

Failure of American Dream in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*

This thesis is an attempt to show disillusioned and discontented lives of Ifemelu from the perspective of an American Dream through the reference of Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah. It deals with the broader area related to American Dream. Within the broader field of American dream, it focuses on failure of American dream. The protagonist Ifemelu, in the novel, concerns with journey to America from Nigeria carrying the dream of prosperity and better life but her dream shatters after reaching their in dreamland. She fails to achieve the dream because of racial discrimination and inequality. It is a novel written by black writer about the condition of blacks in the world of whites. With the help of reference from the text, the researcher argues that Nigerian youngsters whom dreamed the "American Dream" and have taken the American world as the land of unlimited possibilities, equality, justice, and individual liberty, is not same in reality. As a researcher, I will substantiate the argument from the perspective of Ifemelu that her thoughts toward the Promised Land are not true in reality. Ifemelu is discontented because of racial discrimination and racial segregation. At last, her experiences in the United States and her returning to Nigeria indicate the downfall of so-called American Dream. So, basically, this research paper deals with disillusioned and disappointed lives of character through racial inequality theoretical insight.

Keywords: American dream, Failure, Gender, Immigration, Identity

America celebrates a great and glorious history, somewhat controversial too. From ages, it has been eminent for its economic and military prowess. During this splendid history, America gained various great titles as beacon of democracy the shining city the greatest country on the earth which signals the obsession of America to be number one. Americans are always a step

forward in showcasing themselves as a powerhouse of the world. American dream became the most desirable life. It created such a fantasy for people as if would fulfill all the deficiencies the people of the world were facing. America did not let any cards unfold to glorify and fantasize the concept of the American dream. It was claiming for better opportunities, better facilities and a better future. This American ethos glorified the concept of democracy, rights, liberty, opportunity, and equality. American Dream was just a delusion that targeted and persuaded the most viable people who were undergoing a traumatic phase. This novel *Americanah* also highly captures the scenario of America within this phase. After decolonization process, African countries particularly, Nigeria has instability of Post-Colonial political systems. Political instability compelled people to face hardship and face challenges. As a result, economic problems, rapid urbanizations, make difficulties to survive in hometown. Then, young minds get cultivated to dreams for America and Europe. America is made out to be everyone's number one choice. Ifemelu the protagonist of the novel *Americanah* also confronts with the desire to migrate America for a better life, security and opportunities. Ifemelu is a Nigerian young, energetic, educated lady.

With regard, people shuffling to apply for visas to get into the United States. The protagonist Ifemelu cannot remain untouched with this process of applying visa to the United States. She applies visa carrying loads of dream to the University of America. Finally, she gets a visa to the United States and heads to the dreamland. Before moving to America Ifemelu could not think her succeed only limits in education rather she hopes her aspiration could be reached and attained. Ifemelu meets great hardship and alienation in the new land. The protagonist reveals that she is marginalized, dehumanized by systematic and racial subjugate in the world of whites. After footing there in new homeland several experiences make her realize

disappointment and discontentment of Americans Lives.

Ifemelu is born in a middle-class family background and spends her childhood in poverty in Lagos. She continues her education in Nsukka University being apart from family. She stays there with her Aunty Uju. Aunty Uju had affairs with the General and became pregnant. She gives birth to Dike. After some years of Dike birth, the General had died. After a year passed of General's death aunty Uju decided to settle there in America. As a result, aunty Uju departs for the United States with Dike. Ifemelu falls in love with rich Obinze in Nsukka University. The current situation of Nsukka is not satisfying because of the decolonization process. Every day strikes, endless violence and political circumstances frustrate the young people. Besides, the university suffers from the never-ending protest, students go to university, but classes often remain leisure. Now and again the process of obtaining a visa is continued among friends. Obinze at first is more fascinated to apply for a visa. He encourages Ifemelu to apply for a visa. With creating the idealized view of America, Ifemelu decides to continue her college studies in the United States. Together, they apply for a visa but unfortunately, only Ifemelu gets success the visa. With loads of dream, Ifemelu says goodbye to Nigeria her homeland and arrives in dreamland. After arriving in dreamland, the experiences make her underwhelmed. Ifemelu comes to America, expecting a new successful life and ends up disappointed with the reality of the consumerism and capitalism that makes up American society. Ifemelu arrives in the United States without the concept of race but suffers there under the shadow of racial stereotypes. Ifemelu's relationship with the American education system is complicated. In such a new location her academic qualification and skills do not support her. She struggles a lot in the United States. She opens the blog also, tries a lot to find her own identity, but failed to get own identity in a new land. After fifteen years she returns back to her own country Nigeria. Her return

to Nigeria is referred to as the failure of achieving the American Dream.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian novelist who is famous for depicting the consciousness of African social and political movement. Her works have been translated into several languages and have appeared in various publications. She is the author of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), which won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which won the Orange Prize and was a National Book critic circle award winner.

