

The Revelation of Subjugation of Women in the Select Novels of Buchi Emecheta: A Detailed Study

¹Dr. Shirisha Deshpande

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad.

deshpandeshirisha72@gmail.com

²Avula Vijayalakshmi

Assistant professor

Department of English

Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad

Vijayalakshmi_english@cbit.ac.in

³Dr. B. Chandana

Asst. Professor of English

Matrusri Engineering College, Saidabad, Hyderabad.

⁴Dr. Nandigama Madhu

Assistant professor

Department of English

Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad

nmadhu_english@cbit.ac.in

Abstract:

Oppression is a way of treating women in society cruelly or oppressively. It has been on women for hundreds of years in many different societies on many different types of land. The main reason people are victimized in African culture is how things are made. Buchi Emecheta's books show that women were oppressed, and this is an obvious fact revealed in her novels. She and other women of her time tried to show women's problems, like how hard it was for them to live in an African culture ruled by men and how hard it was to fight against solid areas for their empowerment. In this novel, Emecheta shows Africa as a society on the cutting edge, where women leave their homes to get an education and move to cities. In this novel, there is a change from traditional culture to modern culture.

The novel shows the transformation from the breaking of African traditions to the growth of new insights. Throughout the novel, there are references to establishing a balance and the struggle of a traditional African woman in a patriarchal society. This research methodology considers Emecheta's novels and examines them in person. This research aims to understand how Buchi Emecheta's books treat women. For example, she finds that disconnected and socially forced social traits cause the constant divergence between males and females in her books. In her works, these perception conflicts are shown through the themes given below: the dilemma of being a young girl, how culture opposes womanhood and treats her like things that can be traded or bought, polygamous relationships, and the oppression of a male-centered society. Buchi Emecheta says that education is essential for empowerment and overcoming gender differences.

Keywords: Double Yoke, Traditions, Culture, Patriarchy, Marginalization of Women, Contemporary African Society.

Introduction

One way to talk about gender is to talk about Sex, i.e., being men or women. It includes several physical, emotional, and behavioral problems and traits that show male and female. The word "*sexuality*" is also hard to understand. This occurs as language makes it hard to tell the difference between Sex, which means men or women, and "sexual act. As of how badly females are treated as sexes, sexuality has had to be significant among various oppressions for women's activists to look at. The words "*sex*" as well as "*gender*" are frequently in use reciprocally in everyday conversation and academic writing. Sex associates the natural parts of a person. Arliss (1990:45) says that the word "*sex*" means "*natural classification*." everyone can all be marked as either male or female when one comes into the world, based on the idea of the genitalia, which is a visible sign to denote the gender. The writer says, "*masculine and ladylike gender might be seen as terms that cannot be given out when a person comes into the world but can be figured out based on how a person acts*." So, gender should be identified at the same time that identity was given. A gender classification was found as an amalgamation of social and behavioral rules usually contemplation of an appropriate male or female in a social or romantic bond. It was seen in social activities and qualities that a person shows and jobs that he or she takes up. So, it can be asserted that, in general, the female gender is open, deep, dependable, sensitive, calm, careful, reasonable, yielding, and soothing. At the same time, the male is forceful, wise, free, solid, harsh, boisterous, gruff, cold-hearted, cutthroat, and work-oriented.

Dobie has noticed that the problem of uneven attitudes has been around since the past. In the West side, for example, it is common knowledge that women were not as good as men. It led scholars from *Aristotle* to *Charles Darwin* to say that women are not as good as men, and it is easy to find quotes from writers, scholars, and other well-known people who insult and degrade women. John Chrysostom, a Greek Christian leader, said that women were a threat to the family, a necessary discipline, and a fundamental evil. Women are constantly mistreated no matter where they are in the social order. They are considered to do household chores care for kids as well as do what their spouse or wives say. Women are not seen and, as a result, are not given political, legal, social, open, and, surprisingly, marital rights. Because of how they look, these open doors are closed to them. If they tie an know together they gift their property to their partners.

