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WOMEN AND EMANCIPATION IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*, *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN* AND BUCHI EMECHETA'S *THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD*, *SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN*

ABOSSEDE PAULETTE OKPEICHA-GNANVI

University of Abomey-Calavi
Républic of Bénin



ABSTRACT

Adichie and Emecheta view education as the main solution for African women's problems. Through this process, women strive towards emancipating themselves and ensuring the attainment of equal social status and access to opportunities with men. Adichie and Emecheta remarkably dramatize, in their works, women's determination to survive in the face of violence, sexual assault, extreme starvation, senseless brutality and ceaseless threats to their lives and poverty. As there is no medal without reverse, apart from many advantages attached to women changing roles, image and status, there are many consequences which are worth mentioning.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the fact that African women's relentless struggle to achieve the much desired freedom from the clutches of tradition, from socio-political and economic disempowerment of women as well as from male oppression, is like a medal. Therefore, finding remedial solutions for African societal problems linked to African women changing roles, attitude and image should be an important issue for African female scholars.

Keywords: Women-emancipation-consequences-determination-education

RESUME

Adichie et Emecheta considèrent l'instruction comme la solution essentielle aux problèmes des femmes Africaines. Par ce processus, les femmes s'engagent dans la lutte pour s'émanciper et garantir l'obtention de statuts sociaux égaux à ceux des hommes aussi bien que les mêmes opportunités. Adichie et Emecheta, dans leurs œuvres, dramatisent d'une manière remarquable le désir des femmes de survivre face à la violence, l'abus sexuel, la famine extrême, la brutalité inexplicable et la peur incessante de survie et de la pauvreté. Puisqu'il n'y a pas médaille sans revers, à part les nombreux avantages liés au changement de rôles, d'image et de statut de la femme, il y a plusieurs conséquences qui méritent d'être mentionnées.

L'objectif de cette étude est de mettre l'accent sur le fait que la lutte acharnée des femmes Africaines dans le but d'atteindre la libération tant désirée du joug que constituent les traditions, la situation socio-politique et économique aussi bien que l'oppression masculine est comparable à une médaille. Par conséquent, trouver des solutions pour remédier aux problèmes des sociétés Africaines liés au changement de

rôles, d'image, et d'attitude des femmes doit être une préoccupation importante pour les femmes intellectuelles africaines.

Mots- clés: femmes-émancipation-conséquences-détermination- instruction

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INTRODUCTION

To be emancipated is to be free from unpleasant or unfair social, political or legal restrictions. Emancipation is the major theme of many African and even European female writers. A person is emancipated when he/she is free from unpleasant or unfair social, political or legal restriction. Mariama Ba, in her works *So Long a Letter* (1980) and *Scarlet Song* (1981), expresses a disapproval of certain glaring abuses which are occasioned by traditions and some cultural practices. Mariama Ba suggests that culture and tradition should be progressive and accord women a choice. She contends that a healthy family will always result in a healthy nation. This is in total agreement with what Adichie is advocating for in her selected novels. It is important to examine some possible consequences and advantages of women's new status on families and furthermore on our societies.

Working Women and Families

Increased autonomy of women and improvements in their political, social, economic and health statuses were fundamental principles espoused at the international conferences in Cairo (1994) and in Beijing (1995). A priority among the recommendations in the Global Plan of Action for Population is the implementation of programmes taking into account the results of research carried out about the role and status of women, notably within family structures. It is indeed at the level of the family that current economic, social, demographic, educational and health conditions are experienced, and relations among family members are deeply affected by changes in these factors.

African traditional women's activities are primarily limited to domestic chores and caring for children. After colonization, these roles have changed because of schooling. In their selected works, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Buchi Emecheta have presented female scholars and very emancipated women. Nevertheless, they have, very often, unfaithful, lazy, husbands. Emancipated women's husbands rarely accomplish their familial tasks perfectly.