The novel *Americanah* is a story of African American Ifemelu where she struggles for achieving equality, self-reliance, self-identity, freedom, and dignity as well as material prosperity in an inhospitable land. In this regard, various critics have reviewed Adichie's *Americanah* from various angles. The novel had published in 2013 has a welcoming various review from varied critics. Most of the critics have viewed *Americanah* from anti-racist, feminist, post-modernist, ethnic nationalism point of view. Hence, this study has attempted to analyze the novel from the perspective of failure of the American dream because of racial discrimination.

The Critics Frances White views the novel from the nationalistic point of view. She focuses on the futility of Nigeria's ethnic nationalism:

Adichie is an extremely accomplished author in her own right- as she's
Proved again in her latest novel, *Americanah*, a work of a different order to anything
she's written before. The book spans three continents and grapples fiercely with issues of
race, identity and what it means to be an African today- questions that Adichie doesn't
necessarily answer even as she destroys any answers that you thought you already had.
(Blurb)

It shows her recent book *Americanah* mainly shows the psychology of the Nigerians who feel that there is no choice and stability, due to which for a better future they choose America later victims from an identity crisis.

Similarly, Alex Clark mentions that Adichie's novel is "extremely thoughtful, subtly exploration of structural inequality of different kinds of oppression, of gender roles, of the ideas of home, subtle but not afraid to pull its punches" (6). Hence, Clark indicates towards the latent content of western values and norms that are pervasive and peculiar. The protagonist of the novel, Ifemelu feels lacks identity. Blacks are derogative presented everywhere.

Similarly, Kathryn Schulz argues that *Americanah* is a novel about identity, nationality, difference, loneliness, aspiration, and love not as distinct entities but in the complex combinational relation they possess in their real life. He asserts:

A great global novel, Ifemelu was well on her way to becoming an – American –which promises dangled before and coveted by, so much of the world for so long. She chooses instead to, become an *Americanah*; an identity predicated on experience rather than nationality, trajectory rather than the place. It is an open question whether identified like that will change the world for the better, but I, Adichie they have already done for literature. (1)

These lines explore the issue of race and nationality. Ifemelu tries her best to construct her identity in America. She declares identity play a crucial role in the life of human existence.

Maureen Corrigan, a book reviewer observes the book as a narrate of the Nigerian Blacks living in America. It shows how people, who went through a sense of insecurity, instability, and choices in their homeland, force them to see outside, somewhere else as a safe and secure space to enrich Corrigan observes the book as:

Adichie has written a big knockout of a novel about immigrants, dreams, the power of first love, and the shifting meanings of skin color... *Americanah* is a sweeping story that derives its power as much from witty and fluid writing styles as it does from keen social commentary. *Americanah* works in so many different genres- coming of age novel, romance, comic novel of social manners, up-to-the-minute meditation on race, as well as the aforementioned immigrant saga- that I'm shortchanging its bounty by only mentioning some of the adventures of the main characters here. Like Ifemelu's hairdo. Adichie's novel tightly braids together multiple ideas and storylines. It is a marvel of skilled construction and imagination. (Blurb)

Adichie critically examines American society and culture. She finds that in America tribalism is alive and well. It also dramatizes the long rooted color discrimination and displacement and sense of identity crises and its effects on the immigrants of black skin.

The critic Raboteau Emily views that Adichie's novel is "a ruthless honesty, about the ugly and beautiful sides of both nations" (5). It means harms and charms of Western countries particularly America and London, and non- western country Nigeria are lucidly presented in the novel. Adichie reveals the latent ugly beauty of America which is maintained by the American mainstream discourse.

According to Mike Peed, "*Americanah* examines blackness in America, Nigeria, and Britain but it is also a steady-handed dissection of universal human experiences, a platitude made fresh by Adichie's observation"(12). It means Adichie's novel demonstrates the white values and norms in the western world whereby black people are rated second class human by their discourse.

Similarly, Caroline Levine declares, "Adichie uses a time-honored defamiliarizing

strategy: the perspective of an outsider. She offers us the changing perspectives of her two migrant protagonists who move between countries and climb and fall in personal wealth" (601). It means Ifemelu and Obinze experiences different social position and geographic location. Migration allows an individual to experience many new things and help to know the different societies allocating power with the base of the social hierarchical definition.

These critics have viewed the text from several angles. However, none has till the date, analyzed from the issue of failure of the American Dream. This study, thus, analyzes the text from the prism of Racism and American Dream point of view. Given criticisms mostly emphasizes the culture, feminism, colonialism, and diversity. None has systematically analyzed this text from the failure of the American Dream.

