

A Feminist Analysis of the Changing Roles of Women in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Anthills of the Savannah*

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ABSTRACT

Chinua Achebe is one of the pioneering figures of African Fiction. In his several critical essays and interviews Achebe has discussed the role of an author belonging to a postcolonial country, and declared that he writes his fiction with a definite role. He has penned five novels including his masterpiece *Things Fall Apart* (1958) in which Achebe, with his realism, has taken up the task of telling his people the greatness and weaknesses of their Ibo culture. Here, the object of his criticism is the colonizer British exercising power under the guise of a civilizing mission. On the other hand, in one of his most discussed novels *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) he takes the role of a conscience builder in a new nation engulfed in cutthroat power politics; and the object of his criticism shifts to his own people, the corrupt educated elite and military officials who have failed to contribute in nation building. However, the role of women in Nigerian society is also one of the prominent issues depicted significantly in both these celebrated novels. The paper focuses on a feminist analysis of these novels with the aim to find out the changing roles of women in Nigerian society depicted in these novels. It takes recourse to the method of explication and close reading of these primary texts and the secondary data in the light of Feminist Criticism.

Keywords: *Feminist Criticism, Igbo Culture, Nigerian Society, Patriarchy, Postcolonialism, Realism.*

Introduction

Chinua Achebe is one of the pioneering figures of African Fiction. In his several critical essays and in interviews Achebe has discussed the role of an author belonging to a postcolonial country and declared that he writes his fiction with a definite role. He has penned five novels including his masterpiece *Things Fall Apart* (1958) which belongs to his trilogy of 'Village Novels'. It is set in Nigeria of the 1890s. In this novel, Achebe has taken up the task of telling

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his people the facts about the rich and varied Ibo culture; he also records the weaknesses found therein. Here, the object of his criticism is the British exercising power under the guise of a civilizing mission. The other novel *Anthills of the Savannah* is one of his 'City Novels' set in an imaginary country Kangan but certainly Nigeria of the 1970s. The role of women in Nigerian society is one of the prominent themes discussed at length in both these celebrated novels. This study focuses on a feminist analysis of these novels with the aim to find out the changing roles of women in Nigerian society depicted in Achebe's realistic fiction. The study takes recourse to the method of explication and close reading of the texts in the light of Feminist criticism.

Feminist criticism has developed as critical discourse in the 1960s. It has its roots in the political and social movements for women's rights and recognition of their cultural roles dating back to the eighteenth century. Women's issues were upheld through the books like Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), J. S. Mill's *The Subjugation of Women* (1869) In her book *A Room of One's Own* (1929) Virginia Woolf raised voice against the constraints of patriarchy or the rule of the father poses against the economic, social, and educational existence of women. However, it was Simon de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) that made a mark of the second wave of feminism. She summed up the gist of all essentialist feminists in a single sentence, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." (283) She based her argument about gender identity formation on Hegelian principle of how humans achieve a sense of identity, and emphasized that, in all cultural discourses woman is always situated as the other (the object) to man (the subject). She has also argued that literature implies ideas about roles of men and women in society and criticizes marriage as a cultural institution directed towards exploitation of women that deprives her liberty. In *Sexual Politics* (1969), Kate Millet attacks the mechanisms in western social systems that contribute to perpetuating power relationships between the two sexes where the female is always subordinate to the dominant male.

As opposed to the essentialism of Beauvoir, the anti-essentialists like the French feminist Luce Irigaray propagate that, as women are not only biologically different from men but also psychologically and emotionally, they have to celebrate these differences rather than strive to identify themselves with systems modeled on male values. A further alternative to the phallogocentric feminist literary criticism was introduced by Elaine Showalter. She coined the term 'Gynocriticism', it implies reading of women's texts by women. It aims at revolutionizing the canon of literature. Her book *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) included gynocentric

readings of canonical women authors as well as less known female writers. There are various types of Black feminisms that reject the Eurocentric explanations of their indigenous experiences. Several other feminisms have been eschewed from the above discussion of feminist criticism; but as M.H, Abrams has noted in his Glossary:

“The various feminisms, however, share certain assumptions and concepts that underlie the diverse ways that individual critics explore the factor of sexual difference and privilege in the production, the form and content, the reception, and the critical analysis and evaluation of works of literature”. (94)

The present research article focuses on these shared assumptions and concepts for analysis of the selected novels of Chinua Achebe. The aims and objectives are:

- 1) To find out mechanisms of patriarchy depicted in the selected texts.
- 2) To explore the Gender roles prevailing in the selected texts.
- 3) To identify the changes the Nigerian women experienced in their gender roles in changing times.
- 4) To analyze the existence of ideological bias in the selected texts.