Survival of Women without Men

Everyone knows that women face men's oppressive attitude. How do they survive with all this maltreatment in Buchi and Adichie's world? Buchi and Adichie do not only underline the effects of discrimination on women, they use Auntie Ifeoma and Adah to show that some women are able to survive without men.

In every inch, Auntie Ifeoma is a mother to the core. She manages her acquisition in her little way, never depending on the wealth of her elder brother, Eugene, as other widows would have done. Moreover, she does not seek sugar daddy's help for fear of being humiliated or causing pain for the legal wife. She is contented with her little salary. Her children are always happy and satisfied with whatever she gives them. Auntie Ifeoma takes care of her father, PapaNnukwu, with the little she has Papa Nnukwu comments: "Ifeoma could not afford to buy new electronics" Since the father of her children died, she has seen hard times. But she will bring them this year".¹ Even though Beatrice tells her to depend on her rich brother, she refuses. Beatrice tells her: "Why don't you tell Eugene? There are gas cylinders in the factory [...]. Auntie Ifeoma only laughs at this suggestion

¹Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *Purple Hibiscus*, p.73.

and pats Mama's shoulder fondly, saying: "Nwunyim, things are tough, but we are not dying yet".²

In contrast to Ifeoma, Beatrice feels she will not survive without her husband. She says: "where would I go if I leave Eugene's house? Tell me, where would I go?"³ This is the main reason why she puts up with all the difficulties she faces in her household. Eventually, when her husband dies she survives with her children. Aunt Ifeoma is not annoyed by the loss of her job. She announces it without any show of despondency: "They have given men notice of termination".⁴ Aunt Ifeoma strives hard to get visa for herself and her children to travel. Amaka says: "Mum, how did it go? Did you get it? "I got it" Aunt Ifeoma said, coming onto the verandah, you got the visa!"⁵ Aunt Ifeoma writes Kambili's family when she gets to America. Kambili expresses "Aunt Ifeoma writes to mama and me, though she writes about her two jobs, one at a community college and one at a pharmacy, or drug store, as they call it".⁶

Aunt Ifeoma is independent minded. There is comparison between Aunt Ifeoma in *Purple Hibiscus* and Nnu Ego in *The Joys of motherhood*. Ifeoma can be put side by side with Adah in *Second-Class Citizen* and she is an educated version of Nnu Ego but each of them has succeeded in the midst of nothing to build their homes independently in spite of the odds of their societies. It is also discovered that women can survive without men. Some maltreated women are scared to leave their husbands because, they are afraid they will not survive without them. Other women struggle to survive without any help from men.

Dereliction of Duties by Husbands

Dereliction of duty is deliberate or accidental failure to do what one should do as a duty. In African societies nowadays, some husbands are no more bread winners in their families. This ability is the main

husbands' feature. Emecheta portrays Nnaife as one who abandons his duties to his wife, Nnu Ego. Nnaife leaves his family to suffer and goes to join the army, making money, which he uses to marry more wives. When Nnaife tells his wife that he wants his son, Adim to go to a cheaper school, she reacts: "Cheaper? Nnu Ego's voice still raised, she asks: Is that because you have spent all your army money, the money you were busy making while the children and I were busy suffering? Oh Nnaife, you are a fool".⁷

Nnu Ego struggles to feed the children and send them to school. Nnu Ego chooses her children above anything in the world. Nnaife ill-treats Nnu Ego by blaming her for, her children's misbehavior, Nnaife says to himself: " [...]her children. None of them had so far showed any loyalty to him, their father. God, what was he to do now? Send this woman away. Tell her never to come near him again? 'Damn you and your food, Nnu Ego he repeated aloud'".⁸

When it comes to Nnaife taking up his duties as the father of the house, he refers his children to his wife, Nnu Ego. When the child does good they are his, and when they do bad they are their mother's Nnu Ego declares: "When the children were good they belonged to the father: when they were bad, they belonged to the mother. Every woman knew this: but for Nnaife to keep hurling it in her face at the slightest provocation was very unfair".⁹

Emecheta agrees that the love Nnaife has for Nnu Ego is turned into hate and so he doesn't want to see her, she says: "He opened his heavy eyes slowly, frowned at seeing Nnu Ego".¹⁰

As women are able to take care of the families, many men spend their money for other women which leads to polygamy with the well-known consequences attached to it as one can see in this passage:

The 'help' soon arrived in the shape of a sixteen-year-old girl named Okpo. Her

²Ibid .. p. 83.

³Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*, p. 255.

⁴Ibid., p. 265.

⁵Ibid., p. 266

⁶Ibid., p. 304.

⁷Buchi Emecheta. *The Joys of Motherhood*. p.185.

⁸Ibid., p.205.

⁹Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁰Buchi Emecheta. *The Joys of Motherhood* .p. 208.

parents insisted on having nothing less than thirty pounds for their daughter; had not Nnaife brought home all the white man's money from the war? [...] He paid thirty pounds for his woman instead of the usual twenty pounds stipulated by Ibuza custom.¹¹

In the following lines, I'm going to explore the way Emecheta and Adichie deal with multiple wives in an efficient way.

Multiple Wives

Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood* expresses how multiple wives affect families. It brings discomfort to families because the family may not have enough to care for a big family. Nnu Ego's husband, Nnaife, causes discomfort to his family with his quest for more wives. He agrees to marry his late brother's wives, when he can barely feed and send his children to school. Nnu Ego says:

Oh Nnaife, how are you going to cope? All those children and all those wives. Here she stopped, as the truth hither like a heavy blow. She almost staggered as it sank in [...] where would Nnaife get money from? Oh, God... she ran out, leaving her baby on the bed.¹²

Women are the ones who try to cope with financial problems generated by polygamy. The love they have for their children causes psychological problems for mother who are obliged to do whatever they can to help their children succeed in life. According to Ibuza culture, a woman should be happy when her husband brings another wife home. Emecheta portrays this in NnuEgo when she pretends to be happy to see a new wife. The narrator reports: "She tried desperately to control her feelings, to put on a pleasant face, to be the sophisticated Ibuza wife and welcome another woman into her home but she could not."¹³

Emecheta describes Nnaife as one, who is supposed to care for his family, but keeps getting more wives and abandons his children to his wife Nnu Ego to care for. Nnu Ego does not fail to express her

feelings about the new wife. This act is a change in traditional African women: "For once Nnu Ego did not bother to hide her disapproval. She refused to share a room with this new girl and all their children [...] where are we going to put them all? She screamed at her husband and the girl".¹⁴

Multiple wives in a family cause jealousy and conflict among wives. This jealousy often leads to criminal actions. Nnu Ego fears for her children due to the presence of the new wife. She goes to seek help from a Dibia who advises her: "The child is right; you must protect your son against the jealousy of the younger wife. If you bring me two hens and a yard of white cloth I shall prepare a charm for your sons to wear".¹⁵

Some men only think of themselves, not of their families before they choose wives. This shows they are self-important and selfish. In their culture, marrying many wives shows men's wealth, strength and capacities. Consequently, they discard legal wives most of the time and do not care for the legal wife's reactions. She can even commit suicide or die a violent death from heart attack, some men do not mind as they have other wives who take care of them.

Disrespect to Legal Wives

When women are busy working, some men take advantage of their absence to lessen the respect they had toward them. Emecheta displays how disrespectful men can be to their legal wives through the character of Agbadi and Amatokuwu. Agbadi brings his mistress home to give her sexual pleasures knowing that his legal wives are around. Agbadi does not respect the feelings of his wives. This disrespect leads to his senior wife's death. Emecheta confirms this:

Agbadi's senior wife, Agunwa becomes ill that very night. Some said later that she sacrificed herself for her husband, but a few had noticed that it was bad for her morale to hear her husband giving pleasure to another woman in the same court yard where she

¹¹ Ibid., Pp. 206-207

¹² Ibid., p.115.

