



MASCULINE ABUSE OF POWER WITH REGARD TO RELIGION IN PURPLE HIBISCUS BY CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

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Abstract

Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian writing has been explored under the framework of ecofeminism. This movement links oppression of women and degradation of environment that ultimately occur as a result of patriarchy. It explores gender politics, gender discrimination and the role of misuse of religion. This study also investigates the masculine abuse of power with reference to religious bigotry. Moreover, Adichie through the character of Beatrice shows how such exploitation by men results in revengeful acts. She has portrayed a number of women and their struggles. Nature and love are the source of proper nourishment for the mental growth of women. On the contrary, oppression and religious extremism consequently lead to outraging effects. This study concludes that the oppression leads to traumatizing impacts. For instance, emotional disorder, rebellion in order to gain freedom as well as revengeful acts.

Keywords: *Ecofeminism, Nature, Oppression, Patriarchy, Religion*

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1. Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is firmly, resiliently, and unapologetically a feminist. She is well known for her feministic writings. In one of her TEDx talks ‘we all should be feminists;’ she boldly calls herself a ‘happy African feminist.’ She is determined to break the gender discrimination and gender-based stereotypes through her writings. In her interview, she quotes the late Kenyan Nobel peace Laureate Wangari Maathai who said, “the higher you go, the fewer women you see” (TEDx Talks, 2013). This idea can be vividly viewed in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Suppressed women like Kambili cannot grow and as suppression of women is very common, therefore most of the women are unable to excel.

Through her novel *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie portrays different types of women including weak and strong and their struggles. She shows her character Kambili’s growth into a mature woman through nature and love that gave her liveliness and confidence. Aunt Ifeoma and her daughter are an embodiment of a true women and femineity. Ifeoma is a strong educated women who is leading her life without a man. Whereas Beatrice, Kambili’s mother, depict typical Igbo women. For her, marriage is the ultimate goal of one’s life. Beatrice suffers oppression all her life at the hands of her religiously tyrant husband just because he marries her and provides for her and her children. However, the oppression leaves a very traumatizing impact on her psyche.

Purple Hibiscus represents the emotional disorder of adolescence, the powerful bonds of family, and the bright promise of freedom, rebellious acts. The novel earned Adichie the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award. It was also shortlisted for the Orange Prize 2004 and the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, longlisted for the Booker Prize and was winner of the Hurston/Wright Legacy award for debut fiction (Adichie, 2003, p. 214).

Descriptive qualitative research method will be used to analyze the masculine abuse of power with regard to religion and ecofeminism will be applied to analyze the ecofeminist perspectives of Adichie’s novel *Purple Hibiscus*. Qualitative research is about exploring issues, understanding phenomenon and answering questions. This method of research is to evaluate existing knowledge which includes primary and secondary sources. The purpose of this kind of study is to explore if the same findings will also emerge in a different context.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews pertinent literature and critical views on the novel chosen i.e. *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to establish the several viewpoints of analysis thus revealing the gap that this research seeks to fill. Being a noteworthy figure in the African literature, Adichie's works have received extensive attention from different critics, writers and other academic commentators.

Adichie's art of characterization is also highlighted by *The Sunday Times*. It says that the simple transformation tale has become stronger and enthusiastic because of its characters. It shrewdly portrays simplicity, opens up new vistas of meaningful feelings for the readers. Observing the political angle of the novel, *Vogue* asserts that *Purple Hibiscus* leads you to the core of personal feelings and emotions. Moreover, it also staggers into political scenarios with extreme fineness. Adichie shifts the African endeavors for their identity into the center of family life with her heartbreaking generous and infinitely wise writing. In 2006, *Glasgow* appreciates her writings for being "balanced yet passionate, she is an inspiring new voice and *Purple Hibiscus* is a book that one must read".

According to *The Boston Globe* Adichie's prose relates with Nigerian landscape, lush and green ... evokes with full strength. His comprehension of a young girl's heart is so pure that her story finally hovers over its setting and makes her little but significant part of Nigeria which is as close and clean as Eudora Welty's *Mississippi* (Adichie, 2003). Broun (2004) reviews *Purple Hibiscus* and points out some of its cons as well. She says that apart from a lot of merits, there are a few loopholes in the novel as well. For instance, the repetition of gestures and imagery beyond thematic concerns. Moreover, the mentioning of eyes and throat is also frequent. Therefore, Adichie leaves a room for improvement of her prose. She also talks about the repetitive eating that never stops throughout the novel.