Things Fall Apart is set in the 1890s; the British have just entered the Ibo heartland where it was an oral culture. A small group of villages comprised a ‘Clan’; and every clan had its own customs, traditions, festivities and rules, a separate unit in itself. Through the story of the protagonist Okonkwo’s rise to prosperity and eminence in his Umuofia clan, Achebe explores the Ibo culture and its clash with the colonizers. In the process, he has depicted the subordinate place of women in this patriarchal culture and the mechanisms for their empowerment endowed to them. That can be discussed as follows:

Gender and Identity Formation: Female to Feminine

One of the major examples of this type of identity development in the novel can be seen when Ekwefi tells her daughter various tales that would help in shaping her feminine demeanour. From a young age, the female children were expected to behave in accordance with feminine norms. This is how Okonkwo instructs Ezinma, a daughter behaving like a son, “Sit like a woman!” Okonkwo shouted at her. Ezinma brought her two legs together and stretched them in front of her. (TFA, 33) On the other hand, male children are supposed to be macho. Okonkwo is concerned that his son Nwoye is not grooming him like that. He made numerous attempts to transform Nwoye into a man. He sought to tell Nwoye stories of manly violence and carnage

because he didn't like him listening to “silly women stories.” His expectations from his son Nwoye are the best example, he tells him, “No matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children and especially his women he was not really a man”. (TFA, 38) This is how female children are educated to acquire feminine gender attributes. Identities were formed beginning in childhood and maintained for life.

Manifestation of Patriarchy in Ibo Culture

The cultural system in the novel is patriarchal. In this society, men presided over households and made decisions. The conversation between Okonkwo and his first wife makes this clear. When Ikemefuna was taken to Okonkwo's home she asked about the boy and his stay at their home. Okonkwo rebukes her, “He belongs to the clan”, he told her. “So look after him.” Is he staying long with us? She asked. “Do what you are told, woman,” Okonkwo thundered, and stammered. When did you become one of the *ndichie* of Umuofia? (TFA, 12) This demonstrates that women are unable to raise important questions. One concession, though, is that she would have been qualified to ask if she had been a *ndichie*, an elderly woman.

Men have authority to beat their wives to assert male dominance. Okonkwo beats his second wife, claiming that she killed the banana tree in their yard, even though she had only removed a few leaves. On another occasion, he strikes his other wife, failing to prepare food for their children. But the Ibo tradition has developed some customs to attain balance of power between these two sexes. Week of peace is one of such customs they observe to maintain the balance. When Okonkwo beats his wife during the week of peace, he is punished by Chielo, the priestess of Agbala the village goddess, for breaking peace. Women can also raise complaints against men and seek justice during the meeting of elders of the clan if the beating or negligence is unjust. These types of cases were resolved by the elders to maintain justice.

Marriage Rituals and Negotiations

As in many other societies, Igbo marriages were ceremonial occasions. Before the main ceremony of marriage, a series of ceremonies should be performed. These include the “Uri” ceremony in which the bride price is fixed and the “Iso-ife” ceremony in which the bride's virginity was confirmed. The bride price custom required the groom and his family to give the bride's father a sizable sum of money when the bride was fixed. If a wife were to leave her husband's home, she might find solace in that money. The novel's depictions of marriage

discussions and ceremonies demonstrate the Igbo people's respectable approach to social life and conflict resolution system available in Igbo culture.

It is important for a bride to possess fundamentally feminine traits like tenderness, meekness, and submissiveness. In the iso-ife ritual of Uchendu's son Amiku, the bride is compelled to declare her virginity in front of all kinsmen from both sides. Njide, the eldest daughter of Uchendu, posed the inquiries. "Remember that if you do not answer truthfully, you will suffer or even die at child-birth," she began. "How many men have lain with you since my brother first expressed the desire to marry you?" "None," she replied simply. "Answer truthfully," urged the other women. (TFA, 97) After the confession they are husband and wife. Despite being the groom's second marriage, the bride was required to admit she is virginal. This symbolizes the inferior status of women in Ibo society. It also exemplifies oppression of women by women.