Dreams are part of our life which motivates every individual to be alive. Orison Swett Marden American inspirational author said: "All men who have achieved great things have been great dreamers"(3) . Without dreams, a person has no motivation. The American dream is a dream that several people believed in and still do. American Dream has distinctive implications for diverse cultures. It allows anyone that has an aspiration, a desire a yearning to carry out an individual dream. It knows no bounds of race, gender or religion. There is no fitting definition to be found anywhere of the genuine vitality of the American Dream. The commonly followed notion is that of a perfectly tidy life with two children, a house with a white picket driver, and a perfect spouse. Regardless, the American Dream is not for the most part so obvious a thought. In general, the American dream is based on a national ethos of the United States in which freedom includes a promise of the possibility of prosperity and success. The idea of the American dream has much deeper roots.

The term American dream was coined by writer and historian James Truslow Adams in

1931 in his popular book “Epic of America”. According to Truslow, “life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement regardless of social class or circumstances of birth. With regard, the American Dream can be defined as gaining the freedom that an individual in a society based on these principles that one can live life to its fullest. Achieving the dream requires political and economic freedom, as well as rules of law and property rights. To some, it means that if you work hard, you can achieve more prosperity and it will take to your goals. To others, it is an opportunity that everyone desires and if they get the opportunity, only then they can taste the pleasure of the American Dream

The cornerstones of what constitutes the Dream were expressed 50 years before the term was coined. In theory, the American Dream is supposed to be accessible for every citizen of The United States. The declaration of Independence announced by Congress in 1776 states that "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (5). Cullen defines the keywords equality, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as inherent components of the American Dream.

The American Dream was originally based on religious themes but over time was gradually decoupled from religion to encompass social and financial opportunities for individuals, according to Cullen. The American Dream does not revolve around one single definition but includes "religious transformation, political reform, education attainment, the sexual expression: the list is endless" (7). The American Dream has been defined as “one of the motivating forces of American civilization” (5). The literature on the American Dream explains that the Puritans and the Founding Fathers created guidelines based on moral and liberal ideas.

Adams than interpreted these ideas and its primary document, the Declaration of Independence, and coined a term that gave its name to the ideas that define America's national ethos. The early Puritan settlers were convinced that God leads them to North America where their New World was described as a promised land. Cullen claims that the Puritans' sense of mission and their belief in New World was deemed significant by God has influenced the way modern Americans think about their country and themselves as a prototypical nation for moral guidance and economic prosperity (17-18). Cullen explains that the American Dream had, by the eighteenth century, become separated from religious discipline and had become a dream of individual freedom. Adichie's protagonist lived in poverty in Nigeria. Due to poverty, the protagonist dreamed of a better life in America.

Ifemelu opened it and saw the landlord standing here, a round man with bulging, reddened eyes who said to start his day with a glass of harsh gin. He looked past Ifemelu at her father and shouted, "It is now three months! I am still waiting for my money!" The landlord shouting at their door, and her father turning a steely, silent face to him, they had never owned rent before. They had lived in this flat all her life; it was cramped, the kitchen walls blackened by kerosene fumes, and she was embarrassed when her school friends come to visit, but they had never owned rent. (49)

It shows Ifemelu and her parents faced hardship. Their life is not easier; they lived in a rented flat. The landlord time and again tortured them in the name of money. Ifemelu felt embarrassed among friends because she had not a standard house of her own. Ifemelu had difficulties to study at a good university without scholarships. Unity Uju managed all things after she had an affair with the General. After school, Ifemelu joins Unty Uju in Nsukka. "My understanding is that Uju has sufficient help," her father said. "It is a good idea," her mother said to her father, "she can

study well there, at least there will be light every day, No need for her to study with kerosene lamps" (75). Ifemelu's parents had not any dissatisfaction with aunty Uju. Unty helps her a lot to Ifemelu in every difficult situations..

In addition to this, some of the critics argue that the American Dream is just an irony. It never succeeds; it only fantasizes the innocent Africans. In the book, *enlightened racism: The Cosby show, Audiences, and the myth of the American Dreams*, Sut Jhally, and Justin Lewis argue that "the American Dreams is just that, a fantasy that few can or will ever realize. It is a fantasy sustained by anecdotes and success stories that focus on exception, rather than the norm." It is a mirage not only for immigrants but for other racial groups too. Those immigrants do not live in free societies. They are marginalized and treated as second class citizens. American Dream is sad irony Africans. Ifemelu comes to America believing that the Promised Land is full of opportunities and success, hoping to fulfill those dreams and expectations. Sadly, Ifemelu's American dreams turn into a complete deception, making her argue that living in America "is like being in prison. You are caged in."(108)

Ifemelu's journey can be discussed from the set of dreams that she aspires to fulfill. For the protagonist her fellow college students before in the United States they had great hopes of achieving American Dream. Her influence is supposed to be a force of enlightenment and success but over time it is depicted more and more difficulties and restricting to African American. Cullen claims that "each version of the American dream is based on orientation and geographical location (160-161). For the Nigerian, the United States is of great significance. Ifemelu's journey to the United States is in pursuit of a job and money as well as for better education. Her journey doesn't value her development in the way she imagines. Due to her hairstyle and dress, she was often subjected to dehumanization and objectified in front of white

people.

