

Plight and Predicament of Black Women: A Feminist Reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Purple Hibiscus"

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Abstract

The word literature refers to a group of words of art made up of fiction and non-fiction especially by the written works of authors. Literature has also been divided according to its language, nationality and region namely, Indian Literature, African Literature, American Literature and so on. African literature is the literature about the African continent and it has begun thousands of years ago but it has gained much popularity in the 1950s. It incorporates a body of works in different languages and regions of different authors. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, one of the leading African woman writers highlights the uniqueness of Nigerian culture and its shortcoming. In her novel Purple Hibiscus, she apparently depicts the culture bound enslavement imposed upon innocent women and their encumbrances in the African society. Woman becomes an object to fulfil man's inordinate desires. Hence, the objective of the study is to bring out the plight of black women who have been victims of their culture and society.

Keywords: Black Women, Culture, Identity, Suffrages, Violence.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, one of the most influential writers in 20th century belongs to Nigeria. She is popularly known as novelist, short story writer and non-fiction writer. Her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) has won an Orange prize for fiction and long listed for the Booker prize in 2004. Her famous novel collections are *Americanah*, *Half of the Yellow Sun*, *The Things Around your Neck* and many other works. The novel *Purple Hibiscus* explores the different dimensions of black feminism by analysing the way of men with pessimistic towards women. Kambili, the protagonist of the novel is dominated by her father from her youth age. Later, in the middle of the novel, she has realised herself and she becomes little open up with her brother Jaja and with her aunt Ifeoma. In the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, the protagonist of the family has more belief and as much as were based on colonized people in their home followed by strict rules and more judgments. Adichie's debut novel is also considered both the African literature and Nigerian literature and culture of Igbo. Feminism is an issue of modern society, cutting across culture, race, ethnicity and status. Adichie in the novel aims to bring out a change in the attitude of society.

The term feminism can inculcate equal rights and judicial assurance for women. Feminism can be described as cultural, political and social movements and sociology theories. These theories were concerned with the issues of gender and supports for women's rights and interests. In the year 1942 Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker has divided the

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history of feminism in three waves which includes first wave, second wave and the third waves of feminism.

And also Motley feminists and scholars have divided the movements and history into three waves. The first wave of feminism examines the women's suffrage movement and concerned for women's right to vote of the nineteenth and twentieth century's in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the second wave of feminism found the ideas and actions equated with the women's liberation movement for legal and social rights for women in the beginning of the year 1960. And in the third wave feminist movement continued the spotted failures of second wave feminism beginning in the year 1990.

Black feminism movement grows out and argues about the liberation movement and the woman's movement. The black feminism movement has formed in the consequence who taught they were being in ethnologically subjugated in the women's movement and desirably repressed in the Black Liberation movement. Black feminism denotes the black men and women whom connected with white women and men.

Black feminism denotes the experiences and suffrages of black women in relation to sex, class oppression and racism. The experience of being a black woman cannot be grasped in terms of being a black or of being a woman, but it is elucidated by intersectionality. A black feminist opens up in the United States was first progress by black women to make sense of how white supremacy and patriarchy interacted to inform the particular experiences of enslaved black women. Black feminist movement is said as second wave of American women's movement which has begun in the late 1960s.

Adichie in her novel *Purple Hibiscus* identifies numerous conducts in which women live through discrimination. Women are sorrowful and accepted through emotional trauma. Female family are seen as low-grade to gentleman ones. Adichie demonstrates this take step of discrimination through Chief Eugene Achibe who uses his holy beliefs to enchain his family. The novel uses a female disposition Kambili who is the major spirit to distinguish the story. Other foremost women typescript are Beatrice- Kambili's mother, Ifeoma- Kambili's aunt and the promote women. The chronicler of the story and these lettering offers the interpretation of women who are pretensions exactly to violence, gender discrimination and enslaves committed in their lives. Here, Beatrice portrayed as a slave and abandon by her husband.

The African background additionally sees the gentleman kids as individuals to get hold of their dad's possessions hither to the females are hitched out to substantial men. Jaja is viewed as the one to get his dad's materials time Kambili is to be hitched out. Female brood is not to be viewed as ware to be sold out. In the result that Jaja preserve be in the position to attain his father's property. Kambili must to as well include both privileges to buy her father's property. Family has to be certain counterpart constitutional rights and status.

Female as a parent, newborn upbringing is an essential back number in a family. Women hold additional bang on the brood than men. Mothers create their family in adoration,

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which men lip service understands. Adichie in her novel, *Purple Hibiscus* depicts a man's background and a woman's parentage.

