

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Chinua Achebe as a Postcolonial Black Writer

Chinua Achebe (b. 1930), a Nigerian novelist, short story writer, essayist, poet, critic, editor and author of children's literature, is famous for his profound novels describing the effects of western customs and values on traditional African society. Achebe's satire and his keen ear for spoken language have made him one of the most highly esteemed African writers in English. He is widely known as the father of African literature. Praising Achebe's talent Nadine Gordimer opines, "Chinua Achebe is gloriously gifted with the magic of an ebullient, generous, great talent" (qtd. in Achebe, *A Man*, cover page). Similarly Michael Ondaatje, the most acclaimed international author with Sri Lankan roots, adds some precious words in respect of Chinua Achebe that Achebe is "One of the few writers of our time who has touched us with a code of values that will never be ironic" (qtd. in Achebe, *A Man*, cover page). Achebe is regarded as the finest Nigerian novelist of the 20th century and his literary criticism and sociological essays also have won praise. Achebe's writing has relevance beyond the anthropological, sociological and political concerns of postcolonial Africa.

Achebe is one of the most significant writers to emerge from contemporary Africa with a literary vision that has profoundly influenced the form and content of modern African literature. Achebe always raises a strong voice for African literature and against colonialism, was born in Ogidi, Eastern Nigeria as a son to a Christian evangelist and teacher. He attended Church Mission Society School where he learnt the Bible. He continued his study at Government College in Umuahia from 1944 to 1947. In 1948, he joined at the newly established University College in Ibadan, run by the University of

London and took his Bachelor's degree in 1953. He went to London and studied broadcasting at the British Broadcasting Corporation. Later on, he was appointed as a talk's Producer in Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, Lagos, Nigeria's Capital from 1958 to 1961 and as a director from 1961 to 1966. He left the job after the massacre of Igbos in Northern Nigeria in 1966 and moved to the eastern Nigeria. Over the course of his life he has written nearly 300 books and he has become a powerful personality even in the Nigerian politics.

Achebe is one of the postcolonial Nigerian novelists who deals with anthropological, sociological and political concerns of postcolonial Africa. Postcolonial writers' writings react to the discourse of colonization. They deal with the issues of de-colonization or the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated to colonial rule. They also criticize the texts that carry racist or colonial undertones and it is what can be noticed in the work of Chinua Achebe. So he is a great postcolonial writer. Besides this, his works also deal with the universal qualities of human nature. As Achebe himself says:

I am a political writer. My politics is concerned with Universal human communication across racial and cultural boundaries as a means of fostering respect for all people. Such respect can issue only from understanding. So my primary concern is with clearing the channels of communication in my own neighbourhood by backing away at the thickets that choke them. Africa meeting with Europe must be accounted a terrible disaster in this matter of human understanding and respects. The nature of meeting precluded any warmth of friendship. First Europe was an

enslaver: then a colonizer. In either role or appreciate Africa; indeed she easily convinced herself that there was nothing there to justify the effort. Today our world is still bedeviled by the consequences of that cataclysmic encounter. (qtd. in Henderson 7)

There are several postcolonial writers and critics who oppose Euro centrism, racialism, imperialism and colonization like Homi K. Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Leela Gandhi, Gayatri Spivak, Helen Tiffin, Robert Young, Griffiths, Hamid Dabashi, Bill Ashcroft, V.S Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Bharati Mukherjee, Nadine Gordimer, Michael Ondaatje, Anita Desai etc. Among them Achebe is an African postcolonial writer whose writings especially focus on race relations and the effect of racism and usually indict white or colonial societies.

Achebe is the first generation of African novelists and his wrings are really praiseworthy. As David Carroll states in his book *Chinua Achebe*:

Of all the contemporary African novelists writing in English, Chinua Achebe is undoubtedly the most deserving of praise and scholarly study. Achebe's four published novel clearly established him in the avant-garde of the first generation of African novelists and his influence on subsequent Anglo-phone African writing can easily be documented. (156)

Chinua Achebe is a prolific black writer and he is considered one of the most original literary artists writing in English. Achebe has always taken as a primary concern with understanding and accurately depicting the African people. He represents a particular reality of modern Africa which is rich in variety of ethnic and cultural identities, but it is complicated by the impact of European colonialism. His works are

intended to challenge stereotypes of African. African societies were treated as primitive and savages by colonizers which are changed with their alternatives sets of tradition, ideals, values, and behaviors. Achebe is even dismayed, however, to Africans themselves internalizing these stereotypes and turns away from their cultures to interpret the African past from an African's point of view. He wrote short stories and novels illuminating the experiences of traditional Africans perused by the stressed of modern society.

Achebe, one of African writers in the west, whose works explore the impact of European intrusion on African society, deliberately writes in English language. He argues that for most African societies, which have been enough through colonialism, English is a national language. It helps the diverse ethnic communities to speak to one another. Achebe opines that national literature of Nigeria will be written in English. In his essay "The African Writers and the English Language," he argues:

English language gave them a language with which to talk to one another. If it failed to give them a song, at least gave them a tongue, for singing. There are not many counties in Africa today where you could abolish the language of the erstwhile colonial powers and still retain the facility for mutual communication. Therefore those African writers who have chosen to write in English or French are not unpatriotic smart alecks with an eye on the main chance-outside their own countries. They are by products of the process that made the new nation states of Africa. (26)

A powerful instrument of control used by the colonizing powers is the instrument of language. Language forms a huge part of the culture of a people—it is through their language that they express their folk tales, myths, proverbs, history. For this reason, the

imperial powers invariably attempted to stamp out native languages and replace them with their own. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out, “There are two possible responses to this control–rejection or subversion” (284). While Chinua Achebe has chosen the idea of subversion rather than rejection. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin say, “Achebe’s writing displays a process by which the language is made to bear the weight and texture of a different experience. In doing so it becomes another language” (284). Achebe uses the language of the colonizer to convey the Igbo experience of that colonization. The idioms, proverbs and imagery of these books all invoke his Eastern Nigerian culture, forcing the reader to accept on Achebe’s (linguistic) terms, the story he has to tell. Indeed, his purpose is to drive out the colonial myth of the primitive Africa and to establish a true picture of the people and their culture. Primarily he wants to make western readers know that Africa has its own myth prior to colonial myth and to remove the feeling of inferiority from African’s mind created by colonizers. Moreover, he challenges European exposing African’s history, religion and civilization through his powerful writings.

In his first successful novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), he successfully corrects the imperialist myth of African primitivism and savagery by recreating the Igbo culture of the Eastern Region of Nigeria; its daily routines, its rituals, its customs, and especially its people dealing with one another in a highly civilized fashion within a complex society. The interpretation necessitated, as well as a look at the invading culture; Achebe tilted the balance in the African’s favour by depicting individuals in the British administration as prejudiced, imperceptive, unnecessarily bureaucratic, and emotionally impotent. Achebe has emerged from these spiritual contests with a deeper and more comprehensive sense of

what it means to inhabit the alternate worlds of post colonialism, worlds that are at once aristocratic and democratic, heroic and ironic, ancient and contemporary. Similarly, his second novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960) follows Obi Okonkwo, the grandson of the protagonist of Achebe's first novel, throughout his failure to successfully combine his traditional Igbo upbringing with his British education and affluent lifestyle in Lagos during the late 1950s. Describing Igbo village life during the 1920s, *Arrow of God* (1964) centers on Ezeulu, a spiritual leader, whose son Oduche attends a missionary school to learn about Western society and technology. When Oduche comes home, he nearly kills a sacred python, which precipitates a chain of events culminating in Ezeulu's loss of his position as high priest and his detention by British authorities. Highlighting the widespread graft and abuse of power by Nigerian leaders following its independence from Great Britain, *A Man of the People* (1966) focuses on the tribulations of a Nigerian teacher who joins a political group working to remove a corrupt bureaucrat from office. As Mercedes Mackay writes:

The Man of the People is the jolly, cosy image created by Mr. Nanga, later, inevitably, the hon. Dr. Nanga. The story is told in the first person by Odili a school teacher . . . also leads a new party in opposition, despite offers of bribes and threats of destruction. This lands him in hospital, but the days is saved by a military coup which sends the Minister of Culture up the lagoon dressed as a fisherman in an effort to escape. (81)