Only weeks before, she had been a new graduate and all her classmates were talking about going abroad to take the American medical exams or the British exams because the other choice was to tumble into a parched wasteland of joblessness. The country was starved of hope; cars stuck for days in long, sweaty petrol lines, pensioners raising wilting placards demanding their pay, lecturers' gathering to announce yet one more strike. (46)

The central character Ifemelu has great excitement and interest to settle in America after getting a visa. Firstly in her view Nigeria is starved of hope where cars stuck for days in long, sweaty petrol lines, lecturers gathering to announce a yet another strike. Ifemelu along with other students' first and foremost priority is to depart to dreamland America.

"I read American books because America is the future, Mummy. And remember that your Husband was educated there." "That was only dullards went to school in America. American Universities were considered to be at the same level as British secondary schools then. I did a lot of Brushing up on that man after I married him. (100)"

The protagonist's perception regarding America is very much positive. She dreams to be in America, and in her view, American universities have better standards and higher level in comparison to the British. America is a symbol of hope, prosperity, social and economic mobility for Nigerians. So, many young Nigerians were influenced with American lifestyles cultures. They used to read American books. However, instead of shortening the days of strikes, it increased day by day in Nigeria.

Strikes were now common. In the newspapers, university lecturers listed their complaints, the agreements that were trampled in the dust by government men whose own children

were schooling abroad. Campuses were emptied, classrooms drained of life. Students hoped for short strikes because they could not hope to have any strike at all. Everyone was talking about leaving. Even Emeka had left for England. (98)

It shows that the situation is devastating. The message around the youngsters would be that who stayed in their country would not have secured future. To be away from the homeland is better than remaining there. As a result, sincere and hopeful students also applied visa abroad for a better future.

Similarly, not only the young generations but also all aged people dream that there is happiness, choices, and better chances to enrich life. That Glinka's father says,

Glinka's parents had been talking for a while about resigning from the university and starting over in America. Once while visiting Ifemelu had heard her father says, 'We are not sheep. This regime is treating us like sheep and we are starting to behave as if we are sheep; I have been able to do any real research in years because every day I am organizing strikes, and talking about unpaid salary and there is no chalk in the classrooms'. He was a small, dark and small looking man... when Ifemelu told her own parents that Glinka's family was finally leaving her father sighed and said. 'At least they are fortunate to have the option.' And her mother said. 'They are blessed'. (65)

It shows that Glinka's parents think that there is no easy improvement in the homeland but once they cross the border there is a lot of opportunity but all these kinds of psychological findings finally lead to the frustration and isolation as things won't go as it is expected.

The strike lasted too long. The weeks crawled past. Ifemelu was restless, antsy; every day she listened to the news, hoping to hear that the strike was over. The strike ended.

Ifemelu returned to Nsukka., eased back into camps life, and from time to time, she

dreamed of America. When Aunt Uju called to say that there was acceptance letter called; judgeship offer, she stopped dreaming: she was too afraid to hope, now that it seemed possible. (100)

These lines show that before footing their at America Ifemelu was much excited about America. She is fed up with political disturbances and current situations of Nigeria. She regularly used to chitchat about the condition of Nigeria with her aunt who used to reside in the US. It means the young, energetic, exited Nigerian had failed to live happily and prosperous life in America.

Moreover, immigrants and African Americans faced even bigger hurdles. Not only were they disadvantaged because of racial issues, but also because of the inequality already existing between the classes in America. In their article “The State of the American dream: Race and Ethnic Socioeconomic Inequality in the United States, 1970-90”. Charles Hirschman and C. Matthew Snipp, discuss immigrant and African American opportunities in the United States. “despite the massive immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the image of American society as an extension of English society persisted throughout the first six decades of the twenty century” and because of that “the patterns in the first half of the century “was expecting “the exchange of cultural conformity for a chance at upward mobility,” which made “the American Dream- seem obsolete” (90). This means that the American dream started to create a racial definition and norm for the dream, which meant excluding races that did not conform to white Anglo-Saxon norms. This already undermines the idea that the dream is for all. On the Contrary, the American dream, mainly at the turn of the century, has excluded immigrants on the racial background and demanded cultural assimilation in exchange for opportunity. Hirschman and Snipp also confirm that "there remain wide socioeconomic gaps between minority populations and the majority” (90). And that African Americans, even though

have undergone cultural Assimilation, "had not experienced large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society, that is, structural assimilation"(92).Actually, African Americans have been the most prevented from attaining the American dream.