Womenism occurs when the male head of a family has the power to control the female by his own perspectives. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Eugene Achike has been depicted as a modern citizen and a family man, turns out to be a man of domination and inflicts injury on his wife, children, sister and father by physically and psychologically. The traditional African family united with extended relatives on the paternal and maternal sites. The Achike family is categorized by Eugene Achike, his wife Beatrice, son Jaja, daughter Kambili, aunt Ifeoma and with her family members have been formed as a nuclear family.

Adichie in the novel paints an art of the superiority in a traditional African family with an environment of black feminism. Eugene is a loyal catholic, devoted and self-effacing. He is held in high esteem by both priest and congregation of the church he attends regularly with his family St. Agnes Catholic church. Eugene and aunt Ifeoma are siblings from the same parents. Eugene, the elder son despises his father. This difference between these two Eugene and his sister Ifeoma has become a contention. He used to control his wife and his children. Adichie highlights Eugene's inherent violence with his family members as:

"... we let our light shine before men, we are reflecting Christ's triumphant entry", he said that Palm Sunday (Adichie. 4).

"...Igbo customs and language with Catholic ritual and which incorporates men into her gender politics and embraces the literary traditions of her elders Chinua Achebe, Ngugiwa Thiong'o and Alice Walker" (1).

Fifteen year old Kambili lives in fear of her father who is a charismatic violent catholic patriarch. Though he is generous and well-respected among his community people he is repressive and fanatically religious at home. She fears his violent punishments and her world view is based on his strict catholic faith, though a more liberal one based on that of father Amadi and her aunty Ifeoma.

"... in brown spirals like uncoiling springs, and I could taste the sand that settled on my lips." (Adichie. 47)

According to *Awake!* "...women live with a constant fear of attract in the one place they should feel the safest – their own home. Yet, sympathy is all too often shown the perpetrator instead of the victims" (4).

Escape and the discovery of a liberated way of life have come when Nigeria is shaken by a deadly military coup. Kambili's aunt house is filled with full of noise and laughter. The family members are shocked to see and adopt with the surroundings of aunt home. Kambili is very silent in the house and she feels hesitated to talk frequently with all members of her aunt family.

"...See, the Purple Hibiscuses are about to bloom," Jaja said, as we got out of the car. He was pointing, although I did not need him to. I could see the sleepy, oval-shape buds in the front yard as they swayed ..." (Adichie. 253)

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Later, Kambili's life has bloomed like a purple hibiscus flower in her aunt house. She feels many changes in her behaviour while almost attaining her menopause. Jaja is fascinated by the Purple Hibiscus in Ifeoma's garden. Amadi gives his paintings to Kambili. One day, Papa finds out and he beats Kambili severely. Her love towards Amadi has gone deeply who seems attracted to her.

“Above, clouds like dyed cotton wool hang low, so low I feel I can reach out squeeze the moisture from them. (Adichie. 307)”

However, “I used to wonder why she polished them each time I heard sounds from their room, like something banged against the door. She spent at least a quarter of an hour on each ballet-dancing figurine. There were never tears on her face” (10).

A female makeup which accurately reflects the job of women in the population is Beatrice Achike, besides established as Mama. Kambili's mother, a quiet, obedient female who takes consideration of her family but does not preach out against Papa's violence. After Kambili's birth she suffers quite a lot of miscarriages as of Papa's beatings. She feels she cannot put off such a wealthy and socially foremost and still generous man. But as his foul language worsens and he causes nevertheless an additional miscarriage for Mama, she does little by little poison Papa. After the overthrow, Kambili and his family gets the anticipation of future.

Moreover, for the reason that of supervise of the family men damage their wives. They are putting their wives below them as they are in the charge of every condition in the family. This abuse to husband is described through the atmosphere of Kambili's priest Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus* by Adichie. He not single does sour possessions but refuse to apologise. Readers bottle make firmer this whereas Kambili expresses that she predestined to disclose she was sad Papa bankrupt her mother's figurines, but the expressions that came out were, she was unhappy as breakables broke. Existence a resolute Christian Eugene does not concentration about anybody, while it comes to clothes associated to place of worship matter, in spite of that he discriminates in the company of his children.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Papa Eugene symbolizes as a violence and pessimistic towards women. This novel is an intoxicating story that is distinctly feminine, African and universal in theme. The same perspective, Ifeoma's garden Purple Hibiscus has begun and the process to break the silence of Kambili. It creates a space for people of freedom that empowers people to be, to do as the narrator tells us. Adichie is a fresh new voice out of Africa to look around the African culture and society.

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