

## Exploring Power Structure and Females' Subjugation: A Marxist Feminist Analysis of *Things Fall Apart*

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### ABSTRACT

*The present paper aims to scrutinize and unmask multifaceted webs of power structures and female suppression. The paper presents the power dynamics, marginalization of female characters, and patriarchy in Ibo culture. Economic disequilibrium in the culture is the root cause of gender inequalities, male dominance, and female subordination. In his novel, Achebe manifests female's unpaid labor, socio-economic position, and their contribution to farming. Preparation of food, bearing children, securing male lineage, and fulfilling marital duties are regarded as primary tasks of female characters in the novel. The text of "Things Fall Apart" has been scrutinized by keeping in mind the approach of close reading. The ideology of Marxist Feminism propounded by Engels (1884) has been taken into consideration to get a better understanding of female suppression. Okonkwo's wives are diligent but they lack social status. This research paper endeavors to analyze self-imposed constraints upon unrecognized female characters. The paper will give a new insight into interlocking systems of oppression, patriarchy, and economic disequilibrium.*

**Keywords;** Marxism, Feminism, Suppression, Patriarchy, Subjugation, Marginalization

### INTRODUCTION

Over the years revolutions in education have changed the thinking pattern of every Tom Dick, and Harry and the suppressed classes of the society have raised their voices to retrieve their fundamental rights. So, marginalized and suppressed females around the world launched various movements to claim rights equal to men, emancipation from the suppression and universal suffrage. The feminist movement launched in the 18th century achieved its objectives but in a partial way. Struggle for the economic autonomy became a motivation for the rise of Feminism (Jonsson & Neunsinger, 2022). Modern critics, activists, philosophers, and literary authors conclude that females cannot get emancipation unless they become independent. Marxist feminists lifted their voices to attain economic equality. Marxist feminism is the progeny of Marxism and Feminism. Marxist Feminism theory has some deep links with various disciplines like; Political science, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, and History. Marx (2018/1894) discusses only two classes; proletariat and bourgeois. He did not directly thrash out the female inequality but females are marginalized due to lack of wealth. *Things Fall Apart* portrays the picture of female marginalization. In the novel, author unmasks the atrocities and injustice done to female characters.

### **Introduction of the novel**

Achebe is regarded as a multifaceted and prominent figure in the arena of postcolonial literature. He printed an indelible mark in the history of African literature. *Things Fall Apart* reflects the Aristotelian concept of tragedy. The novel exhibits the African identity and Nigerian nationalism. His literary compositions familiarize Igbo Culture with the whole world. According to Gupta (2024), *Things Fall Apart* rejects the colonial fabricated discourse about innocent Orientals. Achebe fights against the colonial rules with the means of literature, particularly storytelling. It is a type of counter-narrative. Such types of literature sharpen the momentum of decolonization. He challenged the colonizer's narrative. In his narrative, Achebe has focused on male dominance because Okonkwo is a known wrestler, fearless, ambitious, and diligent, a man of action and bravery. On the other hand, women are portrayed as dependent, domesticated, and yielding.

Achebe's writing style is multidimensional. He is regarded as a world-class literary iconic figure. His explicit, implicit, and diverse facets of individuality appeal to literary as well as non-literary biographers to cover all the hemispheres of his life. Iluebe and Exeifeka (2023) conducted research on a biographical text on Achebe. They evaluated a stylistic study to analyze multiple social identities of Achebe. The researchers explored the personal, social, literary, individual, and collective identity of Achebe. They concluded that the author's multifaceted personality has a positive impact on literary style. The psychological identity of Achebe made him a global literary icon in the African culture as well as around the world. Achebe also secured a religious identity and preached his Christian faith through his literary compositions. Through his fictions, Achebe predicted the coming events in the history of Igbo society. Racial identity holds a significant place among other identities. African people are mostly black-skinned. A subjective discourse has been developed by white people, but Achebe rejected the biased discourse and proved that black people have their own specific, strong culture. *Things Fall Apart* unveils that all the tribes are leading their lives according to the values, customs, and traditions of their culture. All the identities were secured with the use of stylistically different lexical items and linguistic patterns such as attributive and predictive adjectives, abstract and concrete nouns, declarative, explicit, and implicit attitudinal patterns, references, and Intertextuality are the foregrounding of his mark of identity.

