of an individual. There is an imminent need to research the various forms of sexual assault experienced by Nigerians as it becomes necessary to identify the stigmatization and isolation of the individuals prone to assaults. The research on

aggression directs attention towards the relationship between power and violence.

Aggression is perceived in various political, social, and cultural forms.

Human rights agencies like the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) address the human rights conditions detrimental to African societies. Internal conflicts persist as a predominant disorder in Africa, and establishing human rights institutions is pivotal in raising awareness. Human rights violations are noticed extensively in Africa, and the combined efforts of various agencies in Africa attempt to promote human rights. Institutions include Amnesty International (an International non-government organization), The International Federation of Human Rights (the third oldest international organization), The Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), and all the organizations serve their purpose throughout Africa at the local, regional and international levels to promote the protection of the victims and to prevent the human rights violations in the country. Human rights and their protection are not prioritized in many African countries, and the state funds the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to address the racial violence in the country. Their headquarters is located in Johannesburg, and they dedicate efforts towards protecting human rights in society. They also manage issues related to children, women, and also concerning the well-being of an individual. African Charter of Human and People's Rights came into force in 1986, and it is a foundational document resisting Western imperialism as it emphasizes the obligations of an individual towards society. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a milestone in 1998 that ensured the promotion and protection of human rights.

African Youth Charter was adopted, as it is part of the development agenda for African youth, and the AU campaign to end child marriage was to protect women's

rights in Africa. AU has launched a pan-African advocacy campaign, Free to Shine, and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa protects women's rights. They undertake promotional missions in the member states of the AU. There was also another campaign on the reduction of maternal mortality in Africa. Community-based non-government organizations serve a critical role in the upliftment of the ordinary lives of citizens as they pay attention to the conflicts in rural areas. It is a development initiative, and they obtain funds from Western governments and other private donors (philanthropic organizers). They are crucial in addressing the government's shortcomings and supporting indigenous civil society.

Nigerian literature addresses the rich heritage of their writings and expands to include substantial contributions to world literature. The pervasive patterns of aggression in the society determine the predicament of black women in the Nigerian realm. Nara Sudarkasa's "The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies" (1986) scrutinizes the status of women in divergent societies and cultures. Christopher Cramer's "Researching Violence in Africa: Ethical and Methodological Challenges" explicates research conducted in conflict zones and intimidating environments and exposes the nexus between African conflicts and violence. Social science researchers endeavor to examine the various causes of violence in Nigeria. Patrick Chabal, in his work, *Is violence inevitable in Africa? Theories of Conflict and Approaches to Conflict Prevention* enunciates the rationale of violent conflicts in Africa and initiates approaches to conflict resolution. Black women's self-determination and the rising voices of women become apparent in the works of Lloyd Wellesley Brown. *Women writers in Black Africa* (1981) express violence and endure trauma response, coping with the trauma, and the notions related to it are explored in the work *Critical Trauma Studies: Understanding Violence, Conflict and Memory in Everyday Life* (2011) by

Monica J Casper and Wertheimer Eric. The post-colonial history centers critically on the issues of identity, colonial culture, and corruption, and John Campbell's *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brick* emphasizes the post-colonial trajectory.

Gender operates in conjunction with societal institutionalization and becomes an individual's socially constructed behaviour. Florence Stratton's *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* enunciates the colonialist influence on African soil. The historical origins and Afrocentric thought are scrutinized in the work *The Critical Concept of Afrocentrism in Nigerian Literature* by Chike Francis Mgbheadichie. African women writers analyse the connection between women and the environment they are linked to, and they represent characters close to real life. Ofure Odede Marla's *Female Identity and the Dynamics of Culture in selected African-authored novels* explores identities and subjectivities of African women and the underlying disparities in gender relations. Manisuli Ssenyonjo's *Responding to Human Rights Violations in Africa* addresses the violence propagated by Boko Haram and the challenges and threats posed by the group. They are amid a rivalry among militant groups, trying to prove their capability and competence. *Rethinking the Concept of Power in African Politics* by Takuo Iwatn investigates the country's unsteadiness and intensity of brutal attacks.

The plethora of academic and pervasive literature perceives the various manifestations of power within appropriate sections of society. Narrating the textual chronicles of aggression impartially facilitates the reader to acquire an explicit cognition of the generations of past violence in the Nigerian realm. The narratives chosen for the study testify to African men and women's collective and individual experiences. The thesis scrutinizes the selected authors' genuine writings, exemplifying Nigeria's sociopolitical trauma. The research is undertaken within the

comparative analysis framework to investigate the novels and the characters pertinent to them. The research perspective is to explore representations of violence in Nigerian lives thoroughly. The study limits itself to the notion of violence and the collective human experience of the chosen text. A multilayered analysis of black identity demands a cross-disciplinary approach that appeals to the sensibilities of the black populace.

The persistence of aggression is the prerequisite of the study, and research is ineluctable to unravel the more substantial notions of crime and injustice. The research and studies in this field have become an unfinished fragment, and the scope of the thesis lies in formulating a framework to address the critical areas of violence. A comprehensive theoretical approach is constructed within the violence research arena, and the patterns of aggression put forward the relevance of violence studies. The comparative analysis framework focuses on the recurrent patterns, parallels, and differences in the progress and traits of characters, interpersonal relationships, and social dynamics. The evolution of the characters, the experiences that transform them, and the narrative structures are also studied by closely reading the texts. Multilevel analysis and layered examination of violence connect the aggressive aspects of the individual, community, and society, and this methodological approach scrutinizes the various forms of violence in the African milieu.

Multiple forms of abuse including marital violence, human rights abuses, child trafficking, and violence propagated by Boko Haram are explicitly the identified areas of research. Further research becomes imperative to comprehend the long-term psychological imbalances experienced by the characters. It is the necessity of the study to research intersecting areas such as gender, race, and class to perceive the critical issues and collective experiences of violence. Research done on violence

fragments into multidisciplinary forms, and proper research conducted across multiple dimensions of violence brings out a conceptualization. Integral studies on violence enunciate the troubled relationship between the perpetrator and victim. The perpetrator takes away the capacity of the victim to make decisions, and the patterns of violence, fatal injuries, and plurality of forms of abuse need intricate study. Every individual is entitled to respect the dignity of a person, and accordingly, no person shall be subject to torture or inhuman practices. The single study cannot reflect on the violence worldwide. Since it is a comprehensive area of interest, it can be narrowed down to violence and human rights in Nigeria.

The novels suggest unique aspects of Nigerian writers engaging with national, political, and gender issues, as the writers bring to light the cultural community, thereby recognizing the hassles of the Nigerians. They inscribe from their personal experiences and portray a blueprint of the socioeconomic and political sphere of the people of Nigeria. The backdrop of history represents civil unrest, tension, and repression as the Nigerians have continuously encountered the challenges of military rule, conflict, and disillusionment; thereby, it draws a trajectory of plots in the selected texts. This navigates the reader through the complex political and psychological arena of resistance and assimilates the considerable threats of Nigeria, the society's disarray, and the women's agony. It further emphasizes the politically motivated violence, emotional angst, and pangs of Nigerian society. The corruption, electoral fraud, criminal acts against women, political turbulence, series of coups, and acts of terrorism form the point of dilemma in many of the writings. Terrorism has become a viable threat in Nigeria, and the novels further explore the political history, the pre-independence and post-independence Nigeria, and the extensive acts of terrorism.

Much of Nigerian literature is in English, and the first-generation Nigerian writers comprised Chinua Achebe, Flora Nwapa, Cyprian Ekwensi, and Wole Soyinka. These writers have wholeheartedly relied on the integrity of the nation. Second-generation writers include Buchi Emecheta, Ben Okri, and Ken Saro Wiwa, and third-generation writers in Nigeria include Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Helon Habila, Chris Abani, and they enunciate regarding the heritage of Nigerian literature. Apart from the third-generation writers in Nigeria, the third-generation poets in African Literature include Uche Nduka and Sanya Osha, and their writings turn out to be the literature of resistance. The primary texts chosen for the study comprise *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe, *Efuru* (1966) by Flora Nwapa, *Bride Price* (1976), and *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) by Buchi Emecheta, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* (2018) by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani. The theoretical framework of violence considers the works of Michel Foucault (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison*), Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin White Masks.*), and Cathy Caruth (*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*). The secondary materials of the study comprise books and materials based on Nigeria's sociocultural and political aspects.

African literature has become an effective instrument to expose other dimensions of their lives, and the authors have unfolded a pluralistic approach. African literature brings to light the marginalized and suppressed voices and Chinua Achebe addresses his legacy in his novels by exploring community and nationality. Chinua Achebe is deemed the father of African literature. In his historical narrative, *Things Fall Apart*, he operates on the social institutions of the Igbo, their domestic life, and the belief systems they conform to. The cultural traits and peculiarities of

Igbo culture, language, customs, and writings emphasize the cultural milieu of Nigeria. Achebe's works include *Arrow of God* (1964), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *A Man of the People* (1966), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), and *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983). *Arrow of God* was published as a part of Achebe's African Trilogy, and the conflict between modernity and tradition, the tussle between traditional and modern living patterns in Nigeria, is explored in the text. The issue of bribery and corruption in Nigeria forms the text *No Longer at Ease*. In contrast, power-based marginalization, corruption, materialism, and bribery are apparent in the text *A Man of the People*.

Chinua Achebe emphasizes the key aspects of the rituals that the Igbos follow through the narration of the legends of the Igbo society, and he entered this world at the intersection of the cultures. Chinua Achebe's novels meditate on the colonial spark in the Igbo society, and he allegorizes Udala trees as ancestral spirits in his work *Arrow of God*. He aspires to sustain the ancestral legacy and further elucidate the traditional livelihood, focusing on the ancestral existence of the Igbo society. Conventional medical practices and superstitious beliefs are also integral to the Nigerian culture, and Nigerian cultural consciousness serves as a depiction of it. Chinua Achebe reinstates the trajectory of the masculine traits of anger and Violence, as gender becomes a critical preoccupation in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Buchi Emecheta, in her texts, comprehensively sheds light on the political and domestic aspects of African society. The underlying imbalances and primary challenges in gender roles become notable in the novels of Buchi Emecheta and her seminal texts, which were taken for study comprised of *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Bride Price*. Buchi Emecheta offers a detailed exploration of the twentieth-century lives of Nigerian women and the multilayered social and cultural changes in the

society represented in the novels. Buchi Emecheta's other texts comprise *In the Ditch* (1972) and *Slave Girl* (1977). The plight of the oppressed is expressed in the form of perpetual struggles, misogyny, and gender-based violence in the works of Buchi Emecheta. The colonialist influence and the oppression within the hegemonic agency are phenomenal in Emecheta's novels, and she chronicles the experiences of women in the patriarchal tradition, the complex bride price customs, the Ibo in Iboya, and the ancestral customs that are a part of the society. Buchi Emecheta's work unravels the voices of self-doubt and human disillusionment in the Nigerian milieu, and along with it, the victimization of women across diverse forms and roles, being a wife and being a mother, is reflected in Emecheta's work. The complexity of womanhood and intersectionality in their identities, as well as the crisis in their relationships, becomes apparent through the characters, and thereby, it is observable that the characters are constrained within their narrow boundaries.

The work *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) is listed among the 100 prime books of Africa of the 20th century at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (2002). Buchi Emecheta has been awarded many honours during her literary career. Buchi Emecheta uncovers the true-life trauma of African women as she urges women to stand firm on their own against violence and gender-based differences. Buchi Emecheta endeavours to bring out a political statement for human survival, and she projects the representation of African motherhood, i.e., their prolonged status as permanent victims. Flora Nwapa is the mother of Modern African Literature and the pioneer of African women's literature. Nwapa makes an effort to reconstruct Igbo life from the viewpoint of women. Flora Nwapa strives to disrupt the multitudinous forms of groundless prejudices and biases women address, and she identifies a strong woman character, Efuru, in her well-crafted seminal text, *Efuru*. The other works of Flora

Nwapa include *Efuru* (1966), *Idu* (1970), *One is Enough* (1981), and *Women are Different* (1986).

Flora Nwapa's works unveil the conflicts and torments of African women, and she always carried the wish to write African women's stories. Compared to *Efuru*, *Idu* holds inside her the challenges and disputes of motherhood, and the various identities of women are unveiled through multiple characters of Nwapa, such as Amaka. Nwapa's characters attempt to establish a connection with the thought patterns and emotional framework of women. Flora Nwapa brings to light the weight society imposes upon the shoulders of women, and she purposefully voices her thoughts about the victimization of women and female despondency through her work. Flora Nwapa's characters develop skills concurrently to survive in the community, comprising financial or economic independence, regardless of whether others accept or reject them. Flora Nwapa attempts to revive financially independent African women together with their dreams and aspirations. As a product of social structures and circumstances, Flora Nwapa attempts to redefine womanhood by employing dynamic and vivid characters in her novels. The stereotyped representations of African womanhood demand a progressive change. Through her concept of gender and identity, Nwapa works to carry out societal changes through her works. Flora Nwapa does not consider herself a feminist and attempts to shift the dominant ideas of gender and identity. Nwapa offers more insight into the critical imbalances experienced by the female characters at all levels in her works.

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's debut novel *'I Do Not Come to You by Chance'* earned the 2010 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book and secured the 2019 Carter Journalism Reporting Award. Nwaubani's *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* is the agonizing chronicle of the women kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko

Haram, and the narrative was based on her reflections from the interviews with the kidnapped girls by Boko haram. Through the seminal text *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*, Nwaubani strives to highlight the significance of human rights issues in tangible ways. Nwaubani significantly highlights the humanitarian issues and the violations individuals succumb to, and Nwaubani specifically traces the grappling tale of the women captured by the Boko haram. Authors, including Nwaubani, call into question the spread of violent extremism, and Nwaubani addresses the kidnapping of 276 school girls by Boko Haram. The cruel means by which terrorism takes hold of the country and the methods by which violent extremist movements take a toll on the country become evident in *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*. The targets of violence, being young girls in communities, are documented by Nwaubani, and she further elucidates on the patterns of violence propagated by Boko Haram.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie vividly outlined the identity crisis experienced by the individuals during the war. Through her act of narration, Adichie notably touches on the Biafran war and the agonizing past that they have gone through, and it even testifies to her trauma. Adichie articulates affliction, endeavouring to uncover the veiled trauma of the characters. In *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie experiments with the notion of hybridity, and she becomes aware of solid colonial influence in Nigeria. Adichie compares the distinction between the stereotyped imagery of African women, the oppressed women's resistance, and the self-reliant women's sturdiness. Adichie resolutely addresses Biafra's humanitarian crisis and the liberation struggles in the post-colonial world. Adichie observes the crossroads of the Nigerian Biafran war, and Adichie's work is a solid human chronicle of suffering. The sorrow embedded in the war can be viewed through the portraits in Adichie's works including Biafran children, children with kwashiorkor disease, and memories related

to the Biafran war. Adichie addresses the reader as an individual and a community, and she brings into light myriad tales and confessions of many characters to emphasize human torment. Adichie's narrative strategies intersect with history and literature, and her trauma, inherited from her parents, is touched on. She employs multiple ways to approach history as the texts reflect on the power struggles and the repercussions of colonialism, and it also elucidates the extent of women's struggles in society.

This study locates the discourse within the power politics framework proposed by the theoreticians Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon, and Cathy Caruth. An exhaustive view of the selected narratives effectively presents the subjugation of women and aggressive masculinity in Africa. The anti-colonial struggles and oppression date back to the phase of Franz Fanon, and it is observable that his own experiences guided his insights, and he seemingly clarifies the consequential effects of violence. Michel Foucault, the French postmodernist and literary critic, in his seminal text "*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison*," published in 1975, scrutinizes thoroughly various forms of punishment. Foucault enunciates in depth about the subjugation of the bodies through the mechanism of power. According to the Foucauldian perceptions of power, Foucault critically interprets the frameworks of invisible forms of power and hegemony.

In his central text, *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon deeply comprehends the ceaseless trap of black and white identities in their racial essences, and he expounds on the troubled relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Frantz Fanon elaborates thoroughly on the psychoanalytic concepts tied to their life experience. The seminal text *Unclaimed Experience* by Cathy Caruth discloses the extensive case studies of trauma victims and the narratives of their agonizing

experiences. Cathy Caruth touches on the experiences and the relationship between individual and collective trauma and the way the trauma torments the survivor, thereby generating the language of trauma. The effects of trauma continue for a prolonged time, creating an unconscious cycle of repetition, which eventually results in an experience of rupture.

The victim is affected by the unfavourable events happening to him, and stress responses and stress-related disorders affect him (post-traumatic stress disorder, adjustment disorder, acute stress disorder). This continues to be a lingering painful experience, and they become victimized for life. They habitually experience intrusion, i.e., reexperiencing the traumatic events in the form of nightmares and shock. It creates episodic phases of recollection in the thought process of the victim, often causing detachment from the surroundings, and victims repeatedly get traumatized by either the offender or the justice system. This tends to leave the human being in agonizing ache, and in the stages of progression, trauma ruins their love language and emotions entirely. The wounded individual experience of the victim calls for a specific approach to mental health. It further emphasizes the cross-examination between the invisible and routinized forms of violence in their lives. The hardships and the physical and mental perplexities revolving around the individual address the mind and body dualism. The techniques adopted by an individual to handle the torment and the patterns of neural activity that occur in response to the pain persist within the literary trope of the writer.

The thesis comprises five chapters, and the chapters of this thesis assess the oppressed sects of Nigerian society and endeavour to reestablish their assertive language of power side by side. Human rights should be protected in the communities of Nigeria to promote the country's progress. The texts selected for the study have

incorporated coherent experiences of violence, victimization, repression, and hostility, all lived through by the characters. It further extends beyond the trauma of the characters to unravel the repercussions of war, pain, and scars. The futility of war, the terrors of Boko Haram, the humiliation endured by women on the grounds of gender equality and patriarchy, and the human stories from the heart and soul of Nigerians are profoundly assimilated in the thesis.

The introductory chapter reflects on the framework of the thesis and proposes concepts on human rights violations in Africa. The notions of colonialism and post-colonialism are integrated into the analysis, and it strives to redefine the necessity of black liberation. It intensifies the crucial focus on the subordinate groups victimized by violence and places significant emphasis on Afrocentric reflections at the core of their existence. The thesis employs the experiences of African women to distinguish the stress, friction, and trauma they succumb to. Their real-world experiences become more relevant to unfold the periods of silence that emanate from the oppression of the authority. This introductory chapter gives key foresight on the selected authors, theoreticians, and theories considered for the study, and it also gives a literature review, as well as the context and rationale for the academic research on violence. Violence in Nigeria, the state's role, and the factors contributing to the violence are clarified in detail in the study.

Chapter one seeks to articulate the cloistered and controlled partition spaces in the life of Kambili Achike in the text *Purple Hibiscus*. Discipline controlling the spaces of Kambili can be read in the light of the Foucauldian idea of power and Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. *Purple Hibiscus* attempts to trace silence as a weapon that imposes trauma upon the victims, and discipline ends up being a mechanism to chain individual spaces closed in upon itself. As a result, Nigeria's gendered spaces

deliberately address societal divides deeply ingrained in the culture, including class, ethnicity, and religion. Men entirely control the spaces of visibility. In contrast, the lack of visibility of women in public spaces brings into light the marginalization and gender imbalances endured by them. Political spaces in Nigeria prevail to be dominated by men, and women's under-representation in the political leadership continues to be a pressing issue. Inclusive spaces and eliminating gender disparities are prerequisites for gender balance in Nigerian society. The physical and psychological abuse withstood by the characters merge with the Foucauldian statement, "Fall upon the body indiscriminately or equally, it is calculated according to detailed rules" (34). Adichie renders a prison house, where the characters are subjected to constant monitoring and discipline, where inmates turn into docile bodies. The Nigerian communities' quest for a liberated sense of self and the injustices caused by Western colonization is analysed through the Foucauldian power structures.

Chapter two provides a broader perspective on the historical perception of violence in Nigeria and gives insights into its origin. It offers an in-depth assessment of the unease of colonialist intervention and brings to light the victimhood and oppressive customs in colonized Nigeria. The intervention of colonialism is carved out profoundly to understand the political shifts better. Meanwhile, the trajectory of history relentlessly places the oppressed groups at the focal point of the thesis. The chapter attempts to clarify many questions regarding the oppressed groups as it traverses the historical context of Nigeria and sheds light on the underprivileged and downtrodden category of people. This chapter's framework attempts to analyse the seminal text by Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, in the light of the theoretical insights of Frantz Fanon, and the chapter reviews the characters in the purview of Frustration-Aggression theory proposed by Dollard.

Chapter three is an effort to reread and analyse the ongoing issues of subordinate groups living in Nigerian society, and this chapter evaluates the seminal texts *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* in the light of the trauma theory proposed by Cathy Caruth and the Differential Association Theory proposed by Edwin Sutherland. The interconnection arising between race, class, and gender is unequivocally reviewed in this chapter. Throughout the Chapter, the text attempts to comprehend the existential crisis of the characters, and it further expands on the conventions of placing women as the victims of their bodies. It also fathoms a closer analysis of the involvement of Boko Haram in the lives of Africans. This chapter offers a cross-examination of the human rights violations and human trafficking that took place during the period. It seeks to reflect on the experiences of Africans in the broader context. From the vantage point of tyranny and oppression, Nigeria was subject to lousy governance on one side and insurgencies by Boko Haram on the other. The sufferings and subjugation of people in the light of Afrocentric discipline are exposed in the chapter. The challenges of the civilians in coping with the internal system of oppression are thus addressed in the chapter, and it places additional emphasis on the inevitability of change in the political and cultural domain. It powerfully articulates the rationalist revision of history based on aggressive violence and political unrest.

Chapter four places pivotal significance on the marginalization of women by the oppressive social institutions of power. Gender plays a substantial role in a human's perspectives and lived experiences, and it assigns responsible cultural and social roles to men and women in society. This chapter turns into an analysis of the traditional gender norms and patriarchal power dynamics in the lives of African women. The comparative analysis of the selected texts *Bride Price* and *The Joys of*

Motherhood by Buchi Emecheta and *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa is examined in the purview of the theory of intersectionality by Kimberle Crenshaw. The internal suffering and profound emotional scars of women, prejudice, and judgment initiated from childbirth, and the endless resistance and anguish of women are scrutinized in the chapter. It further expands on the sexual assaults, threats, and abuse forcefully against women. In the interest of Nigerian women, their empowerment, autonomy, and rights are the collective aspects they must attain, and it also assesses the rigorous and detrimental struggles they endured in the timeframe of their lives.

The study concludes by analysing the research methods and assessing their limitations. It then attempts to propose a range of policies to empower the vulnerable and exploited people in Nigeria. The significance of transparency in the government system and peaceful conflict resolutions further contributes to the short- and long-term requirements. Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngugi Adichie, Bessie Head, Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, and many other African writers have identified the social injustice prevailing in Africa, and they have drawn attention to the human rights violations. Following the evaluation of African writers and the notion behind African politics, this thesis studies the democratic and national interests of civilians in Africa, and it brings to the forefront the vast array of female characters confined to their roles as women, wives, and mothers. This thesis is a milieu for critiquing Nigerian violence, and the chapters of the thesis do not fail to intersect with male violence and abuse.

CHAPTER 1

Rereading of Authoritarian Power in *Purple Hibiscus*

Power relations operate throughout all the sections, be it the microstructures and the macrostructure tiers of the society. Michel Foucault is renowned for his original insights on power and is one of the most influential academic theoreticians exploring power. *Purple Hibiscus* is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's debut novel, and it is a coming-of-age narrative unfolding the traumatic effects of patriarchal authority within a family structure. Adichie believes in the power of ink and the world of feminism as she connects literature and life in such proximity. The significant text of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*, offers thorough insights into the manifold dimensions of violence and oppression. It reflects on the necessity of the state to envision the future by resolving the ongoing power struggles endured by women. This chapter also emphasizes the intricate facets of violence, the society's conventions, the community's dictums, and the political trajectory in Nigeria. It constitutes a new perspective to reflect on black lives through the power politics framework by Michel Foucault.

The research also rereads the women's subjective experiences of injustice in Nigeria. This chapter analyses the nature of violence experienced by Nigerian women in the patriarchal society. It reflects on the necessity of an interpretative framework to perceive the slavery and institutionalization of Nigerian womanhood. It exposes various forms of discrimination endured by Nigerian women as the historical muting of women goes on in Nigeria for as long as history remembers, and it has been part of their societal framework. The research has been carried out to critically analyse Foucault's power concept and examine the authority and dominance of the masculine

and feminine characters in the text '*Purple Hibiscus*.' Since the study focuses on the ways by which gender structures function in the patriarchal framework, this chapter also intends to highlight the internal struggles of female characters and various forms of oppression in their routine lives.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a renowned and reputed contemporary Nigerian writer who has been an influential voice in addressing the plights of African women. Adichie's works and writings reflect on the issues of gender inequity, patriarchal oppression, the Nigeria-Biafra civil war, and the subordination of women, and her novels converse about female marginalization and subjectivities of women. Adichie has secured numerous awards in her literary career, and her writings bring to light the contemporary black women's struggles, which have represented their repressed history. Adichie's debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers and Orange prizes for Fiction. Adichie grew up in Nsukka, South Eastern Nigeria. She lived outside her homeland, studied in the US, and acquired degrees from Johns Hopkins and Connecticut University. Adichie has the perception of an exile in her narratives, and her narratives extensively reflect diasporic consciousness and the untold experiences of African women. Adichie identifies with the African women's repressed voice for generations, and the long history of trauma and agony, the dark phases weaving their lives, is universalized in her works. She sheds light on the African women's desire for freedom and individuality.

The stories of victimization hold the subdued voices of African women, and the African Writers series by Heinemann had a vital contribution to strengthening the writings of Africa. The contribution of African women writers to various domains of world literature is substantial, and they have explored the complexities of African

identity and gender roles significantly. Charlotte Bruner states in her *preface to Unwinding Threads: Writing by Women in Africa* (1983),

The African woman writing Fiction today has to be somehow exceptional.

Despite vast differences in traditions and beliefs among African societies, any female writer must have defied prevailing tradition if she speaks out as an individual and a woman. In order to reach an international audience directly, she often had to cross linguistic barriers. Generally, then, the perpetrator is preferred to the creator. To be outstanding is to court rejection. (Bruner 1994)

Adichie displays her art of storytelling through her multifaceted language style and gradually transitions from writing poetry to novels. Adichie has published a considerable amount of literature about the subjugation of black women, and she employs storytelling as a technique in order to challenge silence across various disciplines. Adichie investigates the ongoing battles of Nigerian women in the text *Purple Hibiscus*, and this study proves to be an attempt to address the challenges of African women in the patriarchal society. Adichie's works are positioned in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria, and, notably, the civil war has accentuated the imbalances of women during that period. The whole text is penned from the perspective of the child narrator, Kambili, and the emotional trauma and torture expressed by the characters reveal the ambiguities within the family structure. Since the present study focuses on the mistreatment experienced by Kambili and her family members through the father figure Eugene Achike, it also analyses the abuse of women as dependent and passive commodities in the patriarchal framework. The study also addresses the series of disillusionments and underlying human struggles in the family setting, and it is an attempt to read about the intersection of power and violence in Adichie's work.

Adichie's debut novel in 2003, *Purple Hibiscus*, sheds light on the distorted ideologies of male supremacy in Eugene Achike's family household in the postcolonial Nigerian setup. The methods through which tradition connects with modernity are represented in the text *Purple Hibiscus* and Adichie, as a writer expresses her perspectives and fear apparent in the fifteen-year-old Kambili Achike. The novel foregrounds the author's progressive viewpoints and approaches how control of patriarchy fuses with the day-to-day lives of women within the narrative. It has colonial and postcolonial elements, and it turns out to be the narrative of paternal tyranny and disillusionment in the African milieu. Finding Her Voice review by Heather Hewett states that "*Purple Hibiscus* possesses a narrative arc common to many coming-of-age tales" (2). The text *Purple Hibiscus* turns out to be a radical critique of the patriarchal culture, and it unpacks for the reader the complexities of relationships and the disruption of fixed power structures within the narrative thread. Kellman states that "Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison* can also be read as a commentary on the social organization of the family, on the workings of modern educational institutions, and more generally, on the project of self-governance. He shows how institutions of social organization such as schools, universities, families, and workplaces have become increasingly subject to the disciplinary techniques of the prison" (40). Violence and repression have origins in African history from time immemorial and are observed in the text *Purple Hibiscus*. Violence in the household can be investigated by applying Foucault's power theory based on the text "*Discipline and Punish: Birth of a Prison.*"

The study becomes an attempt to analyse the marginalization of Nigerian women by grasping the concept of power dynamics and the roots of oppression in society. *Workable Sisterhood* by Michele Tracy Berger breaks the traditional notions

of black identities, reflecting on systematic racism and inequality. It is observed that marriage and children determine the validation of women in African society, as men are often identified as the breadwinner of the family, and women assume the role of nurturing mothers. This can be interpreted further by reading Ngugi as stating that “the Black people have been victims of double exploitation” (Killam 7). There is a constant power struggle inside Eugene's family structure, shaped by cultural, social, and political factors. The abusive control over women in family relationships, in a way, is the reassertion of the formal authority of Eugene in decision-making in the Achike household. As indicated, it reiterates the statement of Roger A Deacon that “Power relations shift from being externally imposed to being internally invoked” (148). In this regard, it can be stated that Adichie’s writings become the representation of the gender prejudices, sexual abuse, exploitation, and other harrowing experiences of women in Nigerian society.

This study endeavours to understand the existing patterns in black feminist writing, and it attempts to vocalize black women's existence. The study later explores the multiple challenges in the African milieu, including the denial of human rights, corruption, and hypocrisy within the Eugene family. As proposed by Musa W. Dube, “While the military coup is the national setting of the story, *Purple Hibiscus* is narrated within a religious timeframe in three stages” (3). The study would serve the purpose as *Purple Hibiscus* does not have chapters; instead, it has separate subheadings and reflects on the text's narrative style. The subheadings comprise Breaking Gods, subtitled Palm Sunday; Speaking with Our Spirits, subtitled Before Palm Sunday; The Pieces of Gods, subtitled After Palm Sunday; and A Different Silence, subtitled The Present. The nuclear family structure of Eugene’s family, the violation of human rights toward other family members, and the redefining of gender

performances are perceived explicitly in *Purple Hibiscus*. It leads to the notion that the family of Kambili becomes a miniature political state in Nigeria as it represents the country's political situation. It is found that it turns out to be a mini version of the repressive Nigerian political framework, which is considered to be a symbol of colonial oppression and internalized colonialism.

Colonialism is comparable to a cultural bomb that overlaps time and space, and it continues to exist in multiple forms. It is pertinently expressed that Papa Eugene is the epitome of epistemic violence and the pain is imposed on individuals and communities through marginalization and suppression. Musa W. Dube states, “While Ngugi uses the term ‘cultural bomb,’ epistemic violence is a term coined by the postcolonial feminist critic Gayatri Spivak Chakravorty” (2). As an expansion to this line of thought, “Peiman Amanolahi Baharvand posits that the stifling voices challenge the existing power structures in *Purple Hibiscus* as Eugene becomes a violent product of colonialism” (50). Adichie’s narratives are apt to reflect upon the power dynamics between the patriarchal culture in Africa and the foreign culture of Christianity. The colonialization of Africa, the legacy of the colonial masters, and the switching patterns of power become apparent in the work.

The social reality is mirrored in the text as they live within the confines of cultures, along with the domain of patriarchal dominance and colonial intrusion. Another aspect in this respect is that the natives were made subordinate and stereotyped in the outlook of the colonizer, and expanding the colonial state apparatus, in turn, led to growing political conflicts within the African communities. It may occur through the system of administration/ administration units / colonial laws/ local rulers/ police forces/ colonial troops. As Lewis Gann stated in reviewing Andrew Roberts, "For most of the colonial period, the British administration in colonial Africa

trusted on a minimum of force" (459). The target of the colonizer was indeed to acquire the power so as to control and regulate the masses, and Adichie attempts to bring in the intersection of gender, class, and the violence of the colonial past in *Purple Hibiscus*. Eugene contemplates the world through the colonial perspective, wherein it reinforces the idea of women being silent victims and the body of women being a product of subjugation.

British colonial rule lasted in Africa for more than a century, and the repercussions of colonialism on women were evident in all realms of Africa. Peiman Amanolahi Baharvand further expands on this idea by reflecting on the condition of women in the household as he states, "Beatrice is doubly colonized. She is exposed to both the racism practiced by British Colonizers and gender discrimination imposed on her by the patriarchal society" (49). It has influenced African women's right to be heard in society and elucidates the diverse versions of religious fanaticism. It has been argued that African women have been victimized for centuries as the lives of women have been through multiple phases of violence and assaults. Chinasa Abonyi, Chinonye Ekwueme expands on this: "There is no doubt that Eugene himself suffers from cultural alienation" (12). The tyrannic father figure, Eugene Achike, reflects the ascendancy of colonial superiority, as Papa Eugene himself is a product of colonialism. The language of colonization has lingered in Eugene's subconscious even after the colonialists left the country. As is understood, Eugene is a perfect archetype of the colonial world, and it directs him forward to numerous human rights violations. Eugene's temperament represents colonial mimicry, and he proposes the notion of violence in a broader context.

In this approach to writing, Adichie endeavours to present various critical perspectives from the postcolonial point of view. It is observed that Eugene devotes

himself to the Western colonialist order, indirectly striving to be a self-imposed tyrant. Eugene possesses within himself the power of the tyrant to crush every human emotion that shows up in his life, making the lives of the family members only confined to the household spaces. On the other hand, he manages a flourishing and prosperous business life. According to Rohini Harsh, she says "Eugene is a faithful attendant to British colonizers who teach him in British Universities and instruct him for white's mission" (102). Corporeal repression becomes evident in the autocratic power of Eugene, and he gradually ascertains violence upon the family members. It is found that Eugene practices his dictatorship inside the family, and it carries with it the psychological damage endured by the family members in a militarized environment. Since colonization, Africans have gone through various forms of violence over the decades, and this text also facilitates tracing a chain of violent incidents that are closely tied with each other.

The native Africans constantly experienced various cultural conflicts, and the cultural friction created disagreements and confusion between the West and the Igbo. Mimicry initiates when the colonized imitates the language and behaviour of the colonizer. Through his physical cues and body language, Eugene begins to mimic Western traits, and he starts considering Igbo culture inferior to Western ideology. "Eugene's mimicry and values are reproduced in his children and thereby functions as a colonizing force within the family" (Harsh 22). Adichie represents Eugene's character with all its complexities, and Eugene's overarching power represents the epistemic violence of the colonial past. Anthony Chennells' statement supports this: "Eugene's Catholicism separates his family from the rest of the society" (21). Eugene becomes a colonized masculine subject, educated at a catholic missionary school in

Nigeria. Being oblivious to his legitimate identity, he has entirely adapted to the Western culture and practices.

Eugene always holds on to the arrogant conviction of being an unerring individual and carries within the colonized masculine identity. It is to be observed that Eugene mimics speaking English, consistently monitors the religious rituals, and secures masculine supremacy, thereby perpetually observing himself as a self-made man. It is indeed true, as stated by Ogaga Okuyade, "Eugene's educational standards are not only placidly faulty; it is banal and unproductive" (248). It further aids in assessing Eugene's character, and he represents the waning Igbo culture and progressive Catholicism. His family becomes a microcosm of the religious nation itself, and it can be observed that there is a strong relationship between Eugene's family and church in the narrative, as Kambili articulates,

Our steps on the stairs were as measured and as silent as our Sundays: the silence of waiting until Papa was done with his siesta so we could have lunch; the silence of reflection time when Papa gave us a scripture passage or a book by one of the early church fathers to read and meditate on; the silence of evening rosary, the silence of driving to the church for benediction afterward. Even our family time on Sunday was quiet, without chess games or newspaper discussions, more in tune with the Day of Rest. (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 23)

Along with this, disciplinary boundaries and routines are created by the system for the repression of the individuals, and through it all, Adichie exposes the choking habitat and institutional violence in Eugene's household.

Eugene owns the newspaper titled 'Standard,' and it can be observed that Eugene himself has a solid catholic fervour. Eugene adheres to the power of free

speech in his newspaper Standard, whereas in contrast, the power of silence and stillness at home. "As Papa told us, the politicians were corrupt, and the Standard had written many stories about the cabinet ministers who stashed money in foreign bank accounts, money meant for paying teachers' salaries and building roads. Nigerians needed not soldiers ruling us; we needed a renewed democracy" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 19). Eugene asserts that he conveys the truth through his newspaper 'Standard.' Ogaga Okuyade states thus, "He urges his editor Ade Coker to ensure that the Standard speaks out, yet he continues to muzzle his wife and children" (247). It is presumed that the voice of the newspaper becomes the voice of autonomy, and on the contrary, the muted voice and silences of the children in private spaces turn into an identity crisis for his family members as "Eugene says,

They are not like those children people are raising these days, with no home training and no fear of God. Papa said, "I was certain that pride stretched Papa's lips and lightened his eyes. Imagine what the standard would be if we were all quiet. "It was a joke. Ade Coker and his wife Yewanda laughed, but Papa did not laugh. Jaja and I turned and went upstairs, silently. (58)

There is a recurring pattern of violence emerging in the text. Eugene obtains satisfaction in collective roles, being a husband, a businessman, a father, and a newspaper publisher. At the same time, he exercises power in all the roles equally. It is evident that Eugene is privileged and significantly influences society, engaging in charitable activities and embracing Western ideals and values. He completely rejects the traditional Igbo culture on the flip side. It can be assessed that Eugene becomes a tool to scrutinize the patriarchal power in society. The novel commences with the phrase, "Things started to fall apart at home" (6). The ambiance of their household is described thus, "Papa liked order. It showed, even in the schedules themselves, how

his meticulously drawn lines, in black ink, cut across each day, separating study from siesta, siesta from family time, family time from eating, eating from prayer, and prayer from sleep. He revised them often" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 19). It is evident that despite Eugene's social network and status, Eugene's rigorous impositions and tyrannical rules completely distanced the children from their father figure. P Chitra Devi and Dr G Christopher have taken up this idea to substantiate it: "His focus on addressing issues in the outside world may serve as a means of diverting attention from the injustices he contributes to within his household" (1305). Adichie takes the reader through the tyranny to recognize an atmosphere of religious fanaticism and instability.