The title of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* is of important role as Brenda Cooper, a renowned critic, says that although the horrible violence and oppression of the heroine as well as the protagonist Kambili Achike by her father results in the suppression of her voice, yet she ultimately regains speech and freedom through her successive exposure of the womanist symbolic flower "purple hibiscus." Moreover, she describes *Purple Hibiscus* as a novel which is struggling to create a synthetic whole, combining Igbo customs and language with Catholic ritual (Washaly, 2018).

Adichie makes use of history in her writings, therefore most critics believe that she is following the footprints of Chinua Achebe, a dominant figure in African literature. Calling *Purple Hibiscus*, a breathtaking debut, *The Washington Post Book World* reviews

it saying, “Adichie is very much the 21st century daughter of the great Igbo novelist, Chinua Achebe” (Broun, 2004). She also talks about the limitations of political truth. Due to which, she is very much similar to Chinua Achebe and regarded as her daughter. She herself openly admits her being inspired by Chinua Achebe. Achebe (2007) also comments on one of her books, *Americana* and says that “Adichie came almost fully made”.

Shiva describes the bonding of women with nature in Indian context. She is of the view that females are the significant part of nature, both in their imagination as well as daily lives. Moreover, she considers nature as a personification of women principles on one side and nurture by another feminine on the other side so that life and sustenance are produced. Ecofeminism moreover relates the exploitation by nature and domination by gender and believes that patriarchy originates both exploitation and authoritativeness. Gaard also links nature and oppression and states that the set of rules which give authority to oppression based on race, color, class, gender, sexuality, species and physical abilities is similar to the ideologies that favors natural oppression. Hence the followers of ecofeminism believe that “any endeavor for the freedom of oppressed class i.e., women will only succeed if liberation of nature is also done.” Murphy and Gaard hold the similar view regarding connection of women and nature. It investigates natural exploitation, women oppression, class domination, racism, colonialism and neocolonialism. Moreover, it aims to oppose and destabilize binary opposites like man/woman, culture/nature, humans/animals, self/other and black/white etc., where masculine figure commands as rational, and subject exploiting and colonizing women as unwise, nature, inferior, object and slave (Gebreyohannes, 2022, p. 2).

Religion has a major role in the novel. Evening Standard calls *Purple Hibiscus* to be the “subtlest debut novel. It shows a complicated and convincing portrayal of a young girl of 15 years, her sexual awakening as well as oppression due to religion” (Adichie, 2003). In the novel, Catholicism (religion) has been employed as a means of control over the chaos and anarchy prevailing in the society by Adichie. Adichie believes that due to the influence of religion and culture, it has become an impossible struggle to eliminate domestic violence. She talks about a report that shows that “a law has been passed in the Senegalese consisting of a penal code in order to punish the acts of domestic violence with prison sentences and fines but cannot be applied fairly because of negative influence of religion and culture.” She cites the example of Ghana where spousal attacks are at the top of the list of domestic violence (Washaly, 2018).

Reviewing *Purple Hibiscus*, Hope Lee asserts that, “the portrayal of domestic violence is quite vivid but silent. This is the most effective tool of writing used throughout the novel by Adichie. Sometimes the scenes of domestic violence are explained clearly e.g., the bath scene where Kambili poured hot boiling water over her feet. And when her

father finds out the portrait of her grandfather, he kicks her and she faints while on the ground (Doe, 2023). He also scolds Jaja, his son, saying that “Moral sin, more than anything, keeps any person away from worship on consecutive two Sundays.” Ogwude discusses the history as well as ideology in Adichie’s novels and asserts that *Purple Hibiscus* depicts religious fanaticism, the face of cultural unfriendliness” (Nwokocha, 2019).