There are two major literary influences on Achebe, one of them is Michel Foucault, a European philosopher, and the other influence was the oral tradition of Igbo culture. The oral tradition of fables, cosmology, and proverbial style is the influence of Igbo culture on Achebe. He was part of Igbo culture, as proved by his literary compositions, because most of his anecdotes and folklores reveal his solidarity with the Igbo people. He forged skillfully his cultural folklore in his novels. In personal essays and fiction, he has presented the finest example of his oratory. His fables, proverbs, and anecdotes appropriately contest subjective colonial discourse. Achebe has used almost all the techniques and tools that were used in Africa for storytelling, such as symbolism, stylization, obliqueness, allusion, hyperbole, imagery, direct address, digression, parallelism, piling and association, tonal variation, and repetition (Mumia 2022). Igbo's rhetoric and oratory aspects of storytelling are different from those of Europeans, Romans, and Greeks. They are unique in this tradition because it requires mastery in its interpretation. Achebe has emerged as an African art form and the rhetorical strategies that enriched his fiction. The narrator in *Things Fall Apart* is omniscient. He also manifests the significance of the art of storytelling in Igbo culture. Even the conversation is highly proverbial; proverbs are regarded as palm oil with which words are eaten. Most of post post-colonial novel encompasses the theme of cultural conflict as a major theme. When the people of different societies come together, a clash of values, traditions, beliefs, and practices comes into being. Azad (2025) explores the conflict in *Things Fall Apart* when the native Igbo and the colonial missionaries encounter. The novel presents a sociopolitical transition in Nigeria because the country was on the brink of decolonization.

The novel is a literary master piece as well as a historical manuscript because it unpacks the experience of a society that faces cultural, social, economic, religious, and political upheaval. The whole story revolves around a tragic figure, Okonkwo. He has a determined soul. He is a symbol of resistance against British administration in Umuofia. Economic disequilibrium between male and female characters is also one of the aspects of cultural conflicts. The novel depicts the patriarchal mechanism of society. Okonkwo is an embodiment of masculinity. All the sources of income are in the custody of men; only women are puppets in the hands of their patriarchal husbands. He is also physically strong, aggressive, stoic, successful, emotional, and an economically well-off person of his tribe, thus he has a jurisdictionally influential character.

Rahim et al. (2025) claim that *Things Fall Apart* is widely regarded as a post-literary piece of writing. It can be examined under a multidisciplinary approach because it has been woven with the threads of sociology, anthropology, feminism, Marxism, etc. The novel also offers a gender-based approach in the domain of linguistics. With the help of transitivity analysis, the researchers have explored the role of major male and female characters. The results disclose who is an actor or practicing his agency and power to impose his will upon other people. The male members of the community have the agency to force the females to act upon their will.

The transitivity approach to analyzing *Things Fall Apart* unmask the ways in which linguistic strategies help to fix the position of female characters as passive, victimized, stressed, and oppressed. Achebe has drawn male characters who are dominant and strong in every walk of life. The female characters are weak and submissive. Women have been treated like a commodity; their agency has been negated. Only men enjoy authority, power, and agency.