The domestic circumstances in Eugene's household and Nigeria's political situation can be perceived collectively. Traversing through Eugene's boundaries, he provides orders and rules to adhere to, which are instilled in the lives of other family members in the household environment. For this reason, in the case of Eugene, the complicated relationship between family members in the narration triggers an aura of tension. As stated by Pauline Ada Uwakweh, "Silencing comprises all imposed restrictions on women's social being, thinking, and expressions that are religiously or culturally sanctioned" (75). Nigerian society often regarded men with principal significance asserting their dominance and superiority; on the contrary, women were considered subordinate and silenced in society, being reduced to sexual objects under the control of men. It is apparent here that Eugene, the staunch religious enthusiast, turns out to be a tyrant in his own nuclear family. Kambili's family and circumstances can be viewed in contrast to Nigeria's political and social context. "Although Eugene thinks himself as a fervent Christian, in reality, he is a hypocrite who does not follow Christianity at home" (Harsh 105). Adichie likely traverses the issues of faith and

attempts to break the phallogocentric ideas surrounding it. It is apparent that missionaries have converted Nigerians to Christianity, established new schools, and provided foreign education to the civilians. The persistent pattern in their family is that Eugene and Aunt Ifeoma had converted to Catholicism, but in contrast, Papa Nnukwu maintains his traditional beliefs and spiritual practices.

Eugene envisions everyone thinking and acting similarly to him, and he coerces his subjects by inflicting fear and dominance over them. Musa W. Dube critiques the pious characterization of Eugene; thus, "Papa Eugene's religious piousness seems completely unable to deter him from violence. His attack on the state for its violence and corruption seems unable to stop him from his violence on family" (14). The nervousness and perpetual silence of the other family members substantially hinder their growth and break their self-esteem. Chinasa Abonyi, Chinonye Ekwueme expresses this situation: "Kambili's stammering can be attributed to social limitation and participation restriction" (11). The behavioural shift is apparent in the case of Kambili and Jaja as the willingness of the characters to resort to violence becomes evident in the Eugene family.

Purple Hibiscus represents the essence of the politics of the Achike family and the complexities in the Nigerian political scenario. It is apparent in the text context that the escalation of state violence mirrors the anxieties of the postcolonial environment. John Stoltenberg states in *Towards Gender Justice*,

Under patriarchy, men are the arbiters of identity for both males and females because the cultural norm of human identity is, by definition, male identity-Masculinity. Under patriarchy, the cultural norm of male identity consists of

power, prestige, privilege, and prerogative over and against the gender class women. That is what masculinity is. It is not something else. (343)

The gendered privileges in society always place women in the perspective of the victim. "Ogaga Okuyade states that Adichie does not only artistically illustrate the presence of patriarchal postures, she also artistically advocates a radical feminism" (256). It is observed that the female characters of Adichie offer further visibility into the challenges of being a woman in Africa. When the entire structure becomes power-based, the strain and torture revolve entirely around women. "Bell Hooks says, From the assumption that they are superior to females and should rule over us. Yet, those benefits have come with a price. In return for all the goodies men receive from patriarchy, they are required to dominate women, to exploit and oppress us, using violence if they must to keep patriarchy intact" (9). The intersection of power relations paves the way for female subjugation and suffering further. The domestic abuse of women is unfurled in a fictional form by Adichie in the text *Purple Hibiscus*.

The rigid conditions and principles within the family had entirely muted the individuals, silencing their spaces and reasoning process and thus emptying and shrinking their perspectives and personalities. It seeks to uncover how it leads to loss of self-esteem and self-expression, leaving the individual with submissiveness and inferiority. Silence is welcomed in the Achike household with open arms. The silence of the characters becomes overwhelming as the narrator elucidates how their bodies were struck dumb in the fear of Eugene's violence. Eugene considers silence as surrender and dutifulness to the almighty as it thoroughly engulfs family members in the household. "When Papa started the prayer, his voice quavered more than usual. He prayed for the food first, then he asked God to forgive those who had tried to thwart His will, who had put selfish desires first and had not wanted to visit His servant after

Mass "Amen!" resounded throughout the room" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*, 24). It becomes explicit that silence turns out to be an indication of the totalitarian temperament of Eugene's household. The speechlessness of the characters indicates the belligerent behaviour of the repressive father figure, Eugene. Eugene's family setting controlled and silenced the voices of the family members, and their academic choices and social interactions were regulated. Music, radio, and television choices were controlled within their home and inside the school, and their actions were monitored by the authorities, who had an absolute surveillance mechanism entirely revolving around the lives of Kambili and Jaja.

Their life limits inside a shell, with insufficient power and control over their bodies by Eugene, as is evident through the language of Kambili and Jaja. They are conditioned inside the silence of the home, with strict discipline and timetabled life, and the domestic tyranny in the family inflicts physical and emotional outrage in the characters. Kambili says, "I cleared my throat, willed the words to come. I knew them, thought them. But they would not come" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 48).

Women are strangled in their silences, and the fictional canvas of the characters fits into the social and political scenario of Nigeria. Women in the text *Purple Hibiscus* struggle for individual expressions and autonomy, and gaining a voice in the intersectional spaces becomes challenging. It is observed that *Purple Hibiscus* reflects on the lingering silences and voicelessness of the bodies as the disciplinary mechanisms inside the home do not allow the family members to raise their voices.

Another crucial aspect is that the body often becomes a pivotal point of reference in Adichie's novels as she explores the body's functioning. The physical violence imposed upon the body is represented in the text. The body becomes the site of physical and discursive violence, and it becomes a cultural signifier or identifier.

"Judith Butler postulates that the body is of necessity, a mode of embodying, and the 'what' that embodies is possibilities... the body is a historical situation... and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a historical situation" (521). The body of the suppressed becomes the point of surveillance for the state apparatus and the power hierarchies.

Treating women's bodies as a commodity and as a material object has existed for hundreds of years, and even today, it continues. "Black women's lips, nose, buttocks, and other body parts were scripted to result in the narrative of the black woman as other. Texts about the black woman's body suggested that she was ugly, exotic, different, sexualized, deviant, and dangerous" (Wallace Sanders 200). Visual objectification of black women has existed across time, and a woman's body is reduced to the sum of its parts simultaneously to evoke fetishist fantasies and erotic pleasure. It posits that women were considered a commodity, readily available for men to use at their will to satiate men's desires. Persistent torture, violence and abuse, and physical assault expose the vulnerability of the child narrator, Kambili, and the suffering of the family members. It can be assessed that the oppressive family environment and the absolute dictatorship of Eugene take away the capability of the family members to have substantial conversations and comforting relationships among them.

Eugene, the father of Kambili Achike, brutally strikes his family members and inflicts bodily violence on his spouse and children. The mental and physical abuse by Papa Eugene is a form of surveillance and authority-building technique to maintain the family under his control. It resonates with Foucault's theory of Torture and Surveillance in *Discipline and Punish* as it becomes evident that Eugene is a strict authoritarian. Eugene's rules involve a series of punishments.

There prevails a visual panopticon inside the family structure, which allows for entire control and surveillance, and they follow strict daily schedules, monitored prayer routines, and fixed learning times. It is at the discretion of Eugene that they decide on children's reading books and the television programs they must pay attention to, as uncompromising control is asserted within the oppressive framework. Foucault quotes: "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. He also concedes that where there is Power, there is resistance, yet this resistance is never in a position of exteriority about power" (Foucault 95). The critical concern revolving around Eugene's character becomes the constant internalized authority, as the house is equivalent to an inspection house, and everyone in the household becomes the object of surveillance. As Richard G Lyons states, "While surveillance can be irksome at times, we have come to accept it as a reasonable part of modern life" (43). As the prisoners and inmates modify their behaviour according to the instructions in the panopticon, the members of the Eugene household adhere to the overzealous father figure Eugene. Silence in the circular building panopticon links a network of conversation tubes, and people inside are perceived as being in the cells. Every single decision within the family is controlled by Eugene, who takes control of the political events and spaces on the one side and his family on the other.

There is an entire set of procedures for identification and visibility in the panopticon, and it can be interpreted that the several episodes of violence symbolize Eugene's peak traits of narcissism and absolute patriarchy. Visibility is often considered a trap, and the narrative reexamines the ways through which the body of the victims confirms the stringent order.

The principle of 'enclosure' is neither constant, indispensable, nor sufficient in disciplinary machinery. This machinery works space in a much more flexible and detailed way. It first does this on the principle of elementary location or partitioning. Each individual has his place, and each place is individual. It aimed to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities and merits. (Foucault 143)

The scrutiny of the body and physical abuse endured by the child mirrors the ongoing institutional violence in the life of Kambili. Eugene had perpetually thought of the possibility of disobedience, even the slightest, as absolute dishonour and tears within him functioned as a mechanism to get reassurance from his victims. As Foucault states in *Discipline and Punishment: Birth of a Prison*, "Discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. It is not a triumphant power but a modest, suspicious power, which functions as a calculated but permanent economy" (Foucault 170). Eugene's arguments center around the disciplined body and modesty symbolizes this body.

Power is used as an instrument to direct violence towards the oppressed group of individuals, and using power as a metric to punish, control, and monitor the lives of others becomes Eugene's method. This model of existence had a profound impact on the family members, and Eugene's regular punishments and torture took away their ability to express their thoughts. Jeremy Bentham introduced the idea of the Panopticon in his work *Panopticon or The Inspection House*, an architectural design that only permits the axial visibility of the prisoners. Jeremy Bentham proposes an

inspection house, a circular building where the prisoners are kept under assessment. The inmates can never witness the prison's inspector, but the inspector monitors the prisoner. There is a central inspection unit within the prison house, and this idea of the panopticon was revitalized by Foucault in his 1975 book *Discipline and Punish*. There is steady internalized authority, and Bentham has two arguments. The first argument suggests that it uses moral and religious sanctions to inculcate a sense of responsibility. "Bentham's second argument to combat crime is to use a vigorous surveillance system with rewards and punishments" (Lyons 46). The prisoners recognize that they are constantly being watched, and this concept is broadened into their mundane lives.

Such an environment is constituted to induce a consistent sense of visibility in the minds of the inmates, and it is the process through which power operates inside the panopticon. The idea of being perpetually monitored in the prison system becomes visible, and it is to develop obedience among the victims. There is a central tower, and the guards can observe inside the cells. The prisoners are under persistent surveillance and supervision, and the authorities monitor them.

The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, classify, and punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. At the heart of the procedure of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objection of those who are subjected.(Foucault 185).

The panopticon mechanism by Jeremy Bentham carries itself a whole set of techniques to exercise multiple forms of power. The broader power framework can be employed to analyse the shifting forms of power circulation in Nigerian society. Sovereign power refers to the noble forms of power exercised by the monarch. In contrast, disciplinary power focuses on regulating the individuals through the institutions. Disciplinary power is further utilized as a mechanism of social control, and through these surveillance mechanisms, it strives to form the identity of the individuals.

The institutions exercising disciplinary power comprises of prisons, hospitals, and schools, and there is the persistent observation of the inmates in an uninterrupted pattern. The prominent aspect is that disciplinary power is produced, exhibited, and reproduced and it circulates between people and instils in them self-discipline and obedience. The study acknowledges that it disciplines individuals by regulating their behaviours through a routine and schedule, subjecting them to regular assessment.

The individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved, and articulated on others. Its bravery or strength are no longer the principal variables that define it, but the place it occupies, the interval it covers, the regularity, and the good order according to which it operates its movements.

The soldier whose body has been trained to function part by part for particular operations must form an element in a mechanism at another level. The body is a part of the multi-segmentary machine. (Foucault 164)

It takes place across different patterns as the interrogations take place in multiple ways in the form of examinations, investigations, and documentation to prompt specific behaviours in the body of the victim. Constant surveillance and monitoring

align with the authorities' expectations, and intricate control and power mechanisms are devised to regulate ordinary lives in modern society. The principal aim of disciplinary power is the creation of docile bodies as they are subservient and conform to societal expectations.

The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it. A 'political autonomy,' which was also a 'mechanics of power,' was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over other's bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies; docile bodies (138).

Foucault substantiates that power structures usually function to establish order and control the individual's behaviour. For the affected people, discipline becomes internalized, and they enter into a state of docile bodies under constant surveillance. Foucault further reflects on the methods by which the capillary power shifts from the center to the margins.

The ways by which the prison system regulates the victims through control and surveillance along with the sense of stringency and discipline familiarize us with the principle of panopticon. They often employed methodologies and mechanisms to regulate the body and the body; as Foucault states, "It is not just a physical entity, but a place where power operates." Correspondingly, as prisons, institutions such as schools and hospitals also operate individuals in the power chains within society and are monitored continuously. Schools are effective means for indoctrination when the sanctions work positively (Lyons 47). An important implication regarding the

framework of power is that the structure of the panopticon traces the mechanisms of self-regulation and restraint. "In organizing 'cells,' 'places' and 'ranks,' the disciplines create complex spaces at once architectural, functional and hierarchical" (Foucault 148). This will help gain insights about the spaces that provide fixed positions and permit circulation". To facilitate the study, the plague-stricken town in *Discipline and Punish: Birth of a Prison* has been taken, as the purpose of the study centers on the surveillance and analysis of power.

A deadly plague hit Europe in the 17th century, leading to critical repercussions. Families were organized to be inside homes, and the syndic was given the duty of street surveillance. The citizens insisted on being visible only through the window, and they were given a strict schedule for observation. Corporal punishments and public executions were considered to be the fundamental punishments, and it was directed at the body of the prisoners. There was hierarchical observation and judgment, and the body was constantly affected by punishments and penalties. It becomes apparent that the subjected body gets a constant sense of visibility, further conveying how discipline and punishment operate within modern society. Jeremy Bentham detailed this idea in the form of a panopticon (a donut-shaped building), which has an architectural prison layout with a central tower and windows.

The word panopticon was derived from the Greek word *pan*, meaning all, and *opticon*, meaning to see. Another aspect of the family structure of Kambili is that it relates to the system of panopticon, and she is becoming a prisoner confined to interminable surveillance. In this regard, a broader definition of violence can be connected to the high walls around Kambili's home that restrain her visibility to the world outside and the oiled electric wires top the compound all around in an equally high position. In light of this, their rapport with the world outside is entirely

disoriented as the driver, Kevin, leads them to places. The car becomes the symbol of the expansion of their surveillance mechanism. They adhere to regulations similar to the military rules, and there was a constant shift of anger exchange from Eugene to his family members, either in the form of punishments, physical assaults, or plain beating. Based on this observation, Foucault remarks, "Discipline is the small acts of cunning endowed with great power of diffusion, subtle arrangements, apparently innocent but profoundly suspicious mechanisms that pursued petty forms of coercion "(139). This brings her to a circumstance where she discerns herself in a claustrophobic position inside the high ceilings and off-white walls. As far as the decision-making power in the family is concerned, Kambili is as though a prisoner in the Achike house, and she is given derogatory status even in her family.

Attempts have been made in the studies to explore the concept of Biopower in *Purple Hibiscus*. Biopower is the practice of institutions and modern states for the regulation of subjects. It is observed that Eugene exercising extreme control over the family members is a form of biopower. Moreover, it also emphasizes the indirect forms of control over the body of an individual, and it also attempts to impose regulations on women's bodies. An incident that is directly related to Kambili's stillness unfolds inside the classroom as she is deemed among her classmates to be a backyard snob, and "Kambili is always expected to wear skirts and dresses to conceal her legs because any vanity was considered a sin" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 123). Likely, Eugene aims to take away the autonomy of the women entirely as his orders turn out to be an intense form of repression.

This idea was criticized as Ehijele Femi Eromosele says, "Eugene's callousness is couched in the garb of religion, and in his view, anything that draws attention to the body or makes it attractive to look at is considered sin" (100). Harsh

punishments were imposed upon the family members for violating Eugene's dictum, and Kambili even owned Mama's silence in the mundane lives inside the household. 'Finding Her Voice' review states, "Adichie deftly captures the awkwardness and confusion of a fifteen-year-old whose self-consciousness is only beginning to bloom" (10). It is apparent that Kambili inhabits a society where a woman's worth comes from her capability of fertility, and they were part of the society where girls are taught from childhood to make the cloth of their lappa into a kite-like shape so that a point of it goes between their legs to cover their sex. Ifeoma, Eugene's sister, had made attempts to encourage Kambili to wear trousers, and she believes it is sinful according to her nurturing and upbringing, as it contradicts the dictates of Papa Eugene. The authoritarian figure in the family, Eugene, decides on Kambili's clothing choices and the methods by which the characters in the text become incapable of finding their voices and speaking for themselves within the household.

The isolation from the outside world makes Kambili and other family members hapless victims of domestic violence. Eugene even employs timetables for his children and family to regulate their activities, and he maintains discipline and order by insisting they observe the exact timetables. Hence, in the case of Eugene, he has created a panoptic mirror for the family members, and calculated violence was imposed against those who disobey and violate the rules. Rules were strict even inside their dining room, where the family gathered for meals, and he even controlled and supervised the schedules before they proceeded to stay at Ifeoma's house. It has been observed that Jeremy Bentham elaborates on a prisoner who either beats his head against the walls of the cell or stirs up disturbances through noise. This context of the prisoner is comparable to the various phases of the violence endured by the family members inside the Achike household.

The dire repercussions of the father figure Eugene's sense of conduct become visible in the entire text, and it aids in assessing Eugene as an abusive tyrant demanding flawlessness from family members. His abominable disposition in the household exposes the inhibited lives of the family members inside the walled compound. Papa Eugene attempts to shatter Mama's figurines. Kambili is terrified by fear of blaming Papa for this incident, as she states, "I meant to say I am sorry that Papa broke your figurines, but the words that came out were, I am sorry, your figurines broke Mama" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*, 18). Another incident emphasizing Eugene's regulation mechanism becomes the burning of Kambili's tongue with the love sip, which explicitly reveals Eugene's oppressive rituals and her unquestioning obedience.

Papa sat at the table and poured his tea from the Chinese set with pink flowers on the edges. I waited for him to ask Jaja and me to take a sip, as he always did. A love sip, he would say, and Jaja would go first. Then, I would hold the cup and raise it to my lips- one sip. The tea was always too hot and burned my tongue; if lunch was something peppery, my raw tongue suffered. It did not matter because I knew that when the tea burned my tongue, it burned Papa's love into me. Papa did not say, "Have a love sip"; he did not say anything as I watched him raise the cup to his life. (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 9)

Analysing and expanding on Eugene's aggression, it is realized that he imposes continuous violence and abusive behaviour in his household, and even his love sip towards Kambili becomes the representation of authoritarian exploitation. All the insights and intriguing experiences of Kambili aid in assessing Papa Eugene's authority in the family, and Eugene considers the love sip ritual to be a reassurance of his love towards Kambili.

The differentiation between the fifteen-year-old protagonist and her sixteen-year-old brother is paramount, as Jaja mutely protests despite the time or place; in contrast, Kambili's silence is the focal point of the novel's commencement. By tracing the intellectual progress of the character Kambili, the muteness and acute pauses become evident in the narrative, and her quest for autonomy proves to be an end to the profound aggression she endures within the household. In the course of the narrative, Kambili observes her father's face turning to be swollen, tainted, and oily, and it becomes the reassertion of the distinctive traits of violence evident in him. Kambili's silence is deeply rooted in Papa Eugene's destructive authority, and Kambili breaks the prolonged silence imposed upon her at the end of the narrative. The responsibilities imposed upon the shoulders of the women in the household have likely ruined Kambili's perspectives on life as they reflect the concept that ideologies can be repressive, leading Kambili to live in alarming stillness and silence. "In the essay '*Can the Subaltern Speak*' by Gayathry Chakravathy Spivak, she refers to the established male society as giving women a secondary position along with the stereotypical silencing of African women, the unprecedented hardships, and the subjugated position given to them. "For the figure of women, the relationship between women and silence can be plotted by the women themselves; race and class differences are subsumed under that change" (288). The subaltern cannot articulate, or instead, they cannot protest as they are the source of adaptation.

The voice of the subaltern in this context is the language of the African women and the voices of the silenced in particular. How women identify themselves depends on how society identifies them, and it emphasizes Kambili's ineptitude in communicating and expressing herself. It also sheds light on the enslaved position and the abusive side of the oppressor. Kambili experiences trauma in identifying her

individuality, and it is found that Kambili becomes a prisoner in the suffocating spaces of her household. Another incident in the novel emphasizes the various dimensions of violence and brings to attention Kambili's internal struggle. When Kambili failed to attain top marks in school catechism texts, Eugene penalized her, and the intense pressure coerced by Eugene in Kambili's life later turned into humiliation and suffering. When Eugene loses his temperament, it is observed that Kambili senses danger beforehand, and she feels suffocated, tongue-tied, and choked inside the household. A series of incidents in the novel is taken to expand on multiple forms of violence carried out by Eugene. When Kambili shared her room with Papa Nnukwu, Eugene poured boiled water on Kambili's feet as if he were experimenting. Eugene also scoured her severely when Kambili broke the fast before attending the mass in the church.

The boiling water that he poured on Kambili's feet identifies the extent of distorted forms of violence in the Eugene household, and in another circumstance, Kambili states about Eugene's punishment that her whole body fell in little packets. The burning of my feet was climbing up, in swift courses of excruciating pain, to my head and, hips and eyes. Papa was holding me with one wide hand, pouring the water carefully with the other. I did not know that the sobbing voice – I am sorry! I am sorry! "Was mine until the water stopped and I realized my mouth was moving and the words were still coming out.

(Adichie 138)

It is essential to recognize that the traditional gender roles reinforce gender-based violence in Eugene's household. Papa Nwuku's portrait is kept protected and concealed from Eugene's vision by Kambili. Eugene destroys it and beats Kambili

into an unconscious state, and she feels deprived of a virtuous relationship with their grandfather.

The portrait of Papa Nnukwu amplified Eugene's rage, and Ifeoma's daughter, Amaka, painted the portrait. Yet, that turned out to be futile, as the pieces of painting that Eugene has devastated symbolically convey Eugene's fury and the intensified wrath in the restricted household. The previously stated female characters of Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* have experienced the threshold of torture, tolerating various forms of violence within the household. Beatrice has approved Kambili to eat on the Eucharistic fast day; later, Eugene whips the vulnerable and helpless child again, as stated by Adichie thus: "It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm. He swung the belt on Mama, Jaja, and me" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 73). It likely tends to Kambili deep into depression and trauma as once Kambili becomes unconscious due to Eugene's physical assault, "the kicking increased in tempo... the stinging was raw now, even more like bites, because the metal landed on open skin by my side, my back, my legs. Kicking. Kicking. Kicking. Perhaps it was a belt because the metal buckle seemed too heavy... more stings. More slaps. A salty wetness warmed my mouth. I closed my eyes and slipped away into quiet" (Adichie 148). When Kambili consumes the cereals before the mass due to period cramps, Eugene becomes enraged with Kambili and beats her with a heavy belt.

Dipping legs in hot water, a series of domestic violence, and the master-slave relationship become a pattern of behaviour within the household as Eugene completely exploits the power vested in him. It is essential to note that numerous junctures of the narrative bring on the ache and trauma endured by Kambili, and it

presents Eugene's family as the microcosm of the state-sponsored violence in Nigeria. It could also offer sufficient insight into Eugene's character, thereby observing an individual's mastery to dominate and have authority over another individual, employing violence as a tool.

Against this backdrop, it becomes pertinent to examine the institutionalized forms of oppression experienced by Eugene toward the character Jaja. This becomes an attempt to apprehend the ingrained quietness in the lives of the family members in the context of the violent incidents unfolding inside the Eugene household. Jaja had a sacrificial role from the initiation of the text, and later on, the expertise he gained from Nsukka empowered Jaja in multiple ways. One of the incidents of violence related to Jaja is his finger being cut off from his left hand when he was ten years old, and it turns out to be the indication of the trials of Eugene to make the body of Jaja a disciplined subject. "Papa threw missal at Jaja; it was not just the figurines that came tumbling down, it was everything." (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 14). The refusal of Jaja to attend the communion intensifies Eugene's rage, and missing the hit to Jaja shatters Mama's figurines into bits. Jaja's refusal to attend the church and later being a protector of Kambili from Eugene's punishments becomes the complete revelation of Jaja's identity shift. Papa Eugene cannot tolerate Jaja's denial of attending church as it entirely infuriates Eugene. The missile thrown at Jaja hits the glass etagere and sweeps the ceramic pots of ballet straight onto the floor. Jaja's fingers became disfigured due to failure in the catechism examinations as Eugene punished Jaja with his heavy belt. "When he was ten, he had missed two questions on his catechism test and was not named the best in his first Holy Communion class. Papa took him upstairs and locked the door. Jaja, in tears, came out supporting his left hand with his right, and Papa drove him to St. Agnes hospital" (153). It becomes apparent that a

considerable degree of violence inflicted on the body was experienced by Jaja in *Purple Hibiscus*. Eugene tossing the missal at Jaja proves to be an action stemming from the act of compulsion. Adichie states that religion is a tremendous force, so easily corruptible, yet capable of doing incredible good, and she turns out to be both progressive and reformist in her religious perspectives.

Jaja had rebellion and defiance, and the name Jaja was that of the stubborn king who ruled during colonial times. The study thereby analyses the subtle rebellion in the character of Jaja, who moves away from being the neatest junior boy in school and ultimately becomes someone who rebels against Papa Eugene's ideals. Apart from Jaja, it is observed that the female silence becomes continuous in the narrative, and the literary framework becomes the representation of the intersecting points of power, gender, and race. Adichie endeavours to articulate the docility and exploitation of the female body as observed in the characters. It can be argued that Beatrice's multiple miscarriages and their apprehensive lives internalize the mental anguish experienced by them. Religion is employed as a mechanism to impose violence as it becomes evident that Eugene instructs the children to perform sixteen novenas for the forgiveness of Mama Beatrice for her miscarriage. It is further apparent that Mama Beatrice endures miscarriage due to the physical abuse of Eugene, and she tolerates violence in silence, becoming the representation of the ideal African woman notion.

Even amidst the materialistic privileges and financial stability, the detrimental family environment turns out to be a prison for Beatrice, "Papa did not sway often. His swaying was like shaking a bottle of coke that burst into violent foam when you opened it" (Adichie 210). The removal of blood from the floor becomes the indicator of the loss of Beatrice's baby, and Beatrice endured multiple miscarriages and severe health deterioration in the course of the narrative. Apart from Kambili, Beatrice and

Jaja had suffered from physical and mental turmoil at the hands of Eugene, and it reached the point where Eugene even broke a table on his pregnant wife. Beatrice suffers a miscarriage from the savage treatment of Eugene.

"God is faithful. You know, after you came and I had the miscarriages, the villagers started to whisper. The members of our Umunna even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people had willing daughters, many of whom were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons, taken over our home, and driven us out as Mr. Ezendu's Second wife did. Yet, your father stayed with me, with us. Papa deserved praise for not choosing to have more sons with another woman, of course, for not taking a second wife" (16).

Eugene is an individual who is dislocated from his Igbo culture and traditions. Eugene chooses not to be with another woman, and the concept of a second spouse is considered a meritorious aspect of society. The study emphasizes the women characters often becoming the victims of patriarchal hegemony, as observed in Kambili and her mother Beatrice, and they were often penalized for the slightest deviation from the defined norms.

It brings forward various patterns of physical violence and torture directed towards Kambili and Beatrice. It is evident that Eugene beats his wife even for the most trivial reasons; he has punished Beatrice for not visiting the priest due to morning sickness.

"Mama slid down to the floor. She sat with her legs stretched out in front of her. It was undignified, but I lowered myself and sat beside her, our shoulders touching. She cried for a long time. She cried until my hand, clasped in hers,

felt stiff. She cried until Aunty Ifeoma finished cooking the rotting meat in a spicy stew. She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the chair seat. Jaja laid her on a mattress on the living room floor" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 174).

In another instance, it becomes apparent that Beatrice cannot bear the physical torture and severe beatings from Eugene, and to move past this trauma, she polishes the figurines of the etagere, and through the act of polishing the figurines, Beatrice tries to maintain normalcy in her life in the household. The numerous miscarriages Beatrice had in the yesteryears and the ill-treatment of Eugene towards Beatrice become the reminiscences of the conflict endured by them, and the violation of any of the rules ended up in physical assault in their household. Psychological stress and anxiety in the abused environment often led to silence. The character of Beatrice becomes the representation of the stereotypical image of African womanhood as even amid an economically privileged life; their life continues to be chained and confined.

Kambili's father's supremacy over her mother's body makes her perceive that women experienced assaults and violence towards their bodies in various forms, such as kicking, slapping, flogging, repression, and abuse. Intellectual violence and gender abuse revolve around their household, and the narrative turns out to be nonlinear as it represents the trauma of the body. In the present study, the significance of female relationships becomes evident in the course of the narrative as Collins says, "Black women's effort to construct individual and collective voices involves black women's relationship with one another, friends and family interactions, as mother, daughters, sisters, and friends to one another. Thus, female friendship helps black women struggle against the effects of patriarchy. It provides them comfort and security" (Collins 112). It is inevitable to note here that there is resilient attachment and rapport

between Aunt Ifeoma and Beatrice as Ifeoma endeavours to save Mama Beatrice from the harrowing life that she belongs to, and on the contrary, the bond between Beatrice and their servant maid, Sisi is also strong.

The study also undertook an examination into the framework of religious extremism that has often resulted in violence and stillness inside and outside the family household. Violent outbreaks in the name of religion in Nigeria, turns out to be the mirror image of contemporary society. Moreover, Eugene adheres stringently to the dictums and statements of the church, and he rejects to cater to the demands of his aged father Papa Nnukwu. It ends up being two opposite poles as Eugene follows Catholicism becoming a staunch Christian, in contrast Nnukwu holds on to traditional religion adherently. Papa Nnukwu detests Christianity whereas Eugene loathes traditionalism and religion turns out to be an instrument in the backdrop of Eugene's missionary education. It is observed that Eugene manipulates his family members and he takes up multiple positions as a colonial potentate, and later Kambili recognizes that Papa Nnukwu is not a heathen but an individual profoundly rooted in his own traditions. Papa Eugene has exercised assertive power over his family members, and he considered his belief systems as civilized. Eugene's hatred towards Papa Nnukwu, often stemmed from being a follower of Igbo customs and rituals. Papa Nnukwu had not converted to Christianity and the blame placed under the pretext of tradition and religion kept Nnukwu distant from the family of Eugene. Papa Nnukwu is referred to as heathen by Eugene due to his traditional beliefs and it has caused a wide divide between Eugene and Papa Nnukwu.

Eugene rejects his own culture to embrace the western ideals and imitated the pagan culture, in the meanwhile, Father Benedict too detests Igbo culture, as he advises Kambili not to be involved in Igbo festivals as the catholic church condemns

them. Father Benedict's ideologies are operating within their community to abolish Igbo culture, traditions, and festivals. Father Benedict is a white man who pursues religion according to European tradition. Purple Hibiscus becomes the representation of sanctified violence and the text also recognizes the character framework of Father Amadi, who blends Catholicism with the Igbo traditions. Another aspect to be considered in the Eugene household is that religion is used as a means to dominate and rule over his wife and family. Disagreements, verbal conflicts, and physical torture remained being a part of Kambili's family on the pretext of religion. They had their prayer groups, and all the aspects related to the church and religion was given priority in Eugene's family.

Papa Nnukwu adheres to his own traditional roots, ie pantheistic model of religion, and the pantheistic model of religion believes that God and the universe are considered the same rather than separate entities. There is sacredness evident in nature and it is perceived that it interconnects everything. Due to the repercussions of colonialists, the tradition was looked down upon as it made the natives become skeptic about their customs and traditions. Another aspect regarding it is that Kambili has never rejected Catholicism but dismissed the ways by which Eugene interpreted it and priests like Father Amadi gave room for the fusion of Igbo tradition along with Catholicism. Another contention in this respect is that there is a series of conflicts between Papa Nnukwu and his son Eugene Achike as the western influence made Eugene reject his indigenous culture and belief systems, in contrast traditionalist in Papa Nnukwu worked on pursuing the ancestor rituals and beliefs. Peiman Amanollahi Baharvand states thus “For Eugene, Papa Nnukwu is an ignorant boorish old man worshipping wood and stone, hence a heathen whose company might corrupt Kambili and Jaja” (45). It is observed that Eugene continues to punish Kambili for devoting

time with her grandfather as Eugene ordered her not to communicate with her grandfather.

These observed patterns of Eugene repudiate his own African identity and heedlessly becomes the follower of the west and he becomes an *omelora*, meaning the one who does for the community. Uchechukwu p. Umezurike states that “*Omelora* is usually a chieftancy title in Igbo community confers on any man who has distinguished himself through philanthropy” (566). There is further, a series of contrasts between Father Benedict and Father Amadi as Benedict is a white man from England whereas Father Amadi integrates Catholicism with Igbo traditions. Father Benedict imposes on conducting prayers only in Latin in the church, as for him, religion becomes a tool of oppression and dominance. In the perspective of Eugene, religious hypocrisy becomes apparent. As the church praised Eugene and simultaneously, he imposed stringent rules over the family members in the household. It should also be made clear that priests in the missionary school punished Papa Eugene, and he followed the same methodology and dictates in his own family and thus, he can be called the typical product of the missionary education. The religious dogmas exercised by Eugene include confessions, rituals, rites, and services deeply rooted in Catholicism. This indirectly brought the dissent towards Igbo culture in Eugene. And it becomes visible in Kambili’s school as they were restricted from singing the national anthem.

The driving force for Eugene turns out to be Catholicism, and he submits himself as a loyal catholic servant and it becomes the replica of the oppression during the colonial period in the name of religion. It is apparent that Catholicism is employed as a tool to take individuals under the strict dictates of religion. Anthony Chennells states that, “*Ifeomas’* s God transcends the religious divisions of different cultures”

(21). Aunt Ifeoma chooses Catholicism, yet simultaneously respects and values Igbo songs and prayers. Chinasa Abonyi, Chinonye Ekwueme states that “Their parents represent an upbringing of missionary parenting and caregivers – no wonder they are unable to empower their children socio-culturally” (14). It is observed that *Purple Hibiscus* turns out to be a genuine text as it significantly poses threat to the existing patriarchal norms and it exposes the power of hegemony in the mundane lives of African women. The approach of Ifeoma posits that she is a woman of intellect, endurance, and rebellion and she trains Kambili to be a resilient and affirmative woman. When Kambili and Jaja proceeded to reside with Aunt Ifeoma in Nsukka for a short period, they recognized that Ifeoma's family was in stark contrast to Eugene's family as Kambili felt it hard even to smile and laugh in her own home.

In contrast to the rude and aggressive behaviour of Eugene, Ifeoma laughs at the schedules prepared by Eugene and throws the timetable away. Equated to Kambili's home, Aunt Ifeoma's home is precisely the opposite, all brimming with loud and absolute laughter, exactly the reverse of the routine of artificial silence in Kambili's home. Adichie attempts to distinguish between the family setup as it evidently points towards the shift in the perspective of both the families. When Kambili reaches Ifeoma's home, she is astonished by the sound of Ifeoma's laughter since Kambili had never heard it before. It is apparent that the patriarchal symbol of violence was explicit in Eugene and Eugene's household deemed silence as sacred and Godly in contrast, in Ifeoma's home, Amaka had her mother's loudness, enthusiasm, and vigour.

The women belonging to Aunt Ifeoma's family are unapologetically liberal whose laughter had floated upstairs to the living room and they had their freedom of expression, words, and laughter. It has been substantiated by Chinasa Abonyi,

Chinonye Ekwueme that “Aunty Ifeoma and her children enjoy an equilibrium or good complementation of autonomy and dependency evident in their freedom of expression and socialization” (10). Religious extremism and tense environment persisted to be a part of the Achike household whereas, on the contrary, Aunty Ifeoma's friendly environment was not drenched in fear and terror. "Laughter always rings out in Aunty Ifeoma's house, and no matter where the laughter comes from, it bounces around the walls and all the rooms. Morning and night prayers were always peppered with songs, Igbo praise songs that piece the width of two fingers pressed together and the length of half a finger" (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 100). Father Amadi senses personality of Kambili and compels her to be less critical and be more self-assured about her own self. This emphasizes on the fact that Eugene and Ifeoma addressed the indigenous culture in radically distinct ways. “Peiman Amanolahi Baharvand also asserts that Ifeoma tries to modify the misrepresented concept of indigenous culture for Kambili and Jaja. She does not hesitate to correct the inaccurate image of Papa Nnukwu” (47). It asserts that Aunt Ifeoma and their family had followed a tolerant form of Catholicism compared to Eugene's outlook of religion as he regards himself as the product of colonialism.

In the backdrop of Ifeoma's home, it becomes pertinent to assess how Kambili is amazed at Amaka's smooth and carefree way of speaking. Speech refuses to flow out of Kambili effortlessly, as she used to talk in whispers. She says, “I wanted to tell the girl that it was all my hair.. but the words would not come. I wanted to talk with them, to laugh with them so much that I would start to jump up and down in one place the way they did, but my lips held stubbornly together” (Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 149). The rules and dictates Kambili followed in her household make it challenging for her even to speak as Kambili and Jaja had been conditioned since childhood to

become more silent, and the children were trained to do so right from an early age. The study assesses how Eugene's authoritarian power creates docile bodies, as he maintains order and discipline by adhering to moral codes and strict control. In the present study, Ifeoma compares Nigeria to a tiny baby that crawls. In contrast, others walk as the collective trauma of the women in the patriarchal system turns out to be continuous in the text. The family members inside the Eugene household are denied the autonomy to argue, protest, and even raise their voices. Eugene's expectations of his family are substantially distinct from the wishes of his family members. In contrast, he is generous towards his church, and he ultimately becomes a colonial product, imposing a colonial regime in his household. It can be observed that Ifeoma's household embraces Kambili in all ways; it values her, and she begins to smile, speak, and laugh in Ifeoma's home.

Despite the physical and emotional torture within Eugene's family, Kambili seeks an elusive freedom in Aunt Ifeoma's home. It indicates a world outside the dictatorial system, as Eugene's principles constantly put absolute control over individuals in the household. It seems to shed light on Ifeoma's family bonding, which fosters Kambili's little mind, and she recognizes the spaces of growth and conversations. Kambili practices Christianity and has assimilated the traditions of the Igbo. Ifeoma takes the children to the Aro festival, an Igbo parade of masquerading spirits, and gives children rays of hope. In the context of their family, Ifeoma had an upbringing similar to Eugene, yet she became broad-hearted and tolerant in her spirits. By allowing the representation of the Igbo culture, Ifeoma raises her three children as a single mother, and she works as a lecturer at the University of Nigeria.