¹³ BuchiEmecheta. *The Joys of Motherhood*. P.119

¹⁴ Ibid., p.184.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.129.

slept, and to such a woman who openly treated the man they all worshipped so badly.¹⁶

Emecheta also points out that this kind of disrespectful behaviour has affected Nnu Ego's first marriage. Nnu Ego's failure to produce male children in her first marriage causes her husband's family to look for another wife who can bear male children. Amatokwu, Nnu Ego's first husband disrespects Nnu Ego when the new wife arrives. Emecheta portrays Ibuza culture as a culture in which a senior wife moves out of her position for the new to occupy. Emecheta reports: "She was not surprised when Amatokwu told her casually one evening that she would have to move to a nearby hut kept for older wives, because his people had found him a new wife."¹⁷

This disrespect causes Nnu Ego so much pain that she expresses her fears to her father: "Father, my position as senior woman of the house has been taken by a younger woman". Even if men do not take many wives, they get concubines, which prevent some of them from taking care of their legal wife and children.

Emecheta describes the fact of having concubines through the character of Agbadi, Nnu Ego's father, a strong wrestler, who marries more wives when he wins a contest. When Agbadi gets tired of his wives he goes to get a concubine. This is explained by the author:

He married a few women in the traditional sense, but as he watched each of them sink into domesticity and motherhood, he was soon bored and would go further a field for some other exciting, tall and proud female. This predilection of his extended to his mistresses as well.¹⁸

Women for Agbadi are like commodities to be purchased from the market.¹⁹ When they are worn out, he goes to purchase more. Agbadi even spends his time with mistresses and abandons his wives at

home. Emecheta thinks: "Men being what they are, he [Agbadi] preferred spending his free time with her (concubine), with this woman who enjoyed humiliating him by refusing to be his wife."²⁰

Agbadi leaves his other wives at home without care, and then goes out to meet his mistress. Agbadi is ready to sacrifice his other wives for a concubine who is not ready to give herself to him. Emecheta asserts that: "Nwokocha Agbadi would not have minded sending all his wives away just to live with this one woman".²¹ The fact that women work increases the rate of infidelity on the part of men. This fact is a serious challenge women have to often grapple with. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* Mrs Ozobia is a victim of negative masculinity since her husband has a mistress, a Yoruba woman for whom he has bought a house in a neighborhood where Lagos socialists live. This is considered as a humiliation for Mrs Ozobia. It is out of such a humiliation that Mrs Ozobia cries while telling her daughter, Olanna about her father's mistress:

Her mother held a glass of tonic water in one hand and a handkerchief on the other. She was crying. She was telling Olanna about her father's mistress. He has bought her a house in Ikeja", her mother said," "my friend lives on the same street"[...]have talked to him?"Olanna asked. "What am I to say to him? GivayaGini? "There is nothing I can say to him. I just wanted to let you know what is happening so that they will not say I did not tell anybody."²²

Mrs Ozobia's confiding to a woman could point to the idea that it is cooperation among women that will aid in their liberation from patriarchal chains. When Mrs Ozobia says "...so that they will not say I did not tell anybody".²³ This phenomenon results in changes in family formation pattern. Increasingly, both women

¹⁶BuchiEmecheta. *The Joys of Motherhood*.p. 21.

¹⁷Ibid., p.33.

¹⁸BuchiEmecheta. *The Joys of Motherhood*.p.10.

¹⁹Ibid.,p.33.

²⁰Ibid., p.11.

²¹Ibid., p.12.

²²Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*.p.207.

²³Ibid.,p.217.

and men want to establish themselves in the labour market first and then found a family. Hence, the age of mothers at first childbirth has risen with the probability of having fewer children than previous generations. Moreover, many women remain childless. Consequently, birth rate has fallen and life expectancy has increased.

The household childlessness rate is strongly linked with the education level of women as women with university education are more likely to be in childless house hold than women with secondary education. Both falling marriage rate and increasing divorce rate have increased the number of sole parents families as well as "reconstructed families". This impairs children education.

