

**LOOKING AT CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART* AS
TRIBAL PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO COLONIAL INVASION.**

BY

ISRAT JAHAN

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

October 2015

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People's Response to Colonial Invasion.**

DECLARATION

I humbly declare that this dissertation is original, and has not been submitted or published partially or fully for any other diploma or degree at any other University. The research work was conducted at the Department of English, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, under the supervision of Professor Dr. Kazal Krishna Banerjee, Department of English, University of Dhaka.

ISRAT JAHAN
REG. NO-23, SESSION: 2009-2010,
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA.

CERTIFICATE FROM THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that Israt Jahan (Session: 2009-2010, Reg. No. 23) has submitted her dissertation to me and I find it acceptable and ready for examination. I recommend it to be sent to the examiners for their reports.

Dr. Kazal Krishna Banerjee
Professor, Department of English,
University of Dhaka.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to focus on the Igbo tribe's social structure before and after colonialism— the ideas, the places and people who constitute the context of colonialism as narrated by Chinua Achebe. We find a lot of works about colonialism in different parts of the world. But, exploring tribal people's response to colonial invasion in *Things Fall Apart* will be a new one contributing to the field of research on Achebe. The changes that occur as a result of colonial rule with their various impacts on the particular people's politics, culture and social system comes under scrutiny. In the Introduction, a general discussion on tribe, tribalism and a historical account of Igbo culture will be placed. In the second chapter, there will be a general discussion on Igbo life-style and their encounter with colonialism as presented in Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*. The third chapter presents a comparative study of Achebe's and some other writers' writings on colonialism and the reasons behind his dealing with the issue in a different way. Finally, in the concluding chapter, there will be a general discussion on how Achebe wrote a profound critique of colonization while constructing hints for changes to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to almighty Allah, the ever graceful and merciful, because of His endless grace finally enabling me to complete my study.

I am ever grateful to my parents whose sacrifice and affection have facilitated me to be an aspirant for this study.

I express my deep gratitude and heartiest thanks to my respected teacher, Professor Dr. Kazal Krishna Banerjee, Department of English, University of Dhaka, who gave his kind consent to be my guide for this study. His continuous supervision, active guidance, constructive criticism, whole-hearted inspiration and sacrifice of valuable time have made this performance possible.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Professor Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam who diligently helped me to do this work.

I humbly convey my heartiest thanks to Professor Dr. Fakrul Alam for his continuous encouragement and valuable suggestions for carrying out this work.

I want to express my special gratitude to Professor Dr. Rebecca Haque and Professor Dr. Nuzhat Amin who took M. Phil 'Course Work' classes and inspired me to complete the course.

I am grateful to Professor Tahmina Ahmed who inspired me all the time to do something positive.

I express my profound gratitude to Professor Dr. Rubina Khan for her active collaboration.

I want to thank Amjad Hossain, Associate Professor, Ideal College, Dhaka and Elham Hossain, Associate Professor, Dhaka City College, who always eagerly responded to my calls and provided their supports through specific suggestions.

It would be ungratefulness if I do not mention the names of my respected school teachers—Md. Emdad Ali, Abul Bashir Azad and Md. Jahangir Alam— who inspired me all the time.

Finally, I would like to complete the list of acknowledgements with cordial mention of my husband, Md. Mamun Or Rasheed and my daughter Raima Rasheed Maria, who have been the most patient companions, and have given me continuous support and encouragement during this work.

Israt Jahan.

Dhaka, October 2015.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chinua Achebe is one of Africa's most popular novelists who critically wrote and talked a lot about tribal life and culture there. A tribe is a "notional form of human social organization based on a set of smaller groups (known as bands), having temporary or permanent political integration, and defined by traditions of common descent, language, culture, and ideology" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2012). On the other hand, colonialism is a "political-economic phenomenon whereby various European nations explored, conquered, settled and exploited large areas of the world" (Webster, 2010). The term 'colonial invasion' itself has become a very important topic in literary, political and social spheres of life. This dissertation is about tribal people's response to colonial invasion as placed in Chinua Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*. In this novel, Achebe portrays the life of a socially and culturally developed tribe, Igbo, of Umuofia in Nigeria, its responses to colonial invasion and socio-political and economic changes coming from the colonizers' intervention.

It is difficult to proceed much further without having a clearer idea about the terms—'tribe' and 'colonialism'. The English word 'tribe' originated from old French 'tribu' which was taken from Latin 'tribus'. "In the Bible 'tribus' is translated as race, tribe and clan" (Online Etymology Dictionary). It refers ethnic divisions within ancient Roman state: 'Ramnes', 'Tities' and 'Luceres'. In Roman history, the first Roman tribes were ethnic in origin. In 242-240 B.C, the Tribal Assembly (comitia tribute) in the Roman Republic was organized in 35 tribes. Sometime 'tribe' and 'clan' are used interchangeably. But, it is important to note that tribal people have a special status recognized in international law of "Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention, 1989".