Ifeoma inspired Kambili to discover her individuality and ascend from the patriarchal framework, transforming it into an assertive woman. Ogaga Okuyade says,

"In Ifeoma's house, everybody can say anything, provided elders are not insulted. This enthusiasm with which discourses are introduced and sustained is not only mind-boggling to Kambili but also causes consternation in her psyche "(Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* 252). Aunt Ifeoma is self-efficient and awakens Kambili's individuality by setting an example of how women exercise liberation in Nigeria. Strehle postulates that "the walls of Kambili's home serve a symbolic function, identifying the disciplinary boundaries that separate, repress, and police, keeping order and marking divisions between Eugene's immediate family and the rest of the world" (Strehle 107). Ifeoma's home had broad spaces, permitting openness and transparency, and it turned out to be a wake-up call for Kambili and Jaja. Aunt Ifeoma lives on the ground floor of an apartment block, owns a garden with flowers, and has considerable enthusiasm for the colour of flowers, observing their warmth and the comfort of the unique purple hibiscus. The experimental purple hibiscus in Aunt Ifeoma's home represents a cultural clash, and the flower blooming in Aunt Ifeoma's garden gives Kambili a symbol of autonomy and hope. It posits that the red hibiscus represents Papa Eugene's dominance and authority. In contrast, the purple hibiscus reflects freedom and liberation, as purple is the amalgamation of blue and red, representing diversity. Purple Hibiscus is found in warm tropical regions, and it cannot tolerate too much water and does not prefer dryness.

Red hibiscus in the Kambili's household typifies the unassuming lives of Kambili, Beatrice, and Jaja, and purple hibiscus in Aunt Ifeoma's home is the representation of a hybrid society as it had the loose threads of freedom that it carried. As stated by Dina Yerima- Avazi, "Hybridity in *Purple Hibiscus* is the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone created by patriarchy and elements of misogyny" (122). The *purple hibiscus* symbolizes the potential and capability of

being a girl glowing in an indifferent and hostile environment, and it portrays Kambili's spiritual, emotional, and intellectual progress in the narrative. The purple hibiscus that Jaja had planted in Aunt Ifeoma's garden is symbolic of peace and freedom in the family as well as in the political structure of the nation.

Writers and literature have become authoritative tools to transform human minds and challenge the existing gender order. It is analysed that the regulatory and authoritarian powers hinder the characters' journey toward personal growth and maturation, forcing them to adhere to religious principles. From the silent, shy fifteen-year-old girl, there is a recognizable shift in the character of omniscient child narrator Kambili as she learns to question the principles of the household. The psychological trauma and hardships in making her own decisions become evident in the character of Kambili, and through the child narrator, Adichie exposes the patriarchal subjection of women in Africa. The resilience of the human spirit is questioned, as it often intersects with class and race, and Adichie tries to break down the stereotypical systems that identify women as appendages to men. Adichie projects the preferred place for women in Nigerian society, and she reexamines the binary oppositions of gender in *Purple Hibiscus*. It is observed that the yearning for liberty becomes evident in women's livelihood despite deep-rooted oppression, confinement, and subjection. In the present study, the language of the traumatized body communicates the physical and emotional pain of the resistance struggles and the cruel saga of punishments by Eugene. In addition, Kambili's eyes enunciate the spirit of survival as Adichie focuses on the cycles of oppression and suffering of the body, and she brings the crossroads between the perpetrator and the victim.

The study's main finding emphasizes the journey of Kambili, the characters' hardships to define and redefine herself, and the continuous violence inflicted upon

her inside their family structure. It becomes pertinent that the controlling framework of characters like Eugene becomes the primary source of violence, and it is an attempt by Adichie to equate Eugene with the decision-making figures in the patriarchal family setup. The focus of the study identifies that the emotional trauma of the women characters in the novel is passed on from generation to generation as all of them, including Mama, Kambili, and Jaja, were not allowed to assert their feelings, and Eugene's complexities and authority became supreme in the Nigerian context. The characters of Adichie identify with the obdurate patriarchal system and the unrest in the country, and Adichie perceives the complexities of the dominion of masculinity in women's lives. Representing the human struggle of the other is envisioned in Adichie's narrative, and as in any continuum, *Purple Hibiscus* exhibits the reticence of the female voices.

Chapter 2

Tracing Roots of Violence in the Nigerian Milieu

Chinua Achebe narrates the chronicles of the times through the seminal text *Things Fall Apart*, and he made an indelible impact on the literature of Africa through his narratives. Chinua Achebe's prior statement on the social responsibility of the African writer was made in a lecture entitled "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation," delivered to the Nigerian Library Association in 1964. This certainly goes back to the 1960s period in African literature, and this phase was dominated by authors such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiongo, and Elechi Amadi, and they analysed the disruption of the traditional phase of life in the light of colonialism. The narrative becomes an exceptionally readable work of fiction as *Things Fall Apart* represents disintegration, disorder, and disruption, and the ubiquity of trauma and oppression is predominant throughout the text. In one way or another, the pertinent reason for anguish was the conflict between whites and blacks over black oppression, which gave the African writer a substantial challenge.

Achebe reasserts that the role of a writer in Nigeria is to emphasize the harrowing issues in their homeland. He authored the text *Things Fall Apart* to offer his people the pride they had and to protect their sense of belonging, pride, culture, and heritage. Chinua Achebe is placed at the intersection between two orders, western ideology and the precolonial African. "Emmanuel Obiechina suggests that the novels of Chinua Achebe illustrate the statement that 'life is chaotic, but art is orderly' (39). Occasionally, Achebe attempts to recall the collective traumas of the native individuals from the colonial masters. Patrick C Nnoromele had tried to address that in the novel, "Achebe portrayed people who are now caught between two conflicting

cultures" (157). Achebe strives to observe Africa from the perspective of an independent observer, and he mirrors the communal existence, communal harmony, and the normal conduct of life in the work *Things Fall Apart*.

Achebe has been called a chronicler, as he has given rise to a renewed pattern of African expression. He unfolds the untold human experiences, the consequences of the African encounter, and the rage with the colonizer in the text *Things Fall Apart*. This chapter turns into an analysis of the encroachment of white men into the African culture and their profound involvement in the post-colonial and socio-cultural perspectives of the African community. Achebe's text *Things Fall Apart* reminisces about the Igbos' culture and tradition and the community's cultural ambiguities. The narrative considers the historical overview of the Igbo culture and the nature of the precolonial Igbo society. *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is an archetypal modern African novel in English. The research study carries the notion that the colonial powers have exploited the natural resources of the land and have suppressed the indigenous cultures and values as their priority was to reshape the identities of the colonized. The European arrival disrupted the Igbo's complex belief systems, leading to further clashes and divisions. The natives in their society were considered outcasts, and the religious divide was enforced entirely by the white culture. To engage in a comprehensive evaluation, the connection between native and colonial law is investigated in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and the setting of the novel is the Ibo land, which is now a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Heinemann publishers widely publish the work, which has been extensively read and studied in academic disciplines. It takes African literature, cultures, and traditions on a global platform.

The life of Okonkwo, the text's chief protagonist, is briefed in a series of episodic chapters, and the narrative brings about the simultaneous expansion of the colonial law along with the transfigurations in the Igbo land. Excessive pride is evident in Okonkwo's character, and the traditional beliefs and practices they follow emphasize the tensions and insecurities in the heart of Okonkwo. Psychological, physical, cultural, and symbolic aspects of violence are reflected in the text in the light of colonial power and authority, and all these facets of violence turn out to be the representation of Igbo masculinity. Okonkwo often had the urge to exercise his manliness as the conservative society he lived in had placed a strong assertion on the masculine traits of an individual.

The changing belief systems in their lives made the natives challenge the traditional patterns of culture. The subtlety of the text gives insights into the culture and convictions of the Igbo community and incorporates the systems of law practiced in the land. Postcolonial theory arose as a critical literary approach in the later half of the twentieth century, and it has been framed around the concept of resistance. The ideas clarify that postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon deeply engage with the psychological effects of colonial domination. The current study moves one step ahead in rereading the notions of the political philosopher Frantz Fanon. Fanon was born on the western Island of Martinique, and it is apparent that the racism and aversion of the French towards Algerians made him revolt against French rule. He exemplified the racial intolerance of the French, similar to that of other European powers. This is closely scrutinized to comprehend that the approach of the French towards Africans, too, was racist, and Fanon brings about the aspects of collective catharsis in his work, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon considers the juxtaposition of the white and black races, and he examines the distorted relationship between the oppressor and the

oppressed. It gives us insights about Frantz Fanon, who engages in a society saturated in social and economic injustices. The economic exploitation, the authoritarian culture of repression, and the internal conflicts and complexities in the African milieu are studied in the purview of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*. They signify that the collapse of the traditional Igbo society and the aggression and chaos are analysed in light of the psychological impact of colonization using Frantz Fanon's theory. This assesses the apprehensions of the colonialist intervention and examines the oppressive customs and victimhood of civilians in colonized Nigeria.

Fanon speaks elaborately about the psychological effects of colonialism in his writings, and he often terms violence as a cleansing force. *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon is a seminal work published in 1952 that reverberates on the impacts of the colonial gaze and the psychological impact of colonialism on the black population. Furthermore, it is noted that *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) is another text by Fanon that emphasizes the psychological trauma inflicted by the colonizer on the colonized's mind and body. As in literature, Chinua Achebe seeks to reflect on the myriad perspectives of the socio-political conditions prevailing in Africa, and the writer endeavours to revitalize the African culture, tradition, and customs of the Indigenous people of Africa. Chinua Achebe, the globally acclaimed Nigerian novelist and professor of Brown University, was born in Igbo in the town of Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria on November 16, 1930. Chinua Achebe expressed his emotional response and sentiments through his stories and narratives, and he considered the land's culture sacred and pure. Chinua Achebe began learning English when he was eight years old, and Achebe joined Saint Philips Central School in 1936. He was an exceptional student and entered the highly prestigious Government College in Umuahia in 1944. Meanwhile, he initiated writing practices during his university learning period and

served as a teacher at the University of Nsukka, Nigeria. At the university, he had changed his English name, "Albert," to the Igbo name Chinua, an abbreviation for Chinualumogu, meaning 'My spirit comes to fight for me.' In essence, Achebe's inspiration in writing was the Nigerian writer Cyprian Ekwensi, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) appointed Chinua Achebe as the staff officer in the school in 1956.

Chinua Achebe also endeavoured to interpret African folk tales, and he recognizes his capability in Igbo language and storytelling on his journey ahead. The imposition of western ideologies upon traditional African society came across as a source of trauma for Achebe. "Christopher Anyokwu renders that the Igbo traditional society and culture was a phallocratic one like most cultures and societies worldwide" (22). The distortion of African values and social order and the conflicts that surface when western culture confronts African society were notable in Achebe's eye. Achebe and his friend Christopher Okigbo initiated the Citadel Press publishing company. Further, he became a professor of English at the University of Nigeria in 1976 and held the post till 1981. It can be perceived that Chinua Achebe had an everlasting legacy in African literature and received numerous honours in this respect. As mentioned, the honours include the Rockefeller Grant in 1960, the Fellowship of the Modern Languages Association of America and Honorary Doctorates in the University of Stirling and Southampton in 1974, the Scottish Arts Council's Neil Gunn Fellowship, and the Nigerian National Merit Award in 1979.

Several scholars and critics have expressed their views and perspectives on colonialism. Chinua Achebe reiterated the necessity of rupturing the colonial expansion that has shattered the identity of Nigerian society. Achebe had always placed the traditions of Africa first. The rational representation of Africa and the

restlessness in its population continue to resurface in Achebe's works. In this regard, Achebe persevered in bringing his society back from self-abasement and oppression, and he strived to revive the lost dignity of his people. His intention at this point is evident as Chinua Achebe states that before the European colonial powers entered Africa, Igbos had a doctrine of remarkable depth, value, and beauty; they had poetry and dignity.

Of course, there are legitimate themes for the writer, but as far as I am concerned, the fundamental theme must first be addressed. This theme is that African people did not hear of culture from Europeans for the initial time, that their societies were not mindless, and that they frequently had a philosophy of great depth. (Achebe)

Chinua Achebe emphasizes the ignominy and trauma the Africans had experienced from time to time. "Emmanuel Obiechina proposes that *Things Fall Apart* illustrates Achebe's assimilation of the principle of conflict as the balancing of many-sided traits – personal character traits and social traits" (42). It establishes that Chinua Achebe represents a period of transition that the Igbos had passed through before and after the arrival of white men, as the colonial struggles emphasize the troubled relationship between the colonizer and the colonized people. Further, it holds that European colonialism was considered an onslaught on the African identity. "Kwaku Larbi Korang renders that the narrative persona Achebe creates to retell the story of Okonkwo and Umuofia is a time traveller into the past" (25). The Eurocentric claim is that Africa had no history or culture, and a new mode of resistance was inevitable for Africans to encounter colonial oppression. The colonial ideology of the British insisted the native Africans to negate their black identity and assimilate the

white culture, as this text turns out to be a cornerstone in learning the psyche of the perpetrator, i.e., the British authorities.

The study proposes that Western influence and ideologies threatened the orthodox values of life in Africa and that conflict persisted between recently converted Christians and the natives in Africa. Chinua Achebe sensed that time would aid Africa in recovering from the invasive cultures, and alongside it, he emphasized re-educating African society from their past, which had been disparaged by the whites. As a discerning critic, it is evident that the frustration-aggression theory is one of the seminal theories on aggression, and it has been utilized to elucidate the examination of human behaviour. Dollard and Miller proposed the theory, and frustration is perceived with the occurrence of an instigated goal response. It is apparent that aggression becomes one of the repercussions of frustration, and the proposed study clarifies that the competition between multiple parties or groups results in the root cause of frustration. This theory can also be learned in order to explain aggression in societies, as the episodes of long-term frustration further lead to violence.

This was intricately bound to the notion that when human beings are prevented from succeeding in their aims and objectives, resultant frustration leads to aggression. Referred as a dry area of study, it results in inflicting violence on another individual or society, and it leads to socially intolerable behaviours. As noted, the aggressive traits within the living environment can also be a causal factor for the intensity of the frustration in the individual. Recurrent slave-based behaviour presented toward Africans was the initial step of the colonialists' satisfaction with being a superior power. "John Morrissey opines that Imperialism is a system of power, political, economic ascendancy, and cultural subservience, envisioned from the

center of extending nation-states and differentially experienced in colonial spaces worldwide”(88). The nucleus of Chinua Achebe's text *Things Fall Apart* is based on the protagonist Okonkwo and the colonial expansion within the period. "Jeffrey Meyers posits that Achebe's prior and best novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), reinterprets the European view of African culture and history prevalent since the zenith of imperialism" (25). The narrative also documents the protagonist, Okonkwo, who constantly yearns to establish himself by believing he ought to be successful.

Achebe observed that Okonkwo became the most exceptional wrestler in nine villages, marrying three wives, farming successfully, and proving himself in war by leading tribal battles. Everything turns out to be evident in Okonkwo, including his authoritative masculine behaviour and physicality, which are often employed as masks to cover his fragile nature. "Okonkwo was tall and massive, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a frank look. He breathed heavily, and it was said that when he slept, his wives and children in their houses could hear him breathe" (Achebe 8). Okonkwo had a slight stammer; whenever he was in a state of rage and could not get his words out swiftly enough, Okonkwo would use his fists. This is once again an assertion that the fame owned by Okonkwo lay in solid achievements, including being the champion and bringing honour to the village from former times. Patrick C Nnoromele says that "sometimes Okonkwo acted as if he was answerable to no one, and at other times he was the opposite" (152). These instances can be seen in the text, where Okonkwo boasted of his power and authority and was among the esteemed leaders in the Igbo community of Umuofia.

Okonkwo's harrowing tale emphasizes the anarchy and disorder within the clash of cultures. Jude Chudi Okpala states, "Okonkwo's life represents a contradiction; his life represents one who has arrogated to himself the power of the

non-physical being and who has forgotten the power of chi" (563). They observed that Okonkwo had anxiety about the effeminacy of his son Nwoye as it reminded Okonkwo of his father figure, Unoka. "Unoka, his father, was a drunkard with only one wife, not many yams, and no titles to his name by his death" (Achebe 6). The village had named Okonkwo's father Agbala, a term Igbo use to refer to women and men who have not taken a title in the community.. Unoka's misfortune and evil spell carried him to the grave. Christopher Anyokwu posits that "in *Things Fall Apart*, Unoka is derogatorily referred to as "agbala," that is, women" (21). He further says that while Okonkwo, his scion represents the "male" principle, Unoka stands for the "female" (20). The argument exemplifies that possessing more than one wife, producing more yams, and defeating the most muscular man in a wrestling match are considered to be masculine signs in the Igbo culture. Further, it is alluded that people often laughed at Okonkwo's father as he triumphed in borrowing more and piling up his debts, and he could not bear the sight of blood. This conveys that no title was given to Unoka even after his death, whereas Okonkwo was celebrated as the triumphant wrestler in the nine villages.

Okonkwo never inherited any titles, wives, or barns from his father figure, Unoka, and there are instances of deep-rooted insecurities in Okonkwo whereas, there is the resolute idea of success on the other side. Patrick C Nnoromele argues that "Okonkwo wanted to be a hero. Unfortunately, the road to heroism in the Igbo's belief system is chronically fraught with varying difficulties" (148). Further, it can be elucidated that Okonkwo's lifespan is governed by fear and the phobia of being considered fragile and vulnerable, as he is intimidated by failure and refrains from all his father's qualities. "Emmanuel Obiechina states that "Okonkwo has been so skillfully described that we are not likely to forget him and his weakness as the story

moves forward" (41). Therefore, Okonkwo's numerous titles and honours emphasize his internal conflicts and totalitarian behaviour. It is perceived that Okonkwo had detached thoughts in his cognitive process, and he took the macho benchmarks in all the endeavours that he carried out. Okonkwo's woes commence from the point when he becomes brutal to Ikemefuna, the young boy who was brought from Mbaino village in exchange for killing one of the Umuofian women.

Achebe aptly observes that Okonkwo is a valiant warrior who has brought back fire human heads from wars and drinks palm wine. Patrick C Nnoromele raises the concern that "a hero should be impervious to emotions. The narrator told us that Okonkwo expressed no emotion except anger" (152). Besides the anger, it becomes apparent that Okonkwo remained passive and indifferent among his children, wives, and other family members. Okonkwo's rage flared up when his youngest wife failed to come back to cook the afternoon meal; even amidst the sacred week, he punished her severely. The reader is presented with Okonkwo's physical strength and aggressive body language, which becomes evident through the wrestling match. "Emmanuel Obiechina quotes that the wrestling match episode reveals something about Okonkwo's prowess and standing in Umuofia as well as the intimate relationship between the individual and the community" (40). To exhibit Okonkwo's strength, the wrestling match episode in *Things Fall Apart* depicts the vast circle of onlookers, drums, leaders of the two wrestling teams, dancers dancing into the circle, roaring crowds, drum beating, and its resonant rhythm. The atmosphere was filled with sweaty bodies, tightened drum skin, and shivering air. Twelve men and two judges remained around the wrestlers, and the muscles on their arms twitched. The wrestling matches between the men of the village and the adjacent villages, and two teams of twelve men challenge each other. The environment enhances the spectators' thrill and

sense of excitement, and this setting becomes a space to flaunt the vigour and physical agility of Igbo men. Okonkwo's ambition towards triumph and the epitome of masculinity is represented through the wrestling match episode in *Things Fall Apart*. The narrative features the stories narrated by Okonkwo, involving violence, tribal war, and masculinity, and Okonkwo has an inflexible and unbending behaviour.

In the Umuofias war, Okonkwo was the earliest to bring home a human head; that was his fifth head, and he was not an older man yet. "Kwaku Larbi Korang states that another masculine attribute Okonkwo cultivates that appears to him objectively to have cultural sanction is intolerance- intolerance for persons who are socially weak" (18). As he succinctly states, Okonkwo exposes masculine traits of assertiveness and violence, and anyone who deviates from the masculine norms and dictates is considered to be effeminate. Patrick C Nnoromele says "a hero, in the Igbo cultural belief system, is one with great courage and strength to work against destabilizing forces of his community" (148). The study would then scrutinize Okonkwo's life as it is entirely devoted to his masculinity, and Okonkwo himself has matured, witnessing his father's unfulfilled position in Igbo society.

The narrative framework emphasizes that Okonkwo entirely regulates individuals in the household; he becomes aggressive towards his wives and other members and considers Nwoye effeminate. "I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but he has too much of his mother." Expressing compassion to another individual is perceived by Okonkwo as lacking in manliness, and Okonkwo wishes Nwoye to be a rugged and aggressive individual who will thereby take over his mastery. Okonkwo desired Nwoye to be aggressive towards the women in the household as they assessed that a man incapable of ruling his women and children was not considered a strong man. It can be noted that as the patriarchal structures

reinforce the gender roles in society, aggressive masculinity traits progress over time within their culture. Patrick C Nnoromele states "Okonkwo had a scrupulous desire to fulfil his obligation to society, but he often realized that it only brought him to a crossroads of conflicting loyalties" (150). In a comprehensive sense, the supremacy of aggressive masculinity devalues women and causes harmful societal imbalances at the same time. The relationship between power and masculinity will inevitably be identified to gain further insight into the behavioural patterns of society. The men who do not exhibit solid masculine dominance but gain privileges of the patriarchal system tend to fall under the complicit masculinity conception. "Kwadwo Osei-Nyame asserts that Okonkwo's masculinity becomes a defensive resource and his adherence to a masculine philosophy will henceforth order his world" (151). Hegemonic masculinity relates to a dominant form of masculinity, the recognized way of being a man by society.

Hegemonic masculinity often gets correlated with men's behavioural patterns, shaping them into aggressive and indifferent individuals and further allowing for the collective superiority of men over women. Raewyn Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity becomes a framework for assimilating the concept in society. Violence often turns out to be a prominent factor in imposing hegemony upon an individual, and the chain of patriarchy loses its essence when the next generations do not fall on par with the early generations. The thesis becomes an attempt to unfold the hegemonic masculinities functioning within the framework of families. Here, Achebe recognizes the potential authority of the colonialists on African soil. In this regard, he observes that the colonial powers had the goal of giving Africans a renewed identity, and the colonialists treated the colonized through the lens of oppression and humiliation. Colonialism refers to acquiring full or partial control over another

country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. As Caribbean writer "Lamming (1965) once wrote, The colonial experience is a live experience in the consciousness of these people" (Lamming 12). The Eurocentric claim is that Africa has no records or culture of their own, as the Europeans looted almost in its entirety, extracting a wide variety of natural resources through economic exploitation. The colonial expansion was deeply rooted in the racial and cultural superiority of the colonizer, and it became the representation of the harsh reality of African people being subjected to all kinds of indignity.

Colonialism ultimately transforms and shifts the entire aspects revolving around their lives, including their beliefs, traditions, language, and identity, and it imposes Eurocentric culture on the soil of Africa. When the colonizer attempts to substitute the culture of the colonized, further conflicts between the Igbo and the British harm the civilians, i.e., the colonized sect of people, to its complete capacity. The study stresses that it affects the inner tranquillity of the colonized sect, taking away their sense of identity and freedom. In all probability, the colonized perceived Africa through cultural prisms, as Africa had bulk natural resources, including timber, tobacco, cocoa, and cotton. The colonized was considered disgraceful in the colonial eye, and they attempted to civilize and expand the traditional African society.

Achebe's Igbo chronicles are examined by contrasting their culture's perfections and imperfections and analysing the Igbo aspects, including superstitions, sacrifices, and the livelihood of women. The colonial powers considered Africa bestial, and the colonizers utilized their language, education, and available resources to dominate and take control of the colonies. In this regard, Africans were perceived as savage creatures in their homeland by the colonizers, and the Europeans created an ideological crisis and inferiority status in the thought process and consciousness of the

native Africans. They had represented Africa as being dirty and impure. It becomes evident that the colonial propaganda of the British was to destroy the framework of resistance of the native Africans, thereby developing a regime of control establishing domination over the lives of the natives. This brings in the idea that history brings the colonized as a confused set of people, sceptical of their sense of belonging, and from this phase onwards, Nigeria was prone to the British political structure.

The women in the Nigerian household were considered enslaved people, and they were given inferior status and inhuman consideration. To expand on this further, marriage was perceived as a sacred institution, and polygamy was considered as the legitimate right of a man to have multiple partners. The notion can be extended thus, as Igbos preferred the extended family system. The paternal figure of the household can be considered the chief disciplinarian of the family, and females are perceived as possessions and objects in the domestic household. Therefore, this perspective can be precisely viewed as marriage becoming the conjugal union of men and women from separate families through the performance of rites, and marriage bestows reverence not only to the man but also to the women in the union. Irrespective of the union, women often experience intolerance and insecurities in marriage, which eventually lead to inequalities in the family framework as well as in the social structure.

In the marriage system, the first wife often had privileges in their culture, such as authorization to take the husband's titles. As observed in *Things Fall Apart*, Anasi wore an anklet, consenting to the titles. It is to be noted that Ekwefi is the second wife of Okonkwo and the mother of Ezinma, and Ekwefi surrendered herself to unending suffering and misery. Ekwefi had given birth to ten children, and nine of them had died in infancy; the sequential deaths of the children led Okonkwo to the medicine man, the diviner of the Afa oracle. As uttered by the medicine man, "The child was an

ogbanje, one of those wicked children who, when they died, entered their mothers' wombs to be born again. When your wife becomes pregnant again, let her not sleep in her hut. Let her go and stay with her people. In that way, she will elude her wicked tormentor and break its evil cycle of birth and death" (Adichie 74). "David Hoegberg renders that the two main rituals that constitute the Igbo response to Ogbanje – the mutilation of the dead child and the search for the iyi- uwa offer violent and nonviolent approaches to the same problem"(76). "Jude Chudi Okpala also states that Ogbanje means something that returns; it is also translated as reincarnation" (564). It posits that Ezinma is the only child who survived ten pregnancies of Ekwefi. Okonkwo had all the ancestral doctrines etched in him as he screamed at Ezinma, Ekwefi's daughter, to sit like a woman, and she brought her legs together. The narrative also documents that Ekwefi, Okonkwo's second wife, advises her children that even fire does not burn them as people mature. It is pertinently expressed that Igbos offer considerable value to the framework of family, and Ekwefi often had a cherished space in Okonkwo's heart. Ekwefi is renowned for her attractiveness and grace, and she ended her marriage to become Okonkwo's wife. Okonkwo has more admiration for Ekwefi.

The study would then reflect on the marginalization of female characters, as evident in *Things Fall Apart*. The framework of the family system often attempts to regulate and control women's bodies and consciousness through various forms of domestic violence. Silence merges with the narrative as this becomes a representation of the anxiety and suffering of Okonkwo's wives, and silence brought by the colonizer in the lives of the civilians also becomes evident in the text. This can be aptly explained by Okonkwo's wives' maintaining their huts, a compound enclosed by thick walls and boundaries. Okonkwo possessed the authority to control and punish his

wives. During the week of peace, Okonkwo punches his wife as a punishment for the violation of social and religious rules, and simultaneously, patriarchy becomes perceptible, and it is how men consider women as a part of their acquisition. To refer to this concept, maltreatment towards his wives and children by Okonkwo is enunciated in the narrative. "During the week of peace, he will not stop beating his wife, not even for the fear of Goddess" (Achebe 31). In another instance, Okonkwo punishes his second wife, Ekwefi, with the banana tree leaves, and when she fails to prepare the afternoon meal, Okonkwo beats her ruthlessly. It seeks to analyse that he punched her in the routine episode of rage, and thus, his anguish was satiated.

As Okonkwo violates the sacred week customs, he is instructed to sacrifice to the Goddess. In carrying this out, the priest imposes a fine of one she-goat, hen, and cloth as inflicting punishment on someone during the week of peace/ sacred week is an offense against the Goddess of earth. "Florence Stratton says, Women in *Things Fall Apart* are depicted as mere objects circulated among their male folk and systematically excluded from the political, the economic, the judicial, and even the discursive life of the community" (25). In the Igbo society, punishments were considered to be severe as a person arrested for robbery would likely be stripped naked, his body rubbed with charcoal, and he should carry with him the stolen possession and march around the village in broad daylight. The family system becomes the root and foundation of the Igbo system, and Umunna becomes the cornerstone of Igbo society; there are family heads, membership of the council of members, and local legislators of the Igbo community. It is to be noted that the priest is considered the mediator between the two worlds to keep the sacred stance of the community. The study would then examine the white missionaries who replaced Igbo courts alongside theirs. In doing so, the Igbo customs were taken over by the

colonialist intervention, and various social changes were occurring in the Igbo society following the arrival of the white missionaries. This seeks to analyse the fact that when the traditions and rituals occupy a crucial role in the life of the Igbo people, colonial supremacy ruins their customs and belief systems compared to the evil forest, chi, and their conventional rules.

Chinua Achebe considered his prior challenge as revitalizing the society based on their cultural past. The Europeans considered Africa's indigenous language and traditions uncivilized and barbaric, and the Igbos had unwavering faith in chi (Personal God). They opine that the personal God has the power to figure out the fate of an individual, as the devotion and offerings to chi are a part of the Igbo tradition. Igbo culture was not flawless, but the invasion of colonizers carried with it a long-lasting scar on the Igbos. There is a set of dogmas carried by the whites, who have constructed their churches and established themselves through their dominance. These shared features often point to the slow decline of Igbo culture and values. "Diana Akers Rhoads posits that The Igbos, on the other hand, have developed a democratic system of government" (63). The chapter would then look into the trauma occurring in the traditional societies as they have a culturally inferior status assigned to them by the colonizer. The ways by which the colonialists degraded local people and their culture were perceivable through the arrival of the missionaries. "Emmanuel Obiechina says that this society is suddenly confronted with rival institutions and the new order to which they gave rise. A conflict develops in which the old order and the new are engaged in a deadly struggle for ascendancy" (43). Okonkwo's effort to drive the white missionaries out of their land becomes futile, and there is a series of conflicts occurring in the community. The new converts, including Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, adhere firmly to their revived faith and belief system. "Despite Mr.

Brown's effort to disclose to the villagers that they are required to learn English because they are now possessed by the District Commissioner and other white missionaries who only communicate in English, the villagers remain resistant to educating their children (Achebe 128)". Achebe's parents had been converted to Christianity and were inextricably related to it. In contrast, his grandparents were passionate believers of traditional culture. "This proposes to single out and critically examine Achebe's principal concern in two of his texts, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, as it seems to be initiating a new religion and its disillusionment in the society" (Alimi 121).

Okonkwo, along with his wives and children, later moved to his mother's relatives in Mbanta during the period of exile from Umuofia and the eldest surviving member of the family in Mbanta, Uchendu, greeted Okonkwo during the phase of refuge in his motherland. Achebe asserts on the hard labour of Okonkwo and their family members to build a new farm, and Okonkwo's exile in Mbanta had been an expertise for him. Patrick C Nnoromele proposes that "Okonkwo saw his sojourn to Mbanta as a training experience in the wilderness" (154). At the same time, the arrival of white missionaries had entirely divided the people of Umuofia into Igbo followers and followers of white missionaries. White missionaries were firmly opposed to polygamous marriages, and they prohibited Christians from engaging in such an act. "Okonkwo utters: -We shall all live. We pray for life, children, good harvest, and happiness. You will have what is good for you, and I will get what is good for me. Let the kite perch, and let the egret perch, too. If one says no to the other, let his wings break" (16). To Okonkwo and the people of Mbanta, the missionaries were considered mad; the missionaries and the colonial administration had gotten out to establish themselves in the Igbo land they had. The rooted heritage over the past decades, and

for them, introducing a new religion was equivalent to questioning the existing consensus. Irele points out that “Okonkwo’s misfortune is rationalized as a symbol of Okonkwo’s refusal of the new order, as well as the collapse of the old order” (171). The clan disregarded those men who then converted to a new faith, and Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, also adopted the new spiritual path, renouncing the Igbo faith. “Nwoye says: -He is not my father” (Achebe 144). The transitions also stem from the strong bond between Nwoye and Ikemefuna, as deep within the impressions of Nwoye, Ikemefuna was his brother and a family member of Okonkwo. A solid bond was felt between Nwoye and Ikemefuna, and the moments they shared were always close to Nwoye's heart.

The eventual fate of Ikemefuna even creates a void in Okonkwo's heart as Okonkwo becomes involved in the sacrifice of Ikemefuna. The death of Ikemefuna becomes an offering on behalf of the society, as human sacrifice is considered to be an Igbo custom. David Carroll states that the death of Ikemefuna is a turning point in the novel; the boy's guardianship was a mark of Okonkwo’s hard-won status and the highest point of his rise to power (303). The grave consequences that result from it only point out that Ikemefuna had fondly loved the members of the Okonkwo family, and his death signifies the beginning of Things falling apart in the Igbo clan. The process indicates that the ritual sacrifices in the Igbo culture are considered the chief aspect of their traditional worship, and the chants and incantations accompany them. It is to be mentioned that they sprinkle blood during the sacrifices and conduct rituals, which become the offering to the spirits and form a part of the local religious customs. It is headed by the eldest family member / ofo holder, and the ritual objects like palm wine. The sacrifices are made to ward off evil spirits, and it is passed on from one generation to successive generations.

Nwoye seeks hope and purpose through Christianity, and there are visible signs of fragility and vulnerability in Nwoye, as perceived from the perspective of Okonkwo. Okonkwo desired Nwoye to possess aggressive and masculine traits, and he intended to enforce robust macho traits in him. Eventually, Nwoye's conversion to the new religion and adoption of the name Isaac make him a different man altogether. Nwoye's internal conflict and psychological dilemma become evident in the text. The analysis of the text through the lens of Nwoye brings in new perspectives on the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Nwoye's conversion to Christianity signals the shift towards the new culture and, thereby, the disruption of the indigenous values and traditions. The collapse of the Igbo culture becomes evident in the aftermath of the arrival of Western imperialism, and this leads to their aggressive triumph over the native African culture. The long-term frustration and disillusionment of the characters in *Things Fall Apart* exemplify the various forms of violence they endure in various facets of their lives.

With the power exercised by the European colonizers, they had their Igbo customs and practices by threatening their native cultures and beliefs altogether towards the civilians, as observed in *Things Fall Apart*. At this turn, there is physical and verbal abuse in the community, and there is an internal conflict between new and old values and beliefs. It can be critically examined here that there is an ongoing friction and clash of cultures between the villagers and the church. The intervention of the new colonial government upon the established patterns of life forces the natives in the Igbo culture towards repression. In this very sense, those villagers who supported the colonial rule were greeted warmly, and those who resisted it were intimidated. During this turn, when Okonkwo attempted to be the regulating force dominating all the aspects revolving around him, it became the fate of Okonkwo, and he ended up in

exile. Gradually, Okonkwo becomes an outsider even to his people and friends; even Obierika destroys “Okonkwo's property as Uchendu says: -

Why is Okonkwo with us today? He does not belong here. He is an Exile, condemned to live in a strange land for seven years, and thus, he bows with grief. Obierika is a trusted ally to Okonkwo, and he has the guts to question the traditional strict practices of the tribe. He is reasonable and rational, and he does not advocate violence. He is willing to conform to change, whereas Okonkwo's will is irreversible. (Achebe 88)

During the period of exile, Obierika sold yam seeds to Okonkwo and handed over the earnings from the selling to Okonkwo, offering guidance and assistance during challenging times. Through analysis of the Igbo community's religious, social, and judicial systems after the arrival of missionaries, it is observed that Okonkwo's effort to drive the white missionaries out of their land was in vain, and the history made by the colonizer and the history by the native becomes distinct from each other.

Africa's surrender towards colonial policies and the series of repression and violence that succeeded after colonial rule is integrated into the text, and it is undeniable that *Things Fall Apart* is all about collapse, breaking into pieces, chaos, and turmoil. The cultures of several ethnic groups had shaped Nigeria in plural ways in the form of superstitions, myths, and legends, and by the arrival of Western colonization, its values, culture, and conventions were entirely collapsed. The Umuofian tribe pursues mastery over their language and traditions, and they have their own set of priests and medicine men. They had carried within them deep faith in the Agbala oracle, the oracle of the hills and caves, and in the traditional village, they observed their strict beliefs, Igbo festivals, and rituals. To provide more insight into it,

there were the wooden symbols of his personal Gods and ancestral spirits, and the royal python was considered to be a sacred creature by the people of the tribe. It is believed that Amadioha is the God of thunder and Ani is the earth goddess, and they had strong convictions in the spirit of their ancestors. The study would then analyse their religion and faith since it had a significant impact on the natives of the culture. They were also connected to Orthoprax, i.e., the conduct of rituals set within the doctrines of faith. They often considered nature as a merging point of divine and human forces.

Their beliefs, customs, and traditions have been critical in establishing their ethnic identity, and according to them, their ancestors were deemed guardians of their moral frameworks. It is to be perceived that there are no sacred scriptures, and the physical world is considered to be an expansion of the spiritual realm by the religious masters. Altars represent not only Gods and spirits but also are considered channels of power, and their rituals often have the fusion of drumming sounds, painted bodies, and masks. It also posits that shrines are the embodiment of sacred spaces, and the Yoruba people of Nigeria constitute the vast ethnic group in the populated sub-region of West Africa. They believe that Olodumare is a significant part of the dynamics of the universe and that Igbo shrines are dedicated to the water spirit, Mami Wata.

The sculpture of Mami Wata is the water spirit that is worshipped in their culture, and she is the water spirit with long flowing tresses—the lower half of her body being half woman and half fish. There are 401 divinities in the Yoruba pantheon, and the secondary divinities are the local deities and spirits. The Yoruba diviner is called the Priest of Ifa. The Igbo Ikenga is a significant symbol of the Igbo people, a human with horns and Babalawo being the father of secrets, and they performed ritual sacrifices for their protection and well-being. During Okonkwo's tender age, the

priestess was a woman referred to as Chika, and when Ezinma is unwell, Okonkwo pleads with Chiele, the goddess, for the healing process and well-being of his daughter. Ani plays a significant role in the yam harvest as they continue sharecropping and possess barns, and Okonkwo built his barn at a very tender age. “Christopher Anyokwu asserts that “the Umuofia’s experience of time and the ceaseless movement of the seasons is principally regulated by the various stages in the cultivation of yam” (24). They grew crops, such as beans, coco-yam, and cassava, and when harvest turned out to be unfortunate, many of the farmers were driven to suicide due to the devastating loss of the harvest.