In 1903, W.E.B.Du Bois asserted in *The Souls of Black Folks* that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line- the relation of the darker to the higher races of men in Asia and Africa, America and the islands of the sea”(372). In fact, this novel proved the statement by Du Bois. Even in the twenty-first century many immigrants like young Nigerian is frustrated and humiliated because of their race. Ifemelu departs America with the dream of success but her dream get scattered because of inequality and racial discrimination. It shows even today there is still the existence of a color problem which has affected the African American community and other non- whites’ minorities in the United States. Du Bois further said:

Let’s Be Fair tone and say “But black people are racist too." Because of course, we’re all prejudiced (I can’t even stand some of my blood relatives, grasping, selfish folks), but racism is about the power of a group and in America its white folks who have that power. (327)

These lines illustrate that all are prejudiced but racism is the matter of power. Those who have the power they subjugate the powerless. Immigrants are dominated by whites in America. Whites are large in number, due to which they have power. “Marcia was talking about how black women are fat because their bodies are sites of anti-slavery resistance” (311). Blacks are taken as a rebellion by whites. In a sense that they are always urged and fight for power.

From Tru Leverette’s journal of the article, as Noam zack (1993) acknowledges, “Racial categories do not in themselves have moral values within black families. What does have a moral

value in traditional black culture is how individuals whom blacks designate as Black behave about their racial designations” (39). This reveals that race is not biological reality which widespread, race is an experimental and political reality. Discussing race Adichie writes:

There is a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on the top, especially White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, otherwise known as WASP, and American Black is always on the bottom and what’s in the middle depends upon time and place or as that marvelous rhyme goes: if you are white, you are all right; if you are brown, stick around; if you are black, get black! (187).

It shows that the novel strongly depicts the modern attitude towards race. The race is constructed by society. The racial discrepancy between whites and blacks create failure for the protagonist. The protagonist believes that being acknowledged is a path to success but her gullibility creates failure.

The race is a socially constructed artifact that categorizes people based on visual differences which are imputed to indicate invisible differences (wolf). To discriminate one is a matter of perception. African American is more victimized because of discrimination. Adichie's protagonist migrates to the United States with great aspirations. This part of the country is a promised land for African Americans. Race matter changed locations to locations. “I did not think of myself as black and I only become black when I came to America” (290). In another instance, “Race doesn’t really work here. I feel like I got off the plane in Lagos and stopped being black” (447). It means Ifemelu feels like a black and underprivileged in America. She becomes disappointed in America, later she decided to arrive in Nigeria. After arriving in Lagos she feels a sense of security. It shows African in American passed humiliated life. Ifemelu encounters racism during her stay in America, something that she was never aware in Nigeria.

Frantz Fanon in his essay "The Fact of Blackness" clearly states that "I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the mindset of other objects"(402). Ifemelu arrives in the United States without the concept of race. But she suffers there under the shadow of color discrimination. American white men view black women differently in the world of whites blacks used to hide their own identity. While searching the job Ifemelu has suggested adopting the new style by a white counselor at the time of interview.it has been stated as:

When she told Ruth about the interview in Baltimore, Ruth said, only advice? Lose the braids and straighten your hair. Nobody says this kind of stuff but it matters. We want to get that job.” Aunty Uju had said something similar in the past, and she had laughed then.

Now, she knew enough not to laugh. “Thank you,” she said to Ruth. (203)

It means Ifemelu is victimized because of her blackness. Her Nigerian identity is in crisis. In order to get the job, she is suggested to straighten her hair. Whites do not prefer the lady who braids their hair. Identity is an issue of studying in the areas of ethnicity, class gender, race, sexuality, and subcultures. Identity gives life to individual and secures her/him. Ifemelu feels confusion either to accept the American culture or not. Diasporic people encounter a crisis in everyday life which results in them to ranked lower in society.

One of the most highlighted aspects of this novel is unlike most immigrant stories, Ifemelu decides to return Nigeria . Her foot back to Nigeria proves that she is disappointed with the life of America. Ifemelu is doomed to be a failure.,It is like cursed happiness and pleasure. The dream of prosperity and happiness is totally failed. The term *Americanah* is used to Ifemelu by Nigerian in the sense that she has assimilated the certain aspects of American culture.

