

Fiscal Disequilibrium in Family Affiliation Leads to Taciturnity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

I. Grace Soundarya,
Pushpam, Research Scholar,

Dr R. Annie Vidhya,
Research Supervisor,
Voorhees College Affiliated to Thiruvalluvar University Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India.
E-Mail: soundaryagrace2@gmail.com, annievidhya@gmail.com

Abstract:

Women's empowerment begins with their freedom from economic exploitation. Financial dependency in a family connection causes women to rely on their spouses for basic resources, robbing them of their egalitarian authority. Women who are working continue to rely on their severely abusive husbands to defend traditional beliefs and avoid being an outcast in society. Domestic abuse is never discussed among women since it is seen as a source of humiliation in her family. The dread of financial insecurity, cultural and traditional prejudices, as well as the sustenance of children, prevents women from fleeing an abusive husband.

Keywords: Patriarchal oppression, Domestic Violence, Women empowerment, financial dependence.

Introduction:

Women's empowerment is an initiative that strives to empower women by increasing their control over economic, social, and political forces via increased awareness, leading to more involvement in self-reliance, control, and transformational action. Literacy and economic independence serve as a foundation for empowerment. An economic disadvantage might limit one's ability to become empowered because discrimination prevents women from gaining access to resources, they must equal anchoring to achieve a greater share of influence over major education and financial position. According to Kabeer, women are frequently denied the freedom of choice owing to a lack of economic justification to meet their requirements (14-15). Women's household obligations and commitments are restricted, yet their devotion and hard work go undetected; since they are reliant on resources, they are given less attention and considered less capable of making decisions.

Patriarchal society portrays women as those in need of assistance. This has a big influence on patriarchal society and modern parenting. Children prefer to follow in their parents' footsteps. If the child is a female, she misinterprets being subservient to the

masculine figures in her life. Everything in the modern world has changed and evolved as a result of its culture, history, and heritage, but patriarchy has remained constant; women are trapped in patriarchal society's clutches, suffocating their development and making them vulnerable to be dependable and submissive to those in positions of power. Women are subjected to patriarchy in the home and society through a multitude of outlets, including the media, education, politics, and cultural ethics.

Society expects women to behave in a particular conventional way at home and in the family, this subjugation is mirrored in their performance in society. Though some women defy prejudices to attain greater heights academically as well as in physical strength to demonstrate their talent and tenacity, women are still put to the test when it comes to family responsibilities as well as the pressure that confines them to a mindset where they have to fit into the tight enclosures of the clichéd appearance regime to fit into certain cultural and prejudiced stereotypes. Discrimination, domestic abuse, and racism have all been experienced by women throughout history. In order to care for her family, she had to be a patient victim throughout. Despite the fact that educated

women today hold major positions in society, they are nonetheless persecuted by bigots.

Women worldwide are subject to domestic violence, especially those who are marginalised and unemployed. If a woman relies on her husband's income to run the family and provide for her basic needs, her ability to make strategic decisions is likely to be constrained. Due to the denial of choices in their lives women tend to accept violence as part of their life and internalise their lesser claim for resources (Kabeer 15). Some women's life choices are made for them, especially by the male member of the family, since they hold the power over all their finances. Hence they have lost the power to speak or to express their feelings and continue to be subjective to their life partner in the case of married women or the earning male member of the family. Kabeer says: "Today's inequalities are translated into the inequalities of tomorrow as daughters inherit the same discriminatory structures that oppress their mothers" (16).

Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi's novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) depicts the female character Beatrice as a woman who bears agony and suffering from her violent and cruel husband in exchange for financial support and the availability of bountiful resources for her children. Even when she was unable to handle her husband's abuse and had numerous miscarriages, her family and the people of her culture would demand that a woman must stay with her husband at all costs or else it would be a disgrace to her and the family. To avoid being a social outcast, Beatrice had to put up with her husband's harshness in order to conform to social norms.