Okonkwo was clearly cut out for great things. He was still young, but he had found fame as the greatest wrestler. He was a wealthy farmer and had just married his third wife. No matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children, he was not really a man. (Achebe, 1958, p.8). The prosperity in the Igbo community is measured by the rule over women. On the other hand, females lack such prosperity. According to the cultural values, if a person is unable to rule the women and children, his authority and masculinity become delegitimized. In his novel Achebe has applied binary opposition between male and female characters. The positive adjectives have been associated with men. Women are portrayed as cowardly and as a symbol of frailty. Even the unsuccessful people in Umuofia were called women. These are anti feminist values. The cultural criterion of manhood in the town consists of the achievement of grand titles in wrestling.

Neupane (2025) asserts that *Things Fall Apart* is a portrayal of female exploitation and aggression. Brutality and aggression are not personal traits of an individual; they can be identified in systemic ways in the primitive communities. Aggression in postcolonial novels is a symptom of oppression by white masters. Oppression is there in both colonial and postcolonial perspectives.

In Praseeba and Royappa's (2025) view, two of Achebe's novels have content to be performed in the theatre. *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God* are enriched with material for theatrical adaptation and performance. In a theatre, language is above communication because it is used as a powerful tool to act out others. Along with a literary piece of art, *Things Fall Apart* carries cultural representation. Its content is rich in symbolic elements, proverbs, rituals, and folklore. It has dialogues that have the force of performativity. Achebe's art of oral storytelling in the novel appeals to the readers. The power dynamics are reshaped by language. The storytelling is not passing information; it incorporates cultural associations and memory. Achebe's literary compositions are like theatrical spaces where language is spoken to perform acts. Language carries the struggle for decolonization on political, social, and cultural grounds. It

is serving as a profound mark of the social, cultural, and political identity of Nigerians. Achebe has used language to transmit cultural heritage, beliefs, and oral storytelling traditions.

Adhikari (2025) asserts that sabotaging culture is an essential target of colonial rulers. In Nigeria, colonial masters sabotaged and disrupted Igbo culture in a systematic way. Traditional practices, ideologies, and beliefs were exterminated to dismantle the native people. This hegemony manifests the implementation of Occidental's religious beliefs, judicial mechanisms, and social structures over existing native's culture. The arrival of British missionaries and colonial masters generated a crisis that led to the loss of identity. Colonialism disrupted both economic structures and cultural fabrics in Nigeria.

The character of Okonkwo is a symbol of resistance against the change brought by colonial masters. His struggle to resist the foreign ruler exemplifies his endeavor to protect his companions from foreign influences. He adhered to traditional values till his death. His clashes with administrators are based on ideologies. *Things Fall Apart* manifests that in the Igbo tribes, women are dependent and insignificant. They did work shoulder to shoulder with their male and female member but got nothing in return. Their jobs are to bear babies and keep their husbands happy at every cost. They were constrained to challenge any male power and look into the hut. Even the colonial masters disrupted their role in the community. Primarily, women in Igbo culture are viewed as managers of their domestic affairs. Ekwefi is an embodiment of a typical woman in the culture. Her duty is to look after her daughter, Ezinma. Marriages and polygamy in that culture seal the idea that keeping women is a symbol of status for men, and it reinforces their economic status. Women are treated as commodities and property because they are traded in marriages. Women have a itsy bitsy role to play in the community, such as priestesses, mothers, laborers, caretakers, farmers' assistants, etc.

Females' decision-making power is confined to their family and domestic life. They have no access to the political and public decisions because they are undertaken by men only. Adhikari states that Ezinma is intelligent and has influence over Okonkwo, but is obliged to perform a typical role in the community because of gender inequality. The arrival of the colonial role sabotaged the traditional role of women. Some women adopted new opportunities because they were empowered by the church administration. The traditional role of women was called into question. *Things Fall Apart* is a profound critique of the impacts of colonialism on native culture. The female characters were given worth equal to men. They were considered human beings rather than a commodity. In traditional Igbo society, women were worthless and dependent. Female characters are inactive in traditional practices and governance.