The word 'tribe' is used in the 12th century Middle English literature to refer to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. By the mid-19th century, many anthropologists and scholars were using the term as meaning "band, chiefdom and state to denote particular stages in unilateral cultural evolution. As an anthropological term, the word fell out of favor in the later part of the 20th century." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2010)

So, a tribe is a group of people that includes many families having the same ancestor, same language, custom, religion and belief. According to Webster's *World College Dictionary*, a tribe is a "group of people, a community with similar values or interests, a group with a common ancestor, or a common leader" (2010). In *Oxford Dictionary*, sixth edition, a tribe is defined as follows:

A tribe is a social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader.

It can also be said that, "Tribe is a group of people of the same race, and with the same customs, language, religion, etc., living in a particular area and often led by a chief." (Hornby, 2001:1387)

All these definitions make it clear that tribal life appears to have been smoother than modern life. It gives importance to ancient social ties, is clearly bounded, homogenous, unsophisticated and steady. Tribe maintains link among families, clans and lineages, and build their own ideological basis for solidarity that is to some extent limited than that of an 'ethnic group' or a 'nation'. For this reason, in contemporary contexts, tribe is problematic, as it refers to a community living within a traditional society which is strongly associated with past attitudes, living in remote places. Alternative terms such as community or people are used by some critics. But, in historical context, tribe is broadly accepted. "A customary tribe in these terms is a face to face community, relatively bound by kinship relations, reciprocal exchange, and strong ties to place."(James, 2006)

On the other hand, colonialism is the imposition of one culture, religion and governance on the people of another country. It is the "subjugation of one people to another" (Kohn, 2006). The history of colonialism is very ancient. From time immemorial people set out from one place to another and gradually started to live there and establish their own culture and administration. The ancient Greeks, Romans and Ottomans set up colonies over a long time. For this reason, colonialism is not restricted to time and place. In the sixteenth century, with the development of navigation, colonialism spread rapidly with the help of fast-moving ships,

for, the concerned people could easily communicate with the remote parts of the world and keep close ties between colonies and the center. Hence, in true sense, modern European colonial period started from 16th Century when “it became possible to move large numbers of people across the ocean and to maintain political sovereignty in spite of geographical dispersion” (Kohn, 2006). Thus, the Europeans (Portugal, Spain, Britain, Italy, France and Netherlands) set up colonies and established “political control over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia and parts of Africa and Asia.” (Kohn, 2006)

In the very beginning, the countries adopted ‘mercantilist policies’ to develop home economy and were allowed to trade with the home country. But, in the mid-19th century, the British Empire changed business policy and introduced free trade, though they applied a few restrictions or tariffs on trade. They also used religion as weapon to establish colony and exercise power without any obstacle.

According to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2006)*, “Colonialism is the process of European settlement and political control over the rest of the world, including Americas, Australia and part of Africa and Asia.” Colonialism can also be defined as “the project of European political domination from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth centuries that ended with the national liberation movement of the 1960” (Kohn, 2006). Colonialism mainly refers to relationship between Europe and other parts of the world dominated by them. They rejected the culture of the colonized people and “the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule.” (Osterhammel, 2010:15)

In brief, it can be said that, colonialism is a complex relationship among local inhabitants, settler groups and foreign invaders. Here, local administration is controlled by colonial rulers, who overlook the local communities’ socio-political systems and forcefully establish their culture, religion and government. Thus, they develop a relationship of power, hatred and domination.

17th Century is the most important period of colonial evolution. In this century, the French, Dutch and British colonial empire and ‘Swedish Overseas’ colonies were established. But, for American Revolutionary War and the Latin American Wars of Independence, the expansion of

colonial empire was reduced in the late 18th and 19th Centuries. Later, like German Colonial Empire and Belgian Colonial Empire, many new colonies were established. “In the late 19th Century, many European powers were involved in the scramble of Africa” (Kohn, 2006). Africa is the most crucial victim of British colonialism. Nigeria, a West African country, was under British rule during the late nineteenth century to early twentieth centuries. The British colonizers brought administrative, religious and cultural change in African countries. By changing traditional government system, the British rulers set up their own administration. For example: they built court houses where the District Commissioners ruled the natives with the help of Warrant Chiefs and Court Messengers. In Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, the District Commissioner punished the misdeeds of the local inhabitants, and the court messengers worked for him. As about half thousands of ethnic groups lived in Nigeria, they protested against colonial invasion, and it became independent in 1960.