In contrast to the massive loss of the other natives, Okonkwo rises to be the clan's Lord as the Igbo community judges a man by the worth of his hard work, and in that regard, Okonkwo is regarded as a king. During the New Yam Feast, Umuofia carries the colour of the festive season and the new yam festival, which usually occurs before the harvest season, and this honours the ancestral spirits and the earth goddess of the clan. It is believed that they throw away the yams of the old year and commence the new year with tasty, fresh yams and vegetable soup, yam foo, and palm wine, which turns out to be the chief food of the feast of the new yam. The uri ceremony that has been a part of the marriage process is seen in *Things Fall Apart*, and the food prepared by the bride's mother is offered to the family members, relatives, and the groom’s family. The process involves jars of palm wine, cooking yams and cassava, and uri, which is the betrothal ceremony. As bride price, goats were given to the in-laws. Obierika's daughter uri was celebrated with palm wine, and they had slaughtered two goats for the bride price ceremony of Obierika’s daughter. There was the palm wine-drinking gathering, and communal practices were integral to the Igbo culture. Kolanuts are the token of readiness for the ceremony, and the elders

conduct prayers. It is stated that he who breaks the kola brings life. There is the kola nut-breaking ceremony, and the groom's family presents the bride with the bride price, a custom that becomes significant in the traditional marriage ceremony.

This states that the groom unveils the bride, and during the union of the bride and groom, prayers are conducted continuously for the couple. While offering kola nuts to the future relatives, Obierika reiterates, "We are giving you our daughter today. She will be a good wife to you. She will bear you nine sons like the mother of our town"(Achebe). The uri ceremony explicitly represents Igbo customs and courtship, and the Igbo society's myths, proverbs, misconceptions, and falsehoods become apparent in the text *Things Fall Apart*. Another circumstance of a bride price ceremony surfaces in the marriage of Uchendu's son, Amikwu, as paying the bride's price and performing the last ceremony becomes a vital part of the process. All family members and relatives from distant villages assembled for the ceremony. Uchendu's eldest daughter, along with the daughters of Uchendu's brothers, were present for the gathering, and the tradition they observed was to be in big circles with the bride at the center holding a hen in her right hand.

In the Igbo culture, the twins were considered a bad omen and treated as supernatural beings, causing devastation and ruin in society. In Yoruba culture, twins were treated with honour and considered to be their parents' rising fortune, in contrast to the Igbo culture, they are considered to represent evil. People of the clan who were adherent to the doctrines considered it a curse, and the parents of the newborn held the earth goddess responsible for the delivery of the twins. The proposed study observes that the evil forest carries with it many enigmas, and those who could not be buried in the land were taken into the evil forest. They also buried people who died of leprosy in the evil forest. This is the point at which the bodies are exposed to violence, as it is

stated, "Every clan and village had its evil forest. In it were buried all those who died of evil diseases like leprosy and smallpox. This was also the dumping ground for the potent fetishes of great medicine men when they died. An evil forest was, therefore, alive with sinister forces and powers of darkness" (Achebe 137). How violence is instrumentalized becomes visible through the evil forest, and they abandon the twin siblings and the deceased bodies in the void of the evil forest. Okonkwo's father passed away with swelling in his limbs, and he was taken to the evil forest after death. There is also the tale of an individual who did not die when brought to the forest, and people tied him to a tree in the forest.

The Igbo elders had granted the plots to the missionaries in the evil forest, and they believed that misfortunes had surrounded the missionaries. Even after seven weeks, nothing had occurred to the converts and missionaries, and since they secured the place, they attained more converts like Nwoye. Those individuals who died of infectious diseases were taken to the evil forest for burial, and the natives showed reluctance to join the church in the early phases but, in due time, joined the missionary sect. The funeral of the warrior Ezeudu, who took three of the clan's four titles, becomes apparent in the narrative, and there were inscriptions on the body with charcoal and chalk, and their clothing was smoked ruffia skirts. It may further be stated that Ezeudu was the eldest male in the village, with a brave heart and four titles, and it was the funeral of a noble warrior. The air was laden with dust and the foul stench of gunpowder. Okonkwo's gun explosion kills Ezeudu's sixteen-year-old son. This examines the crime committed against the earth goddess, and Okonkwo and his family should continue in exile for seven years. From this point onwards, he takes his belongings and moves to Mbanta. The aforementioned actions unravel Okonkwo's destiny as they have carried a blot on his reputation from that of a grappling

champion. Eventually, things start falling apart in Okonkwo's life from this point. The villagers burned Okonkwo's buildings, and animals owned by Okonkwo were killed to cleanse the village purged of sin as Okonkwo had committed an offense against the earth Goddess. They reinstated that Okonkwo's family was to be taken into exile for the following seven years according to the mandates of the tradition, and they set his house on fire, demolishing the red walls and completely ruining the barns.

The men who came to set the house on fire were considered to be the messengers of the earth Goddess as it said; "He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The earth had decreed, and they were an offense on the land and must be destroyed" (Achebe 116). Okonkwo seeks refuge in his motherland, Mbanta, leaving his homeland and taking his son Nwoye away. After the seven-year exile, Okonkwo witnessed the traditional society's rapid transformation into the white man's territory. Along with this, another aspect to be explained is that the suicide of Okonkwo becomes the response to the psychological trauma endured as Okonkwo becomes a victim of his lousy temperament. "For Ogbaa, suicide grows out of Okonkwo's failure to act with sufficient piety towards the Igbo Gods and traditions. At the same time, for Opatá, this is a consequence of the Igbo's refusal to rally around Okonkwo and join him in resisting the British" (Ogbaa19). The narrative draws to a close further with the woeful death of Okonkwo as when the court messengers approach to end the meeting, Okonkwo takes his own life. It is apparent that when the district commissioner arrives at Okonkwo's compound, Obierika says that Okonkwo is not home, and the commissioner demands details

In due course, they figured out that Okonkwo had hanged himself as they came across Okonkwo's body dangling from the tree. "His body is evil, and only

strangers may touch it. That is why we ask your people to bring him down because you are strangers" (Achebe 156). The district commissioner's concern in chronicling the story of the natives of Nigeria turns into the triumph narrative of the colonizer. Patrick C. Nnoromele states that "Okonkwo's downfall is not necessarily due to weakness in character or departed African glories but rather is a function of heroism in the cultural belief systems of the Igbo" (147). As is evident from the close examination of the narrative, distinct phases of frustration arise in the characterization of Okonkwo. As the fifth commandment in the Bible postulates, only God has the authority to determine when man's life shall end and nobody else.

Chinua Achebe goes through the colonial impact in the life of an aggressive man, i.e., the life of Okonkwo, from the outset of the narrative till the end. John Lott and Sandra Lott say, "Several commentators have argued that Okonkwo's failure is due to his character weakness. Many blame it on the fragmentation of the Umuofia society and the destruction of its cultural values by the colonial powers, yet others stress both" (24). The present narrative also brings about the notion that Okonkwo's life was entirely ruled by anxiety and failure. The context becomes evident that Okonkwo is banished from the land for killing a tribesman, and there is a ritual cleansing. Later on, Okonkwo commits suicide, which is an abomination and offense against the Gods. Patrick C Nnoromele says that "his suicidal act was an ultimate expression of the compound effects of his own experiences in his unflinching desire to become a hero" (155). The narrative shifts the tale of Okonkwo from being a man of character and reputation to being an aggressive man with a tragic end because of the flaw in his character. "David Hoegberg posits that stories of Ikemefuna, Nwoye, and Ezinma, along with several smaller episodes, are thematically linked by notions of conversion, assimilation, and the crossing of boundaries" (78). The author has

explicitly stated that Okonkwo, at the end of his life, is buried without dignity and reverence as he commits suicide by taking away his own life. At the Igbo funeral, the body of the dead was scrubbed with camwood dye, and shaving their head was considered an expression of grief; Ikwu ozu further meant the honoring of the dead. They had initiation rites and customs comprising dance, eating, and Igbo masquerades. “Emmanuel Obiechina observes that Okonkwo is defeated.; the personal defeat symbolizes the public defeat of which it is an integral part” (43). It has been proved through the narrator that Okonkwo has been the controlling masculine identity, and what follows is that after his death, he was buried like a dog. “Obierika says: It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offense against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansman. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it” (Achebe 145). Nwoye was determined to join the white missionaries, and he was instructing youthful children in reading and penning. It was uttered about Nwoye thus, "To abandon the Gods of one's father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the very depth of abomination” (140).

Even during Okonkwo's seven-year period of exile, Umuofia underwent a massive transformation as white missionaries had a considerable impact on the people of Umuofia. As seen from the perspective of the colonizers, they brought their government, the court, and court messengers, and they were arrogant (korma, as they were called). The men who protested against white ascendancy were held in detention. They had also pointed out that the court messengers had penalized the prisoners and the detainees as they sang,

Kotma of the ash buttocks,

He is fit to be enslaved

The white man has no sense,

He is fit to be enslaved.

This demonstrates that new regulations, laws, and rules were introduced to guard the missionaries, court messengers, district commissioners, and kotma. Akunna, one of the renowned men in the village of Umuofia, had directed his son to be trained in Brown's school. Likewise, white culture and supremacy had a tremendous influence on many of the civilians.

The study delineates that the new authority, Mr. Brown, had gained eminence, and even if Mr. Brown did not grasp the Igbo traditions, he had never hesitated them; instead, he continued to honour them. Reverend James Smith turned out to be Mr. Brown's successor, and he considered and kept in his consciousness regarding natives as evil and colonizers as peace, as it said, "Whenever Mr. Brown went to Umuofia, he spent long hours with Akunna in his obi talking about religion through an interpreter. Yet, neither succeeded in winning the other or their belief, but they learned more about their dissimilar faiths" (Achebe 126). It can be claimed that Mr. Brown's engagement with the Igbo culture can be considered as the representation of colonial mimicry. It is curious to note that when Okonkwo returned to Umuofia, the native land underwent a severe transformation as the new agency and the European missionaries had entirely altered the Igbo traditions. Kwaku Larbi Korang says, "By the time Okonkwo returns from exile, Umuofia is culturally and spiritually at war with itself" (17). Within no time, the missionaries had continued to establish themselves in the community as the supremacy and values of the traditional culture were entirely challenged by the church, and the white men protected the converts

from the Igbo culture. Christianity had taken complete hold over the Igbo community, and Egwugwu had burned the church in *Things Fall Apart* because a Christian convert, Enoch, unmasked an ancestral spirit and killed the spirit. Further, it becomes evident that the missionaries had set up their hierarchical system and had court messengers and district commissioners as the functionaries. The missionaries had indeed taken over the father's land of Okonkwo. They had established the white government, and it was dissimilar from Umuofia to the one Okonkwo had returned to.

Chinua Achebe pointed out Okonkwo's embarrassment and rage, which are apparent in the text. When the tribes encountered the invasion of the British colonizers, they pushed the battle further to resist the colonial activity on their soil. Significantly, the missionaries headed by Mr Brown summoned the villagers to convert them to Christianity, as Mr. Brown adores the Holy Trinity. Disagreements with the villagers, the act of burning the church, physical abuse, and torture critically expose the hopelessness of the whole context they belong to in the narrative *Things Fall Apart*.

The psychological burdens carried by the colonized become evident, and this is reverberated in Frantz Fanon's works, including *The Wretched of Earth*, *Black Skin, White Masks*, and *Towards the African Revolution*. It is pointed out that Fanon is the purveyor of the transitional truth, and he perceives the unresolved conflicts between culture, class, race, and sexuality. Moreover, Fanon helps aid in comprehending the colonial power. For him, colonization is the meeting of two forces opposed to each other, where the settler had the continuous tendency to exploit the natives. At this point, it is observed that the negritude writers have shared the black heritage, which was instrumental in Africa's liberation. This is considered a vital road through which Africans had sought to reclaim their quest for authenticity and African culture. The

negritude movement emphasizes the African culture and heritage, and they aim to encourage Africans to reclaim their Indigenous cultures and laws of the land. In this regard, the negritude movement was essential in Africa's quest for identity and heritage as it expressed cultural nationalism and represented cultural and political awakening in the black lives. Aime Cesaire states that Negritude is the straightforward recognition that one is black, accepting this fact and our destiny as blacks, of our history and culture. Homi Bhabha also investigates the idea of colonial discourse in terms of his underlying concepts of 'mimicry.' In order to perceive the standpoint, Homi Bhabha scrutinizes the in-between spaces, and he often draws attention to Mimicry, which is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as almost the same, but not quite (Bhabha 86). It becomes the process by which the colonized imitates the colonizer's culture, behaviours, and language.

Africans had worked in colonial plantations and industries, and the colonial mechanism was aggressive and forceful towards the Igbo natives. The colonialists enhanced the prices of goods they manufactured and dropped the prices of products crafted by Africans, including agricultural products and other raw materials. Thereby, the colonialists restricted the money exchanges from the hands of Africans, and the Africans continued to become impoverished; in contrast, the supremacy of the colonialists was further expanded. It is significant to point out that there was no effort to seek a road network regardless of the expansion of the seaport and the rails. They did not authorize the agricultural and economic integration. Although numerous African colonies had minerals and plantation crops, the colonialists chose them as trading and labour-reserved areas. Another aspect is that European power ensured that everything had been carried out according to the benefit of their home government, and over the period, they have observed that Africa has been the land of their colonial

expansion and exploitation, and perpetrators employ violence as a weapon. Homi Bhabha insists that Colonialism is a touch point between the colonizer and the colonized. “Homi Bhabha sees hybridity as a colonial representation, reversing the colonialist disavowal's effects so that other 'denied' knowledge enters upon the predominant discourses and alienates the basis of its authority” (Selden 228). As is evident from the close examination, the British rule was crooked, and colonizers had exploited the indigenous inhabitants in Africa. As Okafor says, "History has taken the slavery chains from the Blackman's feet to his brains" (15). They address that Europeans often considered themselves educated and civilized beyond debate.

The colonizer asserts power and domination over the natives, shrinking the colonized to a passive position in his homeland. The colonial rule lasted in Africa from 1885 to 1960, and it lasted for nearly 75 years in Africa. The most underdeveloped parts of Africa were into the slave trade initially. As said earlier, they needed to be transported from their country to the demand location, and the yearly allowance of clothing for the enslaved people on the slave trade consisted of two linen shirts, such linen as the coarsest crash towels, one pair of trousers, and a jacket of woollen, put together for winter, one pair of yarn stockings, and one pair of shoes. The enslaved person's entire apparel could have cost up to eight dollars annually, and when these clothes could not reach them, they went naked until the next allowance day, and they looked upon their master with resentment and rage. “In *Black skin, White masks*, Fanon states that. Colonial culture, Fanon argues, teaches its citizens that the only way to be human is to be white. The colonized internalize this. This deeply embedded message pushes them into agonizing psychological position” (Fanon 11). This is visible in the text *The Wretched of the Earth*, where Frantz Fanon attempts to analyse the colonial mindset of the colonizer.

Critics like Moore Gilbert state, “Fanon is a transgressive figure who combines opposition to cultural imperialism with a vigorous defense of culture as a strategy of resistance and a locus of national identity. "The native discovers that his life, breath, and beating heart are the same as the settler's. He finds out that the settler's skin is not of any more value than a native's skin, and my life is worth as much as the settlers” (Fanon 145). It has been evident that Fanon further renders the inferiority complex of the colonized communities and the psychological aspects spinning around the mind and body of the colonized. Fanon transcribed the perceptions revolving around the colonized; thus, The black man was enslaved and allowed to adopt a master's perspective. The white man is a master who allowed his slaves to eat at his table" (11). Fanon elaborates on the essential conflict between the mind and the body of the colonized. It is understood that the colonized are given inferior status and are considered to be barbaric, uncivilized, and savage by the West. “Diana Akers Rhoads states that works such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* see Africans as primitives representing Europeans at an earlier stage of civilization” (63). The critics emphasize that Eurocentrism marginalizes other non-European cultures as it maintains Eurocentrism as the universal standard.

Akpan and Odohodi in Eurocentric and Afrocentric views on the origin of philosophy, stating that “Eurocentrism holds a worldview, which advocates the use of European and United States standards and models, whereas Afrocentrism deals with a specific cultural history that originated in Africa and consists of norms based on which African people judge or measure themselves” (1431). There is often the glorification of European missionaries and administrators to propagate the Western ideas of beauty as Edward Said opines that " Orientalism is a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed, it can be

argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures”(3).

Global coloniality refers to the coherences of colonial practices and conceptions across space and time globally. This seeks to uncover the aspects by which colonialists attempted to assume control of the African administration. Further, colonialism witnessed the accumulation of wealth from the hold of Africa to Europe. The cultural arrogance of Europeans and Africa's plight for liberation from slavery turns out to be the trauma that they were associated with, and it frames the absolute representation of the colonizer and the colonized. Violence frequently manifests in various forms, and the existing study represents the challenges and the power shifts in African society. From time immemorial, different forms of violence have been experienced by the Africans, and it took the form of British colonialism, French imperialism, Portuguese oppression, and exploitation through direct and indirect rule. In addition, they reinstated that there was a massive exploitation of human beings in Africa through various forms, such as human trafficking and slave trade, political instability, religious tensions, and unfair taxation. It becomes apparent that the mental and physical well-being of women has experienced harm in the process, and the detrimental impact of aggression often leads to vicious cycles of repeated loops of violence. This brings out the notion that there is violence inherent in the oppressor's language, leading to the collapse of the existing social order.

The framework specifies that domestic violence becomes apparent in the text *Things Fall Apart* as a series of violent conflicts that make Okonkwo a heartless human being, and there are internal conflicts inside Okonkwo. The silencing of women becomes noticeable in the text as physical violence, and the practice of

polygamy has pivotal significance in the narrative. The reading of the Igbo system points towards denying women's freedom within the community. There is a vital need to identify that women in *Things Fall Apart* turn out to be silent in the narrative, and they never seem to challenge the colonial authority and the Igbo traditions at one point or another. The existence of women in *Things Fall Apart* itself has a subservient position in the deeply patriarchal Igbo society as the culture that they are a part of is inherently destructive concerning women, and it is evident that there is an obvious distinction between male and female gender roles. Ritual sacrifices and punishments become a part of communally sanctioned violence, and ritual sacrifices become apparent in *Things Fall Apart* as strong evidence of the cultural violence in the community.

The violation of cultural principles in the community often leads to cultural anxieties within the narrative, and the inability to adapt to a new environment turns out to be a psychological damage and trauma experience about the character of Okonkwo. As Achebe has elaborated, Okonkwo consistently feared being perceived as Unoka by the Igbo community. When Okonkwo becomes a man of decisiveness, mental scars follow him, leading to breaking ties with interpersonal relationships. Okonkwo emphasized rigid masculinity, and when returning to his native land, he experienced dissociation and disconnection from the native land and lost his authority, turning himself into deep frustration. These attributes point towards the thoughtless violent actions from the side of the protagonist, Okonkwo. The close reading of the texts and Okonkwo's actions emphasize the anarchy and aggressive demeanour, and the blind actions of Okonkwo and their long-term repercussions eventually affect him. In this context, Okonkwo resorts to impulsive actions, and Okonkwo's death itself becomes an abomination in the Igbo society. Frustrated and desperate, it specifies that

Okonkwo ultimately destroys himself through suicide as his influence has waned in his community, and deep down in his heart, he had the impression of being an unsuccessful man. The pressure of Igbo institutions and the masculine order observed in the Igbo community often indicates Okonkwo's rigid approach to life. Reinstating this fact, Okonkwo's trait of placing his success above all the other dimensions of life becomes evident in the narrative, and there are occurrences of a deep rift between the family members, often leaving Okonkwo without strong family ties.

On the other hand, the perspectives and the approach of the clan toward the death of Okonkwo had turned out to be harsh and challenging. Time and again, colonial representation had often created internal conflicts and cultural erosion, and the transparent narrative structure explicitly represents the disintegration of the Igbo culture. As it weaves through, the Igbo past and the colonial context collapse over one another as the conversion of Nwoye implies the deterioration of the Igbo system and the implication of the strength of the European regime. To put it another way, Okonkwo's incompetence in adapting to change in the Igbo society becomes evident through suicide. The social order often isolates Okonkwo, and the shift in the cultural and religious norms makes it challenging for an individual like Okonkwo to adapt to the shifting environment. The tensions between African and Western ideals can be reflected through the character of Okonkwo as the cultural chaos and disruption become evident in the context. Okonkwo makes attempts to assert his masculinity through his acts of aggression. Despite all that, the suicide of Okonkwo becomes a rigid violation of the customs and laws of the Igbo community. To an individual who considered tenderness a sign of weakness, Okonkwo could not withstand the change in the power nexus in the community. Between these two extremes, there are deep divisions within the Igbo community, and the death of Okonkwo can be equated with

the collapse of the Igbo culture and the simultaneous rise of colonialism. The force of British imperialism carried out the absolute destruction of the clan's unity. It is observed that colonial rule-imposed violence through the expansion and establishment of colonial administrations, new laws, and systems. The new ways of functioning of the Umuofian society turned out to be a challenge for Okonkwo, as the traditions and customs of the land had defined the individual's identity. When they were challenged, Okonkwo felt as if his existence was challenged.

There is a consensus that reinterpreting reality was the choice of the intellectual writers in Africa, and through their writings, they battled against the violent aspects of colonialism. This chapter addresses the challenges of the colonized world through his text, *Things Fall Apart*, as it emphasizes the psychological effects of colonialism on the Igbo people. Moreover, Achebe reiterates the disintegration of Igbo society with the arrival of colonialists as the psychological scars inflicted by the colonizer on the psyche of the colonized become featured in the narrative. The essential claim is that they force the natives to speak the language of the colonizer, as even language becomes the tool of colonial domination and colonial racism. In this connection, the colonizer disconnects the individual from their own cultural identity as colonial subjugation, alienation, and the dilemma of the self and identity crisis of the individuals are evident in the novel. The study traces that striving for their liberation and raising national consciousness was inevitable for establishing a unified nation-state. The study reiterates that the consistent fear of being considered weak is the frustration ingrained inside Okonkwo. Okonkwo's father Unoka's life was considered a setback as perceived through the lens of Igbo society, and Okonkwo's shame eventually leads to frustration and aggression directed toward the other family members and the community. The missionaries in the Igbo land had changed the

whole habitat, making Okonkwo deeply disillusioned as Okonkwo failed to meet the social expectations, leading to disillusionment within him. The phases of self-rejection commence when the colonized attempt to speak the language of the colonizer, and the inferiority complex is created in the consciousness as “Fanon says, Let us have the courage to say it outright. It is the racist who creates the inferior” (108). In this regard, conflict is often experienced by colonized groups as the identities of the natives have always been characterized by the thirst for recognition by whites.

Chapter 3

Mapping the Chronology of Nigerian Violence: A Study of Black Bodies

The war-induced trauma in Nigerian society requires in-depth analysis, and the study converges on the colonial and post-colonial scars of war that have been experienced in Nigeria. The way Nigeria turns out to be a battlefield is traced through the seminal texts *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani. It shifts the varying degrees of violence under the diverse backdrops, and the historical overview of the discrepancies in Africa, along with the traces of the war period in Nigeria, is elucidated in the first part of the chapter. The narratives of survival and the approach by which survivors heal from the trauma of the Boko haram terrorists become the core of the second part of the chapter. Tracing the military dictatorship in Nigeria, how corruption pierces the stability of the state, with constant abuse of power by politicians, and the means through which political tensions mar Nigeria are placed within the framework. This chapter exemplifies the prerequisite to uphold the right to life of an individual with dignity and integrity for all communities. The backdrop of the Nigerian civil war and the trauma of the characters in the narratives seemingly render the psychological aspects of Nigerian society. The Biafran war and the insurgencies of the Boko haram further eventually caused the disintegration of families and the trauma of human relationships.

Deep emotional scars succumbed by the characters can be directly tied to the decades of suffering and mental torture in both narratives, as the common man's space and justice are under threat, and their identity turns out to be in crisis. This chapter investigates how the female body is objectified and traumatized in both narratives.

Even if they belong to distinct historical periods, the dilemma and human disillusionment experienced by the women characters become challenging. Both narratives are based on the backdrop of conflicts, tensions, and anguish, and the characters in both novels experience displacement in one way or another. Primarily, this chapter specifically focuses on the female characters and their trauma and emotional experiences and how the characters attempt to cope with the psychological distress and suffering of the war, along with the inhumanity of the Boko haram insurgents, becomes evident in the narrative. The violation of fundamental human rights by an individual within society becomes apparent in the female characters in both narratives. The human conflict and the atrocities experienced by the characters are directed toward their inner resilience and fortitude. The Nigerian civil war becomes represented in the narratives to an unparalleled extent by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the writer of the narrative.

On the flip side, the agonizing circumstances of the innocent women and children under the Boko haram insurgents have been represented by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani. “Veronica Yumnam and Sangeeta Laishram say, The past of the colonized has been constructed as barbaric or tyrannical, and instead consisted of uncivilized people with an unorganized society devoid of religion or culture of their own” (96). This chapter turns out to be the exploration of the loop of violence revolving around the characters in the family relationships. The bonds nurtured within the bounds of the family are addressed in the narratives, and they point towards distinct voices and perspectives, as reflected in the text. Power imposed upon the characters by the authorities becomes evident in the backdrop. This chapter explores the human rights violations endured by the women characters in the narratives by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Nwaubani in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Buried Beneath the Boabab Tree*.

The history of the rest of the world is mirrored on the African continent, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie narrates the events during the early 1960s with an anachronistic approach in the text *Half of a Yellow Sun*. “Rob Nixon argues that *Half of a Yellow Sun* takes us inside ordinary lives laid waste by the all too ordinary unraveling of nation states”(735). Adichie dismisses the term Afropolitan, and she is willingly African by herself. “Chikwendu Paschalkizito Anyanwu also states that The structure of *Half of a yellow sun*, which takes the memory, is one great testimony of Adichie’s revisionary mission of Achebe’s work” (149). The language employed by Adichie in the novel is aligned with the backdrop of the war, and she honours the nation's collective memory; thereby, this becomes a novel of national concern.

The writers including Adichie can be categorized as the second generation of survivors, as she inscribes, “I grew up in the shadow of Africa... I have always known I would write a novel about Africa” (Adichie). Adichie’s mother's memories and recollections from the past were then passed onto Adichie, and she began to unfurl her writing and career in the United States. She attended graduate school and college in the US. Adichie’s writings shed light on third-generation Nigerian writing and characters from Adichie, who were middle-class representatives. The author made an effort to visualize authentic African stories. Adichie was born after the Nigerian Biafran war; there was seven-year difference between her birth and the Nigeria Biafra war; her developmental process was in the shadow of Biafra, and her parent's substantial losses had occurred during the period of the war of Biafra. Adichie has a profound desire to inscribe the injustices of the civil war, the trauma of the defeated people, and the pain of human existence. Adichie's text represents the emotional turmoil and existential ache of being human. “Most fictional accounts of the 1966-70 Biafran crisis have focused more on the trauma and suffering experienced some

distance away from the battlefield” (89). The concepts in this novel are priorly the personal evidence of Adichie and collective trauma of the nineteen sixties have been penned in the narrative as the “New Yorker has written, Adichie positions herself in the Nigerian literary tradition as a storyteller of generations, of the previous and the present.” It has been perceived that Adichie employs Igbo sentences subsequently in the narrative to make it more realistic fiction. “One purpose of fiction is to present and reveal characters in such a way as to invite moral appraisal. We are bought to enter into someone's character as expressed in feeling and action, and we react to this with various evaluative attitudes – affective and cognitive.” (Colin 3). Adichie employs a fluid narrative style in the novel, and the repercussions of the war are enfeebling the characters' lives as the author traces the character's constraints and challenges experienced in the narrative.

This signifies that the historian and the fiction writer merge within Adichie in the process of writing, and unprejudiced storytelling by the characters of Adichie becomes apparent in the narrative. Okechukwu Ikediugwu states, "Adichie is not a radical feminist. She approaches feminism from the African point of view. Any form of feminism that tampers with the African community is unacceptable to Africans" (10). Adichie had her progressive goals concerning feminism and women's liberty. *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie specifically sheds light on the disillusionment of human ties during war. The novel, written thirty-six years after the war, brings about the inner conflicts and turmoil of the Nigerians during the war period. Adichie's second book, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, was published in 2006, and the conflict era rips apart the essence of humanity beyond repair. Adichie made the moments of insecurities in Nigerian history into a compelling story. To be more precise, her narratives explicate the devastation of humanity caused by the war of

Biafra and the ways by which manifold characters cope with the trauma. “*Half of a Yellow Sun*, in particular, recreates the Biafran war history to celebrate the tapestry of Igbo women’s valour and resilience at wartime” (Ijeoma Njoku, 166). The friction of the early 1960s had led to the war, and it is critical that the ethnic tensions had escalated during the period of war and it further led to the massacres by the Northern soldiers; in May 1967, the secession of southeast Nigeria as the Republic of Biafra came.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Biafran war commenced in July. It was the inception of the war as the Biafran links to the external world got shut down, and federal groups circled the area. Besides that, millions of people died in the Biafran war, and Biafra surrendered to the federal troops later in 1970. The first military coup (January 1966) and the counter-coup in July 1966 pogroms deepened the trauma and agony, and the response to the massacres was the secession and the declaration of Biafra in 1967. Colonel Ojukwu declared the independence of the Republic of Biafra and commenced the Nigerian Civil War from 1967 to 1970s. The fall of Biafra happened when the Nigerian military took over the Biafran forces. It is significant to consider that physical and emotional violence against the backdrop of the war takes a toll on the civilians in the Nigerian land. This elucidates that the war primarily took place between the secessionist state of Biafra and the government of Nigeria. Samuel Fury Childs Daly states, "Crime becomes so engrained in Nigeria’s reputation that it can be difficult to remember that it was not always there” (4). The Igbo’s target to dominate Nigeria led to the massacre of an enormous number of people, and Biafra was declared independent on May 30, 1967. Furthermore, the brutal civil war almost pointed to the death of more than a million people, and almost thirty months after the

outbreak of war and ongoing conflicts, Biafra surrendered, and the battle officially ended in January 1970.

The Biafran civil war was itself an attempt to reclaim the Biafran territories. The war had lasted for almost two and a half years. When the Nigerian government implemented a blockade on Biafra, they cut the food supplies entirely, and the images of the starving population in Biafra became a routine view of the external world in the late 1960s. The chronology of the Nigerian civil war points to the armed violence, the weight of the conflict, and malnourishment as the distinct ways of violence become evident in the narrative. The work *Half of a Yellow Sun* is set in the persistent political instability and the insecurities of war. The devastation and the underlying trauma of the coups of 1966 and anti-Igbo pogroms become merged into the narrative. Right from the declaration of the republic of Biafra to asserting and protecting their identity, the narrative stretches along the prolonged periods of crisis and navigates through the characters' harsh experiences during the war period. In the extended period of military rule that followed Biafra's defeat, famine and hunger became apparent. The disintegration of the community and the intense psychological scars left in the hearts of the civilians become visible in the Biafran narratives.

The post-colonial war narrative *Half of a Yellow Sun* exemplifies the far more complex realities of the war as the turbulent decade of the sixties and the consequences of colonialism in the lives of civilians are presented in the narrative. The displacement and deprivation experienced by the characters in the novel become apparent, and on the other side, the ethnic and regional divisions further escalate the tensions of the land. The male and female perspectives on the war are stated in Adichie's narrative, and the evolution of the domestic spaces and how characters grapple with their identities become evident in the narrative *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The

struggle and challenges of the characters to survive in disillusionment and insecurity essentially point to the catastrophic predicament of the war, along with the traumatic existence of the characters. Boko haram has often challenged the resilience of the human spirit through its operations, and the psychological impact of Boko haram on the lives of civilians causes long-term effects of anxiety in the victims. In the narrative *Buried beneath the baobab tree*, through the perspective of the protagonist, the tensions and the mental strain of the abducted girls become apparent in the narrative. The ongoing crisis of women under the Boko haram insurgency is addressed in the *Buried beneath the Baobab tree* as Boko haram had kidnapped more than 275 girls in the narrative. The internal conflicts and attacks by the Boko Haram men had perpetuated anxiety and fear in the consciousness of ordinary civilians. The intrusion of Boko haram into their lives turns out to be a violation of the fundamental human rights of civilians.

The subsequent terrorist attacks by the organization Boko haram have killed thousands of civilians, military officers, and innocent people, and their ideology itself is rooted in violence. The narrative by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*, exemplifies the insurgencies experienced in the lives of young women in Northern Nigeria. The abduction of countless women, as seen in *Buried Beneath the Boabab Tree*, is entirely based on real-life events, and the time before the abduction and the life following the abduction of the girls evidently point out the trauma experienced by the characters. The Boko haram propagates for the rejection of Western education and the rigid implementation of Islam. “Elizabeth Pearson and Jacob Zenn say that the increase in women being abducted in Niger in March 2019 is consistent with the hypothesis that Bakura was already emulating Shekau in the abduction of civilians, among them women” (18). The proportion and intensity of the

attacks by the Boko haram also point towards the extensive acts of violence experienced by women in the narrative *Buried beneath the baobab tree*. They had considered Western education as a sin and forbidden aspect in society, and the attacks had occurred primarily in Nigeria's Northeast, Northcentral, and central states. Often, these attacks were directed towards women, schools, police stations, and government offices. The organization Boko haram had generated an environment overflowing with anxiety and fear in the narrative *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*, and the acts of sexual violence committed by them also became part of the Boko haram insurgency. The Boko haram in the lives of Nigerian women also imposes the strict version of Sharia law upon them as the abduction of Muslim Islamic women and enslaving them turns out to be a strategy in their operations. Often, the Boko haram insurgents disguise themselves among the civilians, and it becomes challenging to recognize them.

The study explicates that the narrative *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents Nigeria's civil strife. The author employs a third-person perspective in the novel, providing a clear assessment as the four parts of the novel, the early sixties, the late sixties, another early sixties, and another late sixties, wrap the narrative as a whole. The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a feminist revisionism of the historical circumstances and interpersonal connections established during the war period, as narrated in the novel. At a more specific level, the text reiterates the unsteadiness of Nigerian politics and the African system of governance. This points to the Biafran war that was fought between 1967 and 1970, which resulted in the death of more than a million people and left a wound in the history of the nation. "Peter P. Ekeh reiterates that In Biafra, these publics substantially overlapped. Many of those who insisted that Biafra was a diverse, ethnically agnostic state also recognized that it existed because

of what happened to Igbos. Biafra's separate identity could not be understood in isolation from that history" (91-112). In this context, it appears that *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a war narrative set in the immediacy of the Biafran war. The text becomes the women's war testimony. The novel juxtaposes the Biafra of the 1960s and brings about the phases of civilian survival during the war-torn period.

The Biafran flag is the symbol of rebellion as the writer identifies the land's catastrophic loss, burdens, and internal divisions as the further consequence of the war. It is significant to emphasize that the principal ethnic groups in Nigeria are the Hausa Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the southwest, and Igbo in the southeast, and the Igbo attempted a coup in 1966 in January, which was the Igbo conspiracy.

I believe the struggle in Biafra has a significance that ranges far beyond Biafra and has tremendous implications for the African continent. For the first time, indigenous African people have taken their destiny into their own hands and, for a whole year, have been struggling against immense odds and are still going. what else do you need of a nation. (Menkiti 77)

Adichie has noted that several affluent individuals headed to other locations. In contrast, the hapless men struggled in the war, and most of the youngsters in the interior of Biafra had discontinued volunteering. From their lives, it may seem that some of them even poured ash on their heads to make themselves look grizzled, and it signifies the human frailty and the bloodshed during this period of despondency holds a deep sense of uncertainty and despair. In her narrative, Adichie exposes the double trouble of the Biafran war as nepotism, tribalism, and ethnic tensions were in the backdrop, and they encountered issues related to the shortage of weapons in the

Biafran troops. "Samuel Fury Childs Daly assesses The Nigerian civil war is important not only for what it reveals about Nigeria but for the comparative study of warfare" (29). Several factors connected to human life during the war period have been identified. Biafran war led to the death of more than two million people, and it has entirely encroached upon family life, bonds, and relationship dynamics as well.

This, in turn, has led to hardships and misfortunes for the refugees, and the fatality of war has continued to doom the land. Throughout the Biafran war, hostility had encircled them around the corner, which further led to worsened grief in the community. SOAS Christian Aid collections state, "The number of spies and revolutionary plots in Biafra was exaggerated, but the number of strange faces was not. By late 1967, humanitarian organizations estimated that there were half a million refugees for a second time" (93). This specifies that even rape turns out to be an armament of the war period, as rape had chronic trauma and prolonged impact on the victim. During the period of war, violence by the soldiers, even towards pregnant mothers, turned out to be gruesome. The civilians in the war-torn environment were battling, and they had experienced detestation, anger, and deprivation. The characters in the novel shift between eastern and Northern Nigeria in the cities including Port Harcourt, Lagos, Enugu, and Nsukka.

As Adichie has elaborated, the experiences of constant violence and bloodshed had formed psychological scars on the survivors, and there were multiple armed conflicts along with the involvement and interference of external state factors and criminal networks. Given the circumstances, there was competition over natural resources, and they have experienced recurrent phases of oppression in the judicial and legal systems. They pointed out that corruption, even at the grassroots level, and lack of transparency in the system led to persistent inequity and disillusionment. It is

apparent that Nigeria had faced multiple military coups, and in the armed conflicts, there was a consistent occurrence of the collapse of the government system. The civilians were subjected to agonizing pain. When the nation's military took over the power systems and distinct ethnic factions combat against each other, everything resulted in the death of countless civilians, leading to anxiety, political unrest, chaos, and instability.

Differential association theory was proposed by the eminent criminologist Edwin H. Sutherland as this theory explains criminal behaviours, and the rationale for the deviant behaviour exhibited by the individual became evident in 1939 in his seminal work '*Principles of Criminology*.' It elucidates how an individual turns into a perpetrator of offensive crimes, as the learning of deviant behaviour occurs through the communication process and learning it from others. Individuals are constantly exposed to various societal influences and often struggle with the standard rules of conduct implemented in society. There is also the likelihood of respecting a particular group's views, tendencies, and behaviours, and how the group influences the individual's personality qualifies him as a group member.

Time and again, the group's potential plays a significant role in transforming the individual, and the individual learns delinquent behaviour by associating with such groups who violate social norms. These frameworks have confirmed that associations with such deviant groups may lead to adopting their habits and criminal values, and the continuous conflict persists between society and the individual. Even without constant individual contact with the criminals, the behaviours can be learned by listening to their proposals, and constant association with delinquents often leads individuals towards antisocial behaviour. Sutherland's Differential association theory

explains it from the perspective of the individual, and that of the society, and exposure to delinquent groups further contributes to criminal behaviours in the individual.