Polygamy and Ibo Culture

The Ibo society is also profoundly influenced by polygamy. According to a legend, the clan's renowned males have numerous spouses. Okonkwo had three spouses and Nwakibie nine. In Igbo worldview having many women and kids is a symbol of manhood, success, and respect. This is how the achievements of Okoye are compared to Unoka's failures. "Okoye was also a musician. He played on the ogne. But he was not a failure like Unoka. He had a large barn full of yams and he had three wives." (TFA, 5) One of the causes of polygamy is the agricultural economy and tribal way of life. It was seen as a path to prosperity. Sampson Ike Oli outlines the benefits and drawbacks of polygamy, which was prevalent among the Ibo:

Although the Igbo practice polygamy, many are monogamous and polygamists do so because it is often seen as an important indication of status. Polygamy often results in more children and therefore more hands to help in cultivating the family land. A man is entitled to marry as many wives as he wishes, provided he has sufficient resources to marry and maintain them all with the children. (8)

But there are examples of monogamous people living happily with mutual understanding. The ideal couple in the village, Ndulue and Ozoemena believed in mutual understanding. Conversation between Obierika and Okonkwo reveals that "It was always said that Ndulue and Ozoemena had one mind," said Obierika. 'I remember when I was a young boy there was a song about them. He could not do anything without telling her.'" (TFA, 50) In his lecture at Umea university, Achebe asserts, this freedom and understanding thus 'The Ibo sensibility has never been comfortable with anything so absolute and clear cut "Man is Boss". But... Because the Igbo have this idea of reality that nothing can be absolute". (24) The Ibo principle of balance

can be seen in marital matters also. Their culture allowed a woman to leave her husband if he failed to meet her expectations and find another match. Okonkwo's third wife has come to him leaving her first husband failing to provide for her. This indicates that they respected the dignity and freedom of women. It can be argued that the patriarchal structure of Igbo society is less rigid than it is in many contemporary societies after carefully examining these topics as they are presented in the novel.

Women and Earning Ability

Many feminist critics have suggested that women's inferior status in any society is caused by their inability to earn a living. Literature is a medium of socializing and a mirror of society. According to some analyses of female characters in European and international literature, very few women were employed up to the early 20th century. Even though they do household work, this is not rewarded, and doesn't fit the definition of paid labour. Marrying a wealthy man is a typical path to achieve social dignity. In Ibo society, household duties for women include collecting firewood, cooking, feeding their husbands and children, working on farms, etc. However, division of labour is also present. The king of all crops, the yam, is a male crop. Women grow veggies, melons, cassava, and other crops. The yam is regarded as a man's crop, despite the fact that women additionally worked with men in cultivating it. Harold Bloom points out the negligence by the Ibo of the contribution of women thus:

So although their contribution was less significant overall to the status of the group, women had an important job in growing the food with which to supplement the family's income and diet. They also had a chance to acquire political influence through marriage, but it remains that differences also exist(ed) in the power relations between the sexes men typically expected to be dominant over their wives and to have greater control over economic resources. (146,147)

Thus, by tradition the women are placed in a disadvantageous position due to lack of access to economic resources.

The Duality in Ibo Worldview

Although the Igbo have the ideas of fatherland and motherland, their society is not purely patriarchal. There are male and female gods in the Igbo cosmology. The most powerful deity is Chukwu, the male god. However, they adhere to the feminine principle, which holds that "mother is supreme". Okonkwo, the protagonist experiences this principle, when he is exiled

from his fatherland Umuofia, he finds solace in the village of Mbanta, his motherland. His maternal uncle Uchendu provides the following justification for the superiority of women:

Can you tell me, Okonkwo, why it is that one of the commonest names we give our children is Nneka, or “Mother is supreme”? We all know that a man is the head of the family and his wives do his bidding. A child belongs to its father and his family and not to its mother and her family. A man belongs to his fatherland and not to his motherland. And yet we say Nneka- “Mother is supreme”. Why is that? (TFA, 98)

Thus, the Ibo culture achieved balance in spirituality also, it implies a flexible approach towards gender in socio-cultural issues.