### **Introduction to Achebe**

Albert Chinua Lumogu Achebe who was known as Chinua Achebe remained alive from 1930 to 2013. He was a multifaceted person and renowned African poet, essayist, critic, and novelist who represented the Igbo culture of Nigeria. He has left indelible marks in the genre of novels. Through his novels he challenged the claims of imperial masters who used to say; that colonized people have weak cultural values. He is regarded as the father of modern African literature (Maria, 2011). He holds Brobdingnagian status in the realm of modern fiction. Achebe highly propagated Igbo culture and tradition and reformed the minds of colonial people who subjectively portrayed Africa as a savage land.

Haglund (2013) claims; that Achebe began *Things Fall Apart* in (1952) but published in (1958). Through this novel, Achebe tried to encounter a colonial perspective that misrepresented African culture. Henceforth it is mostly read African novel. The novel is split into three parts and tells the story of the late 19th century. The novel incorporates the themes of tradition, masculinity, strength, isolation, courage, primitive V S new culture, colonialism, and feminism. The whole story revolves around Okonkwo who is

the protagonist of the novel. Through *Things Fall Apart* Achebe gave political, socio-economic and psychological insight to the African people. The indigenous people believed in the biased picture of Africa drawn by colonizers (Lynn, 2017).

### **Objectives**

Objectives are the essential part of a research work. The objectives of this study are to Determine the relationship between wealth and female subjugation. Evaluate the fundamental causes of female unhappiness in the novel. Explore links between power structures and wealth. Examine patriarchy as the cause of female suppression.

### **Significance of Study**

The present paper is significant because it is not concerned with any limited group of people. It deals with females of the entire world. First time in history Marxist Feminists paid heed to economic and gender-based bifurcation. Female suppression is taken for granted in the back world countries. Marxist feminists advocated for women to make them capable of encountering men in every walk of life. This paper delves into exploring the factors behind female oppression, poverty, and marginalization. It is significant for opening new horizons and the deep analysis of the socio-economic status of females in Igbo culture. Capitalism and patriarchy have paralyzed female freedom. It has bifurcated human beings into superior, inferior, bourgeoisie, and proletariat (Tylor, 2021). Gender roles and their complex dynamics are focused on the primitive culture of the society. The roles of women are to give birth to babies and do hard works like robots rather than decision-making processes.

Methodology is an essential part of the research work. It provides step by step plan and road map to conclude. In this study, Achebe's single novel *Things Fall Apart* is explored from the perspective of Marxist Feminism. The text of the novel is analyzed with the approach of close reading. According to Cresswell (2013) in qualitative research the researcher plays the role of an interpreter. It is an appropriate method used to analyze literary text under the umbrella of qualitative research. This method pays close attention to figuring out the meanings of a literary text. Close reading is an appropriate method to explore a larger portion and structure of the text. The readers can easily extract what the author communicates (Brymen, 2016). Along with some other resources text of *Things Fall Apart* is primary data for this paper.

The content of the novel is analyzed by keeping in mind the symbols, characters, the novel's cultural and socio-economic background, and thematic aspects of the novel. All the major female characters are analyzed to highlight the suppression, discrimination, inequalities, subjugation, and injustice done to women. According to Aksan and Baki (2017) close reading is a suitable method to analyze the text in the discipline of social sciences. Write a connecting sentence

Theory is an unending set of ideas. In a research theoretical framework provides a lens to find the objectives to draw conclusions. Marxist feminism is an appropriate principal theory for this novel to scrutinize the power structures that force females to play inferior roles in the community. This theory is the progeny of Feminism and Marxism. *The Capital* (1867) and *The Origin of the Family and Private Property and the State* (1884). both books contribute material to erect the foundation of Marxist Feminism. Engels (1820-1895) Marx (1818-1883) did not directly focus on female suppression. They were in favor of a classless society and equality of men and women. Capitalism and Patriarchy exploit females in modern times. Females work side by side with men but they are paid less than males. In the light of this theory, females in the capitalist mechanism are a source of workforces. The workforce for the capitalist is brought up free of cost. Females are twice marginalized in the community due to patriarchy