Political violence turns out to be an attempt to control the forces, and collective violence occurs when the ruling class employs violence to an aggressive extent. In this dizzying period, the rivalry between contestants in the election eventually caused severe political violence in Nigeria as power was the rationale for conflict in Nigeria, and there was constant pressure for political succession. Adichie posits that the Biafra War was a miniature world war in its form, and it was Biafra, the land of the rising sun, which was the republic over which the sun never rose. It turns out that suffering has been an inevitable experience in Africa's battles, and this historical fiction reframes the trauma of the Nigeria-Biafran war. "Judith Herman says that traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely but because they crush the routine human adaptations to life" (78). Biafra became diminished to a single airstrip despite the militarily unfavourable state of affairs, and after two and half years, the Biafran resistance collapsed.

The Igbo people formed the Biafran secessionist movement, and ethnic tensions drove the movement. Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu became the leader of the Biafran state. There was political instability and ethnic friction during the mid-1960s, and it was the failure of the federal government to address the atrocities that accentuated the steps toward secession. "Biafra is an important episode in the history of Africa after independence, but its lesson is portable beyond that context. Biafra shows how the legitimate voice of warfare can bleed into crime." (Samuel Fury 33). The political turmoil resulted in a 1966 coup d'état; five army majors and commissioned officers led by Major Chukwuma K. Nzeogwu overthrew the government of Tafawa Balewa and this coup was understood in the North as an

Igbo attempt to dominate the country. The politicians comprise the Premier of the Northern region, Ahmadu Bello, and military officers such as Brigadier Zakariya, Lt. Col. Arthur, and Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun. The violent atrocity and the military coup d'état become an eyewitness to history.

The countercoup took place on August 1, 1966; the soldiers from the Northern Hausa led the countercoup. This massacre led to the death of around thirty thousand Igbo people, and it was the Igbo pogrom; around one million Igbos fled to the eastern region. During the Biafran war, they employed guerilla warfare tactics, resulting in the displacement of thousands of civilians. The war lasted almost three years and six months, and there were also massive explosions that resulted in the death of a large number of Nigerian troops and civilians, and the plight of the people of Biafra became evident during the period of war. "When this conflict became visible overseas due to the images shown by the media, the international public opinion was shaken, and the great need for humanitarian assistance was exposed" (UNESCO). Witnessing the events of the war, including assaults like rape, had severe repercussions on the lives of the victims. During the war of Biafra, there were young girls whom men gang-raped, and there were heinous crimes against innocent civilians; General Yakubu Gowon declared the war as genocide on the Biafran Igbo people. The recurrent events of trauma had resulted in PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) in the Biafran war survivors.

The trauma caused by the war of Biafra has been buried deeply in the consciousness of the group. Individual trauma experienced during the war period is attributed to personal experiences of violence and loss. The post-war generation of Biafran survivors have experienced immense physical and psychological suffering that has affected their communities. The constant threat of loss and violence

experienced by the people of Biafra is extended to the subsequent generations. The alienation and displacement experienced by the characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is evidence of the perceived marginalization they endured in their lives. “The immediate cause of the war was Gowon’s declaration of a new constitution and its new twelve states on May 27, 1967” (Agaegbo, 2001). They were victims of unprovoked massacres and attacks, and many people were forced to flee from their homes. The persistent anger and frustration came from the forced conscriptions into the war by the families. Many families were separated and torn apart, further leading to the disruption of the family structures. The villages were utterly destroyed, leaving the younger generation entirely disconnected from their roots and traditions. The government offered no assistance for the civilians to rehabilitate themselves; the survivors have unconsciously carried over the trauma to their children, and it left behind loss and pain. They have experienced a collective sense of victimhood amidst the trauma of the war. Nwankwo says, “Biafrans lost the war. Indeed, Biafrans lost the revolution before the war. It also lost survival as a nation. It has left behind an ideal. This ideal remains the only hope for black Africa. What is the hope? Indigenous development and lessons of the war in general” (Nwankwo 92).

In the narrative *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Adichie, she recounts the severe losses of the civil war, and even the characters' relationships were tested. The personality sketches of the characters Adichie brings to light their ideological disagreements at different points in their lives. Olana's arrival in Lagos coincided with the Lagos riots, the ethnic tensions, and the political unrest that caused them. Lagos became a microcosm of the broader conflicts happening in Nigeria. “The journey of Olanna through Lagos street, the train had stopped with a rusty screech. Olanna got down and stood in the jostling crowd.” (Adichie). The riots become the symbolization of the

horrors of the Nigerian civil war. The imagery of the burning house by the mob violence remains in Olanna's consciousness. Lagos was the city in which Olanna grew up, yet the riots had left fear and chaos in Olanna's heart. The riots and violence lead Olanna and her family to flee Lagos, and it signifies the long-lasting impact of the war on the lives of the civilians in the land.

It was Kwashiorkor – a problematic word,

A word that was not quite ugly enough, a sin.

You need not imagine. There were photos

Displayed in gloss-filled pages of your life. (Adichie)

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, it becomes evident that Adanna, Baby's friend, gets caught with Kwashiorkor disease. The disease is caused by malnutrition when the body does not get the required protein. When Olanna meets the child, she provides them with crayfish and dried milk, along with sardines from their new supplies. Adanna's mother believed it to be the condition called Malaria, but Olanna identified that it was Kwashiorkor which had caused it as a result of the extreme poverty and devastation. This condition leads to swelling in legs and feet and, swollen bellies and thin limbs in children. The war had blocked the food supplies to the civilians, including the children, and these conditions accentuated the entire failure of the political system and leadership in the country.

The oil resources were positioned in the South, and Northerners feared domination by the South. It is probably significant that almost one million refugees went from the northern region to the east, and they experienced violence in other parts of the federation, too. Deirdre Lashgiri utters; shifting the vantage point of the subject allows us to see forms of violence that had been invisible or to see in unfamiliar ways.

It is indicative that many of the Igbos had abandoned their lives, as they demanded an independent Biafran nation, and Gowon's splitting of Nigeria had accentuated the tensions and led to the declaration of the independent Republic of Biafra in 1967; weeks later, the war in Biafra was declared. They have historically outlined that the Biafran war lasted for around three years, and it was estimated that there were around three million lives. Bernard Dickson C says about Adichies as Chimamanda Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Chinua Achebe in *There was a country*, henceforth have claimed to have recorded truths of the events leading up to and culminating in Nigeria- Biafra civil war and beyond” (82). The novel inscribes the experiences and dismay of war, the psychological trauma, power abuse, and national security concerns on the one side. In contrast, social inequity and cultural disputes exist on the other side.

The colonization of Nigeria by the British had plagued the nation for decades, and the repercussions of colonialism can be observed both in national and domestic spheres. This concept emphasizes the misfortunes enforced by the Biafran war and the role of middle-class Igbo women during the war, revealing the matrix of female relationships and their deep connection and strength, even during times of conflict. These instances intricately point out that women gain sturdiness individually and collectively during challenging times. Being a third-generation Nigerian writer, Adichie also experiences the perplexities related to the Biafran and Nigerian civil wars, and the first-generation writers had also penned about the hassles and the torment of women trapped in institutional silence during the period of war. “Bernard Dickson C states that “For Kole Omotoso, the Nigerian civil war is the most important theme in post-independence Nigerian writing” (82). The utter confusion of postcolonial Africa and the nation's instability becomes apparent in the narrative, and

the characters in the novel are on a quest for their identity. “Bernard Dickson C also reiterates that “The emotional involvement of the writer in the war privileges history and therefore allows her to express in artistic form aspects of her history” (82). Ugwu, the house boy, narrates the Biafra- Nigeria war tale and not only the narration of the androcentric war experiences; it emphasizes the phases of suffering endured by the women in the novel. Perhaps the most significant aspect is that the characters' battles form the novel's focal point, and the trauma of the couple Odenigbo and Olanna represents the postcolonial crisis in Nigeria. Adichie redefines the bonding of human relationships through the compelling characters in the novel. Notably, Odenigbo's home is the point of discussion of their political debates, where the university intellectuals gather, and Olanna takes up her career at Nsukka University. For Odenigbo, education becomes a focal point to end exploitation by the oppressor, and even as a professor of Mathematics, he had a passion for politics, as seen in the narrative. Moreover, his routine included playing tennis in routine lives. Odenigbo's communication with Ugwu is as follows, "Our world is round, it never ends. This is all water, the seas and oceans, and here is Europe, and here is our continent, Africa, and the Congo is in the middle. Farther up here in Nigeria, and Nsukka is here, in the southeast; this is where we are," he tapped with his pen.

“Why did you stop school?”

“My father’s crops failed, sah.”

Master nodded slowly.

“Why didn’t your father find somebody to lend him fees?”

“Sah?”

“Your father should have borrowed!”

Master snapped, and then, in English, “Education is a priority”. (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 24)

As he progressed through these experiences, Ugwu received education under the guidance of Odenigbo, and he initiated reading and eventually became part of Odenigbo's family.

The character Ugwu commits rape when he is recruited into the Biafran army. He drinks to excess and gangrapes the bargirl, and this criminal act controls the rest of his life. “For Ugwu, the body is not only the vehicle that allows the consummation of sexual longings; it is also used to articulate the unspeakable” (Hillman. 104). As a result of violence and war, there is a split mind in Ugwu as he perceives himself as a victim of war, and the raw sexual aggression of Ugwu becomes evident on the other side. This points out that there is a complex psychological battle and internal conflicts within the characterization of Ugwu “Ruth S Wenske states, “The ability to separate the collective enemy from the individuals who make it up culminates in the episode when Ugwu takes part in a gang rape” (75). He asserts that he becomes a slave to the commands of the other soldiers and Ugwu normalizes violence to the extent that there is the transition from innocence to violence in Ugwu's characterization as is discernible through the sexual assault committed by Ugwu.

Apart from these, the memory evokes a perpetual sense of shame in the perpetrator, and the rape experienced by Ugwu's sister is, on the flip side, the continuous loop of the trauma. The novel commences with Ugwu's viewpoint, which turns out to be a compelling aspect in the evolution of the narrative. Adichie emphasizes the prominence of education, and it was in the hands of Ugwu the power to transform the history of Nigeria. Adichie clearly states that he turns out to be a

soldier during the conflict. He later takes part in the gang rape of a bar girl, “afterward, he does look at her, and she stared back at him with a calm hate,' which is an image that will haunt him forever” (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 444). In such a state, the remembrance of the rape is internalized in his mind as Ugwu's thoughts reiterate, "The war would last just long enough for the Biafran army to gas the Nigerians to kingdom come” (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 221). This points out that the novel has taken up critical issues of identity and individuality, and the historical context, i.e., the period between 1966 and 1970, crystallizes in the narrative. The account of the rape of the bar girl is an explicit assertion of the existence of the rape phenomenon during the period of war, and Ugwu becomes the recorder of the chronicle of Biafra. Ruth S Wenke states thus, “He does not become a bad character because he is seen not only as a rapist but also as a brother, a house boy, a believer, a teacher, a writer; his multiple sides never cease to exist” (76). Ugwu represents the map of Nigeria as his book covers and traces the border of Biafra, and the war represents the uncertainties and insecurities in the Nigerian land.

In the same way, through the characterization of Ugwu, Adichie brings into the glimmer the nature of an individual who commits injustice when brought to justice, and the novel explores the civil war from the perspective of the house boy, Ugwu. In addition, Ugwu also becomes both the target of violence as well as the perpetrator of violence. The narratives also reveal that the rape of Ugwu's sister later becomes a point of realization for him, "The bar girl was lying on her back on the floor, her wrapper bunched up at her waist, her shoulders held down by a soldier, legs wide, wide ajar. She was sobbing. 'Please, biko, her blouse was still on between her legs. The soldiers were cheering" (Adichie 443).

The scarred and bruised body turns out to be the representation of war. The world of Ogenigbo and Ugwu experienced colossal disparities: one was underprivileged, and the other was a place of riches. Christopher EW Ouma states, "Ugwu is, therefore, a product of a composite consciousness that embodies composite memories" (15). Adichie pairs them together, and the harrowing war experiences radiate through their eyes as the African narrative appropriately infuses the cultural disparities and the existential dilemma. In other words, Biafran's hopes, disillusionments, and identity crisis are emphasized by Adichie seamlessly within the narrative, and the political commotion in the novel influences the life and love of the characters, Olanna and Odenigbo, Richard, and Kainene. Similarly, the war-torn environment had entirely changed individuals as well, and it became evident that the young boys had begun consuming and smoking weed and marijuana. Furthermore, children in the camps had one meal a day and even lacked enough water, and all the food supply roads for the Biafrans became blocked by the Nigerian government.

There was an enhanced hunger rate, and it turned out to be a vicious place of violence; there was the beheading of the servant, bombs rolling out of the plane, savagery, Uncle Mbaezi lying down with legs splayed, cuts on Auntie Ifeka's body, the scattered dust and blood, and severe traumatic events had passed through the perspective of Adichie. Bernard Dickson C argues thus, "While Adichie endeavors to come to terms with the reality of the war, she remains committed to the demands of emotional truth by maintaining a non-partisan stance despite her pain" (84). The efforts to flee from colonial exploitation persist in the characters' lives in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Adichie is not biased in one way or another; no matter what, Adichie seeks to be objective instead. The Nigerian civil war, loss of identity, and shared values exemplify the effect of colonialism, and the characters of Odenigbo, Olanna,

and Ugwu hold on to a faint hope of the future of Biafra even during the war period. Moreover, during the war, Richard and Kainene lived in Port Harcourt City, and the fall of Port Harcourt was substantial in the narrative. "The people were bloody beggars; be willing for their body odours, and how they will stand and stare at you. Never show weakness to domestic staff" (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 74). The soldiers had managed everyone with suspicion, and there was a string of attacks in distinct parts of Nigeria, and the armed groups carried out the attacks. Despite the massacre of the Igbos, there were extrajudicial killings, mass burials, bomb explosions, gunfire, and grenades as people had been killed, from ordinary civilians to community heads and government workers. Hearing about the death of Okeoma (a university friend), Olanna felt drained and exhausted, and the events revolving around her continued to traumatize her further painfully.

Half of a Yellow Sun becomes an attempt by Adichie to trace the repressed history of the Biafran war as millions of refugees and vulnerable populations were harmed in the war. Chigbo Arthur Anyadaba says, "*Half of a Yellow Sun* faults the fervent Biafran nationalism that emerges as a response to the genocide" (91). The military government had nothing within its reach other than arms and weapons. Biafran pounds were introduced into the land, and food became scarce in availability; even rice and alternative food products were inaccessible in the market.

He writes about the world that remained silent when Biafrans died. He says that Britain inspired this silence. In the United States, Biafra was under Britain's point of interest. In Canada, the prime minister quipped, where is Biafra? The Soviet Union sent technicians and planes to Nigeria, thrilled at the chance to influence Africa without offending America and Britain...communist China denounced the Anglo-American Soviet

imperialism, it did little else to support Biafra. (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 318)

The grim reality is that children no longer attended schools as they turned out to be refugee camps, and their hygiene was utterly futile as the woman had utilized the water in a bowl to cleanse cassava for several days. The individual who came for carpentry stated that he only desired food, not money. "They got a house with nine rooms, one bathroom, and a toilet; almost everyone in the house was a refugee. There were too many people in the yard; a family of sixteen lived in the room next to Mama Oji, and the bathroom floor was slimy with too much dirt that washed off too many bodies" (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 399). In the refugee camp, Kainene served them food, supplied them with necessary medicines, and visited several children with the kwashiorkor disease, as the lack of protein in their bodies caused that condition. Due to the war, schools were switched into refugee camps and training centers for the Biafran soldiers. One of Ugwu's friends, Eberechi, was sold to a soldier in return for money, and later, she was into prostitution. Nigerian women had been trafficked by human traffickers for prostitution. The traffickers had encouraged women to engage in prostitution as Madams recruited young women, and they prompted them to chant traditional oaths to make the victim subservient. Various forms of human trafficking encompass internal trafficking, international trafficking, transnational trafficking, labour trafficking, and sex trafficking.

According to Women Refugees UNHCR, Africa has one-quarter of the refugees, which is on the surge. around thirty-three million refugees and internally dislocated populations exist in the world. The victims are marginalized, and they are denied their fundamental rights and are exposed to substantial levels of violence. Women who had evaded the challenges of the war violence became exposed to

discrete types of violence in the refugee camps, and refugees carry within them long narratives of victimization. In the same way, the police detained them for prostitution, and the harrowing violence against women is inflicted by the government that should provide them with protection and security. United Nations High Commission for Refugees has the prior responsibility to safeguard refugees. Even in the refugee camps, women performed their usual routines, gathering vegetables and collecting firewood and water. The women had been assaulted on the outskirts of the camps both physically and emotionally as the bruises of rape and assault sustain for a prolonged period even after the incident. In such a state, miscarriages, inability to regulate urination, and painful menstruation are the other medical conditions that the women had experienced in the narrative.

Raped women are reluctant to seek medical assistance as they believe that when society becomes aware that it occurred to them, it inflicts emotional and psychological turmoil on the women's consciousness. Susanne Hillman states, "For all three witnesses in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the body is of central importance, either as the focus of desire or as the site on which trauma is enacted. In the case of the raped girl, the two coincide" (100). This substantiates that sixty percent of rape cases remain unreported and unregistered anywhere around, and law enforcement officials do not offer protection to the women around the camps. Denial of justice to the rape victim and the ways by which rape survivors are ostracised by their own families and communities becomes a painful barrier for the victims to surpass in their lives. This mirrors the burden carried out by the women as the victims of rape suffer physical assaults and sexually transmitted diseases. When rape turns out to be the ongoing instrument of war and terrorism, the stigma and disgrace experienced by the victims of rape becomes humiliating. Those tensions continue to simmer as rape and sexual

assaults occur even amidst flights, at the border, in the hands of rebel military units, and no steps are implemented to ensure women's safety. Besides, refugee camps are congested, and humanitarian aid staff is often absent. Security is not adequate in the camps, and a hostile demeanour is observed on the part of the government authorities towards the displaced people.

There was an instance in the narrative when Odenigbo seeks Ugwu to provide food to the injured, and Ugwu observes the wound on a man's head with a knife and the man had lost his right eye, the whole implying the desolation of war. In a series of attacks on the journey back home, and after being rescued by Muhammed, Olanna had witnessed the whole street shredded with violence. It is observed that Muhammad had to put on the Muslim hijab to remain unrecognized, and the disillusionments and misfortunes formed by the Biafran war led the nation into acute suffering. The declaration of the war led the family of Odenigbo to leave Nsukka to their parental village; Abba and even Olanna's parents left Lagos for London. No place was deemed safe during the war, and Odenigbo's family had to leave Abba because it was considered a substantial risk. This highlights that Olanna turned a deaf ear to her parent's guidance. "Through Olanna and Odenigbo, we are introduced to the balance between the individual point of view and the collective" (Wenke,73). Even on Olanna and Odenigbo's wedding day, there was continuous bombing, and not a single person from Olanna's family was involved in the wedding.

War stripes out humanity, in its entirety unveiling the horrors and brutality of war, and Adichie articulates, "The characters and landscape are vividly painted, and details are often used to heartbreaking effect: the soldiers, waiting to be armed, clutch sticks carved into the shape of rifles; an Igbo mother, in flight from a massacre, carries her daughter's severed head, the hair lovingly braided" (3). Eviscerating the pregnant

women, desperate circumstances in the refugee camps, slaughtered civilians, and enraged mobs in violence, the mother carrying the severed head of her daughter in a basket, abrupt episodes of violence and pain become the nightmares of war. It is evident that humanitarian catastrophe and cyclic nature of violence is evident during the period of war, and the rape of young girls is evident through the characterization of victims like Nnesinachi, Anulika, Ugwu's sister. In a series of attacks, people are often left starving to death, as severe bombing has resulted in headless bodies. "Carl Ijeoma Njoku also says that the novel diametrically recreates the binary relationship between the old and new by remarkably projecting the dichotomy in Olanna and Kainene's social and economic independence and their mother Lady Ozobia's marital subjugation" (163). Kainene becomes missing when she crosses the border, and Olanna persistently searches for her sister. Olanna is willing to spend the rest of her life locating her sister to bring her back to life.

This conveys that the misfortunes the individuals had gone through, the mental and personal torment, and the flashback memories become the repercussions of the war, as stated in exact detail by the author. It becomes evident that the woman in *Half of a Yellow Sun* denies the traditional boundaries that society had set. "The next afternoon, a solemn voice on ENBC recounted the eyewitness accounts from the North: teachers hacked down in Zaria, a full catholic church in Sokoto set on fire, pregnant women split open in Kano" (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 180). Kainene also turns out to be the refugee camp food supplier, as the weariness and exhaustion become evident in her eyes when Kainene returns from the camps. The wounds Olanna experienced were similar to her legs being paralyzed, and she had collapsed at the front door. Adichie's narrative symbolizes the characters' mundane existence in

Half of a Yellow Sun. It is, therefore, apparent that Olanna turned out to be a powerful woman, and she joined the student movement for independence at Ibadan.

Adichie has identified that Olanna and Kainene are the prime movers of the narrative, and their houseboy, Ugwu, turns out to be the author of the book entitled 'the world was silent when we died.' The narrative maps out the two wealthy Igbo sisters, Olanna and Kainene, who drift apart as the newly independent nation struggles to remain unified" (Preface, *Half of a Yellow Sun*). Kainene is the sister I would be friends with. Olanna is lovely and sweet, but I would find her slightly annoying. She is too good as Adichie admires Kainene more. When it moves around, it can be noted that in Olanna and Kainene, Kainene is a dauntless woman, whereas Olanna demands affirmation from others to feel whole and at peace with herself. In the practical sense, Olanna is resilient and beautiful in her ways, whereas Kainene is a business-minded, unforgiving, and independent woman. There are ample examples where Olanna's beauty becomes grounds for how men behave towards her, whereas Kainene is substantially distinct from her sister. A further striking aspect is that Kainene is strong-willed and more compassionate than other characters in the narrative.

As Adichie documents, Kainene crosses the enemy lines to get a food supply. This emphasizes that the individual's experiences of atrocities and trauma inflicted on their psyche become represented through the characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Olanna and Kainene are cynical about the hypocrisy encircling them, and at the same time, Olanna and Kainene are proud of being Biafrans. Olanna had earned a master's degree in psychology, and Adichie often emphasizes Kainene as being self-sufficient, and her efficiency is often impressive in her business areas. Her father says of Kainene, "Kainene is not just like a son, she is like two" (Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* 39). "Ruth S Wenske says, the fierce individuality of Olanna and Odenigbo, as

well as Ugwu, Richard, and Kainene, is manifested through their strong-willed, thoughtful, and exceptional characters” (74). This mirrors the subsequent journeys of the characters in the narrative as Olanna remains solid. Her revolutionary husband remains passive, whereas Odenigbo and Olanna's relationship has undergone severe constraints in the due course. Emphasizing the intricate dimensions of the relationship between Olanna and Odenigbo, he impregnates another girl named Amala, and the resulting consequences make the world more unfair to Olanna. The internal conflicts in Adichie's narrative also focus on the shifting gender performances during the war period.

Adichie rejects the chronological storytelling method and blends the events during the war period. There is often this collective tendency in Nigeria to negate the concerns of women and minorities. Yet, writers like Adichie place the issues of women in the spotlight. “Chigbo Arthur Anyadaba states that *Half of a Yellow Sun* chronicles from multiple perspectives the stories of mostly Igbo individuals caught in a time of genocide and genocidal war” (90). When Biafra was falling apart, Kainene put her life in danger during the Afia attack. In a series of attacks, they had risked everything, and they had gone through the scars and heart-wrenching effects of war as working-class women and Ugwu's voice became considerable in addressing bias in Nigerian society. The references indicate that the absence of Kainene makes it even more challenging for Richard and Adichie to choose an omniscient narrator in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Maya Ganapathy says, “In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the reader's ability to identify Richard as the book's author hangs on his ability to represent and think of Africa in non-essentialist terms” (88-105). The writer appraises the female characters in the narrative, and the characters are self-sufficient, ensuring a sense of audacity and nerve in their behavior. “The book ends with Olanna saying, “Our people say that we

all reincarnate, don't they? Uwa m, uwa ozo. When I return to my next life, Kainene will be my sister" (541). Adichie intends to state that the characters reiterate their strength amidst the misfortunes they had experienced and endured in the context of the war front as the brimming violence in the narrative, in one way or the other, had questioned their existence. Ruth S Wenske states that "In fact, the book that Ugwu writes echoes the white district commissioner's book in *Things Fall Apart*, The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger" (84). The myriad voices of the characters recount the experiences of the Biafran war and the torture of governmental powers, which also becomes evident in Nigerian society, and storytelling for Adichie becomes a method for personal and national healing.

The second part of the chapter becomes the narration of the true-life experiences of young women kidnapped by Boko Haram through the seminal text *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani. There is another dimension that the human rights violations and abuses encountered by the characters provide further insights into the harrowing struggles of the kidnapped women. The UN Transnational Organized Crime Protocol broadly identifies trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons using threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, or use of power for the control of another person. It is to hinder, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, and "a protocol on trafficking attached to the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime in 2000 formally defined trafficking as a contemporary form of slavery and indentured servitude, linked to organized criminal activity, money laundering, corruption, and the obstruction of justice" (3). It can be referred to as a form of modern slavery, and the vast majority of the trafficked victims are women and children. Much of this revolves around Benin City, as it is considered the prime

commercial spot for human trafficking in Nigeria, and many of the trafficking chains have close family members or relatives.

The traffickers often coerce the victims to do forced labour, sexual exploitation, and drug trafficking often shifts through patronage networks. They become the key producer and distributor of illicit drugs, including heroin, cocaine, and cannabis. Further emphasis is on places like Morocco, as it has become a significant production center and key transit point of international drug trafficking and a primary transshipment route. It is also worthwhile to point out that they typically follow an oath of secrecy as traffickers take the victims to the shrine of voodoo priests for the oath-taking ceremony. The victims swear the oath to repay the debts and vow not to convey them to the police authorities, and this fear restricts them from reaching out to seek further help in the process. Cutting across all that, the traffickers were using East Africa as the center for transferring drugs like heroin from Asia to Europe, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and organizations like the Taliban also produced immense revenue through the transportation of drugs through Africa.

The proportion of cocaine transferred through West Africa is estimated to be 1.25 million USD, and West Africa emerged as the pivotal production site of drugs. West Africa had also turned out to be the center of the trafficking of weapons and drugs. The establishment of narcotic control boards facilitates a crucial role in the battle against offenders of the law. Illegal trafficking involves coercion as well as deception by the traffickers, and they are exploiting women for sale as commodities, and they also share the profits. Filtered through their lens, the sex trade networks traffic women from Africa to varied countries in the world, and they import women for their bodies, commercializing them, and people (traffickers) force them into sexual

slavery. The lives of the victims of trafficking end up in prostitution, and the traffickers often get enormous profits from sexual exploitation. Furthermore, their financially deprived status serves as an advantage for the traffickers, and it is a flourishing international criminal activity as there is a chain of sex trafficking networks for bodies to satiate men who are driven by their desire for women's bodies. Selling travel documents of the victims, seizing their passports and visas, luring them with lucrative promises by offering some forms of temptation, and demanding them to pay back substantial amounts of debt are the ways by which they facilitate this network of human trafficking.

The list of debts will be handed over to the victims by the trafficker in no time, and seizing the travel documents of victims, coercing them to sell their bodies, and compelling them to engage in prostitution are the strategies followed by the trafficker. Forced labour and working at bars, massage parlors, and the trade of human organs under confinement becomes the hardships that the trafficked victims endure throughout their journey. Apart from this, child begging and the removal of organs, including kidneys, constitute various forms of trafficking. There has been a marked surge in the trafficking of child victims as the recruitment and transportation of the victims constitute the prior phases. Their bodies are utilized for the advantage and benefit of the trafficker. UNODC report postulates that "Since the 1980s, Nigerian women from around Benin City have had a presence in European prostitution markets, comprising a significant share of sex workers detected by authorities in several countries. These women are often victims of exploitative debt bondage and may work without pay for 2-3 years to settle the costs of their illegal importations" (UNODC 6). Nigeria stands as the prior country that had been shipping trafficked

people to the UK, and the internal trafficking in Nigeria has expanded, especially in rural communities.

Posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, physical injuries, aggression, and rejection by the family members become the traumas experienced by victims of trafficking. Other than Human Trafficking, a significant threat experienced by the natives of Nigeria is the suffering created by Boko Haram in their mundane lives. “Mike J Smith says, The 2014 kidnapping of 276 school girls in Chibok, Nigeria, combined with subsequent threats by the group's leader to sell them as slaves, dramatically raised Boko haram’s international profile” (5). Boko Haram had emerged in 2002 and had gained prominence in the long run by 2009; they had prohibited the colonial European literacy method; they claimed Western education as a forbidden aspect in Nigerian lives, and a radical group that commenced during the '90s in Africa was Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama ah. Mike J Smith says, “Mapping out details of what Boko Haram is remains extremely difficult. Even the name Boko haram is an illusion” (29).

For most of its history, though, they had continuously assaulted Nigerian security forces in 2004 and had killed many security officers, and later they fled to the Niger Republic and Chad. Boko Haram had emerged from all these dispersed groups, and they had continued to challenge the legitimate human rights of the individuals in Nigeria. Perouse de Montclos says, “The Nigerian army, in particular, has played a leading role in trying to capture aid and prohibiting relief organizations from entering areas controlled by the insurgents” (2020a). The act of acquisition and exploitation of Boko haram occurs through national and international borders, and many of the trafficked individuals often tend to be minors and girls. Subsequently, it can be observed that Boko haram men coerce the victims into sexual slavery.

A close reading remarkably points out that Boko haram is often capturing the victims, intimidated and sexually exploited, in various forms, such as physical violence and mental trauma. “Mike J Smith says, The police commissioner for Borno state, of which Maiduguri is the capital, refused outright to discuss Boko Haram at the time and warned journalists they could be arrested for even uttering those words” (5). Perhaps the Boko Haram had initially referred to themselves as the Nigerian Taliban, and they held their camps in remote spaces in Nigeria. They had the prior objective of toppling the Nigerian government and consequently aimed to establish an authority. There were persistent clashes between the state security forces and the Boko haram, and they had unleashed bombings and shootings across northern Nigeria. Mike J Smith states, “It is perhaps best to think of Boko haram as an umbrella term for the insurgency and the violence that has come with it, with an unclear number of cells and factions carrying out attacks” (29). More significantly, Boko haram had been transformed into a network of underground cells, and they reemerged in 2010 with advanced tactics and techniques in order to confront the security forces.

They formed armed forces on an ad hoc basis, and Boko Haram often had unrest and consistent tensions with Nigerian government forces. They often could form clashes between the forces that consequently led to the death of hundreds of civilians. Under the leadership of Abu Bakar Shekau, Boko haram continued to maintain its dominance. The utilization of Improvised explosive devices (IED) and targeted attacks against Western interests becomes evident, and raising their international profile, Boko Haram's violence further turns out to be the abduction of 276 school girls in Borno, Nigeria, in 2014. It has been observed that the government of Muhammadu Buhari made assurances in 2015 that it would wipe out Boko Haram and corruption from Africa in its entirety.

Priya Diat, in her work *Critical Methods in Terrorism*, states, "Knowledge can and has been used as a tool for influence and domination, that particular regimes of truth are produced and become entrenched over time, thus categorizing terrorism as a non-state activity, while states remain exempt from being as a terrorist" (Diat 34). It can be observed that Boko haram had a persistent sense of hostility towards education, and they believed that Western education should be forbidden in Nigerian society. Boko Haram had its roots in Niger, Cameroon, and Chad regions, and the emergence of Boko Haram has stirred up chaos in all spheres of Africa. Their monetary assistance is through their engagement in the trafficking of drugs and illegal weapons. The factions of Boko Haram are inclined to be more active in Northeast Nigeria and northern provinces and in the fight against them. Boko haram requires cooperation from national and international organizations, comprising intelligence services and law enforcement agencies. Bound with that, the terrorists become proficient in using all the resources to their benefit, and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad AL Hussein, says human rights are not a utopian fairy tale. They reiterate that the non-governmental entities have substantial influence in responding to the threat of terrorism by Boko Haram, and many of the members of Boko Haram are drawn primarily from the Kanuri tribe. The study sheds light on how Boko haram is evolving into a threat to the whole nation. Often, the government fails to sustain political stability, and it establishes a habitat that is favourable for terrorist activities. Moreover, in this sense, dissident voices are established from every part of the nation against the terrorist organization Boko haram.

This recognizes that agencies of the government should be adept at protecting Nigerian women and children from the perils of human trafficking. Here again, the

traffickers even utilize their family members to recruit new targets, and they also get engaged in the abduction of minor girls and women. The thrust must therefore be clear that they have chosen transit routes to relocate the victims to their preferred destinations; Niger and Morocco continue to be the prime spots of trafficking, and the trafficked victims often experience lethal violence at the hands of the traffickers. Moreover, each destination tends to have its madams who thoroughly regulate the trafficked women. Moreover, this turns out to be a form of modern-day slavery, and the trafficked victims are often exploited for commercial sex trade. The traffickers also coerce the victims to work extended hours to pay off the debt bondage. In particular, the power of their network is so extensive, and the traffickers on the bodies of the trafficked victims exert constant monitoring. Human rights violations persistently arise in various parts of Africa, and they had suffered from several years of oppression and mental trauma; they had been downcast and low-spirited, and they had battled for liberation their entire lives. Nigeria has the second largest number of children being recruited to target groups, and they have consistently experienced critical human rights violations due to Boko haram. Boko haram abducted Chibok girls from their respective schools in April 2014, and the Bring Back Girls movement followed it. They had abducted women and children, and they had torn up their certificates, raped and married them, and they ended up with physical and mental trauma.

The study represents that in the text *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*, the students observe the shootout between police and Boko haram in the middle of a street, and it unfurls the killings of fifty-five people in the northeast of Nigeria. There were a plethora of incidents that happened during the period, including the assault on Bama's police station, the attack on government buildings, and the Sambisa Forest.

The narrative signifies that the protagonist, Yata, aspired for a new pair of shoes and longed to attend a girls' boarding school. Yata had envisioned proceeding to university after secondary school, and thus, she had dreamed of having a sister instead of five brothers to support her in all the household chores.

We must consistently seek reasons to thank God, Mama says. Everything happens for a reason. That was what she said when her third baby died of fever when he was four years old, strapped to Mama's back on the twenty-minute walk to the village health care center. That was what she said when her fourth baby died of fever when she was one year old, suckling Mama's breast one minute and lifeless the next. That was what she said when her seventh baby was born dead, its body swaddled in worn cloth by the toothless midwife and made to disappear, no opportunity given to me for even a peek. (21)

It has always been acknowledged that, unlike other parents, Yata's father had hopes for his daughter's education and permitted her to join the school. It becomes evident that Yata pays attention to the teacher's narrative about the shootout between police and Boko haram in the middle of a street in Damboa.

Yata recognized the impact of Boko haram in the everyday lives of citizens when fifty people were killed by the Boko Haram militant groups in the Northeast of Nigeria. In proving their violence, Boko haram had burned the Bama's police station, along with the military barracks, and the violation by Boko Haram had killed women and children irrespective of ethnic/religious community. Yata's intimate friend Aisha got married at a very tender age, and Aisha, even following marriage, was very inquisitive to listen to Yata's school experiences and all the incidents that had happened from Monday to Friday. Aisha's father-in-law was worried that an educated

wife would be less likely to abide by the wishes of her husband and in-laws. Like many other Muslim and Christian brides in our school, Aisha has never been back to the classroom since her wedding (Nwaubani 30). Yata contrasts the monkeys to the government in a democracy and the gorillas to the military government in Nigeria. The persistent attack of Boko Haram on the routine lives of Nigerians becomes evident in the text *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*, and according to their ideology, Boko Haram considers Western education as forbidden. "Residents said the attack on Konduga, in the Northeast Borno State, lasted several hours, beginning shortly before sundown on Tuesday night with the arrival of gunman in four-by-four trucks. A mosque and more than a thousand homes were razed to the ground, residents said. The region is a stronghold of Boko Haram that is waging an insurgency against the government" (Nwaubani 41). Nwaubani states their feeling of anguish when Yata, along with her family, figured out the footprints of Boko Haram in Izghe and came to realize the firing of the group of men in Izghe village by the Boko haram.

Against this backdrop, bunkers and hideouts of Boko Haram in Sambisa Forest become a threat to the Yata family as Boko haram bandits often disguise themselves as cobblers to detonate explosives in schools, churches, and markets. "Furthermore, Nwaubani reveals that they load donkeys and camels with explosives and detonate them in public spaces." It is reflected in how they bombed the markets in Banki and Bama, and Boko Haram had intense hostility towards educated civilians. The stories are united by Yata's imagination about Boko Haram bandits as they show fear and anxiety. "Do they have horns and hooves? Are their teeth sharp and pointed? Do their nails grow long and curl around their fingers? Are their eyes slit? Do they cook their food or chew it raw? Are their voices huffish and gruffish? Do they eat human flesh? Are their ears long and sharp?" (Nwaubani 52). The pervasive threat

and assaults against civilians become the image of Boko Haram in Yata's eye. Borno state government scholarship program had chosen Yata for being an exceptional child in studies from disadvantaged homes. Such opportunities support students like Yata in studying for up to a master's degree with assistance from the government sector, and it has become a proud moment for Yata. Nwaubani considers Yata's long-term vision of shifting from the village school to the boarding school for exceptional girls. Yata daydreams of earning money by learning to send Jacob to university, purchasing a new mattress for Mama, a new bicycle for Papa, and acquiring a new pair of shoes for Sarah.

Reflecting on the thoughts of Boko haram, the screaming of a civilian in the process of moving on the bus remains in Yata's consciousness as the civilian screams, "Never drive close to the cows. Never drive close to the cows. The spirit of Boko haram can enter the cows, so you should always wait for the cows to cross the road"(57). In line with Yata's thought process, the arrival of men with bombs and guns in the middle of the highway turns out to be their constant threat, and due to the existence of the lethal force of Boko Haram, the civilians restrain their free movement in their homeland. The closer examination further reiterates the persistent noise of roaring engines near Yata's family, as men and women living adjacent to their family disperse out of their homes as Boko Haram eventually arrives at the village of Yata. As it becomes apparent in the narrative, the dusty trucks of Boko Haram in no time had packed dozens of girls, like Yata, Sara, and Aisha, shifting them into an unknown and unfamiliar space inside the interior of the Sambisa Forest.