Ibo Women: Subordinate Nevertheless Marginal

Feminist critics have found it in many societies that women have dual identity. On the one hand, they are respected and revered as mother, birth giver, goddess, source of energy, and motherland in nationalist discourse, etc. This moral, ideal, discursive position is in sharp contrast with the other practical identity of women as subordinate to men. On this level she is submissive, feminine, weak, dependent on men, etc. But the Western critics of the African cultures have remained silent on the women empowering mechanisms in these cultures, and painted one sided picture of deprived and degenerated African women, As Kamene Okonjo points out:

“...elsewhere men rule and dominate. Seeing this outwardly patriarchal framework, many observers concluded that the position of women in these societies was totally subordinate; as a result of their misconceptions, they produced a distorted picture of the ‘oppressive’ African man and the ‘deprived’ African woman”. (45)

Though they are part of patriarchal Ibo culture women have assigned some definite roles. Women have some control over the other women in the home. The womanfolk of Nwakibie’s house are supposed to drink when Okonkwo presented them wine, but they didn’t begin until Anasi, the first of his nine wives, arrived and took a glass.

The novel contains various instances where women exercise power. The priestess of Agbala, the Oracle of the Hills and Caves, Chielo, perfectly represents the dual identity of women. She is an ordinary person by nature, but when Agbala's spirit beholds her, she develops superhuman abilities. She is the only one with the power to prophesy on Agbala's behalf. Nobody can resist

her instructions and sanctions, not even the most dignified man in the clan. This authority is significant to feminist Achebe scholars as well as those studying traditional Ibo culture. Here, the women served as both lawmakers and breadwinners. Filomena Steady observes: “True feminism is an abnegation of male protection and a determination to be resourceful and self-reliant. The majority of the black women in Africa and in the Diaspora have developed these characteristics, though not always by choice”. (iv) In this novel, Chielo is a vital female character, with a strong identity. Igbo women certainly are not extremely powerless.

The custom of ‘Sitting on a Man’ allows women to play a leading role in seeking justice on their own by punishing the offender or getting compensation for the offence he has committed. The cow episode in the novel highlights the powers wielded by women. When Ozoemena's cow was let loose, it trampled through the crops of the neighbours. The women from the neighborhood gathered on his porch and exacted punishment. As Van Allen notes:

‘Sitting on a man’ or a woman, boycotts and strikes were the women’s main weapons. To ‘sit on’ or to ‘make a war’ on a man involved gathering at his compound, sometimes late at night, dancing, singing scurrilous songs which detailed the women’s grievances against him and often called his manhood in question, banging on his hut with the pestles women used for pounding yams’ and perhaps demolishing his hut or plastering it with mud and roughing it a bit. A man might be sanctioned in this way for mistreating his wife. (167)

These kinds of traditions and rituals could be considered as tools for empowerment of women in Ibo society. They contributed in part to the reduction of male dominance and victimization of women. In the Ibo social milieu, women are subordinate to men but they are not marginal.

Woman and Colonialism

The Ibo have a decentralized social structure where power is shared. Both men and women have positions of authority, and women like Chielo took part in the administration of justice. The rituals of “Sitting on a man,” “Week of peace,” “Bride price,” “Meeting of titled elders” etc. were in favour of women. Diana Rhoads observes, “In *Things Fall Apart* Achebe seems to be providing the foundation for effective political institutions at the time when Nigeria was about to achieve independence.” (61) But this structure of distributed authority experienced a fatal blow when the British entered the Ibo land. The colonizers appointed district commissioners and court messengers to initiate administration. Thus, the system for pursuing justice for women was rendered ineffective. They are now doubly marginalized. It validates Spivak’s observation that “The ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. In the context of colonial (and postcolonial) production, the subaltern has no history and cannot

speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow”. (287) It becomes evident that in the colonial setting the situation of Ibo women has got worse.

The other novel chosen for the study, Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), is a sequel to his *A Man of the People* (1966) which dealt with the corruption under the civilian government in the newly independent Nigeria, here Achebe was too frustrated with the endless corruption to finally expect that only discipline of the military can cease this. Consequently, in the sequel, he has dealt with a country under military dictatorship. As compared to *Things Fall Apart*, for this one, he has enlarged the setting from Ibo heartland to Nigeria, with a temporal gap of eighty years in the history of the country. Here the author takes the role of a conscience builder in a newly independent African country engulfed in cutthroat power politics; and the object of his criticism is his own people, the corrupt educated elite and military officials who have failed to contribute in nation building.