He has also had several volumes of poetry published: *Beware, Soul-Brother* (1971), which later was republished as *Christmas in Biafra* (1973) reflects on the human tragedy of the Nigerian civil war, using plain language and stark imagery. Similarly,

some of the stories in *Girls at War* (1973) are about aspects of imminent war. Most of the stories deal with the conflict between traditional religious values and modern, secular mores, displaying the full range of Achebe's talents for humor, irony, and political satire. Divided into two parts, *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1964) addresses a number of literary and political themes, with special emphasis on traditional and contemporary roles of art and the writer in African society. Set in the fictional West African country of Kangan, *Anthills of the Savannah* (1988) is about three childhood friends who hold influential governmental posts. When one of them fails in his bid for election as president for life, he works to suppress his opposition. After successfully conspiring to murder one friend, he meets a violent death during a military coup, while the third friend dies in a street riot. Generally considered Achebe's most accomplished work, *Anthills of the Savannah* illustrates the often dire consequences for society when individual responsibility and power are recklessly exploited. While retaining the use of Igbo proverbs and legends to enhance his themes, Achebe also pays more attention to the development and role of the women characters in this novel. In the book, Achebe gives women strength and composure as the agents of traditional morals and precepts. Finally, *Hopes and Impediments* (1988) gathers new and previously published essays and speeches, including a controversial essay attacking British novelist Joseph Conrad as racist. The book also includes a tribute to American novelist James Baldwin, along with several commentaries on postcolonial African society that high-light cultural forces influencing its modern-day character. Margaret Laurence writes in "Narrative Technique in *Things Fall Apart*":

The flourishing of Achebe's literature which has drawn sustenance from both traditional oral literature and from the present and rapidly changing society. Thirty years ago Chinua Achebe was one of the founders of this new literature, and over the years many critics have come to consider him the finest of Nigerian novelists. (98)

On an auspicious occasion of the sixtieth birthday of Chinua Achebe, a well-known writer Rose Ure Mezu pays respect to him by adding some precious words:

The greatest accolade given him was summed up in one metaphor: the eagle on the iroko. Now, anybody familiar with the African landscape knows that the iroko is the tallest, strongest tree in the forest and that the eagle is, of course, the king of the birds. It is not an easy feat to scale the tree; that is why the Igbo proverb insists: 'One does not climb the iroko twice'. Having succeeded in climbing the iroko, the climber should appropriate all that he finds there: he may not be able to do so again. The eagle, however, can both scale and soar above the tree over and over. (26)

In this metaphor the iroko then represents the field of African literature; the eagle, Chinua Achebe. Achebe has, of course, literarily climbed and soared above the iroko several times. More than those of any other African writer, his writings have helped to develop what is known as African literature today.

Achebe focuses especially African writers and African literature. He wants all African writers should prefer writing their own experience in their own style so as to make known African literature widely popular sharing the history, culture, civilizations and religion of Africa And for the same it is essential to have a strong commitment

among African writers. Achebe says, “Most African writers write out of an African experience and of commitment to an African destiny.” (qtd. in Gikandi 8)

It is obvious that a writer should write for reformation of the society and the nation. A good writer sacrifices his whole life for the national goal and social welfare. A writer should also be involved with contemporary issues to explore in depth the human condition. Achebe argues:

Here, then, is an adequate revolution for me to espouse – to help my society regain its belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of the denigration and self-abasement. And it is essentially a question of education, in the best sense of the world. Here, I think my aims and deepest aspirations of my society meet. For no thinking African can escape to be expecting to be excused from the task of reeducation and regeneration must be done. (qtd. in Ogungbesan 70)

Achebe basically remains constant in his role as a social one. He sees his task as essentially that of restoring dignity to his own people. He helps his society to regain belief in itself. He seems to suggest in fact, that the public responsibility and communal tie are more essential than creative value for any African writer.

In Achebe’s essay book *Morning Yet on Creation Day* he has embraced instead the idea at heart of the African oral tradition that “art is, and always was, at the service of man” (13). “Our ancestors created their myths and told their stories for a human purpose” (14). For this reason, Achebe believes that any good story, any good novel, should have a message, and should have a purpose. Achebe believes that the novelist must have a social commitment. He further argues in the same book:

The writer cannot be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done . . . I for one would not wish to be excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than just teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them. (17)

Achebe has given especial focus to the Nigerian women in his work because they have a very important role, duty and responsibility in the society. Without their support a nation can not be progressed. So to pay respect, he gives diverse role to Nigerian women in his work; it is because of his love of Nigerian people and the society which can be noticed even in *Things Fall Apart*:

Women constitute (and still do) the core of the rural workforce – farming, tending animals, nurturing children, among other activities. To echo the Nigerian critic Juliet Okonkwo, Achebe's cultural universe is one in which women [are] to be seen not heard, coming and going, with mounds of foofoo, pots of water, market baskets, fetching kola, being scolded and beaten before they disappear behind the huts of their compound. (36)

Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of values during and after the colonial era. His style relies heavily on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk stories, proverbs, and oratory. His especial concerns with African culture, African tradition, African religion, African literature, African nation and

prevailing problems of African people of postcolonial era made him a great postcolonial black writer.

1.2 Igbo Culture in Achebe's Writing

Igbo cultures are the customs, practices and traditions of the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria. It comprises archaic practices as well as new concepts added into the Igbo culture either by evolution or by outside influence. These customs and traditions include the Igbo people's visual art, music and dance forms, as well as their attire, cuisine and language dialects. The same culture is highlighted in Chinua Achebe's works. It is not because of he belongs to the Igbo culture but because of his love of African culture and rejection of western culture. Every culture has its own importance and significance. Neither culture is superior or inferior. So it is important to valorize our on culture. Same is done by Achebe through his literary works. Cultures are reflected through many things like music, art, dance, mythology, language, tradition, feast and festival and so on.

In Igbo Culture, a sense of tradition was highly significant. The Igbo people would carry out the various traditions that had been passed down from their ancestors centuries ago in their everyday lives. These traditions or customs that came in the form of funeral ceremonies, one's manners, rites of passage, and more were the backbone of the Igbo culture. They brought the tribe closer by allowing the people to come together and take part in activities as a group.

One of the most notable Igbo traditions is the rite of passage for young girls and boys maturing into adulthood. This rite of passage is not a sudden acceptance into adulthood but rather a series of rites they must go through over time before they become a true adult. Only eight days after birth, a child goes through the rite of circumcision.

Every boy and girl must be circumcised in order to be part of the Igbo culture. Boys and girls must also complete the rite of wearing cloths. This entails going from wearing nothing to being completely covered in clothes, signifying social status as well as individual improvement or transformation. The next rite of passage is Iru-mgede (fattening a girl before marriage). This custom is done to promote healthy offspring as well as a healthy marriage. Itu Anya is the fourth rite of passage, lasting for eight days, where one becomes a diviner. During this time, the child has time to think, reflect, and even communicate with spirits in order to gain the power, knowledge, and courage that is needed to become a diviner. The last rite of passage for a child in Igbo culture is Igba-Mgba or wrestling. In this activity one shows his true strength and courage and with success he becomes a real warrior and in turn, a man.

The Week of Peace is a sacred time for the Igbo people. Before any one is allowed to plant their crops they must live in peace with their neighbors for a week to honor Ani, the great goddess of the earth. It is ordained that if this peace is broken than they will not receive a blessing from Ani and their crops will not grow. Achebe demonstrates how important this week is to the Igbos through Okonkwo's beating of his wife. As Achebe writes in *Things Fall Apart*, "Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her" (33). It was a shocking moment for Igbo people when they heard of Okonkwo's actions because it was the first time for many years that a man had broken the sacred peace.

Mbari, a popular ceremony among the Igbo people, is a festival of the visual arts. For them art is created for the service of human being and is to make the life of people easier but not to make it more difficult. As Achebe says in *An Interview*:

The ceremony, which is called 'Mbari' among the Igbo people, is a festival of art, a celebration of humanity. It is not a festival of oral arts; it is more a festival of the visual arts, the plastic arts, though drama and songs are presented there as well. There you will find, I think, what our people thought of art and that's the reason I am referring to it. Some of the statements made by Mbari are very profound. One is that art is in the service of the community, there is no apology at all about that. Art is invented to make the life of the community easier, not to make it more difficult. (qtd. in Rowell 86)

Another similar tradition in honoring the gods is the New Yam Festival. At this time of the year, before the harvest begins, the Igbo people celebrate the joy of a new harvest year. At night they throw away the yams of the old year and all of the cooking pots and pans are thoroughly washed. This is also a time to honor the earth goddess again and the ancestral spirits of the clan. 'Yam Festival' and 'Harvest Season' have a great importance to Igbo men, women and children. The same thing has been vividly pictured by Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*:

Every child loved the harvest season. Those who were big enough to carry even a few yams in a tiny basket went with grown – ups to the farm. And if they could not help in digging up the yams, they could gather firewood together for roasting the ones that would be eaten there on the farm. This roasted yam soaked in red palm – oil and eaten in the open farm was sweeter than any meal at home. (53)

Aside from ceremonial traditions, the traditions of telling stories have great importance in Igbo culture. It is not only fun but also educational because through these folk tales, myths, riddles, and proverbs the young Igbo children can learn about their ancestors and allow them to understand the importance of various customs.

