

WOMEN IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*

Mr. R. Paul Prabhu Sam (Author)

Research Scholar (Reg. No: 20122024011004), Postgraduate and Research Department of English,
Aditanar College of Arts and Science, Tiruchendur, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti,
Tirunelveli-627012, Tamilnadu, India.

Dr. R. Rita Yasodha (Co-author)

Research Supervisor & Assistant Professor, Postgraduate and Research Department of English, Aditanar
College of Arts and Science, Tiruchendur, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti,
Tirunelveli-627012, Tamilnadu, India.

Abstract

This article will examine the relations of an African woman to explain female unity in the face of male power and slavery in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's writings. One of the Nigerian women novelists in African literature is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Themes of male domination, female subjugation, gender discrimination and governmental issues affecting African and Afro-American women are all portrayed in her fiction. Most of the characters of Adichie are then looked at in terms of gender subjugation. By highlighting some of the difficulties that these women face in her fiction, Adichie attempts to reframe the postcolonial interpretation of black women's identity. The goal of Adichie's fiction is to expand current African commentary on race, gender, and identity concerns. Adichie discusses her justifications for helping to promote feminism and gender equality in her recent books, *Dear Ijeawele, Or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* and *We Should All Be Feminists*. The main aspects of female characters in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* are discussed in this article.

Keywords: male domination, female subjugation, gender discrimination.

Adichie portrays a variety of women throughout her writings, which will help to offer a feminist critical interpretation. The study of Adichie's characters must be understood in the context of the traditional society that is now in place and the subjugation of women in African cultures, particularly Nigerian society. "Yet while Christianity and Igbo culture are both exposed within *Purple Hibiscus* as sources of serious suffering, especially for women" (Wallace 473). Mystery surrounds the beginnings of this issue, and there is a continuous discussion regarding whether it developed as a result of colonial rule's effect on Western culture or whether it was already present in African civilizations.

Male dominance, female oppression, family violence against women and the fight for self-identity are the main themes of *Purple Hibiscus*. Adichie writes about the struggles that contemporary women in Nigerian society face. Adichie considers many people who accept racial injustice with ease but not gender inequality. In her *A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*, she said "But I recently came to the realization that I am angrier about sexism than I am about racism" (Adichie 23). Most of the characters of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* show the angry side of Adichie.

The essence of the work is thus constructed by the protagonist's attempts to establish her unique voice and identity inside a larger traditional society. Adichie portrays a world in which men oppress women including in the home and society through using her characters and events. She offers ways for women to be liberated from all kinds of oppression. Her women characters are portrayed nicely and are shown as strong, powerful, and persistent women.

The story happened in Enugu in Nigeria when an army revolt in Nigeria is just getting started. Kambili resides along her brother Jaja. Both are teenagers who do well in school but are introverted and depressed. Their rigorous harsh disciplinary father Eugene's extreme loyalty to Catholicism overpowers his fatherly care. When his kids and wife Beatrice don't live up to his fatally high rules, he punishes them. The family of Auntie Ifeoma, who finally supports Kambili and Jaja in finding their identities and freedom, contrasts with that of Achike's family. Kambili and her family are at the

centre of the plot's events. It outlines the protagonist's fights to be heard and treated as a person in modern Nigerian culture. The victims are depicted as Kambili and her mother Beatrice. Kambili, a young girl, is highly smart and sensitive. She is, moreover, timid and fearful. Kambili and her mom have always been held captive by the oppressive male dominance that is Papa Eugene. Kambili never feels comfortable speaking her mind at home.

In addition to his religious convictions, Eugene builds his defence of family abuse on the idea that women are oppressed, which feeds misconceptions about them and normalizes aggressive behaviour. The exclusion of women from the larger picture because they are not considered human beings supports such thinking. Eugene's imposed religiosity silences, Mother Beatrice, along with her kids. She has dedicated her life to parenting since it is the one thing that makes her happy. Her bodily and emotional pain, however, is brought on by her husband. She must bear his abuse despite this because of her religion and financial stability.

Eugene's cruelty results in two miscarriages for her. In a sorrowful manner, Kambili and Jaja wipe the blood-stained floor. "We cleaned up the trickle of blood, which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red watercolor all the way downstairs. Jaja scrubbed while I wiped" (Adichie 33). Beatrice only musters the fortitude to flee for a brief moment after her husband beats her to the point of miscarriage; however, she quickly returns home, oblivious to the dangers, while her wounded children become mute spectators and victims of his excessive violence. Kambili, Jaja, and Mother begin to notice the independence represented by the purple hibiscus blossoming in the backyard toward the story's conclusion. With the help of their housekeeper Sisi, Beatrice plans to poison her husband to cease the violence in their home.

The travel to Nsukka by Kambili represents a significant turning point in her life. When she meets Auntie Ifeoma's family in Nsukka, the path of discovering her full potential and identity begins. Auntie is the woman who encourages her to find her authentic voice and assists her in developing into a liberated, courageous, and powerful lady. She inspires courage and persistence in Kambili. She tries to correct her incorrect assumptions regarding her granddad. Kambili learns that Papa Nnukwu is a strict adherent of Igbo culture and traditions rather than a pagan. She is aware that Auntie Ifeoma with her kids is a comfortable and joyful person who expresses their thoughts freely and honestly.

Everyone is free to speak whatever they want in Ifeoma's home as long as adults aren't insulted. The enthusiasm with which discourses are presented and maintained not only surprises Kambili but also affects her mental state. Kambili displays a sense of fearlessness and resolve after returning home. She is still no more powerless or helpless. "Kambili arguably learns to question her father's principles, but she is never able to completely remove the aureole she has put around Eugene's head" (Tunca 128). She makes an effort to protect herself from Papa Eugene's harsh and abusive behaviour. The bond between Kambili and her mom is also quite strong. After Papa Eugene's death, they embrace independence and have pleasure together. As a result, Kambili shows that she is a complete person, owns strength and power, and is an inspiration to modern Nigerian women.

The main characters learn what freedom means. Instead of being the poor victims of male dominance, they express their individuality and discover their true strength and powerful voice. Female bonding encourages women to fight for their liberation and enables them to express their issues with one another. Adichie inspires women to explore their paths toward happiness and self-identity. In order to accomplish their purpose for the welfare of all Black individuals, she also urged them to build bonds with other women.

The author emphasizes parenting as a huge element of family life all across the entire story, bringing to light the enduring impact of parental choices on child behaviour. Children who are raised in an abusive environment are more liable to exhibit this behaviour in their new relationships. Therefore, Adichie refers to the idea of sexual identity aggression can be prevented by teaching kids to challenge men who only show empathy for women if they consider them as connected rather than as separate, equal beings. This is precisely explained by Adichie herself in *A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* as "Share child care equally" (Adichie 13). The women in Adichie's novels provide a clear view of how society, particularly

Nigerian society, is interpreted. The fictional characters that Adichie creates help us to comprehend what women are like in real life.

Works Cited

Primary Source

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus*. London, 4th Estate Harper Collins, 2016.

Secondary Sources

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. , *Dear Ijeawele A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*. London, 4th Estate Harper Collins, 2018.

Tunca, Daria. "Ideology in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*". *English Text Construction*, vol.2, no.1, 2009, pp.121-131.

Wallace, Cynthia R. "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and the Paradoxes of Postcolonial Redemption". *Christianity and Literature*, vol.61, no.3, Spring 2012, pp.465-483. *SAGE journals*, <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/cal>.