The novel begins in media res. In a successful coup, one of the most efficient military officers, Sam, has overthrown the corrupt civilian government and became the President of Kangan, an imaginary West African country. He has appointed in his cabinet his friends Ikem and Chris, and his teachers who have motivated and helped him in the move. The fourth protagonist of the novel, the focal point of our analysis, is a well-educated girl, serving in the Finance department as senior assistant secretary. She was christened as Nwanyibuife, meaning ‘a woman is also something’, but she is known as Beatrice, the Latin root of her name means ‘happy’ or ‘to bless’. In the last three books of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* another popular Beatrice is found, guiding Dante through heaven in *Paradiso*. Like Dante’s Beatrice, this one guides the three male protagonists Sam, Ikem, Chris, as well as the women Ewela, and Agatha. She is a splendid mixture of emotion and intelligence, tradition and modernity, passion and contemplation, sensitivity and toughness. The character of Beatrice justifies Achebe’s ideal woman of the future.

Her Intelligence, Individualism and Independence

In his guest house the President introduces her to the American reporter and other executives thus:

‘Lou, this is one of the most brilliant daughters of this country, Beatrice Okoh, she is the Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, the only person in service, male or female, with first-class honors in English. And not from a local university, but Queen Mary College, University of London...We’re very proud of her.’ (*Anthills...75*)

Being a liberated person Beatrice never believed in marriage, rather she put her career first, she puts it thus, “every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinistic bullshit I had completely rejected before I knew there was anything like Womens Lib” ... because as she says “There was enough male chauvinism in our house to last me seven incarnations.” (Anthills... 88) After completing her degree she joins service. Thus education proves to be a means for emancipation of women in modern society. Her independence is reflected when she observes in the meeting that Sam is falling down his Presidential dignity before the American reporter, she takes a bold move. She dances with the president and drags him away from the other dancers and tells the President how he is placing himself in a ridiculous position, “If I went to America today, Washington D.C, would I, could I, walk into a White House private dinner and take the American President hostage?” (Anthills...81) Sam is unable to understand her patriotic zeal and her sense of dignity. He calls her a racist and asks her to leave the party.

Subjugation of the Modern Women

Being their fifth girl child, Beatrice was hated by her parents. She dislikes her father’s male chauvinistic behavior, his beating her mother in secret, etc. She recalls one incident when, her mother came out with tears in her eyes after being beaten in secret by her father. She tried to sympathize with her, but, “she pushed me away so violently that I hit my head against the wooden mortar.” (Anthills...86) On her part, Beatrice also treats her maid Agatha rather stubbornly on several occasions. And Agatha in her turn humiliates Elewa, because she is an illiterate, ordinary sales girl. Thus women are victims not only of male dominance but also of wrong exercise of power over women by women.

The oppression of women is not confined to domesticity alone; it is prevalent in workplaces, educational institutions, and social spaces, everywhere. The novel contains some incidents of abuse of power by men. The President mistreats Beatrice at his guest house. Amidst the political turmoil in the end of the novel this abuse of power becomes harsher. The soldiers sent to quell a students’ protest, invade the Women’s hostel. In a similar type of event, in the celebration mood after the second coup, a drunken soldier was seen dragging a school girl towards a roadside hut intending to rape her. The bystanders did nothing. It is the women who protested against the atrocity while “most of the men find it very funny indeed” (Anthills...215) It proves that the modern women are also vulnerable to male dominance.

Beatrice: A True Feminist

The author explores the defining aspects of the character of Beatrice through her relationship with her brotherly friend Ikem, the editor of the National Gazette, and her lover Chris, the Commissioner of Information. She admires Ikem for his consideration of the oppressed women and also tells him to be sensitive towards the other oppressed classes like peasants, and factory workers. She also criticizes him for not assigning a clear role to women in his political writings. She reconsiders women's position by affirming that "It is not enough that woman should be the court of last resort because the last resort is a damn sight too far and too late!" (Anthills...91-92) The force of her argument makes Ikem accept that his attitude towards women had been very traditional. It was too idealistic. He used to believe the Ibo principle of 'mother is supreme' with awareness of the fact that practically she is a second-class citizen. Ikem writes an apology to her and says that, he doesn't know what the new role for women will be and seeks an answer from her "You have to tell us." (Anthills...98) In this way, Achebe depicts that they assigned women the freedom to choose their roles in society.