Wollstonecraft says, "Ann said that because she saw how unequal the power was between her parents when she was a child, saw how women were insulted," She thinks that women are just born to do men's jobs. So, this is what Wollstonecraft says: to get what they want, women have to use manipulative methods. She says that women should be educated so that they are ready to be men's partners. She also wants people to consider her gender to take responsibility of their lives by realizing potentials of them are the same as men's, defining their personalities, and cutting out their societal roles.

Theoretical framework

The idea of women's rights was known to go against the structure of a society run by men. Women's rights are primarily a social and political movement that started in the 1960s and aimed to improve life for many women. At its most basic, women's liberation is a movement that fights for women to have the same freedoms as men. It is also a suggestion for how women should change their society. Long-term, the term "women's rights" has come to mean some horrible things, like inners-wearing men who do not believe in anything that could be called "feminine." Instead, they revolt so that ladies can do whatever they want. Women's issues are based on the idea that all ladies must be given the same freedom to execute what they wish to do as male.

Showalter admits in Ann that there is not just one way to talk about women's rights or criticism on women today. Akachi Adimora, Ezeigbo (1996) says there are 2 kinds of women's liberation: "the extremist and the liberal." It is stated that ideas like communists, and "womanists" about women's rights activists.

African women activists are not mean and do not act like soldiers. Women's rights activists like Vegetation Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Zaynab Antacid, Mariama Ba, and others criticize how women are portrayed in many texts written by men. These scholars and other experts say that even the most creative works written by men do not show women's natural place in the public eye. African women activists believe that no one can capture as well as loyally mirror the difficulties regarding the state of women is considered good when compared to other women. In the African continent, especially, the story of the "Second Citizen" mirrors the condition of women in Nigeria. Various statuses of women's subjection in the continent Africa compared to the West. Women in Africa's liberation is based on their socio-presence or relationships, while Western women's rights focus on sexuality, lesbianism, and homosexuality. African women have no idea what is going on in these situations.

African women's rights activists think the label "feminist" is too strong to carry. Fear of cultural segregation is the reason. Surprisingly, these pioneering female writers like Nwapa, Zaynab Soluble Base, Buchi Emecheta, and others do not support women's rights, even though their works and concerns as women scholars show that they are women's rights activists.

Research Methodology

This review uses a literary text from Buchi Emecheta's *The Second Class Citizens* (1975), *The Slave Girl* (1977), *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), and *The Double Yoke* (1981) The Educationist read her works and used women's activist hypotheses to identify their philosophies. Buchi Emecheta's works show African women's struggle, pain, and strength in a changing society. are her works under review for 1981. Her works show female protagonists that question traditional pack animal roles and achieve financial and cultural freedom, reconciling Western and traditional values. According to Ogunyemi (1988:62), this prominent author's writings disclose and take her as an extreme women activist yet feminist in her statements. Buchi Emecheta's depictions of female characters, from the slave girl and woman's ideology to her career and as a lonely woman, trace her women's independence.

The Significant themes from the select novels of Emecheta

The theme of the challenges related to owning a Girl Child:

The aforementioned excellent author claims that as a woman born in Africa, she sees things through the perspective of an African woman. She told about the tiny things that happened in the lives of the African women she knew. She had no notion about that; thus, she would not have been renowned as a women's rights activist. If she was already a feminist, she is an African feminist with a small "f" (Buchi Emecheta, 1986, p. 178).

It might be the most famous thing Nigerian writer Buchi Emecheta said about women's rights. It shows how uncomfortable she is with the designation "women's activist," which is true of many African women writers who do not want to be labeled. Emecheta's use of the word "African" shows that she wants to be set apart from women's liberation movements that are not African. Juliana Nfah-Abbenyi, a political commentator, compares this to how the idea of women's rights came from the West: "Buchi Emecheta questions the very setting from which the word "feminist" comes, which is European, Western, educated, made up, and princely." (F. Stratton, 1997, p.9). African women journalists like Mariama Ba, Tsitsi Dangarembga, and Ama Ata Aidoo agree with Emecheta that "women's rights are a kind of government with a woman's face.