Mothers who work take a short break before birth and a few months after a child's birth. As a result, they are no more able to breast-feed their babies properly which is very important in the baby's physical, psychological, psychical and social growth. This may be a cause of African society decadence including homosexuality and lesbianism in African schools. It is important for African feminists to include remedial solutions for this devastating problem in their future works. Nonetheless, it is important to note that emancipation has empowered women.

Emancipated Women and African Values

Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart*, presents Igbo women as fervently religious, respectful, silent and submissive. At the time dealt with by Achebe in this novel, all the activities and behaviors are judged by what is or is not acceptable by Ani, the Earth goddess and source of all fertility and the ultimate judge of morality and conduct in the clan.²⁴ The society described in Buchi Emecheta and Adichie Chimamanda's selected novels are thematically similar and spin around the breakdown of family and community under the pressure of religious dogmatism and colonial influence.

Emancipated Women and African Prescriptions

²⁴ www.associatedcentered.com Education. "The Role of Women in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*". Assessed on 21/03/2012.

In traditional Africa, there are many attitudes and activities which are forbidden for women. If one examines these things through a moral lens, it can easily be noticed that they can bring about danger for both women and the whole society. For instance, drunken women are more blamed than men. Women like Kainene's mother who drinks alcohol exaggeratedly in *Half of a Yellow Sun* are not accepted in African societies. I totally agree with this African prescription when I take into account alcohol effects on women. A woman addicted to drinking is likely to give birth to low-weight babies whose intelligence is below the average. Hence, they will not be able to work hard at school. Consequently, when they grow they will not be citizens who take active part in the development of their society. Surprisingly enough, today, both girls and women drink alcohol as much as they can. Another important aspect of African societies is marriage. Here, drastic measures are needed to be taken because of the sexual deviance noticeable nowadays.

Marriage, in traditional African context, is an alliance, an agreement or contrast between two families. Most of the time, emancipated girls show their boyfriends to their parents after a pregnancy if it is not aborted. It is important to note that the essentials of marriage in traditional Africa are namely a lifelong union of husbands and wives for mutual support and progeny to continue the ancestral line and to promote the welfare of the tribe or clan. That is why anything that deliberately goes towards the description or obstruction of human life is regarded as evil. Therefore anybody who, under normal condition refuses to get married is committing a major offence in the eyes of society. Consequently, they are against him or her. In all African societies, everything possible is done to prepare people for marriage and to make them think in terms of marriage.

It can be argued that, nowadays, marriage has less traditional relevance because it pries on people's individuality. The sacredness attached to the value of marriage is barely noticeable. Marriage no more concerns all and is no more affected by all. Another deviance is the refusal of heterosexual

marriage which leads to lesbianism and homosexuality.

In African traditional societies, women were silent. When emancipated through schooling, they gain the ability to express their mind freely. But here, one should note that every feeling is not advisable to be expressed by women. For instance, it is not accepted that women declare love to men as it is the case in *Purple Hibiscus*. Kambili's attraction to Amadi is announced with flourish as he comes to Auntie Ifeoma's residence at Nsukka. We are told: And later, "he spoke so effortlessly as if his mouth were a musical instrument that just let sound out when touched".²⁵ Again she confesses, "I could not help staring at him because his voice pulled me".²⁶

The common core that binds all these indications of Kambili's attraction is her consciousness of the other. More importantly, this consciousness is expressed directly through her perspective. Here, I see her as a person, a young woman who is capable of expressing her feelings to a man. This is in contrast to the traditional patriarchal constructs that subtly prohibit female expression for male attraction and desire for sex. As long as Kambili is helmed in between the high walls with electrified wires of the family compound, she cannot experience the joy of self-expression and knowledge of her own sexuality. In this sense, then, the trip to Nsukka becomes an eloquent dramatization of a feminist demystification of patriarchal violence. This free expression can lead to becoming a single woman.