Adichie (2013) declares in a BBC interview that women who raise their voice against gender injustice are often considered as unfarcical. In one of her interviews, she tells that once a male journalist advised her to never call herself a feminist. It is because feminists are the women who are unhappy because they cannot find husbands. She then decided to call herself ‘a happy African feminist.’ Adichie in the same interview, also quotes the late Kenyan Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai who said, “the higher you go, the fewer women you see” (TEDx Talks).

3.Theoretical Framework

Adichie employs different feministic approaches in her writings. Ecofeminism is one of them. Ecofeminism is a theory which is basically a blend of feminism and ecology. The late 1980s and early 1990s was a fertile time for ecofeminist writing. Ecofeminism links the environmental issues and patriarchal issues. It is a perspective and a social movement in which women are attributed with having deep connection with nature. It believes that the degradation of environment and suppression of women are the consequence of patriarchy and gender discrimination. In United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), one of the major impacts of ecofeminism was seen. In this conference, women’s environmental organizations had urged for environmental and women’s rights to be added in the tandem. Similarly, in the 1995 4th Women’s conference in Beijing, it was agreed upon that women’s rights and environmental rights cannot be extricated (1992).

By the late 1990s, the output of this movement started to decline significantly. Adichie plays an important role in reviving it in her first post-colonial novel *Purple Hibiscus* which was published in 2003. Thus, this research examines the ecofeminist study of the novel. It analyzes how nature becomes a source of relief for women living in an oppressive environment. Moreover, Adichie, through her character Beatrice portrays how consistent oppression can result in revengeful acts. Religion has always been misinterpreted by male chauvinistic society, used as a hinderance and obstruction in the freedom of women. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene, being a religious tyrant, exploits his family mentally, physically and psychologically. Through him, Adichie created a character

who tries to prove how Christian he is. Accordingly, this study will also investigate the masculine abuse of power with reference to religious bigotry. Thus, all these factors like man, religion, society resulting in the oppression of women lead them to become vindictive inwardly and plan to take revenge.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Role of Religion in Patriarchal Society

The portrayal of masculine abuse of power and religious exploitation is quite evident in the post-colonial feminist novel *Purple Hibiscus*. The novel is going to be analyzed with special reference to ecofeminism, one of the aspects of feminism. According to the principles of ecofeminism, all kinds of oppression are interlinked.

The character of Eugene in the novel *Purple Hibiscus* plays a significant role in the story. He is the father of Kambili, protagonist of the novel and is both a violent figure as well as a religious tyrant. He is always torturing his family, physically, emotionally and mentally. He misuses religion for every minor thing. For example, he says that “nothing else except a mortal sin can keep a person away from the communion for two Sundays consistently” (Adichie, 2003, p.7). He accuses and blames his son of doing a mortal sin just for not going to the communion. From this chaotic environment, his family finds relief in nature.

Similarly in *Purple Hibiscus*, we see that Eugene is a post-colonial product generally and in terms of religion as well. Even a poor indigenous also calls him a fly following a corpse into a grave blindly (Adichie, 2003, p.50). Religion is used as a tool to destroy tradition and culture, suppress the native and exploit women through domestic violence, thus creating an utter chaos in the environment. Eugene does not even see his father just because he is a traditionalist. He even prefers a white priest over a native priest. He compares the both and denounces the native saying, “white people would never do that” (Adichie, 2003, p.74). It exposes his religious as well as racial hypocrisy as a consequence of post colonialism.

Eugene is the one who makes it suffocating for his family to live in their own houses. Kambili, the narrator and the protagonist of the novel, states about this suffocation in the very first chapter. She tells how she feels suffocated, witnessing the off-white walls of the house narrowing down. It is ironic how such a violent person like Eugene wins a human rights award when his own family is deprived of the basic rights by him. This shows that on the outside, he is a very pious, upright, and religious person. While on the inside, he is a symbol of masculine abuse and patriarchal oppression in the Nigerian society.

Through the character of Eugene, Adichie presents how men use the shield of religion in order to justify their oppressive acts.