The patriarchal society denies women's rights and benefits. It is a male-dominated institution that places women at a disadvantage owing to oppression and dominance. The uneven power relations between men and women have influenced men's authority and prestige concerning women. Barbara Johnstone says: "Struggles over power and control often struggles over those whose words get used and whose do not and over who gets to speak and who does not" (qtd. in Astrick 46). Adichie reveals men's dehumanising tendencies, which force women to remain defenceless in the face of degradation. The work emphasises the oppressions of the female characters, as well

as their critical battle to keep silent in the face of domestic abuse.

The story is told through the perspective of the protagonist, young Kambili, who lives in post-colonial Nigeria during a period of great political turmoil. Young Kambili lives with her mother, Beatrice, her older brother Jaja, and her father, Eugene Achieke a well-known philanthropist, factory owner, and newspaper editor. Eugene's character is seen through the eyes of Kambili, a fifteen-year-old girl from an affluent household in Enugu, Nigeria. Because of his gifts to the St. Agnus church, he got close to the priest and nuns at the convent where he grew up. Eugene is remembered for his generous contributions to churches, as well as for paying for the wine cartons and the new oven he purchased for the convent to aid the sisters in preparing bread. In his company, at work, he is seen as an angelic apparition, but at home, he is regarded as the demon's shadow, abusing and tormenting his wife and children under the guise of discipline.

Eugene, being the sole breadwinner of the family, is seen taking full control of his family. Despite his high social standing and reputation as a kind person who serves as a devoted Catholic and takes his religious commitments seriously, Eugene is a dictator to his own family. The reign of terror in the Achieke household began when Jaja refused to take communion in the church. Eugene was so infuriated by his non-compliance that he threw a large leather-bound missal at him, missing Jaja and smashing the glass figurines in which Beatrice had always found consolation after being beaten up by her husband.

Eugene adored his children and frequently shared his tea with them. The children termed it a "Love Sip," and even though the hot tea burned her delicate tongue, she kept her agony to herself for fear of ruining their bond. (Adichie 8). Throughout the narrative, Kambili's scorching tongue represents her being silenced by her father's dominance. Her fear of losing her father's relationships shows her dependence and her fear of losing someone's love. Her longing and dependence start from a very young age as she grows up to be very quiet just like her mother who never utters a word in front of the father and hence she follows the same footsteps.

Their quietness is the result of their father instilling horror in their every deed.

Kambili feels suffocated when her father explodes in wrath; he oppresses them to the point that they believe tyranny is a normal part of life. Beatrice bears her husband's aggression with extraordinary patience; she is entirely under his control and has no choice but to put up with it. Even when she is ill, she is incapable of making a choice. Because she felt sick and dizzy from her early pregnancy, Beatrice preferred to stay in the car rather than accompanying the family to visit Father Benedict after the church service. This disparaged him and made him feel less powerful and was enraged that his wife spoke against his will. Kambili would hear, father's thuds of violent beating sounds. Beatrice lost her baby not once but many times due to her husband's violent beatings, he would beat her up and carry her like a sack on his shoulders with blood dripping all over.

Beatrice would not leave him for she wanted to hold the family together. Though she was pale and weak from losing the baby she would tell her children with a painful smile, that she had an accident and lost the baby. The children were also punished in cruel ways, when Kambili ate breakfast before church, Eugene lashed Kambili and while trying to protect her daughter Beatrice and Jaja were violently whipped with a heavy leather belt with metal buckles. Eugene also poured boiling water on the feet of his children for entering his father's house whom he considered to be a heathen. Eugene defends his actions by arguing that he is sheltering his children from their evil ways by pouring hot water on their feet. In the novel *Aunt Ifeoma*, the sister of Eugene is an independent woman with her job as a university professor, women empowerment is shown through her actions of independent lifestyle though she is a widow she manages to take care of her children as well as her sick father, whom Eugene never cared to look after. Empowerment is achieved through independence.

