

Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus: A Feministic Perspective

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Abstract: The selected novel of Nigerian novelists Chimamanda Adichie *PURPLE HIBISCUS* considered for the present study is marked by the issues of gender, class and identity and the writers self-consciously reconfigure contemporary feministic issues and social reality in Nigerian society.

Gender is a social and cultural construct which is used to look at roles and behavior of men and women. The gender issues are centered on experiences of men and women as member of the society. A general assumption is that gender issues are the issues affecting women, who mainly focus on the relationship between men and women to the social, political and economic structure of the society. Gender has wide set of characteristics that form a basis of distinction between male and female entities, extending from one's biological sex to other in humans, one's social role or gender identity. Gender plays vital role in determining and analyzing the relationships between men and women with respect to their roles, privileges, status and positions.

Therefore, gender issues are means in understanding and learning more about the behavior of men and women in society and the tribulations and opportunities that each face in doing those activities. In male dominated society gender plays crucial role in oppressing, exploiting and subjugating female, and in giving them inferior treatment.

From centuries, we are entangled with such issues that deny equal rights to women and continue to treat them inhumanly. The struggle for the emancipation is age old which resulted in rise of Feminism that in time spread throughout the world with different labels having different approaches. In Africa also, it flourished under different labels. Some writers practice sober ways where some are extremists. Thus, it gave birth to different notions like Humanism, Womanism, Stiwanism, Motherism and Radicalism etc. These changes evolving in gender and power structures received strong manifestation in literature throughout the world and contemporary Nigerian literature strongly records the gender issues that challenge the existing norms in patriarchal society.

In this regard, the study embarks on gender and feministic issues exposed by third generation Nigerian women novelist and the way she used her skills to expose the facts of real world in her fiction and how they voiced her resistance against the inhuman treatment to women in patriarchal Nigerian society. The present study explores Adichie's novel through feministic perspective that depict array of grim incidents exposing the severity of the feministic issues in Nigerian society.

Key Words: Gender discrimination, Identity Crisis

I. INTRODUCTION: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an acclaimed Nigerian woman writer and socialist who won several awards and persistently deals with social, political and cultural aspects in Nigeria that reveals reality of contemporary Nigeria. In her writing she exposes current problems of Nigeria especially feministic issues like gender discrimination, class oppression, racism and identity Crisis. Her realistic and remarkable style attracted the readers from all over the world to the African Literature.

Her debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), which deals with gender oppression, domestic violence and identity crisis, is highly appreciated by the critics and shortlisted for the **Orange prize for fiction (2004)**. It won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (2005). Her second novel, *Half of yellow Sun* (2006), named after the flag of the short-lived nation of Biafra, is set before and during the Nigerian Civil War. It was awarded **Orange Prize for Fiction in 2007 and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award**. *Americanah* (2013), the third novel of Adichie accounts the story of a young Nigerian faces racism in America and, got selected by *The New York Times* as one of "The 10 Best Books of 2013".

The present study work in prevailing crucial social issues like gender, identity, race and other feministic concerns will be of great importance to explore the contemporary social life, mainly of women in Nigeria. The present study deals with the most challenging universal problem of the day its severity can be mostly traced in severely exploited part of the world that is Africa. As a result, many of African women writers broke the shackles of custom and started to resist through their writings. To overthrow the burden of tyrannical traditions and to assert equality in society, the women writers raised their voice by using the means of writing. Thus, transition from collectivism of previous forms of African feminism can be traced in the writings Chimamanda Adichie who won various prestigious awards. They have significant contribution to contemporary feministic literature and they raised some significant questions which open up new avenues to explore.

Gender discrimination, race and class are products of selfishness, greed and, desire for power and supremacy which is human nature. Especially, women are treated like objects and have been given inferior treatment and they deprived of their rights in nearly every society throughout the world. Gender is used as a weapon to exercise dominance over women. This age-old menace which left drastic effect on the life of women is a product of abuse of the power by using mechanism of religion as well as tradition. Because of this oppressive system, women lagged behind nearly in every sphere of the life. The present study will investigate how the *Purple Hibiscus* presents issues of Gender, Power and Identity to unveil the reality of contemporary Nigerian women's life and how the women characters register their resistance to domination.



Purple Hibiscus is the story of Kambili, who is narrator of the story, whose father Eugene dominates her mother, Beatrice (Mama), and her brother Jaja. Eugene is a successful businessman but religious enthusiast who is violent and brutal with his family. He is strict follower of religion and wants his family also follow him but they are not interested in this. He is hypocrite. This results into domestic violence. Many a times Eugene beats Beatrice but she does not protest in the beginning. She represents ideal women who tries to save her marriage who swallow all degradation, violence, inhuman treatment. This shows how from ancient time, the women have not given the equitable status in society because of the stereotypical customs, traditions present in patriarchal male dominated society. This is universal reality that women are just an object of constant disdain, humiliation and physical torture. Even today, when the world entered into new millennium brutal atrocities and violence against women prevail nearly in all over the world just ratio varies. Eugene, tries to suppress the voice, power and rights of his wife and children. But Jaja, tries to protect his Mom and sister as possible to him. Jaja hates his father and do not obey him.

On the other hand, their aunty Ifeoma, Sister in Law of Beatrice, who is strong, Zealous and who resists against oppression very bravely. Aunt Ifeoma and Beatrice reveal contrast in nature. But at the end, Beatrice slowly poisons Eugene, in his meals and tea every night to free her children and herself from her dominant husband. Jaja, takes the responsibility of his father's death and go to Jail. This shows how women rebel against the male dominance, how they are challenging the norms of patriarchy. Thus, she registers her protest against the male domination. She tries to assert her identity in society. In a nutshell, Adichie's characters reveal rise up against subjugation and suppression. They raise their voice against gender discrimination.

II. CONCLUSION:

Adichie strongly reveals some of the more difficult and shameful aspects of Nigerian cultural practice. *Women in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, are treated with gender subordination which subjects them to experiencing indelible traumas. Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus of Nigerian women's difficulties and their traumatic experiences.*

Adichie is a writer who exposes the gender bias prevailing in African societies. The way in which Adichie makes her women characters strong to face the traumatic experiences of patriarchy. She has given authenticity and voice to the interior life of the most complex black and female experience in white America.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as representative for a new wave of feminism. Moreover, this text also examines the postcolonial element to Adichie's writing and how it relates to her feminist stance. In this context Chimamanda Adichie tends to deviate and try to break the traditions. They did not appreciate the African traditions but exposed hypocrisy, corruption and brutality against women.

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