Similarly Achebe highlights Igbo culture even in *A Man of the People* “Five or six dancing groups were performing at different points in the compound. The popular ‘Ego Women’s Party’ wore a new uniform of expensive accra cloth” (1- 2). Here he glorifies Igbo women’s cultural dance which has great importance in their culture. New Year Yam Festival, no doubt, has great important and yam food is also equally important in accordance with their culture. Whenever some guest comes to home they serve ‘yam food’. Once Odili visits his friend’s house where his friend’s parents serve some boil yams to him. Odili says:

I was in secondary school then and it was our half-term holiday. As my home village was too far away and I didn’t want to spend the holiday in school I decided to go with one of my friends to his home which was four or five miles away. His parents were very happy to see us and his mother at once went to boil some yams for us. (29)

If some people go to visit to some special person, they bring the gift of yam, “There were all those people who brought my father gifts of yams” (29).

Finally Achebe’s writing career is so firmly attached with Igbo culture which cannot be separated. His very popular book *Things Fall Apart* has given good description of Igbo people and their culture like ‘Yam Festival’ and ‘Harvesting Season’. In all of his

writings, he presents and highlights Igbo culture whether it is novel or story or essay or short fiction. As Rais Simola quotes:

Achebe has been subjected to historical, gender sociological, anthropological, and political analysis . . . yet another attempt to grapple with the Achebe phenomenon. She seeks to distill from close readings of all Achebe's writings – short fiction, novels, essays, children's books, and poetry – beliefs that could reflect the ideology of both his specific Igbo ethnic group and that of a 'changing' Africa. (qtd. in Ogede 137)

The first chapter of this research is a general introduction to the novelist, Chinua Achebe, a postcolonial black writer which proves this research is fairly based on postcolonial perspective. The second chapter deals with methodology that applied to test the hypothesis of the research with general introduction to philosophy of colonialism and postcolonialism. The third chapter is textual analysis based on postcolonial perspective and it proves the text to be influenced with colonialism and its consciousness. Odili, the chief character of the novel *A Man of the People*, is conscious about it and revolts against it strongly. The final chapter illustrates the finding of this research in brief.

Chapter Two: Philosophy of Colonialism and Postcolonialism

2.1 Meaning of Colonialism

“Colonialism” is derived from Roman “Colonia” Which meant “form” or “settlement”, and referred to Romans who settled in other lands but still retained their citizenship.

Colonialism was a process that began by fits and starts in the different parts of the world but everywhere it locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into most complex and traumatic relationship in human history. Though this process of forming a new land was not temporarily identical around the world, its effect aftermath was homogenous in its kind. The new communities were unformed or reformed with a wide range of practices including trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions. A large body of writings is responsible for such practices. Such imaginative production includes a wide range of writings including public and private records, letters, trade documents, government papers, fiction and scientific literature. As Philip G. Altbach writes in his essay “Literary Colonialism: Books in the Third World”:

. . . notably, the United States, Britain, France, and to a lesser extent, West Germany and the Soviet Union are at the center of scientific research and scholarly productivity. These same countries dominate the systems which distribute knowledge; they control publishing houses and produce scholarly journals, magazines, films, and television, programs which the rest of the world consumes. (485)

Colonialism is generally defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods. It is not merely the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the American from late 15th century onwards because it is a recurrent

phenomenon in human history. Colonialism is the establishment, maintenance, acquisition and expansion of colonies in one territory by people from another territory. Colonialism is a process whereby sovereignty over the colony is claimed by the metropole and the social structure, government and economics of the colony are changed by colonists- people from the metropole. Colonialism is a set of unequal relationships between the metropole and the colony; between the colonists and the indigenous population. As Jurgen Osterhammel says in *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, “Colonialism is a process of territorial acquisition . . . a system of domination... is the notion of expansion of society beyond its original habitat. These processes of expansion are a fundamental phenomenon of world history” (146).

The term colonialism normally refers to a period of history from the last 15th to 20th century when European nation states established colonies on other continents. In this period, the justifications for colonialism included various factors such as the profits to be made, the expansion of the power of the metropole and various religious and political beliefs. The colonialism literature had produced a variety of discourses such as the myth of power, the race classifications, and the imagery of subordination. Such discourse were once created to support the colonization.

Marxism views colonialism as a form of capitalism, enforcing exploitation and social change. Working within the global capitalist system, colonialism is closely associated with uneven development. It is an instrument of wholesale destruction, dependency and systematic exploitation producing distorted economies, socio-psychological disorientation, massive poverty and neocolonial dependency. Lenin regards colonialism as the root cause of imperialism, as imperialism is distinguished by

monopoly capitalism via colonialism and Lenin advocates forcefully for the self-determination of people and the right of nations to self-determination as he argues:

The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession and for a referendum on secession by the seceding nation. (qtd. in Sunga 90)

No matter, the European colonizers moved for the settlement and plantation in America, or for trade in Indian or for the civilizing mission elsewhere, it resulted an enormous global shifts of population in the passage of time. Both the colonized and the colonizers had moved. The colonized were not only slaves but also people from the diverse profession and class including labourers, domestic servants, travelers and writers, domestic staffs, missionaries, teachers and scientists.

Due to the heterogeneous nature of colonial literature, it lacks the precise definition. Elleke Boehner defines the colonial literature in his famous book *Colonialism and Postcolonialism Literature* as, “. . . writing concerned with colonial perceptions and experience, written mainly by metropolitans, but also by Creoles and indigenes, during colonial times” (4). He also talks about the colonialist literature, which is informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire. Colonialist literature is specifically concerned with colonial expansion which embodied the imperialists’ point of view. He says, “From the days of colonization, not in text in general but literature, broadly defined, underpinned efforts to interpret other lands,

offering house audiences a way of thinking about exploration, western conquest, national valour, her colonial acquisitions” (14).

Colonialism is a relationship between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule. As John Decker says in “The Neocolonial – Assumption in University Teaching of English”, “In colonialism and neocolonial historical situations, a hierarchy of cultural importance and value is imposed by the colonizing power, both on the conquered indigenous societies, and on the white agents of colonial oppression themselves” (445).

Colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods. For Stephen Slemon colonialism is, “All kind of social oppression and discursive control” (50). Colonialism is over now because their direct ruling over the land has come to end. In the colonial period they invented a new way of controlling over other through different other mediums like language, culture etc. As Said says:

Colonialist literature in contrast was that which was specifically concerned with colonial expansion on the whole it was literature written by and for colonizing Europeans about non- European lands dominated by them. It embodied the imperialist point of view. Colonialist literature was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire. (3)

In “Durban Declaration of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001,” the outcome of colonialism is defined in the following way, “Colonialism has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and . . . Africans and people of African descent and people of Asian descent and indigenous people were victims of its consequences” (Ferguson xii). Thus, colonialism was a cruel form of subjugation which only resulted in the discrimination of the indigenous people living mostly in Asia and Africa. They were and are still victimized by the impact of colonial rule.

A great Postcolonial critic Frantz Fanon writes in *The Wretched of Earth*, “Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding the people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of the perverted logic it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures and destroys it” (170). The colonizers by employing ruling ideas in their discourse started domination over the natives. Homi K. Bhabha mentions in his book *The Location of Culture*:

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate type on the basis of racial origin in order to justify conquest and to establish system of administration and instruction. . . . Therefore, despite the ‘play’ in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once. An ‘other’ and get entirely knowable and visible. (70-71)

Historians often distinguish between two forms of colonialism, chiefly based on the number of people from the colonizing country who settle in the colony:

- i) Settler colonialism involved a large number of colonists, typically seeking fertile land to farm.
- ii) Exploitation colonialism involved fewer colonists, typically interested in extracting resources to export to the metropole. This category includes trading posts, but it applies more to the much larger colonies where the colonists would provide much of the administration and own much of the land and other capital, but rely on indigenous people for labour.

In both cases, people moved to the colony, and goods were exported to the metropole. A plantation colony is normally considered to fit the model of exploitation colonialism. However, in this case there may be other immigrants to the colony - slaves to grow the cash crop for export.

In some cases, settler colonialism take place in substantially pre-populated areas and the result was either a culturally mixed population or a racially divided population, such as in French, Algeria or Southern Rhodesia. A League of Nations' mandate is legally very different from a colony. However, there is some similarity with exploitation colonialism in the mandate system.

According to Hans Kohn there are two kinds of colonialism; they are settlement and dependence. The first one is really very dangerous to natives. As he says in the *Review of Politics*:

Colonialism may be of two different kinds: those of settlement and those of mere dependence. The former ones are more dangerous for the natives. The out standing example is the United States where the settlement of the vast continent meant the practical extermination of the natives. (259)

In fact most of the indigenous people of colonial territory were oppressed and enslaved by the occupying power. Sometimes they were even deported from fertile land or murdered to make room for new settlements.

2.2 Colonialism and Imperialism

A colony is part of an empire and so colonialism is closely related to imperialism. The initial assumption is that colonialism and imperialism are interchangeable. Imperialism is the concept while colonialism is the practice. Colonialism is based on an imperial outlook, thereby creating a consequential relationship between the two. Through an empire, colonialism is established and capitalism is expanded, on the other hand a capitalist economy naturally enforces an empire.