Yata cannot identify the way back home, and the mild moonlight turns into the dim light of late noon. The representative of Boko Haram states, "You are now our slaves. His voice is as calm as glass. His face is as black as a stone. His arm is drawn

up to his chest with the long, black barrel in his hands pointing straight at us, a finger resting on the trigger" (Nwaubani 64). Men with black boots, army camouflage uniforms, and wielding guns revolved around Yata and other abducted girls. They had received the alert that any effort to flee from the hands of Boko haram would blow them to pieces, and the vastness of the Sambisa forest stretches across many states, and it belongs to Borno. "In the past twenty-four hours, I have seen more blood and bodies to feed my nightmares for the next two thousand years" (Nwaubani70). The changing life situations of Yata made her anxious, and the leader of Boko Haram ridiculed the women captives for squandering their precious time in school rather than getting married. The enslaved women were circled by the armed men in the interiors of the Sambisa forest, and Yata continued the emergency prayers to get back to her homeland from the power network of Boko Haram. Boko Haram men had black flags, scores of vans and trucks, and hundreds of motorbikes, and their entire body was hidden inside mauve niqabs, which only permitted them to view hands and flashes of their eyes. Moreover, hunger burned like a razor cut in Yata's stomach as Yata thought of herself as a ghost at the crossroads of the land of humans and the land of spirits. Amira gives Yata a mauve hijab and teaches Yata to tuck her ears neatly inside the hijab. "The Boko Haram men give off a feral scent as if they had been born and bred in the wild. They smell like human beasts. If you marry a Boko Haram commander, your life will be much better. Amira says with a mouthful, you will have as much food as you want" (Nwaubani 72). This, in turn, identifies that Yata's heart, thoughts, and consciousness align with the state government scholarship she secured. In the due period, the Boko Haram men changed Yata's name to Salamattu and Sara Zainab.

Yata had been apprehensive whether the Boko Haram men would rape her, as it is stated, "Night after night, I pray it will not be my turn. I pray that Al Bakura and

Malam Adamu will choose someone else. Night after night, my shameful heart rejoices as they tiptoe past me and onto someone else. Thank God, I matter. Maybe I am not beautiful enough. Maybe my waist is not broad enough, Maybe my breasts are not big enough. They have not taken Zainab away either. Whatever the case, I am grateful. I am untouched; I am safe" (Nwaubani 78). This posits that Yata often had nightmares packed with bombs and bullets as Al Bakura had taken control of pregnant Aisha, and even her resistance towards Al Bakura ended in a muffled cry. The Boko Haram men had continuously battered the pregnant women at midnight, coercing and pressurizing the women to sleep with them. It was evident that Boko Haram had detested Western education, but on the contrary, they had employed trucks and guns, which could only be made by learning and attending school. It becomes crucial to recognize that there were barrack attacks in Maiduguri by the Boko Haram to release their seven hundred fighters caught by the military of Nigeria.

Forcing Yata and the girls with her to get married to Boko Haram men exposes the existential crisis experienced by the female characters in the narrative. "There are many other things that a Boko Haram wife needs to learn. Sometimes, the training classes feel almost like attending a real school, except without note paper and pen" (Nwapa 110). It is argued that the women captured by Boko Haram often succumb to heinous forms of violence. "I have no clue how to navigate the new world out there. Maybe inside the Sambisa forest is better. Maybe the life I know is better than the one I do not know. Maybe my dreams of a different life are just a waste of time" (Nwaubani 122).

This seeks to analyse further that when the women are liberated from the hands of Boko Haram by UNICEF, the voice of Boko Haram's husbands becomes reiterated in Yata's consciousness. Yata later realizes that she is pregnant with the

Boko Haram husband. After the horrendous episode of their life in the Sambisa forest as enslaved women under Boko Haram, they eventually return to their families after being released from the hands of Boko haram. "Another world, strange and new. Suddenly, like an eagle trapped in a coop whose heart remains in the sky. I am eager to break loose and fly high. Whatever happens next, whatever lies ahead, I want to return to school" (125). Adaobi has documented the seminal text *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* from the girls' and their families' perspective. "By May 2012, Maiduguri, still considered the home base of Boko haram, resembled something approaching a warzone. Entire neighbourhoods appeared deserted, and security checkpoints kept the city on edge" (Smith 33). Significantly, as pointed out, Maiduguri had a population of more than a million people, and it was the place of origin of Boko Haram. In the communities, they often experienced the anxiety of Boko Haram as the rumble of motorbikes and the sound of the guns reminded the natives of the village of their survival story.

The Chibok girls were reportedly not forced to wed the militants, but marriage was offered to them as a choice, although it did not happen without pressure. Those who refused were beaten and forced to serve as slaves to the militant's wives, who in turn became brutal with their former friends. According to survivors, some of the girls were also taken as concubines. (132)

The propagandists of these terrorist organizations monitor and promote even transnational terrorism as they recruit more individuals and train them to be terrorists, creating a more profound sense of malaise, and it is often employed to challenge the state by Boko Haram. "State terror involves deliberate acts of violence directed at individuals, and the state must protect" (Blakeley 15). The basic argument states that the voice on Pappa's radio in *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* represents the violence

in which they live. About thirty-nine people are believed to have been killed in an attack by Islamic militants in a Nigerian town as residents assert the attack on Konduga, in the northeast Borno state, lasted several hours, beginning shortly before sundown on Tuesday night with the arrival of a gunman in four-by-four trucks. A mosque and more than a thousand homes were razed to the ground, residents said. This sets out to examine that the region is a stronghold of Boko haram, which is waging an insurgency against the government. (78) It can be deciphered that Konduga is thirty-five kilometers distant from Maiduguri, the capital of Borno, and Boko haram has been carrying out a four-year campaign of violence to force Islamic rule in Northern Nigeria. They unleashed a series of bombings, targeting the civilians and citizens of the Nigerian state.

Similarly, the repression of the state mechanisms becomes evident in the narrative, and it becomes visible that forced marriages, forced pregnancies, and sexual slavery occur through the massive abduction of Boko haram. The incapability of the government authorities and forces to protect children and women from Boko Haram captivity becomes apparent through the narrative. Nwaubani has pointed out that bombing the police station and UN building in Ahuja was the prior suicide bombing attack that Nigeria had ever witnessed. Boko haram had diverse factions and deemed the West a disruptive influence on the land. One of the root causes of the underdevelopment in the North is the extremist group Boko Haram. Nwaubani further states that the minority ethnic groups are located in the northeastern states, and repercussions of the state turn out to be a substantial indicator of terrorism. Half of the population in the land is Muslim, and the significant other half is Christian. In *Buried beneath the Baobab tree*, they reiterate,

They claim to be fighting to create an Islamic state in Nigeria. They do not believe in democracy. They plan to topple the government elected by Nigerians...this is what the Northeast of Nigeria looks like: Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba. This is an insignificant portion of us compared to the rest of Nigeria. The army of bandits in Borno and some parts of Yobe and Adamawa imagine that they can somehow take over the rest of the country, all the 36 states. He laughs: "Lack of education makes people stupid. How much more idiotic can they be?" He is talking about Boko haram. The Nigerian government has come under a great deal of criticism over its handling of the Boko haram menace. (Nwabani 54)

In *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*, Isaac discusses the ways Boko Haram had bombed various markets in Banki and Bama, and he addresses the travelers who impede their journey instantaneously in the middle of the highway, being terrified of Boko Haram men.

The author provides an outline of the actions of Boko Haram, where goats, donkeys, and camels are loaded with explosives and transmitted to public places where they would detonate. Adaobi Tricia Nwabani reiterates, "Slaughtering innocent boys and decapitating elderly men is certainly not the Islam that I have known and seen. I wish Magdalene would stop being stubborn and convert along with us." (Nwaubani) Niger Delta militant groups have also been involved in oil bunkering, drug trafficking, extortion, and several other illegal practices, and even drug trafficking has surged drastically over the past decade as well. The organized crime in Nigeria poses a grave threat to the community residing there, and Adaobi points to the battalions of Boko Haram men with their black flags engraved with Arabic letters moving in and out of Sambisa Forest. Another violent extremist religious group

formed in Nigeria is the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama (also called Nigerian Taliban), and they had also established a strict version of Sharia law. They had assaulted the villagers of Kanama and had abducted the villagers through the total annihilation of their military camps. They had even bombarded police stations close to the village, had taken out the Nigerian flag, and had lifted the flag of Afghanistan.

Another group, the Islamist Movement of Nigeria (IMN), led by Ibrahim El Zak Zaky, had been established during the 1980s-90s(272). John Campbell, former US Ambassador to Nigeria, reasserts that Boko Haram, once an obscure, radical Islamist cult in the North, is evolving (45). Aminu Tashem Ilimi is an influential figure who was involved in the initial evolution of Boko Haram. The group began in 1995 as Sahaba under the leadership of the conservative Islamist Lawan Abubakar, and its roots are traced back to the Muslim learners who dropped out of the University of Maiduguri around 2002. It is observed that they adopted Islamic sharia in the late 1990s. Later, the wing bound to the northeast became a notorious armed group in Nigeria. Isa says:

The idea of Boko is not just about rejecting Western education per se; it is a judgment of its failure to provide opportunities for better lives and thus become a symbol for the Boko Haram movement to capitalize on the shortcomings of Yan Boko. Subsequently, it was coupled with Haram (forbidden), and they used the unemployed, unskilled, and poverty-stricken youths to join their cause and introduce the strict application of Shariah law. This partly explains why Boko Haram's primary targets of attack were symbols of state such as security agencies, which had become widely spread. (Isa 332)

Still, another prominent reason is that Boko Haram has targeted local Nigerians, and in August 2011, they killed far more people at the Baga market in Maiduguri. Their correlation with the members of AQIM could facilitate the interchange of weapons and weapon trading, and these transitions ensue within the Kanuri tribal networks in Niger. It could be stated further that they are also into abduction, human trafficking, and smuggling to elevate their finances.

Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree chronicles the manifold languages they employ, encompassing Hausa, Kanuri, and Arabic. Social sciences often employ empirical methods to categorize and recognize terrorists into various groups, such as potential terrorists, sponsor terrorists, or actual terrorists. The Boko Haram men had often humiliated, tortured, and detained people of the village, and their attacks and assaults on innocent civilians were recognized as a disgrace to the government. Children in the community could not even recall the definition of democracy and the freedom they were denied in their routine existence. Many foreign and intergovernmental aid organizations assist Nigerians in coping with their challenges, and the UN development program is one in this regard. Counter-terrorism steps are imperative to combat terrorism through all the possible ways to safeguard the vulnerable sects of society. Boko haram terrorists also forced the abducted women in the Sambisa forest to get married to them. Adaobi notes,

Whatever punishment they will inflict on us cannot possibly be worse than forcing us to marry those men. Marriage may not be as bad as you think, Aisha says. I did not know my husband before my parents decided that I should marry him. They chose him for me. He turned out to be a good man. Your husband was not a member of Boko Haram. I reply, my tone harsher than I intended it to be. (30)

The study has also observed that similar experiences of Nigerian women who had been married to Boko Haram fighters had endured the narratives of trauma as they were subjected to rape and physical assault and were treated as sex slaves by the Boko Haram men.

Boko Haram had transnational links in the Lake Chad region, and their roots are predominantly strong in those regions. In 1994, the Lake Chad Commission initiated a multinational joint security force. The force has troops from Nigeria, and they have addressed many cross-border concerns. In 2014, they revitalized the force to combat Boko Haram. Muslim states of Nigeria insinuated Sharia law in the late 1990s. Christians reinforced their endeavours to make Nigeria a Christian territory, while Boko Haram worked towards the establishment of an Islamic state. The country has around forty million school-aged children who are no longer in school in the region. As an African student, Hussaini states, "I was in class in my village. We heard screaming. Then, people started firing guns. They shot at our teachers and killed one of them. They burnt down the classrooms. I was scared. I felt weak and lost. Then we just ran" (Hussaini 14). These studies reveal that it was not a random attack, as many areas have witnessed endless hostility by the Boko Haram factions, and UNICEF is operational with governments across Africa to commence the Radio education program. It can be elucidated that Hussaini is gaining expertise through the radio education program, and it helps reintegrate children into learning with assistance.

Africans who have been at the receiving end of state brutality, repression, corruption, abuse of power, dictatorship, and gross inefficiency would not hesitate to point out that the post-colonial state has been a total and abject failure. Decaying institutions collapsed infrastructure, and the virtual absence

of the bureaucratic paraphernalia of the state in most rural areas have come to characterize the political landscape in much of Africa. (Klein13)

The security forces in Nigeria had also committed severe human rights violations as a response to the terrorist group Boko Haram in Borno state. For Boko Haram men, they considered rape and sexual exploitation as a means to prey on the women, and women turn out to be the silent victims in the loop of violence. Every human being has the right not to be subjected to torment and cruelty, yet Boko Haram uses it as an apparatus to dominate the civilians.

Perpetrators are indifferent to the repercussions of violence, and the victims, being the innocent women, become the prey. Childhood sexual abuse takes a toll on the biological and cognitive state of the children victimized by the Boko haram men. Through sexual coercion, the perpetrator becomes a visible element of the violence, from sexual abuse to marital rape, and it holds numerous untold stories of pain and survival. Human rights violations become a significant aspect in both narratives as both of the texts are rooted in the representations of violence in distinct ways. Women forcibly abducted from their spaces and forced to get married to Boko haram civilians become references to the human rights violations endured by them. The women in the narratives are subjected to sexual exploitation and slavery, and it violates their dignity and humanity as women are forced to become commodities according to the will of the perpetrator in *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*. They are denied their fundamental human right, i.e., education, and they are physically abused and tortured, further compounding the trauma that they are part of. The narrative *Half of a Yellow Sun* reveals that war wipes out humanity, further leading to starvation, famine, and the death of civilians. It points out the humanitarian crisis experienced by the characters

in both texts as it substantiates the perpetual trauma and torture in the narratives, and it even violates the rights of the victims to their bodily autonomy in both narratives.

The characters in both narratives often have experienced harassment from the military, the government authorities as well as the Boko haram insurgents. For reiterating their perspectives, voicing out their political views, resisting humiliation and repression, and voicing out against anarchy, the characters traverse through extreme emotional and psychological trauma. The long periods of silence and the pain of the characters expose the internal trauma and tensions experienced by them. The vulnerabilities of the characters and their battle against anarchy reach nowhere in the several junctures of the narrative, and the physical abuse and sexual violence endured by them reflect on the long-term subjugation and agony. The identity crisis of the characters, the split representation of their personalities, and the suppression of their emotions become evident in the narrative as the predicament of women in the novels reflects the oppressive environment they are a part of.

The characters grappling with trauma are identified in the narrative, and the war and the insurgency of Boko haram point out the loss of identity and existential crisis of the characters in particular. The emotional imbalances created by war and Boko haram inflict enormous suffering on the mind and body of an individual. The psychological and emotional consequences of coping with the trauma and its further effects on the community are represented in the narrative. The shared sense of trauma and loss created by the war is assessed in the narrative as the collective trauma that has resulted from the exploitation of Boko haram points to the symbolic representations of social suffering. The massive deaths and shared trauma of the characters point to the individual experiences of pain in their everyday lives. The emotions and suffering of the characters critically address the traumatic injury caused

by them. The connection to the roots is an inherent human trait, and it is embedded in every individual. It is observed that trauma shatters the sense of security, and the rational response of the characters becomes evident in the narratives. The outrage, shock, and emotional response of the characters also point toward the physical environment they belong to, and this leads to recurrent anxiety within the characters. The characters in the narratives grapple with ascertaining a space or a sense of belonging, as the individual and collective trauma have far-reaching effects on the individual in the narratives. Unresolved grief of the war particularly emphasize the ongoing sense of agony and disillusionment.

Sexual violence in the narratives explicitly unveils the deep-rooted trauma encountered by the victim, and the offenders of sexual violence within the narratives leave the victim in unending agony and pain. The fear of sexual abuse and rape experienced by the characters is addressed in the narrative *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*, as Adichie also emphasizes the wartime horrors and civilian unrest. The grittiness of being human in a war-torn environment and the way by which improper sexual behaviours are normalized becomes a critical aspect of the narrative. The ways by which women are sexually exploited in *Half of a yellow sun* and *Buried beneath the baobab tree* become significantly alarming as both of the novels bring about the representation of rape and sexual violence through different perspectives. Throughout history, it has evolved on the idea that violence in Nigeria is continuous. Combating extreme violence has always been a challenging phenomenon, and it can also be stated that the harassment and silence of the characters indicate their unending testimony of pain and agony.

Chapter 4

Breaking Stereotypes: Theorizing the Black Body from a Womanist Perspective

The study of the disparate paradigms of the representation of patriarchy and the repression of womanhood in the lives of Nigerian women is an integral part of this research. It also redefines the notions of the prolonged victim status and the marginalization of women. This chapter analyses the interrelationship between violence and power. It unveils the suffocation and vexation of African women in repressed spaces, and this chapter explicates the gravity of violence experienced by Nigerian women in their routine lives. In addition, it expresses the resistance and rebellion of the female characters in the narratives and analyses the institutional power and control exerted into their day-to-day lives. These power relations regulate the women to a fair extent, and the women in the narratives are exposed to harassment, violence, and the modern surveillance patterns of society.

This chapter serves as the microcosm of the lives of women in the patriarchal Nigerian society, and it attempts to decipher the deep-rooted aspects of oppression and exploitation in their everyday existence. *Bride Price* (1976), *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), and *Efuru* (1966) are the seminal texts taken for the study. This study also examines the unseen layers of power relations and the violence endured by the women characters in the narratives. It also expands on the diverse forms of inequality experienced by women, and it also addresses the normative expectations of society. The stress carried out by women regarding motherhood and childbearing, which had been imposed by society, and the phases of violence experienced by them amid the process are addressed in the chapter. This chapter responds to the gender-based violence in Nigerian society in the light of the women characters in the selected

narratives. It examines the trajectory of sexual harassment and abusive behaviours endured by the women characters. Through the female protagonists in *Efuru*, *Bride Price*, and *The Joys of Motherhood*, the authors reflect on the whole experiences of the trauma of African womanhood. The Cambridge Concise Encyclopedia describes feminism as a socio-political movement whose unbiased goal is equality of rights and equal power for men and women. Kimberle Crenshaw has introduced the term Intersectionality to address the marginalization experienced by women, as Crenshaw has elaborated in *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Colour*. Gender identity, class, race, and nationality continue to be markers of inequality experienced in society.

Intersectionality can be defined as the framework for understanding how various aspects of a person's identity, such as race, gender, and class, interact to create unique experiences of privilege or oppression. Race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary mutually exclusive entities but rather as reciprocally constructing phenomena (Hill) "Women writers' voices may sometimes be quiet and dignified, sometimes loud and angry, but they are the voices of authority that come with mastery of their subject matter" (Eko, 218). There is the normalizing surveillance over the body of women that infringes the privacy of women in all possible ways, and often, a woman's identity is defined in society through her relationship with men. This is why Buchi Emecheta has a different opinion of the feminist label. As she said, "I" chronicle the little circumstances in the lives of the African women I know. I did not know that by doing so, I was going to be called a feminist. Yet, if I am now a feminist, then I am an African feminist with a small f" (Emecheta 178). It asserts that African authors like Emecheta are unwilling to be labeled as feminists. The writer has a critical role in projecting the authentic realities

of the community. The study also notes that the women writers attempt to reconstruct their truth in the reader's consciousness through genuine narration. The writer examines the experiences of the vulnerable sect of people effectively, and they address the concerns about women of varied social classes in their writings. The female authors analyse women's experiences through multiple points of view, shedding light on the complexities of relationships, motherhood, and family.

The African women had experienced sexual harassment and mental trauma in one way or another, and the incredible voice of the black female writers advocated for the Nigerian women to come out of the cocoon, breaking the silence. “Nancy Topping Bazin says, Even the feminist women in these novels sometimes fail to recognize the extent to which they have been subjected to what Kate Millett calls interior colonization” (36) This posits that African women often align their virtues with the archetype of motherhood and often experience a shift in their identity while becoming mothers. The societal norms and expectations often revolve around the capacity of women to nurture and mother a child. “Freedom for them must begin with rejecting the patriarchal glorification of motherhood” (Bazin.10). The writers explicitly outline society's pressure on the average woman to fulfil their duties.

Flora Nwapa is considered Nigeria's first lady of letters, and she attempts to unravel the patterns of inequality experienced by women in Nigerian society in her acclaimed work, *Efuru*. Flora Nwapa has been appreciated as a foremother to progressive movements in Africa. “Ebele Eko states that the two pillars of strength on which Nwapa’s novels stand are first as a mirror held up for the reader to look into the inner chamber and heart of an African woman” (214). Flora Nwapa is renowned for her commitment and dedication to striving for women's rights. She is regarded as a trailblazer in the literary canon. Flora Nwapa’s writings present the magical power of

storytelling and shed light on how it creates a sense of social conscience in the patriarchal society. *Efuru* was published fifty years ago, seven years after Achebe's seminal text, *Things Fall Apart*. As noted above, Flora Nwapa has become the foremost canonical voice in Nigeria's women's literature, and she is the forerunner to a generation of African women writers. Flora Nwapa attained international recognition for her renowned text, *Efuru*, published in 1966. Flora Nwapa often refused to be branded as a feminist, and she supposed herself to be a womanist. She has also worked with refugees and orphans. Nwapa recapitulates the necessity for collective and individual female identity, i.e., shared experiences and values of women in African culture.

Flora Nwapa's scrutiny of women's subjects can be expanded further to include women's dilemmas and disillusionment in their community. Flora Nwapa was born in Oguta, in Southeastern Nigeria, and her prominent works comprise *Women are Different*, *One is Enough*, *This is Lagos and Other Stories*, *Never Again*, *Cassava Song*, and *Rice Song*. She graduated from University College, Ibadan, in 1957, and she had always believed in women's exceptional vigour, and her central character in the novel *Efuru* is Efuru. With the publication of *Efuru*, the first proclaimed novel written by African women, the literary world began to give space to African women writers, and in a nutshell, Flora Nwapa paved the way for a new distinction for the following women writers. Flora Nwapa attempts to address women's shared needs and collective necessities, and the women she represents in her works often come with a mission.

The author of *Bride Price and The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta, endeavours to shed light on the dilemma experienced by the women in the community. In the world of Buchi Emecheta, she identifies with the punishments and

torture experienced by women in the domestic environment. Nancy Topping Bazin states, "Buchi Emecheta's novels remain on the level of individual experience and social custom with less attention to spiritual questions and implications" (40). This proposes to explain that Buchi Emecheta voices out for millions of African women who are the scapegoats of institutional forms of slavery. It is discernible that Emecheta chronicles the account of women's victimization and entrapment in Nigerian society. Emecheta addresses the ways by which women get torn between the patriarchal male supremacy on the one side and the established customs of the land on the other side. Marie Umeh says, "In her attempt to promote change, she condemns the Nigerian male's insensitivity to the needs of their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters- women in general" (191). Buchi Emecheta sheds light on the women in pre-colonial Africa in her narratives, such as *Bride Price and Slave Girl*; "Nancy Topping Bazin states thus, In *Bride Price*, Emecheta shows how numerous Indigenous African customs and superstitions oppress and degrade the female" (8). In Buchi Emecheta's narratives like *Bride Price*, she addresses the core issues related to traditional forms of violence, and she elucidates the identity crisis, confusion, and chaos experienced by women in society. "John Stoltenberg, in *Refusing to be a Man*, states that Male sexual identity is not a role. Male sexual identity is not a set of anatomical traits. Male sexual identity- the belief that one is male, the belief that there is a male sex, the belief that one belongs to it- is a politically constructed idea" (165). Buchi Emecheta establishes the supremacy and privilege of men within the African mores, and irrespective of anything, women succumb to the male dominance and hierarchy, and she claims that Africans often had double standards for freedom and equality of women.

From the moment a girl is born, she is often identified with the name from the male lineage, and the web of repression and tyranny is apparent in the lives of women even from a very young age. “Nancy Topping Bazin reiterates Buchi Emecheta saw parallels between sexual and racial discrimination and parallels between buying wives and buying slaves” (39). There is always the perpetual struggle for liberation in the lives of Nigerian women. Gender-based violence is the violation of fundamental human rights affecting individuals based on their gender, and “Mary Jennings and Sherry Mclean reiterate that gender-based violence is seen as a complex and sensitive issue to engage with, is covered in silence, have led to inaction” (115). The patriarchal society deemed women to possess virtues, such as domesticity, piety, purity, and submissiveness, and they had often attached the ideal perceptions attributed to womanhood to be meek and humble in behaviour. Another contention is that various authorities and institutions are imperative in shaping women's lives.

The perpetrators of violence towards women had imposed punishments for them, including stripping their clothes while being beaten, and they tortured women through rape. It is indeed true that the perpetrator had tracked methods of torture as a part of the subjugation and sexual exploitation of young girls and women. They had stripped the slave of dignity and humiliated her publicly. Honor killings existed to protect the honour of the family and community when defying the wishes of the family members, as women often became victims of sexual assault, and one or more perpetrators committed it. Refusal of arranged marriages, pregnancy of women outside of wedlock, and learning against the will of their parents are all considered offenses. Violence occurs within the secluded space of the family, and it is considered the husband's authority to discipline his wife and the family members.

In doing so, the study seeks to analyse that structural violence often becomes invisible, and it becomes more challenging to address the patriarchal society, often hidden in the everyday squalor of life. Domestic violence often occurs in the form of assault, humiliation, abuse in family relationships, and name-calling within marriages. All the diverse forms of violence tend to be the products of the patriarchal system, and the traditional gender roles further exacerbate them. Women are excluded from pursuing their education, and societal stigmas are invisible yet pervasively experienced by women in their routine lives. It affects the holistic health of the female self, and the violence turns out to be a permeating threat in the community.

Battered child syndrome is a clinical condition where young children receive repeated abuse (physical/ emotional) from their parents intentionally. The frustration of the parent often leads to physical injuries, fractures, bruises, and burns, and this remains unreported due to the failure of the systems. Often, the law becomes a puppet as the perpetrators of violence often manipulate the legal institutions, and women turn out to be historically disadvantaged groups who experience inequalities in diverse sectors of life. The strength of society lies in the security and protection it provides for an individual. If that security is at stake, it denies human rights directed towards the individual. This turn reflects the insight that women are perpetually under surveillance, and power dynamics often regulate them in their lives. They encounter social inequities and discrimination in every facet of their lives. Conflicts become a part of a woman's life in Nigeria to thrive in the home environment and cope with social institutions. The following propositions might signify that women are often disadvantaged and marginalized in society as the traditional gender roles restrict their freedom. This sheds light on the female characters in the chosen novels as they self-question their worth at diverse junctures.

Domestic violence is considered a grave human rights issue, and it also constitutes a significant part of human rights. It is to be understood that victims of violence are often exposed to the danger of substance abuse disorders, encompassing alcoholic consumption, and they experience constant shame and insult from their environment, which leads to adverse effects on their health and relationships. In the instance of domestic abuse, victims maintain contact with the perpetrator for an extended period. Article 3 of the statute for the international criminal tribunal for Rwanda defines rape as "A physical invasion of a sexual nature, committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive" (Rwanda International Criminal Tribunal). Even children are prone to fall victim to such violence, including bruises, injuries, infection, and malnutrition. Women in Nigeria had experienced abuse right from their childhood in the form of sexual exploitation, FGM, early marriage, domestic violence, physical aggression, and sexual assault. The manifestations of abuse can be extended from verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse to marital rape, and intimate partner violence can also lead to chronic health conditions, i.e., physical injury. It also involves hitting, punching, and slapping. Often, injuries extend from bruises to severe harm, and the attempt of the victim to escape from the abuse often ends up being homeless.

The seminal text *Bride Price* by Buchi Emecheta, written in 1976, offers an insight into the enslavement and degradation of women through the protagonist Akunna in post-colonial Nigeria. The chronicle of Akunna represents society's taboos in various forms, as Akunna's journey from childhood to short-lived motherhood represents the severe and crushing force of a society like that of Ibuza. Ma Blackie herself was a giant of a woman; she was called the palm tree woman, and her friends and neighbours had attached the reverential title to her name. The name 'Akunna'

literally means father's wealth, and Akunna accepted Chike as her husband against the traditional constraints on them. Chike has a strong love for Akunna, but he is considered an outcast by Akunna's family, as he is an Osu, a formerly enslaved person's son, a descendant of the enslaved person. They often sensed an unbridgeable gap with the families of the enslaved people.

Numerous writings of significance have been penned by Buchi Emecheta, and her influential text *The Joys of Motherhood* is set in pre-independence Nigeria from mid-1930- to mid-1950s, and the novel is represented as a critique of the traditionally rigid Igbo society. The narrative *The Joys of Motherhood* was published in 1979 by Buchi Emecheta in the course of the text, and she renders the challenges and complexities of women's experiences in Nigerian society. Marie Umeh says, "One of the striking attributes of *The Joys of Motherhood* is the author's concern with socio-historic phenomena in pre-independent Nigeria while defending women's liberation." (199) In a nutshell, Buchi Emecheta expresses concern over women's relegated status and motherhood's predicaments in Nigerian societies. "The ironic title, *The Joys of Motherhood*, often highlights between the expectations and reality of woman's existence in Africa and Nnu Ego, the protagonist of *The Joys of Motherhood* becomes a prisoner of her own life, continuously seeking validation and approval from the family as well as the society. "Barbara Christian states Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* details the social dead ends constructed against women caught between the two incompatible value systems of rural Africa and urban colonialism" (246). In doing so, Nnu Ego becomes a victim of her times, trapped and victimized in a relationship with Amatokwu and her second marriage with Nnaife.

Flora Nwapa, in her seminal text *Efuru*, sheds light on the firm and independent protagonist named Efuru. She is a triumphant woman in trading, and it

gives her a sense of autonomy and self-determination in her life. Efuru's life can be traced in the narrative as she becomes a successful trader and asserts her independence and authority. In contrast, society attempts to shape her into a mother through social and familial expectations. "Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi says Nominally, Efuru narrates its eponymous protagonist's quest for autonomy during a transitional period in which British are consolidating their colonial occupation" (2). It can be observed that wealth often plays a pivotal role in the life of women, and Nwapa chooses self-assertive, strong female characters like Efuru, and the resilience and stubborn nature of Efuru challenges the traditional gender roles that expect women to be caregivers. Efuru asserts her identity by attaining personal fulfilment through her trading. She has promoted skills in trading for her financial well-being and earns respect in the community. It may be opined that Efuru lives in a society that constantly places expectations upon women as the women's identity in the culture is closely tied to her childbearing capacity.

In his work' *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault uses the term docile bodies. It is the patriarchy that expects women's bodies and behaviour to be regulated and controlled, conforming to the standards set by them. In Nigerian households, all that the patriarchy expects women to do is to feed and take care of the baby, and if the baby is fidgeting, strap him onto his back and proceed with the household work while the baby sleeps. Accordingly, taking care of the newborn and nurturing the child was considered a full-time job for the women, and women who refrained from exercising their reproductive rights experienced disgrace and social prejudice from the community. Ebele Eko argues, "With a deadly punch at the myth of sweet motherhood, Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* exposes the harsh truths in the life of an average urban mother" (216). It is observed that the Nnu Ego feels

lacking and inadequate in her life without children, and the state of the Nnu Ego in society mirrors the existential crisis of women within the families and communities. Through the life of Nnu Ego, it becomes evident that poverty and financial hardships affect women in every aspect, and the stereotypes of society often limit opportunities for women, as even education is denied to them. Obia Nnaemeka enunciates, “The feminist critic’s preoccupation with standing Nnu Ego up as an indictment of her society beclouds the critic's version and forecloses a serious engagement with the novel” (89). They are also subjected to ineffective sanitation facilities, water supply, and lack of transportation facilities in their everyday existence. In the patriarchal culture, traditions and conventional practices are considered the yardsticks for social acceptance in the communities, and elders remain as the traditions' custodians. This highlights that conforming to their cultural practices is associated with housework, childbearing, and subsistence farming.

History is prejudiced against women, leading to a lack of recognition and representation in society. Despite all the efforts, women are being oppressed institutionally, and they continue to face barriers in many facets of life, including political representation. This makes it imperative that it is the phallocentric order that has given women subservient status. Domiciled extended families (with lineage members, spouses, and dependent children), descent groups (lineages), and conjugally based family units (divisions of extended family) comprise the kin groups. In all these kin groups, women had been assigned responsibilities and obligations, and these kin groups regulated various aspects of women’s lives, including marriage and other social duties.

Matrilineal systems had persisted in various African societies, and over centuries, there was the beading tradition among the Samburu, who offered the girl a

necklace woven with beads and decorations. The beads were placed on the girl's neck as an emblem to maintain purity till marriage, and it is worn as a symbol of their matrimonial status. Family structure in pre-colonial societies was the extended family system, and they often had the idea of existing together with close-knit relationships; their family system comprises grandparents, children, inlaws, and cousins. "Maggi Phillips reiterates that through mother Nnu Ego, Emecheta examines the joys of childbearing in the disturbed social environment of the urban and colonial lagos"(93). It is observed that there was collective and shared responsibility over family matters, and child care and caring for the elderly also fell under the collective responsibility.

Besides, single mothers and women who have gone through divorce have experienced stigmas and challenges in specific communities. Regarding a married woman, it is observed that the prior responsibilities instilled in her include culinary tasks, domestic duties, cleaning chores, and serving their family and children. "When the meal is over, she packs away his plates for washing while he dozes off to sleep. Early the following morning, she must wake up with the cock's crow to start the day's work while her husband sleeps" (Nwapa 173). In the context of marriage, a woman has no preference over the choices and decisions of her family. As it relates, women are expected to perform the duties advised by their parents, and when they attain the age for marriage, their parents will choose someone for her; an exchange of ownership is all Igbo marriages are about. Flora Nwapa reiterates the indispensable roles assigned to women as being wives and mothers in the patriarchal society.

Was a woman nothing because she was unmarried or barren? Was there no other fulfilment for her? Could she not be happy, in the real sense, just by having men and friends who were not husbands? There did seem to be some magic about the word 'husband.' As children growing up, her people had

drummed into their ears that a girl had an ambition – to get married. So, all energy was geared towards finding her a good husband. (Nwapa 22)

In this turn, Flora Nwapa's writings emphasize the segregation and exploitation experienced by the characters in the narrative. It is to be stated that even widowhood makes the woman's state miserable as they have to persist in a disconnected mourning room for nine months. "Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi renders as much as Nwapa's novel focuses on women's experience of slavery, it also ruminates on the demands of representing the relationship between histories of the domestic slavery" (7). Indeed, during the mourning rituals, they are not permitted to change their clothes or bathe; another man would inherit her to protect the widow and her children. They follow a socially accepted tradition. The male journeys away from home. In contrast, the female remains close to home, and Emecheta explicitly exposes the microscopic particulars of the lives of African women. "Maggi Philips says Emecheta advocates a future equality of choice for mothers, an end to all forms of slavery, and a general recognition of life's preciousness" (94). This clearly states that the female experiences in Nigerian society explicitly show the conspicuous levels of oppression endured by them.

A woman's worth is weighed against her children and family, as Emecheta states in *The Joys of Motherhood*: "God, when will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, not anybody's appendage?" (4). Buchi Emecheta reasserts that women should strive for their liberty and resist the institutionalized patterns of slavery. A woman's life turns out to be a series of sacrifices owing to society's expectations to be a nurturing mother and a devoted wife at the expense of their aspirations. The repression endured by them exemplifies the considerable scars on her body and consciousness.

Those belonging to minority groups, Indigenous women, refugee women, women migrants including women migrant workers, women in poverty living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women, displaced women, repatriated women, women living in poverty and women in situations of armed conflict, foreign occupation, wars of aggression, civil wars, and terrorism including hostage taking, are also particularly vulnerable to violence.(Fourth Women's Conference 49)

Buchi Emecheta's narrative identifies the young African women who protest natural customs in their land and are compelled to abide by them. Women in society always respond to the world around them as customs allow. "Ibuza young girls must be prepared for anything to happen. Some youth who had no money to pay for the bride might sneak out of the bush to cut a curl from a girl's head so that she would belong to him for life and never be able to return to her parents" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 106). As a writer, Emecheta also approaches the text from the reader's perspective, and she engages with the unresolved trauma of the characters in the eventual search for their healing. The household chores and their management have long been regarded as the responsibility of women, and they stemmed from patriarchal perceptions. As imposed by the patriarchy, women were supposed to rush to the kitchen to organize their daily meals and satisfy men. "The hurry towards the kitchen had begun. Housewives carried their blackened iron pots in one hand and the pieces of yam they would pound in their various orders in the other"(Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 20).

In the same way, household chores create enormous stress on women; on the contrary, they are considered trivial and unpaid jobs, a woman's job. The traditional

gender roles had created these harmful stereotypes ascertaining power and rights to men and the enslavement and submission to women. This would eventually cause anxiety and stress in the various phases of life, and their traumatic voices have been muffled, and emotional scars have been ignored for generations. It is to be perceived that the narrative *The Joys of Motherhood* discusses the power dynamics and gender inequalities experienced by Nnu Ego. Nnu Ego does trade and sells fruits and vegetables. Despite the challenges directed at her by society, she struggles and does the farm work and gets involved in entrepreneurial activities. In African culture, pregnancy has a pivotal significance as it is perceived as a means to continue the lineage. In the narrative, the struggles of Nnu Ego to conceive a child result in her mental trauma, and it leads to the disruption of Nnu Ego's first marriage with Amatokwu. Her second marriage to Nnaife aligns with the norms and expectations of society, but the death of her child leads her to a life of isolation and trauma. As it can be perceived, Flora Nwapa is also in the process of reconstructing identities for women, contrary to the gender roles imposed by the patriarchy. Nwapa attempts to revivify an African woman who is not docile but economically independent and liberating.

Nwapa enunciates the eponymous character, Efuru, in the text as the woman who asserts herself in the male-dominated society, and she embraces a subtle yet strong approach towards societal traditions. Ebele Eko says, "We watch Efuru's growth from her early acceptance of social definitions of female roles to a period of questioning and choosing, though still cautiously and ambivalently" (214). Nwapa further reiterates that Efuru has economic independence and manages her trading effectively. Efuru gets coins by gathering firewood and selling matches. The monthly meetings Efuru had with their fellow Ibuza wives assisted her in grasping more

innovative ways of initiating a business. In Ibuza culture, the man of the family becomes the financial provider to the household, and the first wife has a peculiar position in the family. This further clarifies that Igbos have accepted values, ritual patterns, and practices such as breaking kola nuts, initiation rites, and new yam festivals. Efuru began to discover herself by being successful in trade and business. The self-assertion and vigour of Efuru, regardless of all the odds imposed by the patriarchy, needed a word of appraisal. Through the experiences of Efuru, it becomes evident that women with financial independence and entrepreneurship in the community also experience severe mental and emotional torment in their everyday lives.