There are a lot of instances by which we can call *Purple Hibiscus* an ecofeminist novel. Ecofeminism believes in the deep connection between women and nature. Similarly, in *Purple Hibiscus*, where women are seen to be nurturing the environment, the man of the house is the one damaging it. When Eugene gets angry on Jaja for not going to the communion, declaring it to be a sin, he grabs the missal and throws it across the room which causes Mama's figurines which she then cleans. As told by Kambili, Figurines are something Mama used to polish and rearrange every time she hears a sound of getting banged at the door. It was a source of relief for her after getting subjugated and beaten by her tyrannical husband. The nurturing eminence of women is portrayed in the character of Mama, Beatrice.

In all this suffocating environment, the view outside the window is a source of relief for all of them. It can be witnessed that the windows are always open. Also, on the Palm Sunday, after a very distressing incident, Kambili finds peace when she sits near her window, close to the nature. She breathes the fresh air, in the scent of the flowers of frangipani trees. She elucidates the outside view in such a detail that it shows her love for nature. On the other side, the high walls of her house's compound are in contrast of the freedom that nature offers. One cannot see beyond those suffocating walls. Their lives are limited within those four walls of the compound.

Here, for the first time, we have come to know about the purple hibiscus which is about to bloom whereas red ones are blooming so fast although mama cuts them often. The color Purple depicts freedom as Kambili also states about them as "rare and fragrant having the undertones of freedom" (Adichie, 2003, p.14) while relating them to Jaja's rebelliousness. We see the purple hibiscus starting to push out like the rebellion of Jaja. His first act of defiance, of not going to the communion, is also the first step towards their freedom from this choking environment.

Women become so habitual to the oppression that they do not even consider it wrong any more. They do not speak against this injustice and cruelty. Eugene beats Beatrice several times as Kambili previously says, 'every time she hears a sound of getting banged at the door' (Adichie, 2003,10). It shows that beating her is not a big deal for him and he does that often. Beatrice, instead of standing and speaking against him, keeps on suffering this brutal treatment by her husband. It is just because he is her husband. It is not just the men but the overall culture and society that treats women as objects. The society plays an important role in building the mindset that consider women inferior to men. They consider women as some kind of machines used for producing babies.

Beatrice has had several miscarriages before and she is expecting it again in the first part of the novel. She tells the role of society in these saddening incidents. She tells how the villagers started to whisper instead of consoling her. They also involve religion telling her to consult a witch doctor. The members of Umunna even sent people to urge Eugene to have children with someone else. They were even willing to give their well-educated daughters for him. It shows how the ultimate purpose of women, in an African society, is just getting married. No matter how educated they are, they are ultimately dependent on their husbands and are their responsibilities. Adichie portrays the idea how people give their educated and capable daughters to rich men who are apparently religious and righteous like Eugene. They then treat them like mere objects, machines or nothing. Their purpose becomes giving birth to children, preferably sons.

Beatrice telling how Eugene stayed with them although she couldn't give birth to more children and suffered many miscarriages employs the idea how she feels obliged and grateful to him for not taking in another wife. It is the reason she bears all the torture because she is totally dependent on him. Just because he did not marry anyone else and did not throw them out of the house, he is allowed to torture his family mentally and physically. Here, we come across the helplessness of African woman at the hands of so-called heads of the family.

Adichie (2003) shows men various times damaging the mother earth as Kambili sees men urinate in the corners of roads. Kambili also sees a woman lying in the mud with her wrapper being undone, revealing her white underwear. The soldier standing there beat her with a whip. They demolish their stalls by kicking down the trays of fruits. This incident shows how military and overall patriarchal system exploit women and the overall environment through violence.

Women having the nature of nurturing are always seen as the caretakers of garden and plants. Not only Kambili but her aunt Ifeoma and her mother also have a deep relation to environment and nature. They are characterized as nurturers of plants and flowers in their backyard. This is because it is a source of pleasure and emotional relief for them. The narrator shows that women have the tendency to preserve the environment. Aunt Ifeoma also tells how she fenced the garden to protect the nature (92). She also finds God's glory in nature. While admiring the flowers in garden, she says "they are like God is playing with paint brushes" (101).

In the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, women are innocent; they cultivate vegetables and sell them to the market whereas men damage the society. As Kambili narrates while being outside the house "we let our eyes reside on the half-naked mad people near the garbage

dumps, on the men who casually stop and unzip their trousers to urinate at corners” (Adichie, 2003, p.31).