Imperialism means formation of an empire in which one nation has extended its domination over one or several neighboring nations. Colonialism is a direct form of exploitation of the native land and people. It is a process of exploiting the foreign land through direct rule and invasion, making the inhabitants of the invaded land the subject people and treating them as cheap labours and slaves, whereas imperialism rules the distant land through economic exploitation. It is an attitude constituted by the west about a distant land which it governs through economic and political dominance. As Edward Said says:

‘Imperialism’ means the practice, the theory and the attitude of the dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; ‘colonialism’, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 46)

Imperialism is indirect rule over the distant countries especially the countries of Third World, by the European power whereas colonialism is the outcome of the imperialism which consists of implanting settlements on the distant territory for direct exploitation of both nature and beings. Similarly Osterhammel says, "Imperialism is the creation and control of what he calls trans- colonial empires. Colonialism concerns only colonial politics, but imperialism implies both colonies are not just ends in themselves, but also pawns in global power games" (146).

2.3 Neocolonialism and Post colonialism

Neocolonialism is a term used by post-colonial critics to refer to the involvement of developed countries in the developing world. It is a great impact of developed and advanced nations upon underdeveloped and developing countries. For Philip G. Altbach "Neocolonialism means the impact of advanced nations on developing areas" (452). He also adds, "Neocolonialism is partly a planned policy of advanced nations to maintain their influence in developing countries" (452). It is similar to old colonialism but the way of domination and control is different since the old colonies are no more today. They have got independence. That's why new controlling power emerged replacing traditional colonialism. As he says, "The old colonial era is almost dead. Formerly colonial areas are now independent nations. On the ruins of traditional colonial empires, however, has emerged a new, subtler, but perhaps equally influential, kind of colonialism" (452). For John Docker, "Neocolonialism is the imposition of the metropolitan power's dominant cultural values" (443).

A policy whereby a major power uses economic and political means to perpetuate or extend its influence over underdeveloped nations or areas. Strong elements of

neocolonialism persist in the economic relations of the rich and poor countries. Political control by an outside power of a country that is in theory sovereign and independent, especially through the domination of its economy. Economic arrangements created by former colonial powers were or are used to maintain control of their former colonies and dependencies after the colonial independence movements of the Post-World War period. The term neocolonialism can combine a critique of current actual colonialism (where some states continue administrating foreign territories and their populations in violation of United Nations resolutions) and a critique of the involvement of modern capitalist businesses in nations which were former colonies. Critics adherent to neocolonialism contend that multinational corporations continue to exploit the resources of post-colonial states, and that this economic control inherent to neocolonialism is akin to the classical, European colonialism practiced from the 16th to the 20th centuries. In broader usage, neocolonialism may simply refer to the involvement of powerful countries in the affairs of less powerful countries; this is especially relevant in modern Latin America. In this sense, neocolonialism implies a form of contemporary, economic imperialism that powerful nations behave like colonial powers of imperialism, and that this behavior is likened to colonialism in a post-colonial world. As Che Guevara, Marxist revolutionary, says, "As long as imperialism exists it will, by definition, exert its domination over other countries. Today that domination is called neocolonialism" (Web).

The term neocolonialism first saw widespread use, particularly in reference to Africa, soon after the process of decolonization which followed a struggle by many national independence movements in the colonies following World War II. Upon gaining independence, some national leaders and opposition groups argued that their countries

were being subjected to a new form of colonialism, waged by the former colonial powers and other developed nations. Kwame Nkrumah, who in 1957 became leader of newly independent Ghana, was one of the most notable figures to use the term. According to Nkrumah, in place of colonialism, neo-colonialism emerged today as the main instrument of imperialism.

Postcolonialism or Post-Colonialism, a specifically postmodern intellectual discourse, sometimes called New English Literature, or considered to be a branch of postmodern literature, is a body of literary writings that consist of reactions to, and analysis of, the cultural legacy of colonialism. Postcolonialism is a set of theories found amongst philosophy, film, political science, human geography, sociology, feminism, religious and theological studies, and literature. It often involves writings that deal with the issues of de-colonization or the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated to colonial rule. Postcolonial literary attempts to critique the contemporary postcolonial discourse that has been shaped over recent times. It attempts to re-read this very emergence of post colonialism and its literary expression itself. As Bill Ashcroft et al. argues:

‘Post- colonial’ as we define it does not mean ‘post- independence’, or ‘after colonialism’, for this would be to falsely ascribe an end to the colonial process. Post- colonialism, rather, begins from the very first moment of colonial contract. It is the discourse of oppositionality which colonialism brings into being. In this sense, post- colonial writing has a very long history. (117)

In fact, there are several definitions and meanings of postcolonialism. None of them is absolute because it covers vast area of studies. Some critics have argued that any literature that expresses an opposition to colonialism, even if it is produce during a colonial period, may be defined as postcolonial, primarily due to its oppositional after colonialism, and postcolonial literature is characterized by its opposition to the colonial. As Slemon says, “Post-colonialism mostly as an object of desire for critical practice” (45). Any way this vast field of postcolonial studies has been gaining prominence since the 1970s. It is used in various fields like professional fields and heterogeneous subjects. He further asserts, “‘Post-colonialism’ as it is now used in its various fields, de-scribes a remarkably heterogeneous set of subject positions, professional fields, and critical enterprises” (50). Some scholars would date its rise in the western academy from the publication of Edward Said’s influential critique of Western construction of the orient in his 1978 book, *Orientalism*. As Said says:

To the extent that Western scholars were aware of contemporary Orientals or Oriental movements of thought and culture, these were perceived either as silent shadows to be animated by the Orientalist, brought into reality by him, or as a kind of cultural and intellectual proletariat useful for the Orientalist’s grander interpretative activity, necessary for his performance as superior judge, learned man, powerful cultural will. (208)

Similarly, Elleke and Stephen define postcolonial writing as a channels for thinking through and beyond terror. As Elleke and Stephen say:

Postcolonial writing, whether defined under the heading of resistance or of hybrid cosmopolitanism, does not, however, provide justifications of

terror or sidestep the pain and wrong that it is the objective of a terrorist act to inflict . . . postcolonial writing supplies channels for thinking through and beyond terror and shocking breaks in time it inflicts, and offers ways of developing workable political responses of its horrors.

(149)

Post- colonial theorists are providing space for multiple voices. This is especially true of those voices that have been previously silenced by dominant ideologies. It is widely recognized within the discourse that this space must first be cleared within academia. Edward Said, in his book *Orientalism* provides a clear picture of the ways social scientists, specifically Orientalists, can disregard the views of those they actually study - preferring instead to rely on the intellectual superiority of themselves and their peers. Said further writes:

He was right about the place, of course, especially so far as a European was concerned. The orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences. Now it was disappearing: in a sense it had happened, its time was over. . . . Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most and most recurring images of the other. (1)

Some post-colonial theorists make the argument that studying both dominant knowledge sets and marginalized ones as binary opposites perpetuates their existence as homogenous entities. Home K. Bhabha thinks, "the post-colonial world should valorize

spaces of mixing; spaces where truth and authenticity move aside for ambiguity. This space of hybridity, he argues, offers the most profound challenge to colonialism” (113). And he further says, “offer the most profound challenge to colonialism” (113).

Truly speaking ‘Post-colonialism’ is very significant for the identity of those nations or groups which have been colonized once. Colonialism, in fact, is a Eurocentric concept and images while post-colonialism is establishment of uncontaminated and fair identity of all groups of people throughout the world. Simon During argues, “Post-colonialism is regarded as the need, on nations or groups which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images” (125).

Some scholars of post-colonialism view colonialism contained in modernity and they further say post-colonialism deconstructs Orientalism and cultural hegemonism by drawing the colonizational relationship between the East and the West. In the article published in the *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, Yang Geng and Zhang Qixue write:

Postmodernism, Post-colonialism reflects modernity from a new perspective—the cultural perspective. Post-colonialism interprets colonialism contained in modernity, deconstructs Orientalism and cultural hegemonism, and turns western reflection of modernity into an inquiry about the global relationship between the East and the West. Post-colonialism brings forward a new theoretical domain, that is, the colonizational relationship between the East and the West in the process of modernization. This interpretation expresses a strong tendency of anti-western centrality and shares some ideas with Marxism. This article

discusses the essence, characteristics, and limitation of post-colonialism from the viewpoint of Marxism, expecting to further the study of post-colonialism and its relationship with Marxism. (279)

Postcolonial literature works through the process of writing back, re-writing, re-reading, re-thinking, re-investigating and re-formulating the historical experiences. As Said asserts:

. . . Re-thinking of what had for centuries been believed to be an unbridgeable chasm separating east from west. . . . The most interesting developments in post-colonial studies was a re-reading of the canonical cultural works, not to demote or somehow dish dirt on them, but to re-investigate some of their assumptions, going beyond the stifling hold on them of some version of the master- slave binary dialectic. . . . The idea of rethinking and re-formulating historical experiences which had once been based on the geographical separation of peoples and cultures is at the heart of a whole spate of scholarly and critical works. (352-53)

This describes the interpretation of well-known literature from the perspective of the formerly colonized. In *A Man of the People*, Chinua Achebe's protagonist is shown to be exploited in several ways like politically, economically, socially and so on. And he is struggling for not to be more exploited.