'*The Joys of Motherhood*' focuses on the girl child's issue. Highlighting a boy, kids get more attention than female ones. Obi Umunna wanted Ona to stay with a particular woman so she might bear a son for him, so he forbade her from marrying. Ona consented to Nwokocha Agbadi and asserted that if she had a child, he would have a place with his dad, but if it were a girl child, she would be hers. (1979:25) Buchi

Emecheta debunks the idea that projects women as menial as well as unintelligible in one of her novels *The Joys of Motherhood*.

"*The Joys of Motherhood*" assumes a woman is stupid. *Nwokocha Agbadi* had chastised his *Ona* for being too eager. He told her she was in early parenting and refused to be a woman since she thought like a man. Ineptly think like a lady. Men enjoy using and discarding women in the story.

Adaku expresses this fantasy. *Nwakusor* and *Ubani* support *Nnu's* self-image against *Adaku* because she does not have a son. After the new wife had a son, *Amataokwu's* older spouse, *Nnu Inner Self*, was replaced. Young women are also expected to accept their inferiority and potentially discard it. *Taiwo*, the other twin, is irritated. *Taiwo* should lead by not groaning. ‘

Nnu Ego realizes the intensity of the education of women as well their laments that the author needs more money to keep the girls in school. She also believes educated women have a future because she witnessed many young women in school. After this realization that women education is necessary to empower themselves that it is the weapon to get success and that girls can overcome their gender issues.

In The Second Class Citizens, it is depicted the dilemma of being a girl child. A young woman perceives herself as worthless in society. On the first page, *Ada* is a young woman who arrives while everyone expects a child. As she failed her parents, siblings, and clan, no one wanted to document her entry into the world. She was unimportant (1974:7).

Teaching *Ada* seemed risky because she was young. Her parents could not enroll her in school since she would grow up and marry. The girl is made to feel lower. Since she was young, a girl is not given choice instead she is instructed that she is a girl .

After *Ada's* dad passed away, *Kid*, her younger brother, went to a posh school while *Ada* went to a poor one. Emecheta focused on this gender inequality, and the awareness legitimized hard work to submerge the women for the benefit of the men. *Ada* believed that early interactions of her mother made her nervous and self-conscious. She is intelligent and insubordinate despite her youth.

She goes from a lousy youngster to a self-confident adult through slow, painful, stubborn growth. *Ada* is "crafty as a snake but harmless as a bird" during this challenging time (1974:30). *Ada* prepared. She went ahead of schedule to follow her mind. She seems like a lady who thinks before acting. Few women can. (1974:31).

Ada uses this strategy when her rejection is done to travel and explore for opportunities to educate herself. Emecheta claims that *Ada's* inventor succeeds despite an abusive arrangement of deeply rooted rules, practices, and convictions in female servitude. In this self-declaration quest, a distressed woman need not cry but should create a method for endurance and identity.

The decision had to be hinted at to the spouse's siblings and in-law guardians, regardless of whether it concerned their own lives. *Ada's* situation is that, despite being educated and serving as the family's financial backbone, she must squander her salary. Nonetheless, the talk took place despite her absence, which was crazy. *Ada* considers this weird, made all the more so if the chat topic was money in her imaginative mind. Considering everything, she would have to pay for the arrangement overall, but the decision would have been made without her knowledge.

In contrast to previous protagonists, *Ogbanje Ojebeta* is the only enduring female youngster in a group of two kids in *Slave Young Lady*. With its rich spoiling, this honorable circumstance will soon give way to the utmost degree of domestic subjugation. She is given into bondage to *Mama Palagada* due to her guardians' sudden deaths by her sibling *Okolie*, who lacks money and resources.