Adichie (2003) exposes the hypocrisy of so-called religious people numerous times in her novel *Purple Hibiscus*. They hide their destructive and egoistic selves behind the façade of religion. Even a pregnant woman is not safe from their torture. Kambili and her family always visit Father Benedict after the Mass. So, one day when they visit him, Beatrice was not well because of her pregnancy so she finds the courage to ask, “let me stay in the car...my body does not feel right.” But it is her husband’s fear that makes her change her statement to “It is not that bad so I can come with you.” She is so scared of him that she cannot even speak for herself. Despite her weakening condition, she agrees to visit father. However, when Father Benedict asks her about her health as she looks unwell, she uses nature as an escape from answering the question and says that it is due to the “clash of rainy season and harmattan” (pp. 22-23).

Adichie (2003) frequently uses colors to shape the reader’s visual experience. The color red especially is repeatedly used. It signifies the violence either used for the destruction of women or for the environment. When Eugene beats his wife, she bleeds on the floor. Kambili repeatedly asserts, “each time I try to read my textbook, the words start turning into blood” (pp. 25-26). It shows how badly the domestic violence prevalent in her house affects her mentally and psychologically, impairing her education and overall life. She is unable to focus on what is important.

Kambili is pressurized to secure first position in her school otherwise she might go through the same as her mother did. When she comes second, she is repeatedly tortured by her father. Rather than taking the responsibility for creating chaos, he blames her by saying that coming second was her choice. He even goes to her school and embarrasses her in front of everyone. Again, she tries to connect to the natural environment in order to find some relief. His father’s behavior in her school depicts her religious and racial hypocrisy and tyranny as Kambili tells how he was pleasingly gracious with religious people, especially the white religious religion.

On the other hand, it is Aunt Ifeoma, a woman, Eugene’s sister who takes care of her father and brings him medicines. It is ironic that his title is ‘Omelora’ which means the one who does for the society. Although he helps the poor his purpose is just to show off as he tells the poor child to show the money, he gave to his parents. Also, he does not fulfil his foremost responsibility towards his family.

The connection between the exploitation of women and nature is made evident when Kambili implies that Father Benedict’s eyes are like a green shade snake that she once saw near the hibiscuses. The gardener also told her how they were harmful for the

garden. It shows the undermining and devaluation of both nature and women by masculine abuse of power and how they are a hurdle in their way towards freedom. By comparing a white religious figure with a snake shows how they have been exploiting and poisoning their lives. When Kambili's father takes her to him, she tells her feelings about the arrival of day of judgement soon. Through this white figure, we are given the idea that wealthy authoritative people consider themselves Gods and want people to obey them. Eugene is also representing being godly and authoritative, therefore aunty Ifeoma also says that Eugene should stop doing God's job while speaking of their ill father who cannot survive for long, even then his son does not see him (Adichie, 2003, p. 68).

Aunt Ifeoma is a foil to mama Beatrice who is silently bearing the torture. The pleasant depiction of nature i.e., the orange trees that started to cast long and wavy shadows across the fountain and her lively laughter depicts her femininity. Her dress that smells of lavender symbolizes tranquility, optimism, inspiration and mainly femininity. It shows that she is the real fearless woman who knows her worth. Whereas mama is contrasted with her by Kambili. She tells how her mother's lips are always pale as compared to her aunt's, always covered in a shiny bronze lipstick. Ifeoma is a true example of an independent educated women, who can live and lead without a man. Her views are quite modern in contrast to Beatrice for whom marriage and husband is everything. Aunt Ifeoma tells her that sometimes life begins when marriage ends which is also a point of foreshadowing. It employs the idea that marriage is not an ultimate goal of a woman's life.

Adichie (2003) portrays the patriarchal society as Ifeoma talks about her students who prefer to marry saying that there is no use of a degree when they do not get job after graduation. It shows the unequal opportunities for women in all the major aspects. We get to know how husbands are the ultimate owners of women and their degrees. At the same time, we are told about the tyranny of military when she says that she has not had fuel for three months (p. 54). The connection between the military tyrants and miserable conditions of women is made as ecofeminism proposes.