Post-colonial literature emerged to countervailing balance to the primacy of western ideas and literary practices in the academic courses of universities throughout the world. Helen Tiffin views, "Post-colonial literature is seen to be broadly counter-discursive" (96). Such a literature emerged as a result of the changing global scenario

which was no more Eurocentric and it advocates for the minority and 'other' groups. He also adds:

It is possible to formulate at least two (not necessarily mutually exclusive) models for future post-colonial studies. In the first, the post-coloniality of a text would be argued to reside in its discursive features, in the second, in its determining relations with its material situation. The danger of the first lies in post-coloniality's becoming a set of unsituated reading practices; the danger in the second lies in the reintroduction of a covert form of essentialism. (96)

There is not single and absolute meaning, definition and features of postcolonial literature. Postcolonial literature has taken on many meanings. Although it covers vast areas of studies. It includes mainly three subjects. According to Wisam Mansour, postcolonialism includes three subjects:

- (i) Social and cultural change or erosion
- (ii) Misuse of power and exploitation
- (iii) Colonial abandonment and alienation

2.4 Decolonization

Decolonization is final aim of anti-colonial resistance in which two contradictory forces encounter each other- opposed one marked by violence. Decolonization is painful because it demands the social structure being changed from the bottom up. However, it does not just overthrow the old colony but it follows the old suppression and people will be suffering as in colony. Old tradition will be replaced by new one which will be equally painful to bring into practice. As Fanon says, "Decolonization is always a violent

phenomenon. Decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain species of men by another species of men without any period of transition; there is a total, complete and absolute substitution” (35). The recently decolonized homeland is invaded by the colonial remnants that leads to the political and socio-cultural alienation of the native in his own land which can be described as one of the many traumatic experiences as heralded by colonialism in various spheres of colonized nation states. Still there is the impact of European imperialism in the recently decolonized countries even though the countries have already been decolonized. After decolonization, when the colonizers leave the country, some sort of cultural, political and psychological components are left by them in the nation states. As a result of that, colonialism does not end along with the end of colonial occupation. Helen Tiffin in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* argues:

Decolonization is a process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectical between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them; between European or British discourses and their post-colonial dismantling. Since it is not possible to create or recreate national or regional formation wholly independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise. (49)

In the similar fashion, Achebe himself has been the critic of colonial impact upon the recently decolonized nation-states. He writes in “Colonialist Criticism” an essay included in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, edited by Hazard Adams:

And so our world stance in just as much need of change today as it ever did in the past. Our writers are responding to something in themselves and acting also within the traditional concept of and artist’s role in society-

using his art to control his environment has addressed themselves to some of these matters in their art. And their concern seems to upset certain people whom history has dealt with differently and who persists in denying the validity of experiences and destinies other than theirs. (1197)

Achebe's observation theorizes the complexities of colonized nations as is the case with Leela Gandhi holds in *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, "colonialism does not end with the end of colonial occupation" (17). However, "the psychological resistance to colonialism begins with the onset of colonialism", Gandhi reiterates on the changelings of sovereignty in recently decolonized nations, "thus, the very notion of colonial after-math acquired a doubleness inclusive of both the historical scene of the colonial encounter and its dispersal" (17). Thus, though the empire leaves the country, the psychological components that ruin and rule still remains at the aftermath of colonialism.

Decolonization emerges in relation of resistance that occupies its location from the pit of domination and intervention generally in indigenous affairs. Resistance is generally defined as a revolt or revolution against a certain injustice and exploration. Revolt is the outcome of imperialism and colonialism which had played very notorious role against the spirit and values of African people. Colonialism concerns with the policy of occupying other's territory and exploiting its natural resources physically, militarily or epistemologically leading to modification or devastation of native religion and undermining native's cultural norms and values. K. Asare Opoku writes:

The missionaries taught their converts that life could be separated into spiritual and secular spheres, a teaching which can counter to fundamental

basis of African culture namely the unity of religion and life. Missionary teaching thus attempted to attack the cement which held African societies together. The danger signals were picked up early by many perceptive African rulers who initially resisted missionary penetration into their societies, seeing it a challenge and a treat to traditional pattern of authority. Missionary and colonial administrators alike preached against belief in spirits and supernatural forces and gods... taboos and veneration of ancestors and thus weakened the influence of African traditional and ritual leaders. (513-14)

Historically, the practice of colonialism has initiated from the extension of Roman Empire that led to Spanish, French and British imperialism coherently up to mid twentieth imperialism in Africa commenced from 1885 and lasted up to 1960 by running the state affairs more than seven decades. At this pitfall, Nigeria was colonized by British Empire in early decade of expansion and got independence after a revolution in 1960.

Christianity was dominant during colonial period and dominating culture British empire applied its own religion as means of colonialism. On the other hand, Africans applied religion as a means of tit for tat to fight against colonial force with the synthesis or support from ancestors and gods, except the converts, other native people fought against British Empire. K. Asare Opoku presents, "African used their religion as a weapon to resist colonial rule and often relied on magic and intervention of their ancestors and gods in their fight against colonial oppression" (514).

Writing a book against imperial influence is itself resistance. So, post colonial literature presents counter attack in against of colonial literature on colonial ethos through

writing. The writers had to resist the colonial influence by dealing with native culture and social affairs. They also had to awake the people through writing. Elleke Boehmer writes in *Colonial and post-colonial Literature*:

To mend the self negating disjunction between language and lived reality, colonized writers had to begin to imagine the world from their own point of view. It was the writer's task, Ngũgĩ has said, to assert to right [of the once colonized] to name the world for ourselves' ('Moving the center', 1991) Chinua Achebe is, too has spoken of the imperative need of writers to help change the way the colonized world was seen, to tell won stories, to wage 'a battle of mind with colonialism' by reeducating readers. (189)

Anti-colonial resistance denotes the expansion of hatred and arrogance over the colonial practice through culture, literature and revolution as well. It is the resistance against colonial mentality and its performance. Some writers have conceived colonial expansion as a criminal mentality. Jamaica Kincaid and influential Antiguan writer, postulates bitter arrogance against white as criminal by using 2nd person 'you' in her well celebrated essay "A Small Place", "For isn't it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime? And what can that really mean? For the language of criminal contain only the goodness of the criminal's deed" (94).

Decolonization is final aim of anti-colonial resistance in which two contradictory forces encounter each other colonizer and decolonized one marked by violence. The true intellectual generation of native culture seems ready to change and be changed as Odili in *A Man of People*. Drawing the scenario of violence, the prominent post-colonial figure

Fanon writes in his book, *The Wretched of Earth*, “The naked truth of decolonization evokes for us the searing bullets and bloodstained knives which emanate from it. For if the last shall be first this will only come to pass after a murderous and decisive struggle between two protagonists” (30).

In terms of resistance, the native people react and sharpen their knives over the colonizers. They become conscious about the imposition of western imperialism by realizing that the western ethos is all false and misguided ones. The native is always tensed and gets ready to attack as Odili.

In the second chapter of this research, general introduction to theoretical aspect has been given which is chiefly applied to carryout this research work i.e. post-colonial theory. Aiming to make the theory clear and comprehensible to all, some related terminology to postcolonial theory has been discussed along with ‘Decolonization’, ‘Neocolonialism’ and ‘Imperialism’ with ample citation from the works of profound theorists; otherwise it may not be practical and meaningful to prove the text as purely post-colonial work. It is hoped to be fruitful to comprehend and critically analyzed the text from the postcolonial perspective i.e. colonial consciousness in Achebe’s *A Man of the People*.

Chapter Three: Colonial Consciousness in *A Man of the People*

Generally, consciousness is defined as awareness or wakefulness, the understanding of the concept 'self', the subjective experience and the ability to experience 'feeling'. Besides, it denotes the executive control system of the mind. It is defined variously from different perspective in different era by different scholars or philosophers. As John E. Roy defines:

Consciousness is the subjective awareness of momentary experience interpreted in the context of personal memory and present state. . . . Perception can be defined as awareness of the objects contained in a multisensory scene. Consciousness involves linking the present awareness to past experience. . . . Consciousness lies in understanding how meaningful perceptions are generated in the brain. (244)

Consciousness depends on an individual experience. Everyone has not the same type of experience and perception; so awareness or consciousness is varied in each and every individual. It makes link between present awareness to past experience. For John Locke, a modern philosopher and great thinker, consciousness is, "the perception of what passes in a man's own mind" (web *Britannica*).