It was difficult for the traditionalist Igbo tribal people like Okonkwo to accept the new way of life that was totally different from the views that the Igbos had. Those who followed the new government and religion eagerly were not few in number. The Igbo converts abandoned their own religion, traditional ways of life and fellow people to follow the new way introduced by the white missionaries. Their dual response was very important; for this changed the Igbo socio-political structure upside down. Igbo tribes played a great part at that time, and still a minority of the population practised Igbo traditional religion and culture. Igbo tribal people’s response to colonial invasion is the focus of my study.

Africa is the living place of thousands of tribal groups. Among them, the largest ethnic group originated from West Africa. West African country Nigeria is populated with various tribes. Many of these tribes evidently came from different parts of Africa many centuries ago. “Several history books claim that these tribes originated from Sudan, Egypt, North Africa and other territories. Among the early settlers in Nigeria were the Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba.”(Onyemachi1, 2010)

On the basis of what Achebe has mentioned about the Igbo tribe’s socio-political condition before colonial invasion and their response to colonialism, my endeavor is to highlight the Igbo tribe’s history before colonialism, and the changes that are shown to be taking place after the

arrival of the European missionaries with their new way of life that is contradictory to tribal life. The Igbo tribe was proud, dynamic, progressive, cultured and ambitious. They formed one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, with about fifteen million living outside. All Igbo-speaking people had the same basic culture, social structure, common beliefs and traditions; they shared a common language, though it had different dialects. In English, both they and their language are known as 'Ibo' but they prefer themselves to use the form 'Igbo'. A very large forest area situated "between the Niger River in the west and the Cross River in the east, stretching from delta swampland near the southern coast through tropical rain forest to open grasslands to the north was their living place" (Ohadike, 1996: xix). In ancient time, they were peaceful farmers; their intelligence and capacity for hard work and their high regard for education caused them to spread out over Nigeria as traders, teachers and professional men with the economic development that followed the settlement of the country in the first half of the twentieth century. "It is one of the oldest kingdoms of Nigeria"(Hrbek, 1992: 254). The city of Nri is considered to be the foundation of Igbo culture. Nri was ruled by Eze Nri. The kingdom of Nri started in the 10th century and continued until it lost its independence to the British in the 19th century. "Nri and Aguleri, where the Igbo creation myth originates, are in the territory of the Umeuri clan; they trace their lineages back to the patriarchal king figure Eri."(Uzukwu, 1997: 93)

Today, the majority of the Igbo people are Christians or agnostics. But, "the ancient Igbo religion and traditions are known as Odinali" (Isichei, 1870: 512). "Chukwu is the supreme deity in Odinali as he is the creator in their pantheon"(Basden, 1912: 216), and "the Igbo people believed that all things came from him and that everything on earth, heaven and the rest of the spiritual world is under his control" (Elechi, 2006: 32). Ohadike, in his *Igbo Culture and History*, said:

The Igbo believed in the Supreme Being (Chukwu) and life after death. Chukwu lived far away in the sky; he was the origin of all things. The names the Igbos gave their children expressed the beliefs. For example, an Igbo family might name a baby Amaogechukwu (Gods time is the best), or Chukwukelu (God is the creator). (qtd. in *Things ...* xxxii)

Igbo economy was based on cultivation and farming. They grew yam, cocoyam, cassava, bean and vegetables. Among them, yam was their staple food, and growing it was an act of manliness. Only a young man had the right to grow yam. Women were prohibited to cultivate yam. They could grow cocoyam, cassava, bean, etc. They were also able to produce every daily necessary product. For example: pottery, palm-oil, wine, weapon, herbal medicine and musical instrument. In a word, they were self-dependent. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe shows the use of herbal medicine for the treatment of Ezinma's Iba. He also describes the yam cultivation process, through the story of Okonkwo's hard work for establishment in society.

Though the Igbo communities had no centralized government, they were extremely dynamic. The lineage head was the religious, executive and judicial head of his lineage. But, he could not act without the people's approval. "No action would be taken until an issue had been fully argued at a lineage meeting and some degree of consensus achieved" (Ohadike, 1996: xxv). The Igbo communities maintained protocol even in respect of title. Umuofian villagers' meeting in the market-place with the clan heads, after unmasking the masked egwugwu, is the example of their practice of democratic system in the time of crisis. Personal achievement was evaluated greatly and Okonkwo, the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*, tried to gain honor and prestige what his father failed to achieve. Okonkwo's personal agony for being the son of an unsuccessful man was the source of his inspiration to be a successful man in society, and he tried to uphold his success at any cost. Okonkwo's protest against colonial invasion was the cause of his denial to accept the change that would destroy his autonomy in the clan.