and capitalism. Throughout the novel, Achebe highlights injustices done to the female characters in the novel.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Achebe revolutionized African literature. *Things Fall Apart* is a highly influential and widely read novel in Africa. It has not only appealed to critics, scholars, theorists, researchers, and literary authors but researchers have also explored its various aspects through the lens of different theories to understand its meanings and message. This novel explicitly manifests the effects of colonialism on the Igbo's primitive culture. The writer throws light on the collision and subjugation of cultures through narration, characters, themes, and settings. Customs, rituals, traditions, ancestral practices, and social structures of the community are vividly portrayed. Colonial encroachment brought societal upheaval and internal division. Okonkwo is the protagonist of the novel and he is also an avatar of masculinity, dominance, knighthood, courage, and patriarchy. Achebe portrays both the pre-colonial and post-colonial history of the society. Imperial masters started converting indigenous people into Christians. They faced some challenges in preaching and spreading their religion because some tribes and their leaders resisted. Okonkwo is presented as hostile fore to the missionary's objectives (Achebe, 2021).

Traditional analysis of the text provides only a surface picture of the female characters. They are considered inferior to males in the Igbo culture, maltreated and beaten bitterly as well. Women are voiceless there and treated like pets and puppets in the hands of men. Mace (2022) explored the novel through the lens of feminism. She concluded that women are viewed as child bearers. The cultural milieu demands that women must produce male progeny. They consider females insignificant and have no pride in their personalities. Ezinma is the only child in the house moreover she is young, naive, and beautiful. Okonkwo wishes that she could be a boy. Consequences of colonial and post-colonial periods; on females have been explored in this novel. The feminist writers have given enlightenment to the females of Africa through different campaigns and movements. Now their view about their role in society has changed (Okpala, 2020).

*Things Fall Apart* is a unique literary product that captured the attention of filmmakers due to its cultural representation. Amah (2020) acknowledges that Hollywood is trying to adopt the film based on the novel. The focal point in the film is the language, rituals, festivals, costumes, food ways, orature, sports, values, and religious beliefs of the Igbo people. This novel represents the entire culture of the community; henceforth it is appropriate for film adaptation. Along with some other literary compositions Roy (2021) has analyzed female unnatural subordination in modern society. African men regard women's status inferior to men in society. They take it for granted but there is nothing natural in this school of thought. Both are equal in all respects; it is a society that assigns different roles to males and females.

In addition to the themes of feminism, the effects of British colonialism on the indigenous people are explored in the novel. The British missionaries came and implemented their educational and administrative system. First, they convinced the natives that their traditions, beliefs, norms, and institutions were irrational and null and void. Christian missionaries used religion to subdue the traditional people (Okoye, 2021). Contrary to Feminism Siddique (2020) examines the significance of masculinity in Igbo culture. Okonkwo performs all irrational deeds as he is afraid of failure like his father. The competitions of wrestling are organized every year to reveal individual masculinity. Females perform entire physical work to run their domestic affairs but they are not treated politely. All the costumes and traditions are male-centered. Decisions on tribal issues are settled by the male members of the society; females cannot interrupt those affairs.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The novel depicts a socio-economic picture of women in Igbo culture. Women are economically marginalized and suppressed.

*In the end, they decided as everybody knew they would, that the girl should go to Ogbuefi Udo to replace his murdered wife (pp. 85-86).*

Females are treated like commodities because they are compelled to marry against their will. The narrator says that a girl was given to Ogbuefi Udo as wife. The patriarchs of the tribe decided that the dispute should be settled by offering a girl for a widower. It was like the tradition of wanni (a tradition in some Asiatic regions; in which dispute is settled by offering a girl to marry) which is the transgression of human rights (Ambereen et al., 2021). The Jewry consisted of only male members of the tribe. Females had no jurisdiction to decide the fate of a girl.