Consciousness is an awareness about social and political causes, state of being conscious of an external object and the quality of being aware especially of something within oneself. In Merriam- Webster Dictionary, it is defined as, "the quality or state of being aware especially of something within oneself; the state or fact of being conscious of an external object, state, or fact; awareness; especially; concern for some social or political cause" (web *Dictionary*).

Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* is his fourth but most powerful novel set in the postcolonial period in an unnamed independent African state. As it is said in the introduction to *Things Fall Apart*, "Achebe published *A Man of the People*, a novel located outside of Nigeria that explores the corruption of post-colonial society" (XX). The novel is a political satire that narrates, with the misuse of power by postcolonial political leaders, a worry that reflected in all of Achebe's literary contributions. However, Achebe was able to deal with this critical subject in a mode of satire that is frequently of quiet comic in nature.

A Man of the People vehemently criticizes the drawbacks of military rule which had usurped power in the guise of clean administration which had turned out to be worse than the democratic government in the hands of politicians in post-independent African countries which were formerly colony.

In this novel, some traditional customs that existed in post-independence of Nigeria have been described. There is a custom to offer bride-price to father of the bride to marry her by the bride-groom, "Chief Nanga had paid a bride-price of one hundred and fifty pounds for his daughter" (148). The character Obi Okonkwo is ready to pay not only the bride-price but also 100 pounds for bride's educational and incidental expenses as demanded by bride's father, "one hundred pounds on her education and other incidentals" (148). This demonstrates a view of the increasing relevance placed on academic opportunities for women.

The continuing operation of 'British Amalgamated' in the story demonstrates how British companies still wield their power in business dealings which demonstrates neocolonial influence by the British in their former colony. Further, the above company

makes hefty contributions to the campaign funds of the ruling 'People Organization Party's mainly to see that party was in power to furthering their business interest, "British Amalgamated has paid out four hundred thousand pounds to P.O.P. to fight this election? Yes, and we also know that the Americans have been even more generous, although we don't have the figures as yet" (147-48). Thus, Achebe divulges how a strong Western contribution has its effect on the African corruption and greed that he satirizes in the novel.

The title of the novel indirectly resembles Nanga, who is characterized as an uncultured, unscrupulous, ambitious and ruthless politician who elevated himself by crookedness to the position of minister in the ruling government. Achebe's satirical portrayal of Nanga as a selfish man helps to make the title of the novel is wholly ironic. In his novel, *A Man of the People*, he vividly dealt with the "corruption in high places" (81) of the government and recommended military intervention as a solution to the situation. Thus, the proposed remedy rendered implies that Achebe was susceptible to the accusation that he had prior insider's knowledge of military plans. Further, Achebe exerts his technique of identifying the competition between competing value systems for political power in Africa.

This novel describes various political and social changes that have been taken place in Africa (Nigeria) since its publication. The novel describes Nigeria in its post-independence phase, during which time the country became a cesspool of corruption and misrule in the context of colonial-style of social and economic development. In the back flap of the novel, it is said:

. . . most political novel, *A Man of the People* is a story of corruption and expectations, deceit and hope. Elegantly fusing the worlds of the traditional village and the modern city, *A Man of the People* brings together the multiple identities of a country leaving behind its colonial past, while trying to make its way into an independent future. (Cover page)

In the novel, Odili, the protagonist, has colonial consciousness while Nanga, antagonist, is an agent of colonialism. Other people including protagonist are exploited and suppressed a lot.

In the very opening of the novel, a politician, M. A. Nanga's arrival is pompously celebrated by ignorant villagers. He gets his name, fame and financial benefit. He is respected everywhere as "Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga" and "the most approachable politician" (1). He seems to be a true man of the People/ politician/ leader/ guardian of the country. On the other hand, Odili is observing every incident very attentively and critically. The influence of the corrupt politician upon people; and the country during transition period is perfectly portrayed in the novel:

That after noon he was due to address the staff and students of the Anata Grammar School where I was teaching at the time. But as usual in those highly political times the villagers moved in and virtually took over. The Assembly Hall must have carried well over thrice its capacity. Many villagers sat on the floor, right up to the foot of the dais. (1)

Although such leaders cannot lead the nation in the right path, they try to lead for their selfishness. Nanga, being a corrupt Minister of Culture, exploits the ignorant people

using power and position and leads the nation to instability. It is the fossils left by colonial empire. Just Odili and his friends, mostly the educated people are conscious about it.

Chief M. A. Nanga makes an official visit to Anata Grammar School, where he taught during his early career. Odili, a teacher at the school, views the ensuing celebration by the illiterate masses and the arrival of Nanga hesitantly. Hoping for something miracle to happen for destruction of evil practices in his native land as well as drastic change in the mentality of native people by erasing blue printed false image of Nanga; Odili says:

As I stood in one corner of that vast tumult waiting for the arrival of the minister I felt intense bitterness welling up in my mouth. Here were silly, ignorant villagers dancing themselves lame and waiting to blow off their gunpowder in honour of one of those who had started the country off down the slopes of inflation. I wish for a miracle, for a voice of thunder, to hush this ridiculous festival and tell the poor contemptible people one or two truths. But of course it would be quite useless. They were not only ignorant but cynical. (2)

The local song played on the old "Grammar-phone" (1), women dancing to celebrate the occasion, and the gunfire by Nanga's hooligans all perfectly portray this kind of situation and reflect how African (Nigerians) can sacrifice national interest for personal interests. In the novel, Odili remembers his childhood when he praised Nanga as his ideal, honest politician. This image of Nanga is shattered during Odili's last visit to Parliament, when he watched the political assassination of minister of finance, who was

“a first rate economist with a Ph.D. in public finance” (3). The minister of finance presents a complete plan to avert the financial crisis to cabinet, but the government reject it because it will result in its defeat during the upcoming election. Any politicians supporting the minister of finance were fired and the corrupt politicians accuse the honest minister of being a traitor being un-African, and of “aping the white man’s mannerisms and way of speaking” (4). Odili is shocked to see these lies being used as political propaganda in local newspapers, one of which printed the following:

Let us now and for all time extract from our body-politic as a dentist extracts a stinking tooth all those decadent stooges avert in test-book economics and aping the white man’s mannerism and way of speaking with are proud to be Africans. Our true leaders are not those intoxicated with their Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard degrees but those who speak the language of the people. Away with the damnable and expensive university education which only alienated an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him above his people. . . . (4)

Newly independent countries are highly influenced by colonial political system i.e. cheating in election, bribery, corruption, misuse of power and position for personal interest and so on. It is noticed by Odili, “Nanga must have gone into politics soon afterwards and then won a seat in parliament. (It was easy in those days – before we knew its cash price.)” (3).

During the transitional period, intellectuals are badly treated or abused using bad and immoral words like “Traitor, “Coward”, “Doctor of Fork your Mother” (6) and make ignorant people puppet in the hands of opportunist like Nanga. They promise to do a lot

of things for the welfare of the country and people but practically do nothing else. Some so-called intellectuals become puppets in politicians hands, “But the teachers in that school were all dead from the neck up” (7). Odili like intellectuals are only conscious about the matter and living in great tension. Odili expresses his felling, “Perhaps it was their impatience with this kind of hypocrisy that made men like Nanga successful politicians while starry-eyed idealists strove vainglorious to bring into politics niceties and delicate refinements that belonged elsewhere” (11). However, Nanga like politician tries their best to tempt even the conscious people about their dirty game by offering some things and opportunity to them, “Odili, I think you are wasting your talent here. I want you to come to the capital and take up a strategic post in the civil service” (12).

Mostly, newly independent countries from the hands of colonial rule are highly influence by nepotism and misuse of power. People in the power use power for personal benefits and for the welfare of their nearest people and relatives:

A common saying in the country after independence was that it didn't matter what you knew but who you knew. And, believe me, it was no idle talk. For a person like me who simply couldn't stoop to lick any Big Man's boots it created a big problem. . . . I took this teaching job in the bush, private school instead of a smart civil service . . . give myself a certain amount of autonomy. (17)

Odili's political views are inseparable from his character. His opinion of his girlfriend Elsie is also significant in revealing his character; he thinks that he has been unlucky in love, but Elsie is different:

Elsie was, and for that matter still is, the only girl I met and slept with the same day – in fact within an hour . . . I can't pretend that I ever thought of marriage, but I must admit I did begin to feel a little jealous any time I found her reading and rereading a blue British air-letter with the red Queen and Houses of Parliament stamped on its back. Elsie was such a beautiful, happy girl and she made no demands whatever. (24-25)

Odili's father Hezekiah Samalu is a district interpreter so he is very powerful, rich and widely known. He used to earn money not only from his fair service but also corruption. People used to see him with gift because of his "fear" (29). He did not learn to work without bribery, "There were all those people who brought my father gifts of yam, pots of palm-wine or bottles of European drink, goats, sheep, chicken. Or those who brought their children to live with us as house-boys or their brides-to-be for training in modern housekeeping" (29). Such a corrupt person immediately get opportunity in politics; and uses this opportunity to exploit common people. Odili's father is a corrupt "District interpreter" (28) get chance to "plunged into the politics" (31) and later he is elected from our village as "the local chairman of the P.O.P" (31).