Women are on trade and sold as the property of Men.

In The Slave Girl, she compares women to goods and property. Hence, a girl's worth is reduced to money. *Ogbanje's* sister, *Okolie*, sold her sibling to *Mama Palagada* for eight pounds since she is broke. *Mama Palagada* provides the cash he needs to prepare for the *Uloko* group's coming old-enough dance. *Ogbanje*

Ojebeta is married to her man, the lady of the hour. She takes care of her proprietor, revealing the same foundation of subordination and marriage as she is transported from one expert to the next.

Money abuse does not lead to servitude. A young woman's value is reduced by her earning capacity and pay. In Peon, Ada's 500-pound woman's cost is never paid, so she charges her loved ones. Marriage hinges on pride. So, Okpo's family requested no below 30 pounds. Profit doesn't lead to subjugation. A young woman's value is reduced by her earning capacity and pay. In Peon, Ada's 500-pound lady cost is never paid, either. Marriage hinges on pride. It is done in Okpo's family

In *'Second Class Citizen'*, Ada, who dreams of traveling abroad, tries to save enough money for herself, her husband, and their children. She must stay in Nigeria to pay for Francis, herself, her children, her parents-in-law, and her sister-by-marriage.

Admirably, In *Joys of Motherhood*, the protagonists are introduced as commodities in the market that are ready to be purchased and obtained afterward. Nnaife had been to the house to marry Adankwo. He inherited Adankwo. Women are treated like cattle and goats, which has a significant psychological impact. Emecheta exposed her history and her life as a ware for judgment.

The tradition of Polygamy

The Joys of Motherhood reveals how the author reflects on the multiple marriages affect the women in Africa. Her most noteworthy marriage disowned her for not having children. Before Nnu's inner self was born, Agbadi's spouses wanted Ona, his courtesan who is the reason of her birth. The death of Agunwa was attributed to her inability to endure Agbadi and Ona's entertaining that night he directed her. Agunwa dies of heartbreak after seeing her husband with another woman. Another way Emecheta uses custom to subjugate women

Spiteful conspiracies against womanhood

In *"The Joys of Motherhood"*, the author represents the deception of maturity in women. Even with their marriages, women must care for their children. Her partner's meager housekeeping income pays for meals. Nnu's marriage to Nnaife challenges her self-image. During her partner's absence, Nnu sells cigarettes and kindling. Despite her efforts, she was forgotten by her sons. Society chides her for the misconduct of her children which destabilizes her. She dies like a street person.

Nnuego in *'The Joy of Motherhood'*, is neither protection nor assurance in opposition to misery as she highlights it, "If she does not have kids, the yearning for them will kill her, and if she does, the stressing over them will kill her.." Nnuego regrets: "God, when will he make a lady who will be satisfied in herself, a full person, not anyone is appetizing?" Nnuego calls Adaku a whore for ending their marriage and ensuring herself. When she became a single woman, Buchi discovered Adaku's inner peace and viability. Emecheta's empathic Adaku resists convention and seeks inner peace. Adaku moved out with her daughters. Emecheta portrays Adaku as a driven woman who will survive. The protagonist conveys that Adaku becomes too wealthy and pondered directing her girls to nongovernment schools for illustrations to master the alphabet and that her market was completely packed up with items. Emecheta shows a woman who has risen from a male-dominated culture, where women are maltreated at work, and their uniqueness is stifled.

The Patriarchal Domination

In *"The Second Citizen,"* male-dominated society is another central theme. This topic concerns male domination (man-centered society) in traditional African culture. This marriage structure corrupts women. She has seen but unheard and a man's limb. Francis in Peon is selfish, violent, skinny, disapproved of, and corrupt. He intentionally degrades Ada. Positively, Francis' direction throughout the narrative is rooted in patriarchy. Francis remains chilly to his wife, even after she nearly dies during labor. He neglected his spouse.