*Do what you are told, women, Okonkwo thundered and stammered. When did you become one of the niches of Umuofia? And so Nwoye's mother took Ikemefuna to her hut and asked no more questions (p. 87).*

Due to his fiery temper, all the kin including his wives live under the fear of punishment. He treated his wives more impolitely than other siblings. He was a tyrant and responded when he liked. Only male members of the community are independent. They have a hold on the sources and production. Feministic attributes are negated and disliked in every walk of life in Igbo culture.

*And what made it worse in Okonkwo's case was that he had to support his mother and two sisters from his meager harvest. And supporting his mother also meant supporting his father (p. 91).*

Females were entirely dependent because they had no private or personal property. They spent time equal to the men in every industrious work but relied on the men. From the perspective of Marx females are a source of the workforce. They give birth to the workers for capitalists but gain no money and salary in return. Nwakibie had nine wives and thirty children. All wives depended on their husbands. Rahayu (2010) says that in every ceremony, women worked diligently. They worked side by side but did not enjoy a socio-economic status equal to the men.

The protagonist of the novel is always afraid of defeat. Okonkwo kept control over wives and sons by hook and by crook. He violently and tyrannically beat his wife to sustain his authority.  
*And when she returned he beat her very heavily (p.95).*

Women are ill-treated in Igbo culture. Males beat them on petty matters and little mistakes. Okonkwo mostly behaved impolitely; he beat his wife Ojiugo because she left home without his permission. Nobody criticized this approach because it was the routine of domestic life. It seems that whipping is not an abominable activity for men. All the wives of Okonkwo were freely bringing up his children; he misbehaved with them instead of paying for economic advantages. Siddique (2020) acknowledges that keeping wives, children and wealth is a symbol of status for the men of the Igbo community.

*Without further argument, Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping (p. 100).*

The reason behind this behavior is that Okonkwo wanted to keep his dominance at every cost in his domestic as well as social life. He treats his wives even worse than as a slave. He is a merciless man and

has no respect for his wives on the other hand there is no institution or Jirga (tribal council) to compensate the suppressed women. Women did not know how to get rid of this oppression. They took it naturally and for granted. The indigenous customs, rules, and traditions seem silent upon the deprivation of females' rights.

Since their childhood, the male children are trained as authoritative, dominant, influential, and dictators on the other hand females are trained as submissive, yielding, and dependent. Female characters in the novel have no dreams or ambitions (Gunawati, 2020).

He wanted him to be a prosperous man, having enough in his barn to feed the ancestors with regular sacrifice.

*And he was always happy when he heard him grumbling about women. That showed that in time he would be able to control his women-folk. No matter how prosperous a man was if he was unable to rule his women and children (and especially his women) he was not a man. He was like the man in the song who had ten and one wives and not enough soup for his foo-foo (pp. 108-109).*

Kingship and prosperity are essential only for men; thus it becomes like an intuition. Female children and wives are not given any motivation, knowledge and skills to become prosperous and independent. Men of the Igbo community always want to keep the females physically and economically inferior to males consequently females become puppets in the hands of males. Since their childhood females conceive that they must obey the order of men. Male children are familiarized with masculine traits while females are familiarized with domestic chores.

Women are shown as frail with a biased picture. The male members of the Igbo community always adored males. Ezinma who was the daughter of Okonkwo possessed all the traits of a brave and ideal man but she did not achieve status equal to the boys because she was a girl which is considered a symbol of cowardliness.

*She should have been a boy; Okonkwo said to himself again (p. 115).*

Being a girl or a woman is a matter of shame in Igbo culture. Patriarchy and intersectionality run side by side (Salem, 2018) Okonkwo again and again encouraged and motivated himself to become a brave man. It seems Achebe's views about females are like that of Shakespeare who claims that women are weak and disloyal.