The experience of Ifemelu as an outsider in the United States helps to understand how difficult to adopt a new identity imposed by society and the country's perception of a category such as race and how an individual becomes disillusioned. The fact that race is undoubtedly taken as the visual realities which affect the lives of many African American. Keith states that:

Assumptions linked to physical difference stem from the widespread belief during slavery times that dark skin and African features were a sign of lack of intelligence, ugliness, and evil, whereas light skin represented purity, civilization, and beauty. (27)

It shows all these assumptions about physical features, as opposed to Eurocentric ideals of beauty. Hair texture, the shade of one's skin or certain beauty practices may seem serious topics. Africans were taken as less intelligence, passive, ugly whereas whites were taken as more active, intelligent, bold in the society. Ifemelu's certificate from Nigerian university is not valued in the United States by the fellowship. One of the whites Wambui once said that:

WAMBUI HAD TOLD everyone that Ifemelu was looking for a job. Dorothy, the girly Ugandan with long braids who worked as a waitress in center city, said her restaurant was hiring. But first, Mwombeki, the Tanzanian double major in engineering and political science, looked over Ifemelu's resume and asked her to delete the three years of university in Nigeria. American employers did not like lower-level employees to be too educated. (139)

It clearly shows how much Africans are devalued by the whites. Ifemelu receives an impolite and unexpected answer from the employee. Her belief in the American Dream is destroyed because she faced the challenges in unequal society. The education certificate from Nigerian is mixed with mud and soil by American. The fact is that African – Americans were discriminated and did not have the same opportunities as whites. Still, Ifemelu did not lose her faith. It is important to

realize that Ifemelu is not a poor, lazy, and irresponsible person. In contrary, she is Strength, sincere, cheerful, well-educated and hardworking person who is willing to contribute significantly to the growth and development of U.S. Ifemelu is oppressed and marginalized because of her racial background and points her to do the lower graded job.

African American rarely gett respect or decent jobs because " white Americans commonly denied blacks their humanity, dignity, and value" and achieving anything, the especially American dream, was hard for them (177). Results of such discrimination were their exhaustion, poverty, great anger, and disappointment, as it can see from Ifemelu's life from these lines:

“My hostel in Nsukka was dirty but there was no rats’.

“It’s a mouse, “Ginika said. Ifemelu was about to sign a lease- if saving money meant living with mice” (127). It means lives in Nigeria are somehow difficulties to adjust but not the situation to mix their life with animals like Rats’. Students’ lives are very difficulties in America those who are immigrants.

The play also shows how job discrimination affected female Africans like Ifemelu in America. In case of searching job Ifemelu highly dissatisfied with the Whites who used to give the job. No doubt Ifemelu is a perfect lady in everything. Her Certificates are all fine .along with fine certificates she is a very decent girl. Always she attained in an interview with full preparation but time and again she is not selected. For in selecting the job the main reason is that she is a black lady. Somewhere she is urged to do dis respectable job as well as the job of the lower level. One of the employees said:

So here's the deal. There are two positions, one for office work and others for help relaxing. The official position has already been filled. She started yesterday, she goes to

Bryn Mawr, and she'll spend the whole week just clearing up my backlog of stuff. I bet I have some unopened cheques in there somewhere." He withdrew a hand to gesture towards his messy desk. "Now what I need is a help to relax. If you want the job you have it. I'd pay you a hundred dollars a day, with the possibility of a raise, and you'd work as needed, no set schedule. (143)

These show the suffering and the conditions of educated young Nigerians in America. The high reputed job is not given chance to black. For earning money black lady has urged to sell their body. This pity condition frustrated the Ifemelu. Ifemelu has difficulties to pay the money in universities. "Each day, there seemed to be a letter for her on the kitchen table, and inside the envelope was a tuition bill, and words printed in capital letters. YOUR RECORDS WILL BE FROZEN UNLESS PAYMENT IS RECEIVED BY THE DATE AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS NOTICE" (132). Moreover, Ifemelu is not allowed to work with a student visa, her aunt arranges for her to use a friend's identity to find work; Ifemelu is only able to find the job where she is paid to have sex with a tennis coach.

"Come over here," he said. "I need to be warm."

She should leave now. The power balance was titled in his favor, had been titled in his favor since she walked into his house. She should leave. She stood up

. "I can't have sex," she said. Her voice felt s squeaky, unsure of itself.

"I can't have sex with you," she repeated.

Oh no, don't expect you to," he said, too quickly. She moved slowly towards the door, wondering if he had a gun. "Just come here and lie down," he said. "Keep me warm. I will touch you a little bit, nothing you'll be uncomfortable with. I just need some human contact to relax.