Emotional considerations and women's understanding of their rights and alternatives impact their decision-making at the individual level. Following a separation or divorce, children frequently remain with their fathers. Women are kept in violent marriages due to entrenched societal attitudes. Most women facing intimate partner violence wish to live in harmony with their spouses (Horn et al). women are made to believe that they

cannot survive without a man no matter how abusive he might be. Beatrice has always been the target of Eugene's fury and every time he abuses her, she would quietly come downstairs and start cleaning her glass figurines, which she uses as a diversion from her pain since she has no one to share her agony with, she was concerned that it would destroy her husband's social image.

Battering is commonly defined as men's ongoing use of physical, and frequently sexual, attacks, as well as verbally and emotionally abusive actions that may grow more severe and harmful over time. In addition to beating their partners, batterers threaten, intimidate, and humiliate them; isolate them from family and friends; limit their access to money and other resources; endanger the safety of children and others in their families, and regulate their activities outside the house. Some partners use physical and nonphysical violence to achieve and retain power and control over them (Smith et al). Being self-sufficient, or having your economy, not only protects essential resources like food and shelter, but it is also a requirement for full participation in society. According to research, women who are subjected to domestic violence frequently suffer from economic abuse and face economic difficulty both during and after their relationships. Without financial help, it is more difficult for abused women to split up, and the chance of returning to a violent spouse increases (Ulmestig and Eriksson).

Women's societal and individual dependence on males is linked to less equitable gender perspectives; such dependency influences women's opinions by pushing them toward men's less equality viewpoint. Individual dependence on equality is bolstered by the social level of reliance (Baxter and Kane). Men are granted power only when women rely on them, and they exploit that authority to make the defenceless subject to his wrath and have total control over their lives.

By the end of the novel, Eugene had beaten up his wife Beatrice with the coffee table right in her stomach, causing her to miscarry for the final time. This was when Beatrice told Aunt Ifeoma about her husband's violence, and she sought solace in her home, crying for hours until she fell asleep, but she was ready to go home when her husband

called her on the phone. Even after several miscarriages, she revered her husband and remained calm despite his aggressive treatment of her. Beatrice had to think about her children and their financial security in order to escape her husband's clutches. Because she had no financial security, she had to bear all the misery until she couldn't stand it any longer and poisoned him. She had no option but to save her children from him, and she was pushed to the limit of her patience. She threw her children's future away by killing their father in her powerlessness.

Women accept domestic violence as part of their and fear escaping the situation mostly due to traditional ideologies which were imposed on them right from their childhood. And the fear of holding the family together for the sake of the children. ("The Effects of Abuse") A mindset that was created by society makes them believe that a woman requires someone to care about her emotions of helplessness. The subjugation of a woman starts when she is dependent on a man for her financial needs and realises that she is incapable of taking any initiative in her life or the future of her children. A woman also carries the responsibility to a notion that a good marriage is contingent on her, causing her to accept blame or assume responsibility for the abuse, low self-esteem, and low self-worth.

Works Cited

Primary Source:

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Purple Hibiscus*. Fourth Estate, 2003.

Secondary Sources:

Baxter, Janeen, and Emily W. Kane. "Dependence and Independence." *Gender & Society*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1995, pp. 193–215., <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124395009002004>.

Horn, Rebecca, et al. "I Don't Need an Eye for an Eye': Women's Responses to Intimate Partner Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia." *Global Public Health*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2016, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25996201>.

Astrick, Tiffany. "Patriarchal Oppression and Women Empowerment in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*." *Vivid Journal of Language and Literature*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019,

p. 46., <https://doi.org/10.25077/vj.7.2.45-50.2018>.

Kabeer, Naila. "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal 1." *Gender & Development*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2005, pp. 14–16., <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070512331332273>.

Smith, Paige Hall, et al. *Women's Experiences with Battering: A Conceptualization ...* Elsevier, https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/P_Smith_Women_1995.pdf.

Ulmestig, Rickard, and Marie Eriksson. "Financial Consequences of Leaving Violent Men – Women Survivors of Domestic Violence and the Social Assistance System in Sweden." *European Journal of Social Work*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2016, pp. 560–571., <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2016.1188778>.

"The Effects of Abuse—Why Does She Stay? ." *Encyclopedia.com*, Encyclopedia.com, 12 Mar. 2022, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/>.