Francis keeps Ada pregnant. Francis becomes a spouse mixer after having four children quickly. He does that often and tells residents and the property management that his wife has a conception prevention

device so she can date other guys. Dad, Honourable Francis, stops hitting Ada. Dad Honourable, the landowner who settled the matter, informed Francis that his girlfriend Ada was proper and should have told him. Francis legitimizes in such a way that "she could take other men despite his good faith, since how might he knew that she would not do that Francis considers a lady to be a subsequent human, to be laid down with at any time, at least during the day, and if Ada declines, he will beat sense into her until surrenders; to be requested up after he is finished with her; to ensure she washes his clothes and prepares his dinners, brilliantly." Francis thinks he should talk to his girlfriend since she might start thinking. Ada realizes she is Francis' tissue thistle. Ada mourns Francis' marriage after the battle. Francis invited the Aristocrats and others. She realized she could not live with him. A month after leaving the clinic, everyone discovered she was being beaten. Francis mistreats Ada inwardly, mentally, honestly, and always. Ada holds them. Francis' mistreatment culminates when he devours Ada's and Lady Cost's original copies. Francis claims she keeps forgetting she is a woman and a black woman. The white man cannot stand brainless women like her who cannot think of anything except how to breastfeed their children.

The denial of Francis reading Ada's original copy disheartened her. Ada's garbage. Ada knew Francis would never tolerate a sensible lady. Francis eats her Lady Cost originals. Ada regrets, "Bill who is her associate, known for that story My Cerebrum Youngster... that you would end my youngster's life? She did that (1974:187). Francis does not care, but that breaks Ada. After her abusive husband devours the finished copies of her most famous work, *The Lady of the Hour*, Ada leaves him. Changing Ada's awareness and certainty "In African writing... in women's freedom with little f (2007:553), she has no compassion towards her young women, nor does she have compassion against a lady remaining in a wedding to a savage lady, merely is appreciated. The author believes "if one instructs a woman, one teaches a local region, whereas if one instructs a male, one instructs one man". After Francis' legal denial that they were wedded from the time he was drunk the wedding endorsement and the children who are belonged to them are introduced to the world testament, and Ada removes her five children.

Emecheta examined women's freedom again in "The Double Yoke". Nko is a girl student whose connectivity and aim to fulfill her education are hindered by gender issues of the Nigerian government. Nko's boyfriend hates her for permitting early Sex, and a deceitful teacher impregnates her. Nko recognizes her corrupting alternatives between prostitution as a traditional wife or emancipated scholar, hence the term. 'women. Women have had to protect their freedom in phallogocentric societies like Nigeria. In *Alice Rossi's* "The Last Words", a student who completed her degree displayed indestructible responsibility as well as freedom, characterized as "an unfeminine bitch," and others calm and indecisive are called "ailing in longing," women who will never amount to much (1970:62-3).

Writings of this prominent writer, especially *The Joy of Motherhood* (1979) and *The Slave Girl* (1981), show women as "never sum to anything" (1977). Nnuego in "The Joys of Motherhood" and Ogbanje Ojebeta in "The Slave Girl" are imbeciles since they do not want to work on their parcels. They admit to living in dismal marriages, receiving less love, companionship, and financial support from their husbands, and wanting less for them to undergo training to change their predetermined behaviors. Those women are traditional, yet; their image should be replaced with that of present-day's women who are strong, sensible, confident, and independent enough to take significant steps toward their survival in a world full of sharks ready to attack weak porpoises. However, the characters in this conscious author's novels always focus on this accomplished fact.

Conclusion

This research defines re-examining and characterizing African gender roles to identify common themes in this brilliant author's writings. This study has examined how African women are minimized in a chauvinist society that relegates women to gender tasks. Buchi Emecheta represents women while advocating for herself. *The Slave Girl*, *The Joys of Motherhood*, and *The Double Yoke* show her readers

how to keep women oppressed. Emecheta also criticizes comparing womanhood to parenthood. Her voice might be serene and dignified, or it might be authoritative, like her topic. In her works, socially driven social traits generate a constant gap between people. Her imbalance in work has weakened women.