“She had lain on his bed, and when he placed her hand between his legs, she had curled and moved her fingers. Now, even after she had washed her hands, holding the crisp, slender hundred dollar bill he had given her, her fingers still felt sticky: they no longer belonged to her. (153)

These lines show that the moment to sell her body by sleeping with that white man who prove very pathetic condition Ifemelu. She did all because of the financial crisis. Ifemelu compels to share a bed with that fellow in order to pay rent and tuition fees. She thinks a lot but compels to do decision because she searches for a job but desperately and not being able to find the job, agrees to sleep with the man. Ifemelu appears to be disillusioned as she reaches there. Her dreams of being success Students shatters at the moment when she does not find a job and compelled to do grade job. Blacks were hated, despised not by family, friends but by an entire race. Fanon said that Color prejudices:

It (color prejudice) is nothing more than the unreasoning hatred of one race for another, the contempt of the stronger and richer peoples for those whom they consider inferior to themselves, and the bitter resentment of those who are kept in subjection and are so frequently insulted. As color is the most obvious outward manifestation of a race it has been made the criterion by which men prejudged, irrespective of their social or educational attainments. The light skinned races have come to despise all those of a darker color and the dark-skinned peoples will no longer accept without protest the inferior position to which they have been relegated. (406)

African –American with a white heritage were supposed to be smarter and superior to dark-skinned blacks. With regard, the area of opportunities for education, acquisitions of land and property have been determined. Colorism was a device used by the white colonist in order to

create a division. Skin color discrimination in education affects individuals in different ways depending on gender too. Ifemelu also faced several difficulties in the journey of achieving higher education. Ifemelu has to take source and force from whites to get her eyebrows waxed.

“Hi. I’d like to get my eyebrows waxed.”

“We don’t do curly,” she called man said.

“You don’t do curly”?

“No sorry.”

Ifemelu gave the woman a long look; it was not worth an argument. If they did not do curly, then they did not do curly, whatever curly was. She called Curt and asked him to turn around and come back for her because the salon did not do curly. Curt walked in, his blue eyes bluer, and said he wanted to talk to the manager right away. “You are going to fucking place. You don’t deserve to have a license.”

The woman transformed into a smiling, solicitous coquette. I’m so sorry, it was a misunderstanding,” she said. (292)

These lines show the color discrimination. Ifemelu being a black gets rejected by the woman for doing curly hair. For the small things, she used to call the Curt. While curt told about for her curly the woman apologized sorry and permits to do curly.

Similarly Eduardo Bonilla- Silva in his book *Racism without Racists: Color- Bind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* states:

Nowadays, except for members of white supremacist organizations, few whites in the United States claim to be “racist”. Most whites assert they “don’t see any color, just people”; that although the ugly face of discrimination is still with us, it is no longer the center factor determining minorities’ life chances; and finally, that, like Dr. Martin

Luther King Jr., they aspire to live in a society where “people are judged by the content and their character, not by the color of the skin.” More poignantly, most whites insist that minorities (especially blacks) are the ones responsible for whatever “race problem” we have in this country. (2)

It shows Silva confronts the current racial ideology existing in America, which he defines as color-blind racism, and provides a conceptual framework for understanding colorblindness and its function in society. In this post –civil right era, most Whites would rarely identify themselves as racist. Rather, they see race as an irrelevant factor in the United States declaring that they don’t see color, just people. Kelly J. Cutler argues that “the new racism” appears invisible and more covert while dominated by the notion of color blindness. Bonilla- Silva asserts that color-blind racism has become the dominant racial ideology in America as a means for justifying order in society. With response to it, Adichie’s *Americanah*’s characters’ From Nigeria to the United States faces the ideology constructed by whites. Adichie clearly shows the suffering of characters in the post-civil rights era. Beside Ifemelu next protagonist of novel Obinze who had gone to England said:

I think the class in this country is in the air that people breathe. Everyone knows their place. Even the people who are angry about class have somehow accepted their place, Obinze said. ‘A white boy and a black girl who grow up in the same working-class town in this country can get together and the race will be secondary, but in America, even if the white boy and black girl grow up in the same neighborhood, the race would be primary. (275)

To supports the lines said by Obinze, Ifemelu is real culprit which has been proved above in many paragraphs. America and particularly European countries are a country of hope and

securities for Nigerians Obinze a boyfriend of Ifemelu from Nigeria departs to England whereas Ifemelu departs to the United States. Undoubtedly both experience the hardships and prejudiced in secondary land because of blackness. America is one step ahead in terms of racial discrimination. Even though they claimed they do not discriminate in name of color after Jim Crow law passed, but whites used to discriminate black from several countries invisibly and visibly too. Adichie's a famous African American writer clearly depicts in *Americanah* through the variable characters. Ifemelu is marginalized and oppressed primarily because she is black. While responding to her White American classmate who denies the existence of racism in America, Ifemelu argues that "Racism should never have happened and so you don't get a cookie for reducing it" (223). Still discussing and devastating impacts of racism on black people like her and why white Americans' are not impacted by it? Ifemelu argues that "race doesn't really exist for you because it has never been a barrier. Black folks don't have that choice." Not only the above quote suggests that racial discrimination is deeply ingrained in the U.S, but it demonstrates its damaging effect on the black population in America.