When Jaja claims that there are people inside mmuo, Papa Nnukwu objects telling him not to speak like a woman. Actually, they are aware of the presence of people inside. Here, Adichie, quite skillfully depicts the idea that its actually the women who talk the most truth. Later on, Kambili also notices that the priest at the Mass only talks about zinc and cement. It shows that they do not talk any sense, hence, mocking the so-called religious people.

Playing with pathetic fallacy, Adichie (2003) portrays the connection between environment or character's feelings and the weather or nature. Jaja says while caressing the petals of flowers that they are so beautiful depicting his adoration towards them and

foreshadows his upcoming defiance. Later on, he asserts that the “purple hibiscuses are about to bloom” which points towards his rebellious decisions of being free and missing the communion, against his father’s will. Afterwards, ‘strange, furious rain’ shows the environmental chaos and Eugene’s depressive state of mind on the death of his friend Ade Cocker (pp. 145, 176).

Kambili’s attitude towards nature also changes throughout the novel. It echoes her inner mood of disorder as well as satisfaction. Her interaction with an earthworm depicts the uncertainty of her feelings as she decides to remove it without flushing it. In the same way, she decides to stay away from her feelings in lieu of confronting them. Later on, she notices a snail while she was getting her hair platted. She notices how it “crawls out and then thrown back in and then again he crawls out” (Adichie, 2003, p.167). She realizes that she has similarities with him. Just like him, she tries to come out of prison where there is only oppression. She tries to gain freedom but keeps getting pushed back inside.

Later on, she leaves the earthworm alone while bathing with the scent of the sky. Kambili owns the relief that nature gives and starts to honor it. She finds her voice in nature and aunt Ifeoma and father Amadi’s love as she sings with him. Hence, it is nature and love in which Kambili grows.

4.2. Impact of Reiterative Oppressive Acts

The suppressed feelings and consistent oppression have different mental and psychological impacts on Kambili, Jaja and Beatrice. Their social lives are very miserable because of living in an oppressive environment. Kambili and Jaja find nature as a source of freedom and relief. For instance, when the purple hibiscus starts to bloom, so does Jaja’s rebellion against his father Eugene.

Adichie (2003) here also foreshadows the ending of the novel. The way Kambili watches and observes every movement of Aunt Ifeoma shows her fascination to her. She is quite inspired by the fearlessness in her aura. She is a defiant woman as she tells Jaja that sometimes it is good to be defiant. She symbolizes defiance with marijuana saying, “if it is used right-it is not a bad thing” (p. 103). Kambili’s unfulfilled desires lead her to inferiority complex.

Similarly, Aunt Ifeoma’s daughter is a foil to Kambili, having a striking resemblance to her mother. Unlike Kambili, who cannot ask any questions or reject any orders of her father, Amaka asks so many questions and does not accept many answers. Kambili has not even grown according to her age because of consistent oppression. Just because of that, Amaka seems older than her age to her. This clash of upbringing between

Amaka and Kambili devour her peaceful state of mind. Thus, both these girls show a contrast to each other.

Amaka is a confident fellow. On tasting juice, Amaka suggests Eugene to reduce the amount of sugar in it so that it tastes even better. Her confidence shows that she is already a mature woman having opinions and then having courage to express them. She is truly a daughter of her mother. It is intriguing as well as unlikely for Kambili to see words flow out of Amaka's mouth so easily. It is because she has never talked back to Papa, shared her opinions or asked any questions

Kambili has never been even to the places like Nike Lake and Genesis in her hometown Enugu. In fact, it was the first time she was sleeping outside home when she went to her aunt's house. But the beauty of nature and greenery in front of the aunt Ifeoma's house depict that they are now in an environment where they will find peace and freedom unlike their own house. Still, Kambili is very nervous and anxious. Because her heart starts to congest the moment Kevin leaves after dropping them. She wants to be in an environment in which she has grown. She does not have the confidence to live outside that house because she has never been before. It reveals the oppressive impact of her extremist father and how her natural instincts and longings have been crushed and shattered. The contact with nature and surroundings is also very significant in the normal upbringing of females.