Buchi Emecheta promotes women's greatness and transparency. She also preserves women's capabilities in unmatched ways. As a women's activist, she tells the difficulties of women from her perspective to contradict her gender, which seems underestimating. The gender bias, her characters' patience in every situation, and substantial irregularity shown towards protagonists in her novels stir her reader. This study also indicates that female ignorance affects young girls' pleasure and makes them feel inferior. It leads them to recognize their abilities. Since Buchi Emecheta has introduced training as the most effective tool for testing the instructional debilitation of women, one aspect of gender imbalance. African women who are constantly abused. Mental, physical, and emotional abuse and its effects on success were also examined.

References

- Adimora-Ezigho, A. (1996). *Gender issues in Nigeria. A Feminine Perspective*, Lagos: Vista Books.
- Alice, R. (1970).
- Baker, C., & Lund, P. P. (2017). *The Role of African Fiction in Education*.
- Catherine Frank, "The Death of the Slave Girl, African, Womanhood in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta," *Journal of World Literature Written in English*, 1982, vol21.issue3: pp. 476- 97 & p.492. Web.
- Collins, William. Sons and Co. Ltd., Glasgow. 1977.
- Deshpande, Shirisha. *Culturally Displaced Identity of the Protagonist in the Novel 'Wife'*, [Vol-3, Issue-5, September - October 2018](#) pp 819-822.
- Dobie, A. B. *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to literary criticism* (2nd ed). 2009 print. USA: Wadsworth
- Emecheta, B. (1974) *Second Class Citizen*, Great Britain. 1974.
- Double Yoke, London: Ogwugwu Afo, Eko. E. *Changes in the Image of the African Woman: A Celebration*, Phylon: 1986. Vol. 47. No. 3.
- Dugaje, Manohar. "Mothers Mummified: A Study of the Novels of Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee". *Journal of The Gujarat Research Society*, Volume 21 Issue 13, 2019. pp. 115-120.
<http://www.gujaratresearchsociety.in/index.php/JGRS/article/view/1218>
- Emecheta, B. (1984). *Double Yoke*. London, Fontana African Fiction. 1984
- Emecheta, Buchi *Feminism with a small 'f'!* in Kristen Holst Peterson (ed) *Criticism and Ideology: Second African Writers' Conference*. Stockholm 1986, Uppsala. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1988. pp.173-181.
- Gender and Communication*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Marie, Linton Umeh, ed. *Emerging perspectives of Buchi Emecheta*. Trenton N.J: Africa World Press. 1996. Print.94
- Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Avon. 1970. Print.93.
- Nnolim, C. E. (2010). *Issues in African Literature in his A House Divided: Feminism in African Literature*, Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd. Nwapa, F. (1998).
- Olaniyan T. & Quayson A. (2007). *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Ogunyemi, Chikweyne Okonjo. *African Wo/Man Palava: The Nigerian Novel by Women*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996 97
- Perspectives on Nigerian Literature: 1700 to the present*. Lagos: Guardian Books Nigeria Limited.
- Sex Equality: The Beginning of Ideology* Voices of the New Feminism (ed) Lo, Thompson: Beacon Press.
- Arliss, L. P. (1991).

Thing'o, Ngugi wa, Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. London: Heinemann.1986. pp. 16 89.

Women and Creative Writing in Africa in Nnaemeka (ed), Sisterhood. Ogaunyemi, C. O. Women and Nigerian Literature; Ogunbiyi, Y. (1988).

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/letisism>

<https://johannesburgerviewofbooks.com>

<https://archive.org/details/20culture>

<https://archieve.org/20Cuturally>

<https://www.ambridge.org/core/jounals>