Formerly in Africa, a single woman was an abomination. No girl or woman intended to remain single. Parents and especially mothers consulted dibias and made sacrifices so that their daughters would find husbands. Nowadays, emancipated women fail to acknowledge the value of a married life. Women like Auntie Ifeoma in *Purple Hibiscus* are numerous in African societies presently. This university lecturer refuses to marry again after her husband's death in

spite of the pressures from her family. She believes that men are naturally selfish and that marriage gives them the room to have an absolute control over their wives. It can first be said that she is right because of all that is attached to this new married life with three orphans. Nevertheless, if I take into account the importance of a father's authority in children's education, I can affirm that she has taken a wrong decision. A child raised by a single parent does not have the same psychology as the one who is brought up by both parents.

Chinua Achebe, after portraying women in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* as weak, exploited, submissive, silent and passive has changed his views on them in other novels where he presents them as important and active people who cannot be discarded. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, speaking through his alter ego Ikem a journalist and writer, Achebe acknowledges that the malaise the African countries are experiencing results from excluding women from the scheme of things. The same ideas are emphasized by Buchi Emecheta and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Emecheta has brought to the awareness of the patriarchal societies through her technique: the use of traditional assumptions as errors to challenge patriarchy, the use of paired-women like Ona and Nnu Ego, stories, cultural taboos, to prove that Africa's development requires the involvement of women in all activities. Thus, nobody should expect to see the society become glorious when the men exercise power and command on the women who are despised or made passive. Moreover, she uses her artistic insight to present woman's plight in a culture involved in a clash between traditional society and western influence. Her fiction indicates her as a canon, thus exhibiting a formal coherence where she suggests the need for change through a reconsideration of marriage, motherhood, emotional and economic changes.

Adichie's writing is also a proposal aimed at healing the division and conflicts between genders. The hostility of men towards women does not always yield positive results. It is battering; abuse and her husband's refusal to make her economically active

²⁵Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *Purple Hibiscus*. Op. Cit., P.138.

²⁶Ibid., p.148.

that push Beatrice to poison her husband. Her case can be taken as a radical feminist decision but it is an action that happens out of total despair. Adichie draws a situation where the woman is in a tragic subjection and she has to do everything to redeem herself. For Beatrice, the poisoning is the only way to save her rather than committing suicide. Beatrice's case is unique because she deals with a husband who has gone berserk due to religion and one who is injured in the African patriarchy.

The appearance of Buchi Emecheta and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels on the modern Africa literary scene has really brought new and positive changes in the African traditional societies as well as in the literary world. This is the result of the fact that their main theme is the woman. The novelists' main theme being the woman has enlightened the holders of patriarchal ideas on the imperious need for change in the traditional African societies. These societies must undergo serious changes in the modern world. But it can surprisingly be noticed that the voices of writers, especially female writers are still not loud enough. Nevertheless, a greater number of girls attend school nowadays and many women are emancipated. How does women emancipation impact on marital life?

Emancipated Women and their Husbands

African societies believe primarily in the role model of women as perfect housewives. All their life, women are tied to their husbands whether alive or dead. Emancipation through education has helped the latter to free themselves from that burden. Beatrice, in *Purple Hibiscus* is forced to remain at home and endure her husband's insane behavior because she is a traditional woman. To demonstrate the usefulness of emancipation in marital life, Adichie uses Auntie Ifeoma, her sister-in-law, who is a university lecturer.

Auntie Ifeoma is also used as a woman who fights against the suffering imposed on widow by their in-laws and their societies. She paints in the readers' mind, a picture of an extremely intelligent, self-sacrificing widow who is also a staunch defender of her honour and her family. She undergoes severe emotional and psychological torture which a widow in

many African countries is subjected to as soon as her husband dies. She opposes her in-laws' suggestion to be married to one of her husband's relatives. This character also fights violence on wives.