Her Political Awareness and Enlightenment

Beatrice alone is able to access the current situation of their country Kangan. She tells Chris, "all three of you are incredibly conceited. The story of this country, as far as you are concerned, is the story of the three of you." (Anthills...60). She makes prophecies about the impending trouble for the three protagonists Sam, Ikem and Chris. She is sensitive and concerned about Ikem and Chris, so she advises them to connect to common people and be alert from Sam, the dictator. On her part, she has always been connected to society. Once she accepted that she never tries to attract attention of people by maintaining aloofness from lower strata of society as other elite people usually do. Sakshi Semwal rightly remarks:

"Achebe's last novel *Anthills of the Savannah* makes a radical departure from the dwarfed image of women. Beatrice, the female character, in the novel emerges as a strong feminist and true spirit of the novel. In this novel Achebe realizes the fact that women are also as equally important for literary imagination as men." (306)

Her prophecies eventually come to be true; Ikem is arrested and killed by the military officials sent for the job by Sam. Chris flees to the north for safety. Sam is deposed and killed in a counter-coup. Chris is shot dead by a drunken soldier who was dragging a schoolgirl for raping her amidst the merry making crowd. Though Ikem and Chris fall from political grace and lose

their lives, the novel chronicles their rising consciousness with respect to both women and the common people of the country. Beatrice is the source of this enlightenment.

Beatrice: The Hope of Future

After both the men have died Beatrice recovers from these shocks and comes forward to take care of the pregnant Elewa. She takes charge of the household and also of Elewa, Agatha, Emanuel. The baby born to Ikem and Elewa is a girl. As the baby's father is no more, Baetrice takes the responsibility of naming the baby which traditionally was the job of the father or headman of the family. She gives the female baby a male name, Amaechina, which means "May the Path Never Close". She stands for Nigeria, the hope for the future Nigeria. Thus, Achebe suggests that the era of military dictatorship is over and the future of the country is in the hands of girls, intellectuals like Beatrice and baby Ama. So, he has assigned a significant role for women. They are the leaders, the decision makers. Their path will never close.

Conclusion

After the feminist analysis of these two novels, it can be concluded that the gender roles of women in Nigerian society depicted by Achebe have changed considerably since the 1890s to 1970s. The traditional Nigerian culture was patriarchal and facilitated male dominance. In their family women were educated to acquire feminine gender roles from early childhood. Polygamy prevailed in the traditional agrarian culture as a means to prosperity, but it was the privilege of the rich, people believed in mutual understanding. Though it was a male dominated society, their customs and traditions have assigned some definite roles to women with a view to their empowerment. Within the bounds of patriarchy, women enjoyed some economic freedom. The division of labour allowed women to have their share in crops. They used to sell their veggies on market days to support themselves and their families. They were not in a position of authority to take important decisions and also were victims of unjust treatment by men occasionally. Still, their culture has an arrangement in favour of women; the systems like 'sitting on a man', bride price, clan meetings, were some of the mechanisms to ensure justice to women and to curb the abuse of power by men. It was a culture that believed in balance between the dualities of men and women.

In modern times, the bounds of patriarchy become looser than before. The institution of marriage, the foundation on which patriarchy stands, has changed significantly, now it allows more liberty to women. Beatrice and Elewa both live with the men of their choice, without

marrying them. Traces of polygamy are not found in modern scenario. Modern women are educated. They have the freedom to pursue their career. They have found the means of their emancipation. They are decision makers leading the family; men seek their advice in important matters. Though the situation has changed, they are not equal to men. Even the women in higher positions face secondary treatment, the uneducated and underprivileged face negligence, and all are prone to be the object of male chauvinism in pressing situations. Achebe has portrayed the traditional worldview of the Nigerian women realistically in *Things Fall Apart*. He had no bias in depicting whatever good and bad, their age-old culture, brought to the lot of women. However, in *Anthills of the Savannah*, he has presented an idealized image of the modern Nigerian woman.

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