She walks as if she is frightened of something or someone while visiting the house with Amaka. Aunt Ifeoma's casual and normal behavior seemed so strange to her because she does not belong to a normal house. Even Amaka finds the way she speaks very uncanny as she says, "you talk in whispers" (Adichie, 2003, p.84). Kambili also feels like apologizing on any and everything instead of talking back. As she used to do at her father's house on minor things. It shows her lack of self-confidence which is no doubt a consequence of living in an oppressive environment.

Adichie (2003) uses Kambili's gestures and body language to reflect her mental state. She tells how she wanted to get rid of her chaotic thoughts saying that she gulped water as if it could wash her thoughts. She is concerned about Amaka, thinking her thoughts would not please her if she gets to know about them. Even at her house, she was a people pleaser who always craved appreciation from her father. She thinks too much about what others think.

Adichie (2003) represents both kinds of women the strong and the weak. She portrays what a woman can be if encouraged and brought up in a healthy environment. She also shows the women who suffer oppression and suppression all their lives. As a girl, Kambili lacks the decision-making ability because she is not allowed to take her decisions.

As she says, “when the time comes, papa will decide where I would go, what would I study” (p. 93). It shows the controlling nature of her abusive father.

Whereas Amaka is a powerful woman who takes her own decisions as she has decided that she would live in a hostel and launch her own activist movements. In this way Amaka also mirrors Adichie’s life who is a strong feminist and activist. Amaka has strong views, being brought up in a healthy environment unlike Kambili. She possesses the capability to work on authoritative positions as she asserts “the students would not riot if I were the V.C because they would have light and water” (Adichie, 2003, p. 94). While Kambili keeps on longing to enjoy that confidence as she always wonders how it feels like to do the things that Amaka does like bargaining with a trader.

Kambili thinks that she could never be as bold as Obiora, Amaka’s younger brother, who is just fourteen. When Amaka’s friends come over, she yearns to have the same cheerfulness and enjoyment as them. She wants to talk and laugh with them so much and wants to jump up and down just like them but she is unable to do so. She is afraid to stutter in front of them, not knowing how to talk and have a normal conversation. She also does not have the ability to live normally as Amaka also thinks of her and Jaja as abnormal. It is Aunt Ifeoma who encourages Kambili to talk back to her and stand up for herself. Aunt Ifeoma and nature becomes a source of inspiration for Kambili that let her answer back to Amaka.

Jaja, being a victim of oppression, also connects with nature. Kambili tells how his eyes gleam while he is in Aunt Ifeoma’s garden. He even smiles and feels happy when he gets to know that they are going to stay at Aunt Ifeoma’s house for a few more days, which is far from that chaotic environment. His rebellion is also a consequence of domestic violence and oppression.

The plight and miserable condition of Kambili is depicted in the fact that she has never even heard herself laughing like a normal person. Father Amadi also notices that she never laughs. In fact, she is surprised when she sees Aunt Ifeoma and her family praying for laughter, something she has never imagined praying for. The house she has lived in is never a home. It is more like a prison in which they cannot even breathe without permission. She seems to be in a concentration camp that will suffocate her to death. But such kind of suppression when reaches out of control explodes in the form of rebellion, which is quite evident in the novel.

For the first time Kambili feels free and at home is when she is with Father Amadi instead of her own house. She does not want him to leave as it is the first-time her heart has been filled with light. She reminisces how she smiled, ran and laughed. She never experienced all these joys in her house, a house which she finds lifeless, feelingless, and

cold. She could not even cry freely there as she suggests that Amaka did not have to learn the “art of silent crying” (Adichie, 2003, p. 131). Amaka is a foil to Kambili, a sort of motivation. Encouragement and motivation are important part of one’s growth. If one is continuously degraded or devalued, one does not grow fully and normally and it brings frustration. This is what happens to Kambili.

One of the main concerns of Adichie is to show how suffering from violence consistently results in violent and revengeful acts. Beatrice has an important role in answering that question. She is a victim of domestic violence. We have come across several times when she is beaten brutally. But she keeps on staying quiet on this injustice and inhumanity. But there are things that make her lose her patience and sanity as no one can stay normal in such household.