*Frailty thy name is women (Hamlet 1623/ 2024).*

In Samuelsson's (2020) perspective both regard that women are incapable of governing a community. Okonkwo also gives privilege to men and does not idealize women. The novel manifests a subjective portrayal of women.

The price of a bride is fixed by men because they have caught hold of wealth. According to the Igbo culture, it seems that brides are sold and purchased.

*In this way, Akueke's bride price was finally settled at twenty bags of cowries (p. 121).*

Man is the crown of creatures and he is matchless among other creatures of God. People from the Igbo community measure the worth of human beings with the parameters of wealth. Women were treated like slaves in ancient times; because slaves were sold and purchased in the markets by the will of people. Slaves were used to do work in mines and other dangerous places (Martins, 2019). *Things Fall Apart* portrays the atrocities of the patriarchal mechanism of the society and helplessness of brides who were



purchased by males. Females have no right to fix the price of their bridegroom. Even they have no freedom of choosing their spouse. All the means of income were under the supervision of men only. Furthermore, Achebe discloses that the male fixed the price of the bride like a monger of cows and goats. Women are maltreated everywhere in Igbo culture. Even at the time of entertainment women were treated like outsiders. It is the influence of wealth that has blessed men with power, superiority, dominance, governance, and dictatorship.

*That woman standing then is my wife, Mgbafo. I married her with my money and my yams (p. 132).*

The entire sources of income are in the custody of male characters. They are the owner of farmhouses, yam barrens, and animals. They have deprived freedom and basic human rights of women. They run their social structures from the perspective of “might is right”.

That also is true. My in-law, Uzowulu, is a beast. My sister lived with him for nine years. During those years no single day passed in the sky without his beating the woman. We have tried to settle their quarrels times without a number and on each occasion Uzowulu was guilty. It is a lie Uzowulu shouted. Two years ago continued Odukwe, when she was pregnant; he beat her until she miscarried (pp. 132-133).

Some male characters reveal their brutality in their social life. Ouarodima (2018) says that the novel is about the evil practices of men against the freedom of women. The inhuman treatment of men reveals that for male members of the community, there is no worth, value, and respect for women. Women are treated like untouchable. They are submissive and did not make any complaint against this injustice. The males consider it their right to beat women on petty matters. There are two groups of people one has wealth while the other is penniless. The wealthy group consists of males who are powerful due to possessions.

Women are not socially considered equal to men. Men perceive that the inborn duty of females is to serve men. Yeasmin (2018) acknowledges economic crises have snatched life from females.

*Five women stayed behind to look after the cooking- parts (p. 147)*

The women always look busy serving the patriarchal men. They have no sky-touching ambition and transparent ideas about life. In light of Angel’s theory of feminism, women are producing a workforce for capitalist masters or patriarchal husbands. They give birth to babies and bring them up without any economic demand. They are unaware of their legal and social rights. All industrious works are done by them but they do not receive any privilege or recognition.

*We are giving our daughter today. She will be a good bride to you. She will bear you nine sons like the mother of our town (p. 148)*

Women are regarded as transformable goods. It seems that men of the Igbo community shift from one family to another family only to enlarge their family. At the time of the marriage ceremony they already assign a role to her. The in-laws have decided that the girl would serve them instead of leading their generation. They must serve them furthermore they cannot encroach in administrative and decision-making processes. Even their fate is decided without asking their accent.

Men are like rulers inside as well as outside of the house. Females’ whole life revolves around their domestic activities. They have no, friendship, passion, harmony, ambition, and charm in their life.

*This is Obierika my great friend (p. 158).*

There is no friendship between men and women as it is analyzed in *Pride and Prejudice* (Jane, 2021). Females spent their time in huts and obis. They are cut off from their social life because Achebe has not described likings, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, bravery, wisdom, and attitude. Even females have no friends in the neighboring tribes like that of Okonkwo. Only men enjoyed the fruits of friendship.