Traditional African women were not exposed to school curriculum education, and their lives inevitably dealt with customs and ritualistic practices in the community. The labels of a faithful and subordinate wife, a nurturing mother, and a caretaker for the family continued to be their prime objectives in life enforced by the patriarchy. Women often had duties to carry out in subservient silence and had an extensive list of responsibilities to perform in their household. Their lives were often confined to the traditional gender roles. The chimney could not draw the smoke escaping from the sixteen or so earthenware cooking stoves ranged around the walls. The chimney could not draw the smoke from all the fires, so smoke rose and curled around the ceiling. Sometimes it would be dense that one would swear that the chimney was emitting smoke instead of sucking it up. In the kitchen, your eyes watered, and your nose ran in sympathy (45). In absolute terms, it reflects the life of a typical woman in Africa. The deeply ingrained gender roles often lead to a sense of entrapment for women as seen in the narratives; marriage becomes the conventional system to silence a woman's consciousness. Akunna's cousin utters, "A fatherless

family is a family without a head: a family without shelter, a family without a parent is, in fact, a non-existent family. Such traditions do not change very much" (Emecheta, *Bride Price* 25). The analysis attempts to show how cultural conflicts and the power of institutions emerge as a threat to women's liberation. Women had prolonged periods of strenuous work, and the institutions of patriarchy, including family, only weighed them as cheap sources of labour. African women were evaluated in a subordinate way and became cloistered from the economic and financial spheres. On close scrutinization, impediments confine black womanhood, but despite all that, there is the endeavour to discern the female perspective that black women have a history of their own.

Stereotyped slave women are the genuine representation of African women, and the assertive voices of black women need to be heard. Women often cursed themselves for their predicament, but it was the community and the masculine-led frameworks that were guilty of the gender roles imposed on women. The characters may change as the patterns repeat themselves, but the destiny and trauma they succumb to remain identical. It is observed that women in these texts are involved in the procreation of children, pre-and postnatal care, managing household functioning, and fostering the family environment. Amidst all the duties of a mother, Nnu Ego becomes a prisoner of her fate. It is perceived that she had followed the traditions unseemingly. She failed at life miserably, and Nnu Ego failed to give her daughters educational preferences similar to those of her sons.

Nnu Ego's daughter Taiwo protests against her for not being sent to school, and Nnu Ego shouts at them, "...you are girls! They are boys. You have to sell to put them in a good position in life so that they will be able to look after the family" (Emecheta, *Joys of Motherhood* 176). This implies that Flora Nwapa reflects on the

critical role of a writer in society, and it is with contempt that she deciphers the special consideration of the boy child to be educated in their society and always favours boys for education.

It is a good thing you are sending her to school. It is a waste sending them to school, you know. Well, I mean that boys should be given the preference if it comes to that. If you had a little brother, for instance, and there was just enough money to train one, you would not train Nkoyeni and leave the boy. They get married before the training, and the money is wasted. 'You are right, it is the fault of us men. we should allow them to finish their schooling.' 'and where does it end? In the kitchen (Nwapa 191-192).

Education can be a substantial turn in the empowerment phase of both men and women and mobilizing local communities to plan collective action toward education for children is significant. This unravels the relentless hardships and woes Nnu Ego endured to raise her children, child after child, following the dictums of the community. Nnu Ego is denied of the dignity and respect women expect from their children. Amidst all the chaos, she assisted the family with the trade and embraced the identity of a conventional mother living by society's customary norms and traditions. This explains further that women are categorized as passive objects inside the male-centric discourses.

They similarly delineate that the rigorous internal conflicts are intrinsically tied to the roles of a woman as a mother and wife. Society and communities believe that fulfilment in life is sought only through the triumph of motherhood. This addresses the fact that women make relentless efforts to nurture children, and there is a consistent female struggle behind this process. This exemplifies that the domestic

trauma inflicted on their consciousness has lasting consequences affecting their emotional and mental well-being. Morgan writes,

slave narratives show that slaves suffered physically, emotionally, and spiritually under slavery, that slaves yearned for freedom and resisted slavery in every possible way, that slavery was a pernicious system eventually shattering enslavers as well as slaves, that the narrators were telling the truth about their own experiences; and that each narrator was a reliable transcriber of the experience and character of Black folk (Morgan 73).

As is evident in 1934, Nnu Ego's spouse served as a domestic servant for the colonial officer, and it was unacceptable and intolerable for Nnu Ego that her husband was a white man's servant. It has explicitly stated that Nnaife had valued the religious rules while working with the Meers household and the condition of being owned by others as property or about labour, i.e., the institution of slavery was practiced in their culture. In this connection, the slave women are buried alive, and this slave woman turns out to be the chi/personal God of Nnu Ego. Ultimately, the slave woman becomes the curse to Nnu's ego, and Nnu's ego in her life turns out to be an enslaved person for her husband and children. The death of Nnaife's elder brother makes Nnu Ego realize that Nnaife must protect his brother's wives and children. During the marriage of Nnaife and Nnu Ego, Nnaife had affirmed that he would have Nnu Ego as his only wife. Eventually, Nnaife justifies his polygamous relationships as it is acceptable in the patriarchal power structures of the society.

In *Joys of Motherhood*, Nnaife has multiple wives, and wives seek validation from their husbands. Polygamy is widely accepted in their culture, and it is considered a normative practice in African society. In this regard, Nnaife works for his white

master, Dr Meers, at the Forensic Science Laboratory, and he becomes submissive and willingly takes on the role of the servant to his colonial master. Even if they do not respect his individuality and integrity, and regardless of whether he was called a baboon, Nnaife will take all of it in a philosophical approach as they are white-skinned. It may be observed that Nnaife wore khaki shorts with holes and an old loose and white singlet, and he had trained himself in the daily routine, reaching his master's home by six in the morning, wearing his khaki shorts, and consuming the night's leftover food. This deciphers that washing clothes, going to the pantry, and filling and pressing the iron with coal all fall into the constant routine in the master's home for Nnaife. "But every time she saw her husband hanging out the white woman's chores, Nnu Ego would wince as someone in pain. The feeling would cut deeper when, with a sickening heart, she heard Nnaife talking effusively about his treatment of dainty clothes and silk. This man was proud of his work, she realized." (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 47). It further stresses that the sociopolitical milieu and colonial influence shape the perpetual conflict between tradition and modernity in characterizing Nnaife and Nnaife's identity. Nnaife becomes assistant to a group of English men, washing clothes for meers, later, Nnaife is sent to India and Burma to combat during World War II, and Nnaife himself turns out to be in absolute disillusionment with life.

Nnu Ego steadily realizes that men like Nnaife are more engaged in being the white men's attendants, and they do not cater to the wishes and desires of their wives. Naturally, they look forward to the white money in the hands of the colonial master, and an indifferent misdemeanour from the master can follow up the wife back in the form of punishments. Nevertheless, from time to time, there was the grim reality of the economic hardship that Nnu's ego had fought with, and the character takes pride in

washing white women's clothes. Nnu Ego and Nnaife thereby take respective turns in life, where Nnaife becomes the servant of the colonial master, and Nnu Ego becomes a petty trader in the marketplace. Nnaife's domestic servant routine in Meers compound involves washing the colonizers' clothes and being their domestic servant; all of this seems disgraceful and dishonourable for Nnu Ego. He becomes a chef to the white woman, does the dishes, and madam's garments, and it continues to be a day-to-day routine in Nnaife's life. Nnu Ego's father had polygamous unions, and she is the daughter of one of the mistresses. The reputation of the senior wife was prominent in African tradition as they had power superior to the other wives. Further, when Adakwu became Nnaife's second wife, it was strenuous for Nnu's ego to accept it, and the double trouble of polygamy encompasses challenges of long-standing disagreements between women. At the same time, men were perpetually driven in their community to have more wives, the rationale being that men could have more scapegoats in their farmland and for household chores. They shared heavy workloads between wives, and most women in their community had no ownership and rights. Another significant aspect is that polygamy has also facilitated a surge in the fertility rate, which was of pivotal prestige in their community, and the bond and attachment between the family members were always fragile.

Moreover, Buchi Emecheta tends to be expressive as the narrative approaches Nnu Ego, who is left with her fading hopes and her malnourished children. The Ibuza village grapples with acquiring the fundamental necessities of food and proper health care. It has been observed that there are insecurities in terms of food and health, and lack of access to safe and nutritious food eventually leads to stunted growth of children and other infectious diseases. People even boast of Nnaife's accomplishments, yet Nnu Ego reaches a position wherein she cannot pay Oshia's

school fees as Oshia weeps to Nnu Ego: “But I love school, mother. All my friends are here. Why do I have to stop so many times?” (177). The narrative reveals that Oshia represents many children in their community who discontinued their education, and Nnu Ego remained in Lagos penniless with her children. In the narrative, it is evident that she was left with declining expectations and demanding children, and she nourishes her children and manages to direct her son to higher studies.

Nnu Ego's husband's junior wife becomes exasperated by her husband and then becomes an independent prostitute. This brings in a situation as Adaku leaves Nnaife, and she turns out to be a prostitute. In Emecheta's narrative, she observes the marginalized experiences of Nnu Ego, who has succumbed to systemic discrimination. Emecheta meticulously underpins the grim reality of women's lives. This entails various dimensions of the constant monitoring of the patriarchal system, expecting women to be mothers and wives. Nurturing their children and the physical and mental wounds imposed upon the consciousness and body of Nnu Ego become evident in the text. Therefore, the exhausted and battered soul of the protagonist and the disillusionment of a woman's life become the essence of the narrative.

A baby inside me is the only time I am alive. I know I can make and do something, regardless of skin colour and names people call me... you can see the little one grow and get larger and start doing things, and you feel there must be some hope, some chance that things will get better, because there it is, right before you, a natural, live-growing baby... The baby is a good sign, or at least he is some sign. They consistently adhere to the ancient customs and notions, which are the foundations of a family system. They concede to the belief that the only power vested with a woman is the procreative power, and the lack of procreative power makes her futile in front of society. "God, when

will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, not anybody's appendage?... when will I be free?... I am a prisoner of my flesh and blood... having to live up to the standard expected of me by the males in my life, my father and my husband, and now I must include my sons. (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 186-87)

In traditional African society, pregnancy and childbirth are rooted in their customs and practices. The women often acquired midwifery skills to heal their children's illnesses, and they had gynaecological expertise and traditional knowledge to resolve such issues in the community.

The pregnant women were encircled by their family members, and men were never present at the place of birth. Midwives preferred squatting for the mother during the time of contraction, and they also performed spiritual rituals for the birth of the baby; they used herbs to protect the newborn from evil spirits, and the Yoruba conducted the naming ceremony seven days after birth. This conveyed that it was customary for expectant mothers to give birth in their own homes, and emergency and complicated situations necessitate skilled physicians within the communities, and in their absence, midwives dealt with challenging situations. On the other hand, the swelling of Efuru's leg during pregnancy was resolved by Ajanupu, who had never had any prior experience in medicating a pregnant woman, and it was Ajanupu who recognized Efuru's pregnancy for the first time. Against this backdrop, it becomes relevant to state that procreation and female fecundity are deemed sacred, and the communities and the child-rearing practices in Africa are as old as the tradition itself.

During the birth of a baby, the umbilical cord is cut with blades and knives, and they utilize cow dung and human saliva on the cord for immediate healing. This

kind of habitual practice could lead to neonatal tetanus for the newborn. The study is also an attempt to reflect that the cultural perceptions and taboos related to childbirth seemed to be barbaric, and they have another erroneous belief that foods like eggs, meat, mangoes, and citrus fruits cause allergy-causing pneumonia. Thus, it broadly focuses on how some particular traditions and cultures are universal and passed on from generation to generation. The child is dependable not only to the biological parents but also to the extended family members, and the children live with their family until they are prepared for marriage. It can be perceived in African society that they reinforce the connection between husband and wife through a child and presuppose children to be the authentic source of wealth in their community.

When the baby was five days old, Ajanupu told her sister that it was time to put alligator pepper in her mouth to free her tongue. If this was not done, Ajanupu said, the baby might be deaf. So early the next morning, some alligator pepper was brought, and Ajanupu chewed it very well and then put it under the baby's tongue. The baby yelled and yelled. She was quickly breastfed and stopped crying. Ajanupu, my daughter, will talk like you. I am afraid she will be very talkative. (Nwapa 33)

Indeed, Nnu's ego could not bear the death of her first child, so she attempted to commit suicide by plunging into the water, and a woman without a child in wedlock was considered to be a failed woman. From time to time, children, especially male children, are deemed to be assets in the community, and losing her first child made her despondent. This seems to uncover how women's battles, exploitation, and abuse are explored through the character of Nnu Ego. It is indeed true that violence endured by Efuru and women characters on the other side exposes the toxic masculinity of male characters like Adizua and Gilbert. This also articulates that keeping up with

societal expectations and aspirations is a part of women's responsibilities according to the dictates of society. As Emecheta has documented, Nnu Ego craved the joys of motherhood, but in reality, she has never experienced authentic sources of happiness. "For years, Emecheta's protagonist, Nnu Ego, had accepted the patriarchal attitude that sons are more valuable than daughters" (Bazin 10).

Nnu Ego has never rejected the patriarchal expectations of society but experiences persistent incompetence in coping with the norms of society as she gives birth to numerous children, lacking satisfaction and contentment. Nnu Ego's endeavour to attain self-contentment through nourishing the dreams of motherhood and womanhood becomes in vain in the narrative. Nnu Ego attempts to move on from the past set of events in life, and there occurs a chain of intermediate instances that cause physical and mental pain, affecting the holistic health of Nnu Ego. As noted above, reminiscing the grief on past experiences and memories in the middle of the journey makes Nnu's Ego dejected and depressed, and Nnu's ego's predicament in this narrative is fatal. "She says, who made the law that we should not hope in our daughters? Until we change all this, it is still a man's world which women will always help to build" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 187). This becomes more visible when Oshia grows up, as he becomes an erudite individual and relocates to America for higher studies.

Oshia gets married to a white woman, embraces western ideologies, and traverses the confines set for him. Over time, it becomes evident that Nnu's ego turns out to be secluded and a lonesome woman by the end of the narrative. Nnu Ego has lost her identity, and Oshia becomes disrespectful and rude towards his mother. In the process, she experienced rejection and humiliation and could not liberate herself from the oppressive colonial structure. The narrative's backdrop is the era when the

European regime colonized Africa, and Nnu's ego does not abandon her indigenous culture in the footprints of the colonial experience. Buchi Emecheta challenges the attempt of society to disgrace women as second-class citizens, and Emecheta strives to represent the deep-rooted gender bias in a male-chauvinistic society.

Lack of rationale and victimization have made Nnu Ego make flawed decisions in life, and she becomes trapped between the cultures. The distinctive aspect is that she experiences countless hurdles and challenges in her life, both as a wife and as a mother, and she presumes that being a mother is the ecstasy of providing all to her children. At the close of Nnu Ego's life, she was rewarded with hardships and shame, and being the daughter of the mighty chief of Ibuza, Agbadi, and Ona, she succumbs to a despondent life. It can be asserted that the life of the protagonist, Nnu Ego, was a line of upheavals that occurred one after another as she succumbed to a lot as a woman. This becomes discernible as the Igbo society always cursed her as a failed woman, and she felt vulnerable because of her fondness towards her children. "It happened to Nnu Ego that she was a prisoner imprisoned by her love for children. Imprisoned in her role as the senior wife, she was not even expected to demand more money for her family, which was considered below the standard expected of a woman in her position" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 137). Here lies a protagonist disheartened with Nnaife and her children, and she had believed over the years that her motherhood would gratify her.

At this juncture in her life, Nnu Ego experiences the predicaments of being a woman and mother, and Nnu Ego's life shifts between slavehood and motherhood collectively. Eventually, Ona's public degradation points to the perils of restricted freedom in traditional African society, and a life of self-abnegation was never Nnu Ego's aspiration. Indeed, in this very sense, the circumstances that she had

experienced after the multiple childbirths made her vulnerable and fragile, and it points towards the double oppression of African women. The slavery of women becomes apparent throughout the novel, and it acts as a continuum of colonial history. It has decisively posited that the hierarchy between men and women becomes evident as everything is enshrouded in a masculine discourse and complies with the superior authority. This serves to emphasize that Nnu Ego directs her life in agreement with the patterns laid down for her by the Ibuza patriarchal system, and Nnu Ego takes solace in her journey with the assurance that one day, her boys will be men. This clearly states that the fissures in the colonial backdrop also led to the futile life of Nnu Ego, and her shift from desolation to a more bleak life represents the chronicle of agony. "When Nnaife returned from the war, he is told that Nnu Ego fought the war too here in your family" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 183). At this point, it becomes evident that Nnu Ego's battle was to accomplish the necessities of her children and her undernourished household. The narrative of Nnu Ego becomes the tale of trauma and unending aches, and her life is in a state of flux and transition, but the pain remains undivided and sharp. Marriage and children were considered life's backbone and pillar of strength.

The novel mirrors the rupture of the wedlock with Amatokwu, and she becomes one with Nnaife through the institution of marriage. She later had many children, but she was downcast and disheartened, and she could not fit herself into the patriarchal system. Thus, Buchi Emecheta condemns the traditional conventions in society, and she becomes a persistent and resilient voice for African women. It should be understood that in the former union with Amatokwu, she never had children with him, as Amatokwi says, "I have no time to waste my precious male seeds on an

infertile woman" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 32). In all these junctures, excruciating pain abandons her at distinct points in her life.

Gender conflict and the prevalence of violence become evident throughout the narratives. The writer seems dismayed as the victims barely speak about the inner conflict they have experienced. The narratives emphasize that they use women for pleasure, as objects for sexual satisfaction and procreation, and to perform household responsibilities. This is bound to the idea that Efuru's life, as reflected by Flora Nwapa, assimilates the dictums of their community, and they had believed in Uhamiri, and they also affirmed the notion that Uhamiri had chosen Efuru to be her worshipper. As Emecheta succinctly states, they had a keen belief in traditions and superstitions as they had the conviction that Adizua had eloped with another woman because it was in his blood as he continued to be in his father's path. They considered childlessness as a curse, and they even followed deleterious traditional practices in society, including customs like FGM.

The custom of female genital mutilation as a traditional practice is a grave violation of human rights, and it is practiced widely in Nigeria. Nancy Topping Bazin states, "This event is framed by rituals designed to win acceptance by the daughter and mother-in-law. The pain suffered by the daughter-in-law is cushioned afterward by a one-two- three-month confinement during which time she is waited on and fattened up with feasts of the best food" (9). The study clarifies that Efuru's husband had an illegitimate relationship, and polygamy was a part of their custom. Nkwo day was significant to them, and they yearned for the significance of the Goddess, including Uhamiri and Ani. "Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi states that The Uhamiri goddess, rendered as Mami Wata in Pidgin English and widely recognized as an icon for multiple forms of desire, bridges the divide" (6). They shared their customs: big kola

nut, nsala soup, homemade gin, and ganashi. They firmly believe that the initiation rite is a traditional practice that the Africans observe, labeling initiation at the beginning of adulthood, and they assume that this custom makes convincing women and good-natured wives in the community. This further emphasizes that initiation customs in Africa include etching scars on the skin surface to deep penetration into the genitals.

On the completion day of initiation, they are ornamented in occasional apparel. They are exhibited to the public, stating that they have entered womanhood, and Nwapa states that during circumcision, Efuru screamed out of pain. "Efuru's husband returned home, and he was told about his wife's circumcision. 'It must be done now, my son,' his mother told him. 'this is the time. let us not leave it until she gets pregnant.' Adizua said it was all right. He could afford the expenses. He was afraid of Efuru's father. 'Your father must be told, my wife. It will not be fair to have your bath without his knowledge. He must be told'" (Nwapa 12). It is evident that for African women, circumcision is just a part of women's wedding preparations. It is a practice to inhibit women's eroticism, and it becomes a part of the deep-rooted male oppression. They consider it as an experience of childbirth as female mutilation includes cutting the edges of their external genitalia. "Oh yes, that is it.. Efuru is having her bath. Poor girl, it is so painful" (Nwapa 15). Efuru lay on her back with her feet apart, and the woman gave instructions; she prepared black stuff, put it in a calabash, and left it outside the room where Efuru was lying. "Sprinkle this on the feet of all the visitors before they come into the room. It will be infected if this is not done. Press it with hot water every morning and night. Efuru's mother-in-law gave her the sharp razor that did the work. She wrapped it up and tied it at one end of her wrapper" (Nwapa 14). Moreover, the circumcised girls were referred to as feasting girls. Later,

after rest, they headed to the market to exhibit them for the whole village, charmingly decorated to expose their attractiveness, and they were adorned with gifts. Elizabeth Beker says, "In fact, in Efuru, the rationale of the rite's existence is never questioned, not by any of the characters nor by the narrator, not even when Efuru's bath fails to offer the post-natal protection it promises for mother and child" (Nwapa 49-50).

Female genital mutilation is a fundamental human rights violation, and the custom perpetuates violence and assault on a woman's body.

During the menstruation period, they remain in huts, and menstrual blood is projected as toxic. Further, it addresses that women become subject to collective forms of intolerance. The study reiterates that the body often plays a significant role as part of their rituals and practices, such as circumcision and female genital mutilation, which are the footsteps of initiation. It has explicitly stated that Cinamwali female initiation is a rite of passage in which they are secluded for some time. African religions have ancestral worship, sacrifices, initiation, reincarnation, and a routine of religious practices, and African rituals are conservative as they reinforce male power and male privileges. Clitoridectomy is a rite of female initiation in some areas of Africa, and the surgical removal of the clitoris is far more severe than male circumcision. They also practiced infibulation to constrain female sexual desire and to keep their bodies pure. Further, the World Health Organization labels the practice as female genital mutilation and female genital cutting is exercised in almost 28 countries in Africa. African Goddesses represent the primary source of power, and infertility is considered a curse. In this connection, it is significant to note that they also trace the sacrifices and offerings as a part of their convention, and they frequently play drums and other musical instruments as a part of rejoicing. It is observed that they exploit wild animals and use part of their bodies for rituals, conduct rituals to get

rid of barrenness and utilize trees for religious rituals. It is also pinpointed that they follow traditional ritualistic practices and that God/Chi is responsible for the person's fate. In this regard, Chi figures out the ultimate predicament of an individual and gives offerings and reverence to ancestors. There is also the custom of often consulting dibia.

Facial scarification is observed among Yoruba people to trace their lineages, and they have body accessories, marked patterns, inscribing on the face, vertical lines on cheeks, facial mark incisions, and in ritual sacrifices, there is shedding of blood. Moving on further, their tribal marks relate to their life, and marks on the body are also given to the firstborn of the family, irrespective of sex, to express the legitimacy of the child. They seek blessings from ancestors and forefathers. This phenomenon may be explained by the fact that there are communities where women are considered priestesses and traditional medical practitioners. The sacrifices to Uhamiri were practiced for fertility betterment, and Efurū was a firm adherent of Uhamiri. In this aspect, there is also an Igbo tradition that a chi or personal God can attribute to the torment of an individual. It was conveyed to Nnu Ego that her chi/ personal God was an enslaved person who was forced to die with her mistress, and the chi would not give Nnu Ego a fulfilling life as well. It was presumed that her chi was forcibly buried with her father's senior wife, which proves the hardship of Nnu Ego, and it was the chi who could be of assistance and aid to a person. Maggi Phillips thus renders, "By enslaving Nnu ego to the former slave in a dialogue through a dream, Emecheta enchains the second generation to their predecessors. (34)" They also postulate that the chi gives the child to Nnu Ego only to take the child back from her. "She knew her chi was a woman, not just because of her way of thinking; only a woman would be so thorough in punishing another" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 9). It expounds

the character of Nnu Ego as she had boundless dreams of her chi giving a baby boy to her hands by the banks of the Atakpo stream in Ibuza. It is to be reiterated that Nnu Ego pleads to God to safeguard her child. “Nnu Ego begins to see how the patriarchy uses motherhood to keep women relatively powerless” (Bazin.10). During Nnu Ego’s journey, she realizes that trials and ordeals in her life are caused by her chi, the slave woman who sacrificed against her will. One plausible way to observe it is that Agunwa’s slave was pleading for survival, and the slave women were forced to be buried alive to death.

In essence, the slave woman is bound and disciplined to adhere to the dictates of her master, and chi is recognized as principally responsible for an individual's affluence and prosperity. “O my chi, why do you have to be me so low? Why must I be punished? I am sorry for what my father did, and I am sure he is sorry too. But try to forgive us” (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 32). Nnu Ego is the daughter of Agbadi and Ona, and she becomes a reminder of Agbadi’s passion for Ona. Her chi, or the African life force, becomes a harmful influence on her life. Other than the Chi/personal God, various religions in Africa recognize the customary practice of ritual slaughter, and African medical practitioners perform many sacrificial rituals to affirm a good stroke of fortune. Besides, they utilize roosters, goats, cows, scorpions, porcupine quills, or baboon paws for this ritual, as sacrifice is a crucial form of ritual for them. Sacrifice and the shedding of blood were customary in African society, and they carried it within the African indigenous religions and considered offering sacrifices a habitual cultural practice.

Nnu Ego’s father approved the standard bride price from Amatokwu’s family as seven goats, baskets of yams, twenty-four home-spun lappas, rows of Hausa trinkets and coral beads, ornamented cooking pots, calabashes. Meanwhile, the

beautiful effigy of slave women was placed on the top of Nnu Ego's possessions to protect her from evil eyes. They also mentioned that to ward off people from the evil eye, they create jewellery like eye-catching rings and presumed that they defend individuals from the evil eye phenomenon. This emphasizes that from sickness to discontent in marriage, they accused the evil eye phenomena, and that notion was profoundly ingrained in the African state of mind. It is crucial to consider that the Yoruba people of Nigeria consider Ajuju as an evil gaze caused by envy. The defensive measures against the evil eye include a black rim around the eyes and blackening the face; the evil eye belief is a cultural norm in African institutions. They have also stated that the witch children superstition in Nigeria leads children to dwell in the streets as their families abandon them. Furthermore, they stay in a goat shelter in the village, and they even rush into the forest out of anxiety as they presuppose that the children become possessed by demons. It enables us to interpret that they give birth to several children and they cannot attend to them, thereby rejecting and abandoning them, branding them as witches.

Furthermore, they have ancestor and spirit cults, the medicines they make have spiritual powers, and it is said that their spirits can regulate the world. They interconnect their energy with the cosmos and have spiritual practices and offerings. On the other hand, they are deeply rooted in their tradition, presume their spirits to be benevolent, and consult spirits for their protection. It is a fact that Ukang (ordeal) is a procedure of crime detection that they observe; their moral code denies harm to a stranger, and religion remains the prime fulcrum of their society. They trust in good and evil spirits, and their religious values permeate every facet of their life. Nnu Ego considers children her priority, and her chi becomes a metaphysical entity that

determines her misfortune. This speaks volumes of the community that she lives in, as Nnu Ego expected a male son to give renewed existence to her flagging spirits.

There was no naming ceremony for Nnu Ego's newborn baby, and the child was named Oshiaju, meaning the bush refused this. In their community, it is ascertained that motherhood is a precondition for a female to secure fulfilment in life. The characterization of Efuru had kindness built into her, and she attended Ogea, and Ogea's raw nature changed. What is exceptionally related to women in her community was that Efuru was a flourishing businesswoman, entrepreneurial, righteous, and honourable at trading. "Efuru and her husband traded in yams and bought yams and other rare things in their town and sold them for a profit. When the yam trade was bad, they traded in dry and crayfish. It was in crayfish that they made their fortune. They bought crayfish in bags. Then they paddled back and sold the crayfish, making over a hundred percent profit" (Nwapa 21).

Another significant factor is that Efuru was always compassionate to her fellow beings, and Nwapa herself was a persistent proponent of human rights. It signifies that Efuru is benevolent in sharing her profits and establishing her business empire. It is observed that Efuru has gained economic independence but has also needed emotional independence. Efuru's first marriage with Adizua often leads to emotional turmoil, and Adizua's waywardness is in his blood. Eventually, Efuru reiterates,

There is a limit to human endurance. I am a human being. I am not a piece of wood. Perhaps he wants to marry this woman. What is wrong with marrying a second wife? It is only a bad woman who wants her husband all to herself. I do not object to his marrying a second wife, but I do object to being relegated

to the background. I want to keep my position as the first wife, for it is my right (Nwapa 170).

Reflecting on the characters' experiences, Nwasobi is the narrow version of Omirima, and Omirima, the gossip, persistently creates struggles in Efuru's life by bringing up issues regarding Efuru's infertility. "Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi reiterates that In Efuru, a character's participation in existing dialogues indicates her position within hierarchical social networks" (9). This marks that Efuru rises above tradition and becomes a token of boldness and strength. She leaves the relationships when the male figures fail to ensure the responsibilities they adhere to. Efuru challenges all injustices with a sturdy heart. Although she has had two marriages in her life, she is hapless in getting a sincere husband.

Efuru decides to get married before the groom pays her family the bride price, and she is resolute in making her own choices and decisions in life. In contrast, in her business, Efuru proceeds with her enterprise, and she sets an example for society as a financially independent woman. The events happening in the life of Efuru took an unexpected turn when her husband eloped with another woman, and the elopement of Efuru's husband and the demise of her daughter entirely devastated Efuru. This provides insight into her husband's recklessness, as it is ascertained that Efuru's husband, Adizua, relies thoroughly on his wife. "Efuru was worried in the second year of her marriage; my mother had only me. My father told me so, and she also found it challenging to become pregnant. Am I going to be like my mother?" (Nwapa 24). It is apparent here that Adizua's father had abandoned Adizua's mother, and the predicament of Efuru's mother-in-law is visible in these words,

My life has been one long-suffering. Adizua hated me just as his father hated me. He did not want me to be happy and denied me the happiness I had found in his marriage with Efuru. My son left his wife and ran away with a worthless woman. My Gods and ancestors, I have not wronged you. I have been upright. I have never stolen in my life. In all the long years I waited for my husband, I did not commit adultery. I have suffered as nobody had suffered before. Moreover, you tell me to live. To live for what? What is the purpose of living? I cannot live a purposeless life (Nwapa 157).

In light of the unrealistic expectations of society relating to women's roles, even a rational and self-assertive woman like Efuru breaks in front of their community and tradition. She becomes a target of those cultural norms about motherhood and being a wife.

In the continuation, Efuru's courage shatters at various phases substantially due to the loss of her child and her incapability of conceiving again. "I am capable of suffering for greater things. But to suffer for such a truant husband, an irresponsible husband like Adizua, is to debase suffering" (Nwapa 61-62). It stresses that Efuru's second marriage to Gilbert happened during that time, and Gilbert was eventually a product of Christianization and English education. Even after the marriage with Gilbert, he disregards Efuru, and he repeatedly addresses Efuru's barrenness. Gilbert abandons Efuru, and he infallibly accuses her of adultery. Even though Christianized, he has the tinge of the Igbo tradition, and Gilbert asks Efuru to confess adultery, as Gilbert says, "Unless you confess, you will die. So, you should confess to me and live" (Nwapa 216). Efuru's life has transitioned from one adverse experience to another, but she has not surrendered to her fate and sprouted as a woman of mightiness. It is essential to consider that Nwapa has taken up the baton to ensure that

Efuru gets autonomy and liberation in her life as she reiterates that the sole ambition of women in life is not marriage or procreation. A woman is complete even if she is unmarried or childless. Dissolved marriages and women returning home after failed marriages would not be approved in African domestic households. Indeed, Ajanupu takes her to the health center, and she cures Efuru of her illness. Ajanupu remains a reliable companion to Efuru. In this regard, it is observed that the intolerance of both Adizua and Gilbert ruins their relationships with Efuru. Adizua cannot keep up his obligations in wedlock, and Gilbert does the same.

The patriarchal doctrines have profoundly scarred the minds and bodies of women, often limiting themselves to the household and intimidating, neglecting, and isolating them. It is believed that the married woman returning home is considered a bad omen, and paying the bride price delayed is an abominable act in agreement with their tradition. The traditional cultural standards in Africa have customary practices like wine carrying and bride price payment, which have become significant in various cultures. Adizua's sexual desire and love were short-lived, as he deserted Efuru. This shows that Efuru abandons her household and tribe to marry Adizua, yet he exploits her as an apparatus of heterosexual fantasy. Efuru is an archetype of endurance through various phases of her life, as seen in the narrative. One plausible way to look at this is that the female body often becomes a solid material for sexual gratification, and women are often placed as an alluring object of male desire, becomes evident. In essence, Efuru's constraints turned out to be the collapse of Efuru's marriage with Gilbert and Adizua, which affected Efuru in multiple ways. It could be understood that Adizua's mother had deceived herself into being in Adizua's father's house for a long time, and Adizua's mother's womanhood becomes tainted by the betrayal of the two men in her life, her husband and son Adizua as both of them had abandoned her

in the end. It could be deciphered that Efuru loses Ogonim, but she endures the pain with resilience. Moreover, it could be found that they exemplify a good wife and a virtuous mother, identical to suffering as Efuru is an Oguta woman, and Oguta society is patrilinear. Nwapa assesses that a woman's social identity is defined by her husband and children.

The community often demands more from women as they presume that women's happiness is tied to the fulfilment of motherhood. There are instances in the narrative where children are disciplined from a tender age to become good wives and mothers. It could be noted that Ajanupu told Efuru to keep Ogea. "You are spoiling Ogea. Remember, she is a girl and will marry one day. Nobody will marry her if you do not bring her up well" (Nwapa 46). Furthermore, another aspect is that women are always in the claustrophobic spaces that trigger distress and stress in them as Omirima whispered, "I mean that your son should marry another girl who will bear children for us. I mean that Efuru is barren and therefore cannot reproduce" (Nwapa 182). This becomes crucial as the four years of promising marriage becomes unproductive in the societal view due to childlessness and being barren, which was considered as a position of stigma for women.

Efuru approaches Dibia along with her father. It is pertinent to understand that they had dibias and healers to treat the condition and save as mediators between the present and spiritual worlds. Dibia advocated that Efuru reach the ancestors, go to the lake, leave the calabash to flow away, and wait till the Owu festival. This features the fact that the acquisition of wealth was critical to them. The absence of a child often results in dispirited marriages, and in society, women's being critical of other women becomes evident in the novel through characters like Omirima.

The writer has addressed the plights of women as Nwapa's novels project the day-to-day lives of women who wish for a cultural shift, and Efuru breaks the stereotypical myths relating to women as subordinate beings. On the other hand, Efuru succeeds with income and persistent hard work, and her work-centered nature breaks the male-constructed myths and reveals her inner strength. It is elucidated in the narrative that economic and financial independence aids in making a legitimate choice for Efuru as Flora Nwapa takes up a subtle method to raise their voice against societal traditions. It seems likely that blue is the colour of completion, and motherhood is often associated with the colour blue. Patriarchy often has a significant role, particularly in woman-centered narratives, and women's talents and ambitions are considered to be futile ahead of the foremost function, i.e., motherhood. Eustace Palmer says "Women are the underdogs, and they are presumed to be content if their man merely sleeps with them even if he fails to discharge his other obligations" (Palmer 40). Constrained thus, often the fear instilled by society forces them to step back from fulfilling their potential and recognizing their identity. Human sacrifices, witch hunts, and female circumcision are brutal primitive practices in Africa, and conventional rituals have become a part of honour and tradition. It is apparent from the studies that Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the entire removal of the female external genitalia. For them, it becomes a sacred ritual to regulate the libido of women. Traditional cleansing is a widow cleansing ritual, and it is intended to get rid of the deceased spirit. The ritual lets the widow have a sexual relationship with another man to let the spirit of the deceased rest in peace. The cleansing rites often lead to the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.

In a more specific view, the thirteen-year-old Beninese girl Effia had to go through violence; she was accused of being a witch, and the community expelled her,

and it became a form of scapegoating. It is contended that even children with albinism had to succumb to fanatical forms of violence and witch hunts, rituals of child abuse, and murders of women accused of witchcraft became a part of their culture. People accused of witchcraft are brutally sequestered and murdered, and the communities consider the children born with disabilities as witches, and numerous children have endured rape due to this practice. It has been perceived that children born out of wedlock are also accused as witches. As they believe in supernatural powers, many of them are branded as witches, isolated, and sometimes persecuted in the villages. Witch hunting becomes another primitive practice where the witch doctor tortures individuals whose family members died for a strange reason. On the other hand, initiation ceremonies mark the shift of women from childhood to adulthood, and Omugwo (after-birth care) is practiced by them, where the mother-in-law of the woman nurtures and protects the baby completely as these ceremonies reinforce their sacred beliefs in the communities. Female circumcision or excision is the customary ritual conducted for Efuru before pregnancy, and it inflicts pain upon young innocent girls. Cutting the clitoris becomes a harrowing experience, and they hold the faith that it assists in surpassing pain during childbirth. Another aspect is that having a bath or ritual purification is considered jubilation, where the relatives celebrate it with gifts, and it is practiced to regulate the sexual desire of women and prevent women from adultery. Collectively, all these ritualistic practices become part of the socially constructed idea of being a female.

Flora Nwapa's other character, Amaka, is childless. Due to her childlessness, she experiences stigma and prejudice from the community, and she even encounters physical abuse and violence from her partner. They have considered marriage as insignificant without children as everything solely depends on the woman's capability

to give birth, especially the male child's acceptance rate, which is considered to be higher. "Amaka in *One is enough* further states to her mother about her fertility condition, and when she realizes that Amaka is the mother of twins, her mother utters, 'whoever the father of the twins is a man' (Nwapa 117). It has been observed that the barren women in the Igbo community, with the consent of her husband or mother-in-law, seek a young girl for her husband, and she pays her bride price, and this context can be evident in *Efuru*, too. *Efuru* wishes to justify her position as Adizua's first wife, and Ajanpu's statement makes it obvious. "Don't you think you should now begin to look for a young girl for him? If you leave it to him and his mother, his mother might get someone who will override you. You will have no control over her, which will be difficult for you. One day, they will tell you you have no children and therefore no right to be in the house, your wealth notwithstanding" (Nwapa 164-165). Therefore, the thrust must be clear that Nkoyeni, Gilbert's second wife, dares to interrogate him with queries because of her foreign education.