Odili admires chief Nanga in the very beginning of the story because he is unknown about his naughty behavior but later he has got opportunity to watch Nanga closely in his brief stay at his house. Life at Nanga's house during the first few days undermines Odili's clear cut views, which are somewhat eroded by the opulence:

All I can say is that on the first night there was no room in my mind for criticism. I was simply hypnotized by the luxury of the great suite assigned to me. When I lay down in the double bed that seemed to ride on

a cushion of air, and switched on that reading lamp and saw all the beautiful furniture a new from the lying down position and looked beyond the door to the gleaming bathroom and the towels as large as a lappa I had to confess that if I were at that moment made a minister I would be most anxious to remain one for ever. (36-37)

Moreover, Odili even begins to feel sympathetic about the temptations faced by men in power:

A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes, is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. The trouble with our new nation – as I saw it then lying on the bed – was that none of us has been indoors long enough to be able to say ‘to hell with it’. We had all been in the rain together until yesterday. Then a handful of us – the smart and the lucky and hard ever the best – had scrambled for the one shelter our former rulers left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves in. (37)

At this point in the story, it is clear that Odili’s disapproval of the country’s politicians is mixed with his new understanding of how a common man could be tempted by power. Still, politicians like Nanga are the villains of the story; however attractive they may be, they seem immoral. The so-called politician Chief Nanga is found to be immoral, mannerless and lecherous. A leader should be of good morality, good manner, good mind and even not polluted by sexual world. Such good qualities are not found in Chief Nanga. In Odili’s words:

I must confess to a certain feeling of awkwardness before her sophisticated, assured manner. The way she spoke she must have spent her childhood in England. But this awkward feeling was only momentary. After all, I told myself, Chief Nanga who was barely literate was probably going to sleep with her that night. (49)

In the story, men like Nanga take bribes and use the money to build apartment blocks “of seven storey luxury flat” (101), which they rent to earn profit. They also make false promises to the population about future rewards if they are re-elected.

When Odili meets Jean and her husband at Nanga’s house, differences arise between African and European codes of conduct. Odili attends a party at Jean’s house while her husband is away on business, “advising . . . government on how to improve its public image in America” (44). Odili finds this situation particularly ironic as he learns about the corruption in Nigerian government through her. Jean takes him on a tour of the city as she takes him home, and Odili senses a hidden purpose, as he notes that “some certainly knew the city well, from the fresh smelling modern waterfront to the stinking, maggoty interior” (54). Odili laughs uneasily at the signs of corruption and inequality in Bori bit is simultaneously suspicious of Jean’s motivation, wondering if the tour was simply out of curiosity or for “some secret reason, like wanting me to feel ashamed about my country’s capital city. . . . who the hell did she think she was to laugh so self-righteously? Wasn’t there enough in her own country to keep her laughing all her days or crying if she preferred it?” (55).

Odili’s sense of affinity with Nanga is badly shaken when he takes Elsie, his girlfriend, to stay at Nanga’s house. Odili refers to Elsie, “she is just a good-time girl”

(60). Before Odili can gather courage to enter her room at night, Nanga enters her room and rapes her while Odili listens in a crisis of inertia to her apparent screams and calls for help:

I rushed into the sitting-room and made to bound up the stairs when I heard as from a great distance Elsie deliriously screaming my name. . . . I trudged up the stairs in the incredible delusion that Elsie was calling on me to come and save her from her ravisher. But when I got to the door a strong revulsion and hatred swept over me and I turned sharply away and went down the stairs for the last time. . . . Recollection and panic followed soon enough and then the humiliating wound came alive again and began to burn more fresh than when first inflicted. My watch said a few minutes past four. And Elsie had not come. My eyes misted . . . I took off my pajamas, got into other clothes and left the room by the private door. (71-72)

Elsie's rape by Nanga is the best portrayed immoral, corrupt and mischievous nature of so-called politician. This incident brings drastic changes in the mentality of Odili. Out of anger and humiliation Odili leaves Nanga's home at midnight but returns later to take revenge, "What a country! I said, You call yourself Minister of Culture? God help us.' And I spat; not a full spit but a token, albeit unmistakable one" (74). Nanga offers him another girl instead of Elsie but Odili's estrangement is final and continues throughout the novel joining with Max forming a new political party as a political revenge. Since then he becomes very much careful about Nanga. Nanga likes so-called 'Man of the People' who apparently seems very innocent but in reality they are degraded,

corrupt, ravisher and so on. It is Chief Nanga, Minister of Culture who seduces his own student, Odili's girl-friend and lives happily in the house made out of corrupted money:

. . . another man had wrenched my girl-friend from my hand and led her to bed under my very eyes, and I had done nothing about it – I do nothing . . . Because the man was a minister bloated by the flatulence of ill-gotten wealth, living in a big mansion built with public money, riding in a Cadillac . . . I doing nothing about it except speculating whether Elsie would go back to her hospital that day or spend another night with Chief Nanga. (76)

Odili is obviously conscious about ruler and ruling system of the government in the country; that is not free from the colonial ruling system and the tradition of it. After forming new political party joining with many other friends like Max, he commits to save the country from the grip of corrupt politicians. In this newly formed party, there is not any corrupt and “illiterates like Chief Nanga” (78) but there are “intellectuals like Max” (79). There are many intellectuals from different fields in the new party including “a very beautiful Lawyer who . . . met at the London School of Economics. There was a trade – unionist, a doctor, another lawyer, a teacher and a newspaper columnist” (78). Max, Odili and some other friends are very serious because whether their hard-won freedom will finish in the hand of corrupt politicians. Whether they can save the country from them by launching a new party or not, “Max and some of his friends having watched with deepening disillusion the use to which our hard-own freedom was being put by corrupt, mediocre politicians has decided to come together and launch the Common People's Convention” (78).

Odili asserts in the duties and responsibilities of intellectuals. Only intellectuals can start great revolution but not by the common people like “the worker, farmer, the blacksmith, the carpenter . . . ” (79). He further encourages to take initiatives of revolution to end suppression, exploitation and dirty game of so-called Nanga like politicians by giving a historical example of great revolution, “And I’d like to take our friend up on a purely historical point. The great revolutions of history were started by intellectuals, not the common people. Karl Marx was not a common man” (80). Odili expresses his patriotic feeling in the form of a poem in which mother refers to “Earth-mother” (82). His deep “tragic feeling” (82) has been poured in the following verse along with his “high promise” (82) to make the country a fine and holy place freeing her from the grips of those sons who makes her sad, “And the son she has pinned so much hope on turning out to be a chief Nanga” (82). Odili quotes:

I will return home to her – many centuries have I wandered –
 And I will make my offering at the feet of my lovely Mother:
 I will rebuild her house, the holy places they raped and plundered,
 And I will make it fine with black wood, bronzes and terra-cotta. (82)

Odili discovers that this new party is backed by a junior minister in the current government and wonders why the minister does not resign if he is so discontented. He insisted that max not take any assistance from such politicians, “I would have thought it was better to start our new party clean, with a different kind of philosophy” (84), but he gradually begins to realize that idealism does not work when a whole “country is on the verge of chaos” (101).

Odili decides to campaign against Nanga in this own constituency. At the inaugural campaign meeting, Nanga's men laugh at Odili in front of a crowd and Edna's father threatens him with a machete with the suggestion that he withdraw his nomination:

My in-law is like a bull . . . and your challenge is like a challenge of a tick to a bull. The tick fills its belly with blood from the back of the bull and the bull does not even know it is there. He carries it wherever he goes – to eat, drink or pass ordure. Then one day the cattle egret comes, perches on the bull's back and picks out the tick . . . (107)

Odili's focus on revenge keeps him steadfast despite humiliations brought on him by his headmaster, Mrs. Nanga, and Nanga's supporters; his focus on revenge changes into a genuine desire to destroy Nanga and the corruption he represents, as is clear in his statement, "although I had little hope of winning Chief Nanga's seat, it was necessary nonetheless to fight him and expose him as much as possible" (110). At this point, Odili's character has two clear aspects. Publicly, he wants to expose Nanga for his misdeeds in the hope that there "may be someone who would get up and say, No, Nanga has taken more than the owner could ignore!" (110). Privately he wants to marry Edna out of love, as revenge on Nanga.