A wife battering is another aspect of marital life that has lessened with emancipated women. Adichie uses Eugene's cruelty, Beatrice's silent and Auntie Ifeoma's enlightenment to show the importance of emancipation in women's life. In fact, if Beatrice reacts while being beaten; her husband will not dare to beat her so repeatedly. This gender-based violence therefore covers incidents in which one sex asserts power by using acts to achieve submissiveness and fear in the other sex. In the process, it commits an offence against the dignity or privacy of that person. Emecheta has also demonstrated this form of cruelty in the domestic sphere where men become very happy, satisfied and proud when they are able to exercise power and control over their wives. Francis' attitude towards Adah, Agbadi's behavior *vis-à-vis* his wives, Okonkwo's excessive power over Aku-nna's mother, are clear cut examples the novelist has chosen to elucidate men's cruelty. Emancipated women also limit their in-laws interferences in their family matters.

Members of the society and in-laws often interfere in family issues and take side against women in issues that are supposed to be private. For instance, Eugene is expected to marry another wife in order to have more children. Beatrice almost loses her husband because of interference. Olanna's husband impregnates an illiterate timid girl because of her mother-in law's interference. It is important to note that emancipated women often help their husbands better their living conditions but they are sometimes ungrateful. This is Francis' case in *Second-Class Citizen*.

Francis is typical of such modern young men who want to get marital status and enjoy life without responsibility. He has aspiration for higher education and helped by his wife, Adah. But surprisingly enough, he has made up his mind to enslave her. The matter of the fact is that the victim aspires to a happy marital life when her potential husband becomes a scholar and obtains a good job. Unfortunately, after their

success, the modern young men fail to acknowledge their victims' main contributions, thus making them more victimized by abandoning them or neglecting them as underdogs in their families. In this sense, not only do women waste their money but they also fail socially. Men therefore keep their supremacy over women and hence remain permanently the holders of power. This is what happens mainly to the female individuals in many of contemporary societies, and this is a phenomenon that emancipated women fight against.

Judging from the analysis of the selected novels, it can be said that education has enabled African women to be conscious of men oppression and fight it. It is the high level of education of the female protagonists of Adichie's works which acts as their bulwark against the retrogressive cultural patterns that exacerbate women's subjugation. With their sound education and high level of reasoning, they are able to deal with the irresponsibility of the men in their lives, in addition to coping with the calamitous happening around them. Consequently, they have fought women enslavement, wives beating, widowhood practices affecting women and other oppressive practices in African societies. Nevertheless, some of the ways they revenge are not in accordance with African values.

Rather than swallow in dejection and self-pity, especially after the discovery of her husband's infidelity, Olanna, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, seduces and sleeps with Richard, the enigmatic Englishman who is enraptured with Kainene, her twin sister. Olanna enjoys the sexual escapade and so does Richard. Olanna does not regret the sexual satisfaction which she derives from sleeping with the White Richard. It is important to mention that education which has changed women's role and status doesn't totally cut them from the African marital values.

CONCLUSION

African women need emancipation to break the patriarchal chains. They likewise need it to be delightful. But, if African women have learnt about the philosophy and principles of emancipation from Western theoretical and empirical experiences, to

achieve their true happiness in the context of Africa, they should include traditional moral values into their feminist struggle or activism.

While claiming for change, it is important that women acknowledge their weaknesses as "nobody is perfect". These weaknesses include lack of female solidarity, lack of positive political will-power and vision, acceptance of being maintained in economic powerlessness, unconsciousness of their economic exploitation by men, laziness, promiscuity, lack of courage to be fully involved in politics, adopting radical feminine ideas, and lack of promotion of the existing laws that recognize their rights and can be evoked for their protection. African women shouldn't forget their roots because all the practices in African culture are not negative. When well scrutinized, women are assigned very important roles in African traditional societies.

To really impose themselves in all modern fields, women should oppose concrete resistance to oppression and repression and enhance education for girls in societies that are imbued with patriarchal ideas. They must urge the government to devise programmes which aim at promoting the health of mothers through maternal and childcare services and family planning services. Moreover, they must promote female friendship and solidarity.

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