Ifemelu is not willing to accept or assimilate to the American lifestyle. Indeed, she hates the American way of life largely due to her negative experiences with racism and discrimination in the country. "She was somehow irrevocably altered by America, had grown thorns on her skin" (17). Finally, the only option to Ifemelu remains is to leave for her country. As Ifemelu's displeasure for American civilization and race relations demonstrate many immigrants, despite their desire to come to America, live in America, raise their children in America and achieve the American Dreams, do not necessarily want to assimilate into American culture. This is because she doesn't find the American lifestyles compelling or superior enough to assimilate into. She believes, in fact, that her own ways of life back in their native countries are far superior to the

American values they live in.

She began to plan and dream, to apply for jobs in Lagos. She did not tell Blaine at first because she wanted to finish her fellowship at Princeton, and then after her fellowship ended, she did not tell him because she wanted to give herself time to sure. But as the week's passes, he knew she would never be sure. So she told him that she was moving back, and she added, 'I have to go,' knowing he would hear in her words the sound of an ending. (7)

She becomes nostalgic and determines to return to Nigeria without her improved material success. She has a true affair with American Blaine, but she could not find inner satisfaction with anything except her return to the homeland.

Finally, Ifemelu starts feeling like she is truly home again. She no longer has to ask Ranyinudo for advice in going to the market, and she is used to waking up to the sound of peacocks. She gains some more weight and vaguely thinks that she wants to lose it before she sees Obinze again. Her work at Zoe, however, becomes stifling. She is always supposed to interview the same rich, vapid women and mingles with advertisers at parties. (334)

This shows that Ifemelu finds a new identity for herself back in Nigeria. She becomes nostalgic and finally returns to Nigeria without her improved material success. Certainly, many Americans would like for immigrants to come into the U.S. and assimilate into mainstream American culture. However, a character like Ifemelu rejects American civilization and do not want to be part of it. Ifemelu's return to her motherland is an indictment of the failure of the American Dream.

Ifemelu feels a sense of loss in American society after passing fifteen long years. She

doesn't feel comfortable as she covers a long distance just to braid her hair. It shows that she is in search of her own African culture. She is not feeling for comfortable and find difficult to adjust in American society. Her mind is full of feeling her homeland. She is reminded of the line said by her close friend Ranyinudo “Lagos is full of American returners, so you come back and join them” (14). In fact, this case is not only the condition of Ifemelu but also the case of all diasporic people. Later Ifemelu somehow assimilates with American culture and she herself starts the blogs and collects the things experienced by black all over there from America. But nothing makes her satisfied. In any contest, she could not become equal to native. Even minor things hurt the immigrant's mind. Due to which Ifemelu choose to return back to her country. The things she hopes fifteen years ago in Nigeria limits itself to only hope not she gained in realities.

This research paper shows the African American teenager Ifemelu's pathetic and painful journey in the search of happiness. Ifemelu has a dream to live a prosperous life, she fails to achieve her goal after indulging in the American's lives and suffers a lot and after fifteen years, returns back to own homeland. Compounding her struggles and the agonizing situation, she faces challenges in order to live in equality and peace of mind. Here, researcher exposes the failure of the American dream. The dream of happiness and prosperity is totally failed. The inner satisfaction never arises when there is no sense of adjustment or solid placement. Due to which immigrants are compelled to feel alien. The mistreatment and racial discrimination lead Ifemelu to feel humiliated and disappointed.

It's clear that people are opportunity seekers, always in the quest; they always run after name, fame, power fortune and for their better life. Similar is doing by *Americanah's* protagonist Ifemelu. America is, in fact, a promised land for Ifemelu. None likes to be ruled by others nor wants to be a slave. Everyone has rights to live their life in their own way and in a

valued way. In such Promised Land Ifemelu faces the color discrimination and inequality in several ways. She even tries to escape from discrimination, domination, and injustice. But time to time she is tamed in the rope of discrimination in varied ways sometimes visibly and invisibly too. Ifemelu moves the United States for better opportunities and education. She comes here in the quest for social, education, economic opportunities as well as political and religious freedom. After many years of struggles and a certain level of achievement, Ifemelu meets a certain level of height and comfort. Thus, she does not become happy. The reason appears to be racial prejudices. And finally, the only option to Ifemelu finds is her country and the people. She becomes nostalgic and determines to return to Nigeria without her improved material success. Thus the researcher concludes that Ifemelu feels disappointed with their life and turns towards the American world instigates the failure of the American Dream.

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