*Her husband and his family were becoming highly critical (p. 167).*

Females in Igbo culture remain always under suppression. They are frightened due to some irrational traditions, costumes, and rituals. Nneka has four previous pregnancies; she was facing complications due to twin childbirth. Igbo culture had no remedy for this difficulty. She even accepted Christianity to get rid of this cruel tradition.

The arrival of colonial masters and new religion was the only ray of hope for women to seek solace.

The women had come to the church with empty water pots. They said that some young men had chased them away from the stream with whips. Soon after, the women who had gone for Red Earth returned with empty baskets. Some of them had been heavily whipped. The chalk women also returned to tell a similar story (p. 173).

Colonial masters and Christianity also could not reduce female suppression. Some difficult tasks were assigned to women although men also were available there; such as scrubbing the church was asked to the women. Even sometimes the women were whipped as they were whipped in pre-Christian period. Colonial masters' primary focus was not on the eradication of patriarchy and suppression. They came to Africa to loot natural resources (Mehdi et al., n. d.) They had their objectives behind the slogan of enlightenment. They did not focus on justice and equal rights of women in Igbo culture. They invaded to loot the natural resources of African colonies. They drew a line of demarcation based on binary opposition. All the positive characteristics; such as strength, wisdom, and bravery are associated with men. Women are represented as cowardly, unwise, and poor. It is because of the patriarchal system that men have wealth thus they hold power.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the novel, Achebe highlights burning issues like; intersectionality, gender roles, female suppression, and unequal distribution of wealth. Socio-economic mechanism in a society plays a vital role in reshaping the fates of females. Various roles of females like; wife, daughter, mother, and priestess have been presented in the novel. In all their states women have shown powerless. They have courage, resilience, and intellect but community keeps them away in the process of decision making. Ezinma is an intellectual, gorgeous, and adorable girl. The Igbo community has made her characteristics and attributes useless due to male dominance. Disputes among the tribes are settled by men only because they hold assets and wealth. This segregation is based on a lack of money. Women are always comrades of men in thick and thin. They are even performing spiritual rituals and religious practices along with laborious farming work. Chielo is a priestess of gods and serves as an intermediary between gods and people. She is also dependent on Okonkwo's wives. Their spiritual roles have no authority in a patriarchal society.

The colonial masters regard themselves as torchbearer (White, 2023). They could not compensate for the female's suppression. Women have been kept in darkness so that they could consider suppression and their subjugation for granted. Women also seemed submissive they did not resist and rebelled due to a lack of knowledge.

Economic insecurity and female suppression is the dominant theme of the novel. It has various aspects which focus on the lives of major characters. Political, social, and economic structures are reshaped by men in Igbo society. They protect, provide, and hold all the sources of income. Women remain busy in domestic affairs along with hard agricultural work. They do side by side work in yam farming and growing crops and vegetables. Women are not valued for their diligent work. Men follow the tradition of polygamy and have multiple wives. Their wives have hierarchies and unconditionally serve and bring up the children.

Lastly, females are regarded as commodities; that is why the price of a bride is fixed by men. The price fixation reveals that only men have control over material goods thus females have no jurisdiction over the fixation of bride price. *Things Fall Apart* is purely a feminist novel (Strong-Leek, 2001). Masculinity holds a central place in Igbo culture. Okonkwo's fear of failure and cowardliness leads him towards his downfall. He always adored people who had masculine traits and attributes. Furthermore, violence is used as a tool to sustain control over wives and children. In their legendary tales, masculinity is adored. Males are the dominant figures in their didactic stories while females are subservient.

Unequal distribution of wealth has lessened the authority, integrity, and autonomy. Through this novel Achebe tries to prove that; wealth is the underlying factor that weaves the threads of female suppression. Marginality, segregation, prejudice, injustice, and subjectivity accelerate individual sufferings and societal tension which paved the way for the disintegration of the community.

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