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Volume: 4, Issue 2, 2017 (April-June.)

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW, EDUCATION,
SOCIAL AND SPORTS STUDIES
(IJLESS)**

<http://www.ijless.kypublications.com/>

ISSN:2455-0418 (Print), 2394-9724 (online)

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www.kypublications.com

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International Journal of Law, Education, Social and Sports Studies (IJLESS)

Volume: 4, Issue 2, 2017 (April-June.);Page 32-34

ISSN:2455-0418 (Print), 2394-9724 (online)

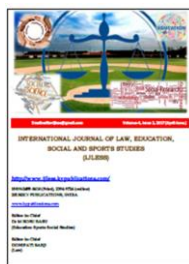
Research Article



Emergence of Post-colonial states, the internal conflicts and social structural collapses, as visible in Adichie's novel 'Half of A Yellow Sun'

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ABSTRACT

Literature is a reflection of life. Literary works of a country often serve to highlight the problems as well as trials and tribulations of people of a country. Africa had long been a colony of various European powers including the British. The misery of subjugated colonies is well portrayed in literary works of African countries. This article examines, Emergence of Post-colonial states, the internal conflicts and social structural collapses, as visible in Adichie's novel *Half of A Yellow Sun*. This vividly written novel vouches for credibility of atrocities perpetrated against the colonized people of Nigeria. The central characters in the novel are Olanna and Kainene, who are twin sisters with contrasting character traits. Olanna joins Nsukka university as its staff and marries Odenigbo, another professor of the university. While Kainene is engaged to Richard, a European doing research in Igbo-Ukwu art. The professor couple does their duty to society by educating Ugwu, their servant boy, who later writes a book on Nigerian history and culture. In this analysis focus has been kept on the moral decadence and infidelity caused during Biafran war.

1. Introduction

The Nigerian civil war forms the background of this novel. It is virtually a human saga which portrays the veiled and cloaked up version of the sufferings of the Biafran side due to the excess intervention in the war by the colonial powers. It is a heart-rending tale of lives, rendered apart by infidelities and unfavorable circumstances created through the war. It also effectively portrays extreme starvation and lack of basic amenities of the refugees and the hypocrisy of foreign media and Photographers.

As the title of this study suggests the consequences of colonial policies on people from different walks of life is analyzed by taking instances from the novel. In the first two chapters the attitude of colonizers to the colonized is analyzed particularly by making use of ideas from Edward Said's work *Orientalism*. Policies like 'divide and rule' which was aimed at creating a rift amongst the natives also is analyzed by elaborating instances from the novel. Adichie, like all African writers, concentrate on the impact of colonization on the culture and mindset of people of the colonies. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, several facets of the Nigeria-Biafra war, which had so far remained unveiled are brought to light. Adichie has given a faithful account of the crisis in her work *Half of a yellow sun*.

2. Divide and Rule: A Surgical Amputation Of A Nation

Europeans, especially the British, are known everywhere for their divide and rule policy. They employed it in many colonies to dissipate the power of the natives, by inflaming either communal or tribal differences. In India, they utilized it to divide people, by sowing seeds of strife based on minor religious differences. They divided India, and created Pakistan and Bangladesh. They employed it in Nigeria too, to sow the seeds of hatred among tribes of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. In one letter, Richard writes to refute some terse allegations provokingly made by the HERALD which called the civil war 'ancient tribal hatred', and which tried to propagate the false notion that Nigerians are naturally prone to violence. He writes "It is imperative to remember that the first time the Igbo people was massacred, albeit on a much smaller scale than what has recently occurred, was in 1945. That carnage was precipitated by the British colonial government, when it blamed the Igbo people for the national strike, banned Igbo published newspapers and generally encouraged anti-Igbo sentiment. The notion of the recent killings being the product of 'age-old' hatred is therefore misleading. If this is hatred, thenit has been caused, simply, by the informal divide and rule policies of the British colonial exercise. These policies manipulated the differences between the tribes and ensured that unity would not exist, thereby making the easy governance of such a large country practicable. (166)

There are some instances of mass programme which are elaborated in the novel, after which the Igbo decided to form a nation for themselves. In that process they had to face a lot of hardships, as the rest of the Nigerians declared war on them instigated by the British and blocked off food and medicine supplies. Hence the entire work is a meditation on the crisis that is related to the formation of the new state of Biafra as also the awakening and liberation of Nigerian people from the enchantment of an alien culture. There are clear indications in the novel, that shows beyond any doubt that the colonial policy of divide and rule ignited the hatred brewing in the minds of the people of various tribes, and sustained it till such time, it developed into a full-fledged civil war between the Nigeria and Biafra.

3. Subaltern, the Solution

Colonial administrators often used to substitute their own language as a medium of instruction, as a language of knowledge itself.

Due to the imposition of English, native children began to lose touch with their own languages and culture. English was used to introduce not only a language, but also a culture and a way of life. Emphasis placed on English education in schools in erstwhile colonies, is a legacy of this colonial policy. Infact these hidden agendas present behind the propagation of English education made the Kenyan novelist Ngugi Wa Thiong'O call for the abolition of English departments. Ngugi argued that a language transmits a culture and for the native language to survive, it needed its own forms of expressions. Ngugi argued that, we, the Third world nations, would remain colonized as long as we retain English. To decolonize the mind, we need to first shut out English. In this section, by analyzing subalterns like Ugwu and Harrison, a reading is attempted, to bring to light the extent to which the colonial policies of perpetrating exploitation, through dissemination of English education, as reiterated in Macaulay's Minutes, works, and whether such a subaltern subject, using a European language, can manage to serve also 'as an agent of resistance against, rather than of compliance with, the very discourse that has created its subordinate identity'. Adiche too, in her work 'Half of a Yellow Sun' implicitly shares the doubt that excessive English education can be counter productive in terms of native language, as a means of transmission of local culture "Culture evolve and things change. What is worrisome is not that we have all learned to think in English, but that our education devalues our culture, that we are not taught to write Igbo and that middle class parents don't much care that their children do not speak their native languages or have sense of their history.(6)" Odenigbo educates Ugwu and he ,who should be termed as the 'lumpen proletariat' manages to use his education as a tool of resistance against the pretences of the colonial powers. As

Odenigbo himself puts it, "To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean, making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too(12)." Education can serve both as a tool to propagate ideology stealing a person of his cultural identity, if he is not discerning enough, at the same time, subalterns like Ugwu, are enabled through education to question the exploiters using their own tools of use. If you are not proud of your country, language as well as culture, even when the colonizers leave, you will find it difficult to decolonize your mind. It is a case of irony that, it was an European who found Igbo-Ugwu art interesting, and not a native. It was he who studied and wanted to write a book about it.

4. Conclusion

The novel is also an interesting study of what undesirable circumstances does to relationships. The situation of chaos caused unnecessary friction among the twin sisters and infidelity with their spouses. They deteriorated morally .Hence through this analysis we seek to understand the internal conflict and social structural collapses that resulted due to the circumstances following the secession of Biafra from Nigeria.

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