In *Bride Price*, the author ascertains that it is the society that often imposes women to live within the traditional gender roles stringently, and the people in the community become apprehensive when the women in the marriage do not conceive offspring. It has been observed that families had performed diverse rites to keep the pregnancy, and many constraints in their communities had prevented the pregnant women from accepting offerings until the infant came out. These lines encompass the substantial value of giving birth in African tradition, as "Uzoechi says, give them time. Idu will be like her mother. She was not barren. No, none of her people is unproductive. What I like about them is how they live their happy marriage"(163). Similarly, Auntie Uzo in *Bride Price* screams out of pain as her baby keeps chewing her nipples as they are chewing sticks. She utters to the baby, "You are not the only

child I am going to have, you know. Others will come, and I shall need my nipples to feed them with. If you bite me like that again, I shall give you a spank" (22). Notably, women are considered as a tree that uninterruptedly bears fruits. It contends that the objectification of women without recognizing their individuality and their incapability to break from male enslavement is the disgrace Buchi Emecheta features in the novel. More importantly, even after the child's birth, they give exalted birth preference to male children as the patriarchal system has the custom of giving more recognition to male children than to female children, and the bias for sons stems from societal and cultural factors.

In Nigeria, where I grew up, only one's enemy would make a special prayer for the birth of a girl child. The regular prayers would go, 'You will be safely delivered of a bouncing baby boy, a real man-child, on a large banana leaf so that we can come and make jolly with plenty of palm wine and pounded yam. The pregnant woman would not protest this prayer because, in her heart, she too would like to have a male child who would not be married away but would stay in the family's homestead and look after his mother when she became old and weak. In most African societies, the birth of a male child enhances a woman's authority in the family: male children are very important.

(Emecheta, *Bride Price* 2)

The women characters in all the narratives often become victims of social judgment. Ma Blackie's husband, who had returned from the war front, was discontent when she had not been pregnant like other wives in the neighbourhood.

Ezekiel Odia had sent her to all the native doctors in Lagos, and Ma Blackie's infertility was a substantial issue of concern for him. The village neighbours had taken

this as a topic of various discussions and interpreted it in many ways. It becomes evident that patriarchal hegemony can either shape or destroy a woman's life in equal ways. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego's incapability to conceive was considered a mark of disapproval and disgrace by society. It can be identified that society raises its voice against a woman who fails to conceive a child, as the concept of motherhood is a much-hyped one, and women's values are measured based on their procreative power. This is particularly concerning, as Nnu Ego was obliged to conform to the norms of society. The failure of conception after marriage becomes a condemnation and disapproval in the societal eye. Similarly, it can be perceived that Amatokwu's behaviour towards Nnu Ego shifts absolutely, and he becomes hesitant to satisfy her by all means. They suppose that her chi/spirits do not favour her, and her connection with other women in Amatokwu's compound also becomes strained. As the senior wife, Nnu Ego is not supposed to breastfeed the younger wife's child. "Nnu Ego locked her hut, lay beside the child, and gave him her breasts. She closed her eyes as contentment ran through her whole body. The baby's restlessness abated, and he sucked hungrily, though there was no milk." (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 33).

Meanwhile, Nnu Ego does not have a strong bond with the second wife; she even has a detached relationship with her mother, and as she was born out of wedlock, she had no companions from childhood. Nnu Ego kept feeding the baby of the second wife daily, and she was astonished to see milk dripping from her firm breasts. Nnu Ego feels the motherly instincts earnestly towards the child, and Amatokwu, witnessing Nnu Ego feeding the baby, becomes violent and hits her abominably. As the situation proves, nursing the child and offering comfort through breastfeeding uncovers Nnu Ego's motherly instincts. When Nnu Ego determines to get married to

another individual after ending her marriage with Amatokwu, Agbadi expects an individual who would value and appreciate his daughter.

The family members of Nnu Ego suggest that Nnu Ego leaving Ibuza can assist her Chi and give her more peace and tranquility. It is apparent that becoming pregnant and embracing motherhood were Nnu Ego's eternal dreams, and she had kept her meagre savings for the baby. This addresses that Nnu Ego's prior childless marriage and her second marriage were rooted in misery, and it testifies to the persistent conflicts experienced by the protagonist. The convention in Ibuza culture is that sons assist their fathers more than they help their mothers. "A mother's joy is only in her name. She worries over them and looks after them when they are small, but she helps on the farm and upholds the family name; all belong to the father" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 122). Furthermore, when Nnu Ego and Adaku got pregnant simultaneously, Nnu Ego got twins. Adaku had soothed Nnaife with the bride's price about Efuru's daughter as it would fetch within twelve years, and the children were named Taiwo (she who came first) and Kehinde (She who came second). Adaku gave birth to a son, and unfortunately enough, the son died of convulsions, leading Adaku to anxiety and depression as it became merely hopeless for Adaku to survive without her son. When Nnu Ego comforts Adaku, saying that her youth and age can still promise her further children, Adaku reiterates that,

You can say that now. Do you remember how sad you were, senior wife, when you had the two girls? You would have been happier if they had turned out to be boys instead. I had a boy, my only son, who did not live. O God, why did you not take one of the girls and leave me with my male child? My only man child (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 128).

Nnaife, Nnu Ego's husband, becomes agitated when she delivers twin baby girls. It is revealed to the reader that Nnu Ego personifies a round character by Emecheta, and the characters emphasize the recurring cycles of patterned violence experienced in distinct phases of life.

The representative work, *One is Enough*, is the fourth novel of Flora Nwapa, and Nwapa cherishes the solid female protagonist Amaka. Rather than being with a disloyal husband, who has two sons with another woman, she relocates to Lagos to initiate a new life. She declines the marriage and has twins out of wedlock. "Female sexuality is no more condemned as opposed to the community of Efuru. Ayo, Amaka's sister, states that she has four children without a husband "(Nwapa 127). As the journey of Amaka is documented, Amaka turns out to be a businesswoman, and she rejects all the gender roles and all the sets of culturally defined behaviours imposed on her: "I do not want to be a wife. A mistress, yes, but not a wife. As a wife, I am never free; I am a shadow of myself. As a wife, I am almost impotent. I am in prison, unable to advance in body or soul. When I got rid myself of Obiora, things started working for me. I do not want to go back to my "wifely" days. (Nwapa, *One is enough* 132). This mirrors her journey towards resilience and self-realization as she got twins with Father Mclaid out of wedlock. Flora Nwapa challenges how society becomes critical of a woman in procreation and marriage. It can be argued that the community's perspective becomes awful even if a girl refuses to marry at a particular age, and even if she gets married and does not have a child, the community's opinion becomes awful.

Thus, it signals that society has a voice in every aspect occurring in a woman's life as society becomes the surveillance mechanism in the life of a woman, and it constrains a woman's life in multiple ways in the patriarchal system. In her work,

“Sarah Sobieraj postulates, "What is more, the experiences among Black women are further shaped by complex stratifying matrices of advantage and disadvantage such as those of class, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, and sexuality" (Soberai 11). Women persist to remain underrepresented in political positions in Africa, and the notion of 'intersectionality' states that class, race, and gender are codependent factors.

Intersectionality signifies the necessity for diverse representation in the institutions of power. Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi coined the term womanism and opinions of Nwapa's discontent with the term feminism. “Frantz Fanon says in *The Wretched of the Earth*, In a developing nation, every effort is made to mobilize men and women as quickly as possible; it must guard against the danger of perpetuating the feudal tradition which holds sacred the superiority of the masculine element over the feminine. Women will have the same place as men, not in the constitution's clauses but in life every day in the factory, school, and parliament” (202). Despite the traumas, traditional customs have assigned women to keep the institution of marriage, execute their responsibilities as wives and mothers, and eventually triumph in that marriage as marriage is considered the coin of fruition in a woman's life.

The narrative *Bride Price* by Buchi Emecheta exemplifies women as an inarticulate section of society through the protagonist Akunna and her mother, Ma Blackie. Aku-Onna means father's wealth, and the wealth they often preferred was in the form of Bride price. There is escalating violence around women, and the irony is that violence is exercised by the family members of the respective women in the case of Akunna. Ma Blackie, Akunna's mother, also reiterated that "if a woman were well dressed, Joseph would go and tell his friends he was sure the woman had another man besides her husband. So Aku-nana was afraid of Uncle Joseph's tongue" (Emecheta, *Bride Price* 15). Due to the complex power dynamics, they have always felt torn

between the customs and the society, and their resistance struggle has been one of oppression.

The bodies of women were often considered objects before their masters or husbands, and objectification has been manifested in distinct ways. This framework identifies that women become a commodity for domestic duties, cheap labour, and sex and purely a tool for procreation. "Akunna felt depressed and disgraced by living with her unfortunate family, her mother's pregnancy issue, and her mother's marriage to her uncle. Your mother is only a woman, and women are supposed to be boneless" (Emecheta, *Bride Price* 12). It becomes significant that the elder brother Okonkwo Odio inherits their family, and he assures to give education to Akunna as it will fetch a better bride price for her in the marriage ceremony. In other words, her stepfather desired to become the Chief with the bride price of Akunna, and her own family denies Akunna's wishes and desires. Another aspect is that Akunna had a reduced body, which was considered dishonourable in her family. "You are to give her children and food; she is to cook and bear the children and look after you and them... a woman may be ugly and grow old, but a man is never ugly and never old." (Emecheta, *Bride Price* 71). If a child at the opposite end of Akinwnwi Street had chicken pox, Akunna was bound to catch it; if someone else at the bottom of the yard had malaria, Akunna would have her share, too. For Akunna, it was a story of today's foot, tomorrow's head, the day after neck, so much so that her mother many a time begged her to decide once and for all whether she was going to live or die. One thing Ma Blackie could not stand, she said over and over again, was a 'living dead, an Ogbanje. The relationship between Chike and Akunna was no longer a secret, and Chike paid Okonkwo a bride price of fifty pounds, but Okonkwo refused the Bride Price; the relationship between Akunna with Chike was rejected and denied by Okonkwo, Ma

Blackie's new husband. – “Nancy Topping Bazin says, “No one will criticize her stepfather for his stubborn refusal to accept the bride price nor for his rituals to invoke her death as punishment for her rebellion”(8). The family of Akunna had contemplated Okoboshi as an appropriate groom for Akunna, and Okoboshi's family forcefully abducted Akunna. Yet, she escapes them, lying to Okoboshi that she is not a virgin,

The very next minute, he was upon her, pulling her roughly by the arm, twisting the arm so much that she screamed out in pain. He forced her into her bed, still holding onto her arm, which she felt going numb. When she kicked him in the chest, he slapped her very hard, and she could smell the gin on his breath. She knew that she could not overpower him. The slap had been painful, and she was bleeding inside her mouth. Tears of desolation flowed from her eyes as he knelt over her, untying his lappa with shaky hands. His chest was heaving up and down like a disturbed sea. (Emecheta 138)

To abscond from Okoboshi, she uttered herself as being not a virgin, inviting public humiliation. "Even if you take me now, that white towel of your mother's is never going to be blessed by any blood from me; I have already shed it to make another very good man happy. I may already be expecting his child, and you would have to father a slave child"(Emecheta, *Bride Price* 139). Therefore, the mighty Obidi family member Okoboshi could not resist himself, and he severely hit her, and she continued to be unconscious for a prolonged period. Violence in Africa, in its merciless form, prevails throughout the patriarchal society, and according to them, it is the family that determines the whole process of marriage.

In the narrative *Bride Price*, Akunna gets married to Chike, her teacher, who is a descendant of an enslaved person. Subsequently, in their lives, Chike becomes the supervisor of an oil business enterprise, and Akunna becomes a teacher. It is significant to note that the prejudice shown towards Chike by the family members of Akunna is harsh and inhumane. Anthony Barthelemy says, "But Akunna's life has ended in diachronicity. She is dead. The choices here are hard. Paradoxically, the culture that circumscribes her happiness and is instrumental in her death offers her immortality and regeneration" (563). Chike accepts his predicament in pain, and Akunna dies in childbirth due to malnutrition. It ends up as a desolate tale, as the death of Akunna becomes tormenting in *Bride Price*.

The surgeon came to the room. He helped Chike untwine his arms from his wife's body and said, "It is time to go now. She is at peace"; she shall be called Joy; every girl born in Ibuza after Akunna's death was told her story to reinforce the old taboos of the land. If a girl wishes to live long and see her children's children, she must accept the husband chosen for her by her people, and the bride price must be paid. If the bride's price had not been paid, she would never have survived the birth of her first child. It was a psychological hold over every young girl that would continue to exist, even in the face of modernization, until today (Emecheta, *Bride Price* 167-168).

Even the death of Nnu Ego ends up being a miserable tale. "Nnu Ego lay by the roadside, thinking she had arrived home. She died quietly there, with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her. She had never made many friends; she was busy building up her joys as a mother" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 229). In their culture, it is believed that marriage becomes consummated only if the bridegroom pays the bride price. "Sarah Sobeiraj states, the long history of women's

objectification and sexualization is not only about sexual desire and the exertion of power but also about laying the groundwork that is fundamental to defining and reestablishing what it means to be a member of a particular sex category"(17). They noticed that the bride's price was mandatory, and the husband had no rights over his child without paying the bride's price.

They presuppose that the incapability of paying the bride price ensues in the demise of the bride during childbirth. The process justifies that the female child was considered a means to fetch the bride's price for the family. The bride price is one of the traditions they follow to sell women in the marriage market, and the payment of the bride's price is made in cash or as cattle, an imperative aspect of marriage in traditional societies. At this juncture, it is visible that some characters, like John, remain unmarried in the novel as they cannot fetch enough money to pay the bride price, and Efuru's potential to make her bride price emphasizes her capability and power.

Eventually, the bride price becomes the practice of sealing the deal between two families through the bride's wealth. It is an imperative tradition that showcases a communal sense of ownership. In this turn, it exhibits the authority of a man over his wife, the material condition of authority, and it remains central to marriage negotiations. It is to be observed that their livelihood becomes attached to the culture of paying their bride price, and in Pumza Fihlani, the Bride price is known as Lobola. In Shona communities in Zimbabwe, the Bride price is known as Roova. Usually, the bride price is agreed upon between both families, and it is considered a symbolic act as it remains part of upholding their culture and it is to validate the customary marriage practices in Nigeria. They have the legend of hunting the bride by going to the bride's hut before marriage, and they assume that failure to pay the bride's price by

the groom's family ends up in the bride's death, as in the case of Akunna. They considered that motherly power often comes from the point of self-sacrifice and caretaking. At this point, it should be made clear that women are supposed to be obedient and subservient to their husbands, and they are expected to be sexually, physically, and emotionally available all the time. This role of women authorizes men to take on the headship role within the family.

African men often judge the bride price as a contest during marriage. It can be deciphered that women not agreeing to marriage leads to their forceful kidnapping and compelling marriage. A woman cannot remain unmarried and has no choice over her husband. “Amatokwu’s new wife is expecting another child. So I am sure he would welcome the return of Nnu Ego’s Bride Price. He will need it to pay for another woman” (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 36). Agbadi believes that Amatokwu becomes pleased with the divorce as it fetches him the bride price for a consecutive marriage. Agbadi returns the twenty bags of cowry, the bride price given by Amatokwu, and the goats. Nnu Ego heads for the marriage to Nnaife Owulum, who has been in Lagos for five years, and they consider a man with many offspring as a blessing of polygamy. Men and women in Lagos stand in favour of polygamy and its boons, and even if it is an oppressive institution, there is a massive population in favour of it.

They presume that women are the better-adapted instruments to cope with the ways of living of Igbo men, and emotional attachment and bonding quality become negligible in these polygamous relationships, and the younger wife often takes on most of the household chores. Women become treated as mere sexual objects through this polygamous pattern of marriage. The narratives grasp that the polygamous practice of marriage and the women’s trauma in marital relationships turn out to be

factors that accentuate the oppression and subjugation of women. "Her predicament as a woman is exacerbated, therefore, by the fact that the capitalist system she now lived under still requires her to play the role of a responsible senior wife without offering her the small privileges and benefits that once accompanied that role under the formal tribal sphere (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 47). They carry with them the financial hardships and the anxiety they had been through on the one side and the customary, oppressive system on the other side. It is worth noting that hunger and malnutrition remain stark realities in their lives as Nnu Ego had nothing to feed her baby Oshia except corn porridge. The emotional anguish and poverty experienced by women reflect on the lack of nutrition, episodes of hunger, economic hardships, and family conflicts in Akunna's narrative; Ma Blackie finds it gruelling and exhausting to bring food to the table. Malnutrition and hunger gradually began to take control of their life, and when they had reached a point where they would starve to death, people brought them foodstuffs. "So hunger was taking my son away from me!" Nnu Ego exclaimed. She looked at him reflectively for a long time" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 106). Torment in the form of hunger and malnutrition also remains predominant in narratives like *The Joys of Motherhood*, emphasizing the gruelling battle of Nnu Ego.

Article 21 (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) states that everyone has the right to participate in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The right to equality, enjoyment of civil and political rights, and right to life reiterates the freedom of expression of an individual. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights document the protection and promotion of human rights in society. The country with the foremost number of early marriages will be Africa by 2050, and the

number of girls married by age 18 is on the rise as headship passes through the male line. It clarifies that when young girls get pregnant, the physiological immaturity of the mother becomes an issue. Following childbirth, there can be many more complexities, such as the low birth weight of the baby, sepsis and infections, and conditions like Eclampsia if left untreated, resulting in hypertension and cerebral haemorrhage. In addition to this, adolescent pregnancy is the occurrence of pregnancy in girls between the ages of ten and nineteen. Hence, it is observed that the cultural and religious standards even enhance rates of child marriage, and the tradition of female genital mutilation is another rite. Ukuthwala is the kidnapping of a girl child to compel the girl's family to proceed to marriage negotiation as this form of marriage by kidnapping is another way towards wedlock, and it is also using rape and violence. This proposes that this steals the childhood of a girl. The vast majority of girls are from impoverished families, and they often employ culture as a tool for justification of practices like ukuthwala. Yet, financial trauma can make child marriage an alluring tool for parents.

Along with this, the exploitation is identified to be purely sexual as well, and restricted access to contraception and early pregnancy is another menace women face. It is imperative to examine that marriages in the ukuthwala custom become legally convincing, and parents and relatives pressure children into child marriages. It becomes a complex custom perpetrating gender-based violence and human rights abuse. The Child Protection Alliance advocates the protection of children's rights, and UNFPA has sheltered many girls from coerced marriages, primarily child marriages. Addressing gender equality and enhancing educational facilities for girls is a pivotal factor in the battle against injustices and in protecting the rights of women. It can be explicated that the victims experience repression, which affects their character

formulation, as the lasting scars of violence get ingrained in their psyche. Further, their trauma can result in neurotic or psychotic behaviour. Objectification of womanhood is apparent in the narratives of Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta, and gender violence takes a toll on the women of Nigeria. "Kirsten Holst Petersen's views on Buchi Emecheta state that Emecheta can recreate the situation and difficulties of women with authenticity and give a valuable insight into their thoughts and feelings" (254). Adolescent pregnancy poses an elevated risk in women, including medical conditions such as obstetric fistula and postpartum haemorrhage. It projects the neonatal complications of pregnancy, and it also exemplifies that religion also becomes a regulatory factor in the marriage of a girl child, and the wishes of a girl are not taken into consideration by the community, as it affects her life in all the viable ways it could. As it is evident, the elders and their family have contract with the groom's family in the traditional family customs, and the girl finally acquiesces to the decision.

Ona refuses to give in to male hegemony; she turns down Agbadi's offer of a bride price and disapproves of being commodified by Agbadi. Akunna's story centers on the servitude of women. Emecheta's *Nnu Ego* complies with the expectations of the Igbo community by being subservient to it. In Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, it is evident that the character Kambili is metamorphosized. Adichie focuses on the significance of stereotypes and multidimensional storytelling. Adichie exemplifies the personalities and experiences of the characters in the community as she utters, "The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are fragmentary. They make one story become the only story"(Amizade). Emecheta's *Nnu Ego* holds on to the impression that a husband owns his wife wholly, and this often stems from a time when women were considered

commodities for men. According to their tradition, if a man no longer desires his wife, he would expose his backside to her in public, and Emecheta condemns polygamous marriages in Africa. *Purple Hibiscus* mirrors Auntie Ifeoma, the self-sufficient and scholarly Nigerian woman, and Kambili, Eugene's docile and submissive daughter. It is equally significant that Kambili's repression in silence exposes the inarticulateness of African women under gender-based authority. "Hope Sabanpan-yu says, works by third world women like Moore and Emecheta reclaim women's marginal positions and show them as a space of strength within which they rise and fall" (286). Emecheta states that rather than idealizing motherhood, it should be a choice.

Cognitive prowess in Ifeoma's character and the docility of Kambili identify a series of dichotomies rendered by various characters by the writers. This deeper scrutiny signifies that Nnu Ego also identifies the social stigmas and her exclusion from society. The institutional form of male oppression is enforced by men in these chosen works. At this point, it is equally significant that the catholic fanatic Eugene mercilessly chastises his wife Beatrice, Kambili, and Jaja, and they are the victims of patriarchal oppression. In contrast, characters like Adakku encourage their daughters to be independent, as stated in the article: "Adaku is firm in giving her daughters good start through education. I will spend my money to give my girls a good start in life. They shall stop going to market with me. I shall see them enroll in a good school" (Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood* 212).

The study observes that the status of women in society has been underprivileged as they were affected by discrimination based on race and gender. This pinpoints that Efruru rejects this to prove that she is a dauntless woman, like the woman around her. Nwapa reminds women to be self-reliant and assertive in the community, and the explicit representation of women can be observed in her

narratives. Efuru becomes an assertive voice for the disadvantaged women in Igbo society, becoming a community trader. Efuru breaks the community rule as she marries Adizua before the bride price is paid to her family. This helps in understanding that Efuru's father, Nwashike Ogene, values his daughter and her convictions, which is remarkable in the African household, and Nwashike Ogene is a distinguishable character in the patriarchal Igbo community as he looks forward to the wishes of his daughter. It stresses the aspect that Efuru leads a self-determined life, which women in the Igbo community are not used to, as African women have muted their opinions and chosen silence under patriarchal institutions. Efuru traverses the crossroads of silence, and the writers signifies the emerging female generation in the African society, as the story of Efuru can be seen as a triumph for the forthcoming African women. Embracing the blossoming of Efuru in this novel from a family-centric character into a liberated entity is reflected in the narrative, and Nwapa refines her character into that of a woman with a mission and vision.

The women in *Purple Hibiscus* were persistently under constant surveillance and supervision and were themselves docile bodies. There was recurrent gossip in the family about Beatrice as she was not getting another child, and Eugene was suggested to take a new woman as his wife. This can be explained as Eugene's authoritarian regime and domestic oppression disillusioned Kambili, and Adichie is herself on the way to preparing and persuading women to become empowered. The trauma succumbed by the various female characters in the chosen texts points out the challenges experienced by women across racial and gender barriers. The narrative voice of Flora Nwapa's Efuru makes the readers comprehend self-emancipation mentally, physically, and emotionally. It is observed that the injustices exercised by the oppressor and the survival and forbearance of the victim can be seen through the

narratives of Kambili, Efuru, Nnu Ego, Akunna, Olanna, and Kainene. Society should empower women with the assertion and willpower to challenge the discrimination and systematic inequalities.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The endless stories of oppression and the repressive nature of society towards African women are reiterated by many female writers in the narratives. Lloyd Brown states in the *Women Writers in Black Africa* (1981), "The women writers of Africa are the other voices, the unheard voices, rarely discussed and seldom accorded space in the repetitive anthologies and the predictably male oriented studies in the field" (3). It becomes evident that the African writers condemn all forms of patriarchy that relegate women as second-class citizens. It is reflected that the Pan Africanist and Negritude movements were directed toward reviving the cultural identity. Women's agency becomes compromised by coerced marriage, pregnancy, early childbearing, lack of education, and gender-based and sexual forms of violence. Family configuration widely changes across cultures and societies, and it has a pivotal role in women's oppression and subordination in society.

The research focuses on women's historical need to emancipate themselves from their assigned roles and thereby, breaking sexual stereotypes. The historical trajectory of Nigeria is traced along the character development in the novels within the framework of violence studies, and the substantial issues Nigerian women address bring to a conclusive standpoint, i.e., women's liberation. The authors intended to explicate the disillusionment suffered by the women in the Nigerian society. Various visions must be juxtaposed to reflect on the lives of the Nigerian women. African writers carry within them the sense of recurrent trauma, and their texts not only establish expectations of the characters but also explicate the torment and misery witnessed by the characters. In essence, the narratives shared in the past resonate with

the stories of the present and the narrative strategies they have employed connect with the reader on an emotional level. It is crucial to recognize that women were never considered rational beings in Nigerian society, and writers like Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Nwaubani and Adichie addressed the challenges and concerns of women in the community. The women characters represented in the works of writers, including Adichie, Achebe, Nwapa, and Nwaubani, are sensible and rational in their approach. The writers analyse the significance of women's autonomy and liberation as Hannah Arendt renders, "Power is not the property of an individual; it corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" (Arendt 3). By exploring the interrelationship between characters, gender-based violence is deeply ingrained in the lives of the women in the selected narratives. The promotion and protection of human rights at multiple levels in society are addressed in the thesis.

The thesis comprises five chapters, and the introduction enunciates the human rights violations in Nigeria by tracing Nigerian history. The chapter becomes an analysis of the distinct patterns of violence examined in Nigeria, and it also converses on the unresolved trauma and disillusionment of the Nigerians. Chapter one further evaluates the emotional trauma and enslavement experienced by the characters under the authoritarian regime of Eugene. The process of constant watchfulness in the family framework represents the surveillance apparatus in their everyday existence. The intricate relationship between power and human surveillance is analysed in light of Eugene's family framework. Adichie challenges the power mechanism pervasively operating in contemporary society through the narrative in *Purple Hibiscus*. The strict discipline maintained by the characters creates a state of permanent visibility. This visibility ensures the automatic functioning of power in the society in which we exist. Eugene's surveillance structures permeate all facets of Kambili's life, turning them

into obedient subjects. Through subtle forms of control, omnipresent surveillance challenges the family space, and power penetrates through all the phases of their lives. Eugene often employs abusive behaviours towards the individuals in the home to make them submissive individuals.

The power structure, which becomes the metaphor of the present society, turns out to be a means of coercion and domination in Eugene's household. The cyclical nature of abuse operating under the principles of observation and surveillance also exposes the domestic victim status of the family members in the household. Internal surveillance and the authoritarian style of Eugene are the representation of the claustrophobic confinement and suffocating air inside the monitoring family system. Eugene's internal surveillance points towards the panopticon framework inside the household and the limited freedom and agency in their personal lives. Their journey towards self-expression is their rebellion against oppressive surveillance. Permanent and constant observation often takes away an individual's freedom and privacy.

Chapter two enunciates the disillusionment experienced by the natives upon the arrival of the colonizers of Igbo society. It exposes the protagonist, Okonkwo, who has deeply ingrained frustrations that turn into aggression. The aggressive nature of Okonkwo was analysed in the light of frustration-aggression theory, and it profoundly examines the conflict between traditional values and British colonial rule. The frustration and alienation from one's culture create a feeling of inferiority, resulting in a fractured sense of self. The concept of assimilation proposed by Frantz Fanon would often lead to the suppression of the authentic self. When Okonkwo becomes forced to conform to societal expectations, the disciplinary mechanisms operating through invisibility make Okonkwo's character more aggressive. The hostile and aggressive behaviour of Okonkwo becomes the cause of his downfall, and his fear of becoming

like his father often reinforces his aggressive behaviours. The change in Umuofia after Okonkwo's return from Mbanta further paved the way for a harsh cycle of frustration and aggression. Okonkwo resisted the changing environment and resisted the colonial culture at the cost of his death. Okonkwo was not willing to accept the encroaching effects of the colonial power, and his struggle to dismantle the colonial regime led to his tragic fall. The constant urge of Okonkwo to prove his masculinity often created internal conflicts, boosting his behaviours of aggression. Okonkwo could not withstand the traditional Igbo life, which was replaced by British colonialism, and resistance to change often led to increased frustration and resultant aggression.

Chapter three analyses the personal experiences of loss and grief, testifying to the suffering of the Biafran war in the lives of Olanna, Kainene, Richard, Odenigbo, and Ugwu. The collective sense of trauma caused by war exemplifies the inter-generational trauma that can be passed through the generations. The pain and suffering experienced by the parents and witnessed by their children create cycles of suffering and lasting scars on their consciousness. The trauma affects not only the ones experiencing it but is also passed on to their descendants, making it challenging to break the cycle. The consistent sense of being watched by the military and the government authorities further leads to an elevated sense of fear and suffering in the victim. The characters' emotional imbalances and psychological turmoil can create cycles of deeply ingrained suffering. The bonding and relationships within the narrative often succumb to constant pressures under the horrors of war. The characters' resilience to maintain the relationships under consistent pressure and conflict proves that the human spirit can rise above war, reclaim their identities, and heal their relationships and lives. The coping mechanisms in trauma can be deep interpersonal relationships, and it points to the human potential to reclaim

connections, even during challenging times. Through the Biafran war narrative, Adichie narrates the resilience of the human spirit and the character's ways of coping with the trauma. It exemplifies the multiple perspectives of challenging the unrest and fear of the human mind.

The second half of the chapter enunciates Boko haram's criminal behaviour in the lives of ordinary Nigerian civilians through the text *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree*. Learning the social interactions of Boko haram insurgents through differential association theory explains the criminal behaviour and the motives behind the political violence. The resilience of the character, especially Yata in the middle of the Boko haram terrorists, emphasizes the trauma survivors' inner strength. The representation of the psychological scars of violence in Yata is uncovered through the narrative. The violence against the abducted women by Boko haram reflects the identity crisis it can create in an individual—the aspirations and dreams of Yata contrast with the harsh realities of Boko haram. The collective identity of the Boko haram challenges the order of the state and the citizens, subjecting them to physical and mental torture. The trauma and suffering due to Boko Haram create deep-rooted identity crises in the lives of characters. The struggle with identity in the abducted victims leads the individuals into a deep sense of loss and stigma in the community and society. Violations of the human rights of vulnerable communities also become the reason for the intergenerational trauma experience, and it is passed down through the family to subsequent generations. The persistence of violence becomes continuous in various forms, and the victimization turns into chronic stress, leading to a diminished sense of personal space and anxiety in the individual.

Chapter four analyses the unequal power relations and the intersecting forms of oppression experienced by the women characters in the selected texts. The relevant

forms of marginalization succumbed by women include polygamy, FGM, forced marriages, social stigma, and childbearing, addressed within the chapter. A comparative analysis of the violence experienced by women under the purview of the theory of intersectionality exposes the subjection of women on the micro and macro levels in society. Breaking the narratives of obstinate violence becomes the central focus in the lives of women characters in the narratives. The narratives become exhausting when the infliction of violence by the perpetrator continues over time, showing patterns of repeated aggressive behaviour. Reinforcement of harmful behaviour directed towards women in Nigerian society exposes the intersectional form of discrimination in all dimensions of society. At times, women never fail to recognize that they are being victimized because of the patriarchal normalization of violence.

The structural forms of violence are often invisible and are often challenging to address for women, making the cycles of violence continuous in their lives. This often leads to the erosion of their identities, making them the victims of a continuous loop of exploitation. The comparative analysis of the women characters reverberates the multiplicity of women's voices, who are subject to physical, psychological, and emotional trauma. Patriarchal institutions often consider women as tools for procreation and take control over women by reinforcing gender inequalities through various patterns of violence. The repeated cycles of violence often place womanhood along with the deep-rooted individual experiences of injustice and unresolved trauma. The power imbalances experienced by women challenge the existing social structures, perpetuating inequalities, injustices, and discrimination. The intersection of the multiple identities of women emphasizes the continuous structural forms of violence experienced by them. Addressing the violence experienced by Nigerian women

reinforces the fact that violence is a continuous phenomenon in their lives. Structural violence is often directed towards the interconnected nature of oppression and marginalization in the lives of women.

This study critically approaches Nigerian novels from the perspective of the violence framework and points out its significance in Nigerian society. This study also investigates the colonial intrusion in the lives of the Nigerians, gradually unfolding the cultural past in the light of the selected novel of Chinua Achebe. The endeavour has effectively touched all the areas that challenge the voices of the marginalized, and this thesis has explored the violence experienced by Nigerian women in its various dimensions through the selected seminal texts. It should be noted that reaching out to the world through narration is a distinct experience altogether. Even though the writers have lured an avalanche of criticism, the characters represented by them address the exploitation and marginalization experienced by Nigerian women. Reflecting on their experiences, the writers encourage the characters to express their agony and trauma, and the myriad dilemmas and disillusionments experienced by the characters in their everyday lives are examined through the thesis. It significantly examines the unequal distribution of power in the family system. The research brings critical insights into the experiences narrated by the characters, resonating with the exclusion and marginalization they have faced in their lives. It is pertinent to state that the pervasive weight that the protagonists of distinct novels carry with them unveils a fleeting insight into their struggle for identity. This study endeavours to identify the diverse types of violence experienced by women in African society. The cross-textual reading of the novels examines how the selected texts interact and influence one another.

The exploitation and prejudice experienced at various junctures of life are evident through the women characters in the selected texts, and the African writers, including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, and Nwaubani, Chinua Achebe have placed the profound emphasis on the traumas of women, stemming from violence in the chosen narrative. No place is considered a safe space for women, and there is a continuous quest for the female identity evident in the narratives. The study also explores the characters' conflicts between traditional customs and beliefs and modern values and practices. "The term black feminist also disrupts the long-standing and unquestioned reliance on black racial solidarity as a deep tap root in black political philosophies, especially black and cultural pluralist frameworks." (Dyson 1993). The study also represents the rage and anger that had become part of the patriarchal system, and the women who challenged the patriarchal norms often faced severe repercussions, as seen through the characters in the narratives. It states that women's experiences cannot be considered separate or distinct, but rather, it should be a collective battle against patriarchal violence and oppression.

Another thrust of the study is that there is the double marginalization of the women characters, as black women are considered barbaric and savage creatures, and the tensions of sexism and racism further result in anxiety and disillusionment. There is indeed the brunt of society's degraded status on women in control, and the patriarchal social order becomes the foundation of the society. In this view, women never had complete control over their bodies. There was a consistent misogynistic prejudice directed towards women, and the exploitation of women can be traced along the historical, colonial, and post-colonial trajectory. In particular, it is identified that the patriarchal power system often determines the spaces for women in society. The

study explores the relationship between women's characters in the selected texts in the context of perpetuating gender inequalities and a growing body of physical, emotional, and psychological violence that revolves around women.

The distressed lives of the characters are under the constant mechanism of surveillance, and the vulnerable groups succumb to gender-based violence, physical harm, and abuse. It is observed that the human rights of individuals are restricted on various grounds, and a contextual analysis of the human rights violations in Nigeria often leaves a scar on the human consciousness. The unequal power relations between individuals or groups in society remain to be the root cause of the conflicts, and rape, sexual violence, femicide, acid attacks, and gender-based violence occur every minute of the day. This has surpassed the considerable extent to which abuse has become a learned behaviour, a form of human conditioning, causing physical harm and injury. In addition, selective sex abortion in pre-birth, female infanticide, the marriage of minors and female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, acid attacks, bride price, honour killings, rape, sexual abuse, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and forced pregnancy in adulthood all fall within the category of myriad forms of violence.

Notably, the research observes that substantial weight of exploitation and victimization lies with women in all the conflicts. Save the Children initiative in Africa serves to support the lives of disadvantaged children and to curb violence against children. Apart from this, the Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation is a nonprofit organization that helps victims who have endured physical, emotional, and psychological trauma. The texts chosen for the study unravel the evolution of the institutionalized forms of violence, which have taken new forms in the modern world alongside technological advancements and changes. Patriarchal

conditioning in Nigerian society disciplines women to be silent and inarticulate. Even when asserting that Africa has procured substantial progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality, there is the observance of compelling gender disparities and inequalities between the genders. Further, it is noticeable that women have been regulated and controlled by their biological identities in the first place. A continuous pattern of violence can be traced in the lives of the women characters, and there is the constant psychological abuse and violence visible in their life experiences. This is perhaps the time to reconsider the gender imbalances in society and raise awareness of gender diversity and inclusion in Nigerian society. Hannah Arendt says, "Power is all against one, and violence is one against all" as defined. (Arendt 42). This points out that challenging harmful stereotypes in society often creates insecurities, and it takes a toll on women's life and their expectations. This thesis is a methodological approach to address gender-based violence in Nigeria, and it is the need of the hour to have a supportive environment for the individual to work towards the elimination of gender-based violence in all forms.

The narratives chosen for the study reveal that women are being subjected to physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological abuse that cuts across time and space, and it calls for resilience to curb the violence against women. The findings also address that women are subjected to social conditioning, and an inevitable shift in societal perception becomes imperative at this point. The sociopolitical and historical experiences of African women become evident in the narrative. Representation of women's voices becomes essential to identifying the human rights challenges and achieving gender equality in all areas of society. The literature of Nigeria addresses various forms of exploitation and human rights violations endured by the individuals

in the society, and the Nigerian literature becomes the agent of change at the outset for an equitable society.

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Recommendations

Examining a particular experience from the framework of violence studies brings about new perspectives on Nigerian literature. Many more texts from African literature can be examined from the human rights perspective. The notions of resistance and protest within the literature can be connected with the human rights perspective, and reading through the works discussing authoritarianism can be disseminated as a critique of contemporary Nigerian writing. This thesis becomes an attempt to identify the patterns and causes of violence experienced by Nigerian women. It also addresses the gendered spaces in Nigeria and analyses the power dynamics within the narratives. The ways by which race, class, gender, and other identity markers intersect to shape experiences of oppression are also elucidated in the thesis. It can be a framework to address the writing gaps of the respective authors, and the way docile bodies are silenced can be examined by taking up the discursive voices of creative writers.

The post-colonial critical framework can also be employed to analyse the unresolved past events of Nigeria. The insightful narratives relating to the power body dynamics should be taken to the conceptual framework, and further reading on the systems of oppression brings about the need to study power structures further. Political works and their significance enable us to learn more about the framework of understanding violence, and the line of Nigerian history presents the cultural ebb of Nigerian society. Global history will be absent without African history, and investigating African narratives about women across ages brings us to the standpoint that violence is a continuous phenomenon throughout Africa.

Analysing the colonial texts and examining the ethnic and religious dilemmas and human rights violations have been explored in the thesis. Unravelling the historical dilemma and trauma through the perspective of violence has been presented in the narratives. Further research can also be undertaken on the sociocultural aspects of the selected texts and identity, identity crisis, and culture in the African literary terrain, can be evaluated further in an expanded framework of novels. Violence in African diasporic literature lacks significant research, and the ways by which oral narratives represent violence in African literature can be considered for further studies. Gender identity and conflicts can be read in the broader African context, and the male dilemma and frustration intersecting with political and social history can be read further. Mapping their experiences wrapped up in history and trauma can create new areas of literature and a study on trauma management techniques can be integrated further.