When Odili began his political campaign, he recalled that when he was at university, his sole ambition was to become "a full member of the privileged class whose symbol was the car" (110), and that "many of us vowed then never to be corrupted by bourgeois privileges of which the car was the most visible symbol in our country" (111). By this point, however, Odili has undergone a great change; he has acquired a new car through party funds. He assesses his present position, "and now here was I in this

marvelous little affair eating the hills like yam – as Edna would have said. I hoped I was safe, for a man who avoids danger for years and then gets killed in the end has wasted his care” (111)

At the novel’s climax, Nanga is having his inaugural campaign meeting, in an attempt to expose Nanga to the people, Odili sneaks in wearing a disguise:

What would happen, if I were to push my way to the front and up the palm-leaf-festooned dais, wrench the microphone from the greasy hands of that blabbing buffoon and tell the whole people – this vast contemptible crowd – that the great man they had come to hear with their drums and dancing was an Honorable thief. But of course they knew that already. No single man and human there that afternoon was stranger to that news – not even the innocent looking convent girl on the dais. (139)

While Odili considers his next step, He is spotted by Josiah, now an ally of Nanga. Nanga calls Odilia thief, forcing him to pause in order to respond. Nanga calls him to the dais and publicly ridicules him, beginning with his own interpretation of the past:

This is the boy who is thrusting his finger into my eye. He came to my house in Bori, ate my food, drank my water and my wine and instead of saying thank you to me he set about plotting how to drive me out and take over my house. . . . He was once my pupil. I taught him ABC and I call him to my house to arrange for him to go to England. . . . He even tried to take a girl on whose head I had put the full bride-price and many other expenses – and who according to our custom is my wife – this girl here. . . .(140-41)

Then Nanga thrust the microphone into my face. At the time Odili thinks he has a chance to expose Nanga's corruption and exploitation and he says, "I come to tell your people that you are a liar and . . ." (141). While speaking Nanga pulls the microphone away smartly, and slaps him on his face. To Odili's shock, the crowd joins in the beating:

He pulled the microphone away smartly, set it down, walked up to me and slapped my face. Immediately hands seized my arms, but I am happy that he got one fairly good kick from me. He slapped me again and again. Edna rushed forward crying and tried to get between us but he pushed her aside so violently that she landed on her buttocks on the wooden platform. The roar of the crowd was now like a thick forest all around. By this time blows were falling as fast as rain on my head and body until something heavier than the rest seemed to split my skull. The last thing I remembered was seeing all the policemen turn round and quietly away. (141)

Achebe presents Odili as an educated man who is conscious about the corruption and suppression and who wants to bring drastic change in the society but fail because they are easily finished by villains. Max and Eunice are Odili's friends. Max is killed by an election jeep belonging to Koko, a ministerial colleague of Nanga, and Eunice kills Koko out of anger after Max's murder, "she opened her handbag as if to take out a handkerchief, took out a pistol instead and fired two bullets into Chief Koko's chest" (144). When Nanga elected unopposed from Anata, Private armies begin to rampage, "sacking one market after another in the district, seizing women's wares and beating up people" (144) and in this state of anarchy, the Prime Minister reappoints the old cabinet to office. The army can not accept this decision and "by staging a coup at that point and

locking up every member of the Government” (147-48). The political turmoil serves to help Odili, after Nanga is arrested, Edna reveals that she never wanted to marry him, “Marry him? To be frank with you I did not want to marry him. . . . All the girls in the college were laughing at me . . . it was only my father . . .” (146). Still, despite the military coup Odili knows that nothing has changed and refuses to accept this simple consolation that the will of the people has been served:

No the people has nothing to do with the fall of our government. What happened was simply that unruly mobs and private armies having tasted blood and power during the election had got out of hand and ruined their masters and employers. And they had no public reason whatever for doing it. Let’s make no mistake about that. (145)

Overnight, Max becomes a “Hero of the Revolution” (148), and the people who have previously idolized Nanga and Koko now denounce them. Odili comes to understand the entire ethic of social acceptance and rejection within African (Nigerian) society, “Max was avenged not by the people’s collective will but by one solitary woman who loved him. Had his spirit waited for the people to demand redress it would have been waiting still, in the rain and out in the sun? But he was lucky” (149).

As Odili seeks to understand why private loyalty seems to be more important than public morality, he remembers the story of Josiah. Rejected by the whole village at the beginning of the novel for stealing a blind man’s stick, Josiah ends up as Nanga’s most trusted man. As Odili observes, it is “a regime in which a . . . fellow cursed in the morning for stealing . . . and later in the evening saw him again mounting the altar of the new shrine in the presence of all the people to whisper into the ear of the chief celebrant”

(149). This exemplifies how priorities can change suddenly, when individual self-interest comes into play. In this way, Josiah's story foreshadows events later in the novel. In this context, Eunice has done a noble deed, as Odili summarizes:

. . . I do honestly believe that in the fat-dripping, gummy, eat-and-let-eat regime just ended – a regime which inspired the common saying that a man could only be sure of what he had put away safely in his gut . . . in such a regime. I say, you died a good death if your life had inspired someone to come forward and shoot your murder in the chest – without asking to be paid. (149-50)

Besides political influence, there is a high cultural influence of colonialism in Africans. Their Igbo culture is influenced by westerners' culture, "After Christmas. You know Eddy's father is going to America" (39). Here, indigenous people are celebrating westerners' festival i.e. Christmas. Language is also very important aspects of culture. Without language no culture can be transmitted to new generation. If the native language is contaminated by others language especially by colonizers' language, there will be more chances to collapse native culture, "they would become English people. Don't you see they hardly speak out language? Ask them something in it and they reply in English" (39). The wearing cultures has also highly influenced from capitalism. Odili once attaining in a programme where Chief Nanga is delivering his speech but he observes the dress of the people in the room:

There was one man I noticed particularly. His robes were made from some expensive-looking, European woolen material-which was not so very strange these days. But what surprised me was that the tailor had retained

the cloth's thin, yellow border on which the manufacture advertised in endless and clear black type: 100% WOOL: MADE IN ENGLAND. (65)

Finally, Achebe has suggested that if a nation is to progress and to end the "oppression and corrupt government" (149), it must take proper care when selecting leaders, otherwise corrupt politicians will always get their way and citizens will simply be a means by which they can fulfill their corrupt goals. An electorate needs to be strong enough to withstand the opposing pulls of private and public pressures. National interest must be given supreme importance as opposed to self-interest, which has the power to corrupt leaders. Achebe successfully projected his own ideals through Odili Samalu, the protagonist of *A Man of the People*.

Chapter Four: Conclusion: Protest due to Suppression

Chinua Achebe has reflected pathetic and tragic story of post-independent African countries in postcolonial term through *A Man of the People*. The colonizer wants to reestablish colonization. In fact, the colonizer never forgets the sweet or taste of colonialism and wants to see the past in the future with the sense of returning to the period when they were free and held power in their own hands. On the other hands, there is a mass of colonized people who are accustomed to live in such an impure situation and relationship between the colonizer and the colonized; except a few educated and conscious people like Odili in this novel, *A Man of the People*.

Achebe, through his powerful writing, vividly portrays the real picture of lawlessness, anarchy, chaos, exploitation and suppression in African countries rather than an independent and prosperous one. Neocolonialist inclination and nativist practices in post-independent African countries make them a cesspool of corruption and misrule in the context of colonial-style of social and economic development which resulted in conflict and protest against the system.

Achebe's *A Man of the People* successfully demonstrates the colonial consciousness and sense of protest in African countries. In the novel, the protagonist Odili Samalu, an educated and conscious citizen, is the representative of all colonized Africans while Chief M.A. Nanga, antagonist, illiterate politician, is the representatives of the colonizer who is habituated to suppress and exploit the common people through corruption using his power and position in post-independent African countries. When his evil deed reaches the climax, Odili, joining with his friends like Max forms a new political party to end the corrupt politicians' rule for ever. Aiming at overthrowing the

corrupt government of Nanga-like politician, Odili has decided to fight for the membership of the parliament from the same constituency wherefrom Nanga fights in the forthcoming election. But unfortunately, the nomination paper, in which Odili has signed, is seized by thugs from his people on their way to the Electoral Office. So Nanga is elected unopposed. Odili cannot achieve his goal. So the dreams of all the Africans' are shattered and now they have realized that no freedom, liberty and equality can be achieved without joint protest against suppression. If the people were not divided, their dreams (i.e. to make a prosperous country) would not be shattered.

The novel deals with the social and psychological impact of European imperialism on indigenous African societies, particularly with respect to a distinctly African consciousness in the twentieth century. After colonial rule no nation can live independently and no leader can lead the nation towards prosperity because of neocolonialism. So independence becomes a myth to those nations and their people. When anarchy, suppression and exploitation reaches its climax, people should strongly protest against it to give the way to the country from the situation of national crisis and chaos. But here Achebe presents Odilia as a hero, intellectual and very much conscious leader who fights against political instability, suppression, domination, and exploitation and tries to give a way to the nation.

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