It is probably when Eugene beats Kambili so badly just because of keeping her grandfather’s painting and she knocks out. Mama asserts that it has never happened like this before. It shows that this incident is moving for her. Kambili then doesn’t go back to her home but to her aunt’s. Her relief of being at a safe place is depicted in her connection with nature as she talks about sunlight and feeling the freshness in air. She feels alive because she is in safe hands.

The last and the most important section i.e. “A Different Silence” of the Adichie’s novel (2003) depict the post-modernist nature of the novel (p. 203). As it is a continuation from where the novel started, thus leading to a climax and then followed by the end in a linear fashion. Adichie starts this section with howling winds and angry rain thus depicting the chaotic atmosphere. This part represents Beatrice’s ruthless way to gain salvation from her husband’s tyranny as well as Jaja’s defiance against Papa. He does not come out of his room even on his father’s order and also decides to go to Nsukka without fearing him. In this uncertain environment, Kambili sees nature as a relief as she sits by the window, looking at a cashew tree.

Finally, Eugene dies and his death is so shocking for Kambili because she has never thought of him being mortal. His domination, oppression and authority over them is nothing less than an immortal cruel god. He himself never thought of his ultimate destination i.e., death. His tyranny has blinded him towards reality. We came to know that Beatrice had started putting poison in his tea before coming to Nsukka. This is the reason of her desire to come back. Her revengeful act is a consequence of consistence violence as it is truly said that violence begets violence. She does not see any other rescue from the tyranny of her husband. It drove her so insane that she planned to murder him. A normal person cannot do such a thing but a person living in an oppressive environment cannot

remain normal for too long just like Beatrice. She does not show any guilt on what she has done rather her body language and voice has calmness as Kambili notices.

Jaja, who always thought that he could not protect his mother like his cousin Obiora decides to take blame on himself. He proves to be a true man who protects the women of his house unlike his father. He is a hero in eyes of his sister too. Although Beatrice tries to persuade everyone that it is her who killed Eugene yet people do not believe her because she is now an abnormal woman whose condition is a consequence of her husband's death.

Although the impact of violence Kambili suffered from, still impacts her as she has nightmares about her papa, yet she is hopeful and even the silence lets her breathe freely. The novel does not end on a bad note. In fact, she is hopeful to get her brother out. She hopes that "she will plant new orange trees and Jaja will plant purple hibiscuses too" (Adichie, 2003, p. 211). Adichie, being a powerful and hopeful feminist, ends the novel in hope for freedom for Kambili, her family and in general all the women

5. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the novel mainly focuses on the terrible effects of patriarchal society. This has been part and parcel of every society which is now being countered by feministic movements. The male domination results in the split personalities of women. Women however grow and prosper the best in the light of nature, appreciation and love instead of oppression, suppression and violence. An evident example of this is Kambili who grows the best at her aunt's peaceful home instead of her suffocating house. At her house, she remained oppressed by her father while at aunt Ifeoma's place, she feels freedom and blooms in the love of her aunt, her cousins and Father Amadi.

Religion plays an important role in violation of women rights and a fine example of this is Adichie's tyrant character and Kambili's father Eugene. Men misuse God and religion to defend their heinous treatment of women. Nature then becomes a source of relief and an escape from such a tyrannical environment for women like Kambili, the protagonist of the novel. However, when one keeps on bearing the violence for too long, it disrupts their minds. Some people become rebellious like Jaja while some lose their sanity and try to get rid of it by hook or by crook as Beatrice does by poisoning her husband.

With the help of this research, the readers will understand how environmental factors and natural resources directly influence social and psychological aspects of female life. As nature is also regarded as feminine, therefore, women have natural affinity and belonging towards mother nature. They grow and prosper in the light of peaceful nature. They are also the best care takers of nature. Whereas men disrupt not only environment

but also the peace of women, bringing utter chaos in their lives. Masculine power is misused against feminine beings in order to satisfy their lust for authority and domination. As a result, anarchy, oppression and suppressed life come into being which sometimes explodes and bring equal destruction.

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