Igbo women were also given recognition and honor. The women had their own clubs, age-group associations and title associations that balanced those of men. Women controlled certain regions of community life, just as men controlled other regions. "Women were perceived to possess superior spiritual well-being, and headed many of the traditional cults and shrines. In Achebe's novel, for example, the oracle is served by a priestess ('chielo'). Women also gained status by amassing wealth through trading, farming, or weaving, and were treated as *ndi ogalanya*, wealthy persons." (xxviii)

It is unquestionable that the Igbos gave much importance to marriage and family life. In fact, the Igbo tribe regarded marriage as the cornerstone of their whole social structure. The marriage process usually involved asking the young woman's consent, introducing the woman to the man's family and the same process they followed for the man. The Igbos tested the bride's character and age, checked the woman's family background. If everything was satisfactory, they took consent of the family and clan and paid the bride price. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe has presented two marriage ceremonies— one of Oberiaka's daughter Akuekue's (chapter-12) and the other, Uchendu's son Amikwu's (chapter-14), where we find the observance of all tribal rituals.

Hospitality was another character trait of Igbo society. They entertained the guests by offering kola nut, wine and other food items. Igbo people observed the cultural and social ceremonies with great fervor and cordiality. They were also very much temperate, and did not want any clash without a proper reason. When the people of Mbanta found that the gods had killed Okoli for killing the sacred Python, they “saw no reason for molesting the Christians.” (114)

Moreover, the Igbos had the tradition of maintaining secret societies. In important judicial matters, the lineage heads gave judgments in the guise of egwugwu or egungun, and no one had the audacity to contest their judgments. Most of the Igbos knew, the egwugwus were the familiar persons of the country but when they wore ancestors' masks, spiritual spirits occupied them, and no one could pretend to be wiser than the ancestors or the spirits. In chapter ten of *Things Fall Apart*, we see the egwugwus emerged to hear a series of legal cases. When that happened, no one contested the egwugwus' judgment and promised with awe to follow their order. The masked ancestors' procedure of judgment was very much democratic as they followed every procedure of legal judgment. The lineage heads gave importance to the problems of each party, took the exact evidences, arranged discussion among them and after consultation, they pronounced a verdict.

Igbo culture includes various customs, practices and traditions of Igbo people. These include the Igbo people's visual art, music and dance forms as well as their attire and language. “Masking is one of the most common art styles in Igbo land and is linked strongly with Igbo traditional music” (Picton, 2008). A mask can be made of wood or fabric, along with other

materials including iron and vegetation. Masks were used in “social satires, religious rituals, secret society initiations and public festivals, which now include Christmas time celebration.”(Eltis, 1997: 87)

Igbos were rich in music. They had “musical instruments such as—Udu, which is designed from a clay jug; Ekwe, which is formed from a hollowed log; Ogene, a hand bell designed from forged iron. Other instruments include Opi, Igba and Ichaka”(Grove, 1980: 239). All these instruments were used in cultural festivals. Highlife, a fusion of jazz and traditional music, is another popular musical genre in West Africa. The most popular Igbo Highlife musicians of 20th century are Dr. Sir Warrior, Oliver De Coque, Bright Chimezie and Chief Osita Osadebe. Not only that, Igbos had their own calendar, banking system and strategic betting game, Okwe. “In their indigenous calendar, a week had four days; a month consisted of seven weeks and thirteen months made a year. In the last month an extra day was added. This calendar is still used in indigenous Igbo villages and towns to determine market days.” (Holbrook, 2007: 35)

On the basis of the preceding pieces of information, it can be said that the Igbos were very modern, quite civilized, though some of their customs may seem brutal. For example: throwing the ‘twins’ in the evil forest, separating the ‘osu’ from normal social chores, treating some diseases (swelling) as abomination to the earth goddess. *Things Fall Apart* is a novel where Achebe portrays many aspects of Igbo tribal culture through his story of the nine villages of Umuofia.

To this society came the British invaders in the pretext of preaching Christianity to destroy Igbo culture and establish their own culture and colony in the 1870s. Definitely, pre-colonial Igbo tribal time was not a dark time that the colonizers claimed. Actually, Africa has always been an attractive place for its vast unexplored natural resources. As a result, “from the 17th through the 20th centuries, the African continent resembled a massive jigsaw puzzle, with different pieces representing the colonial possessions of various European kingdoms including France, England, Germany and Belgium” (Nelson, 2010). During colonial period, European powers tried to divide Africa amongst themselves that had lasting impact and far-reaching effects for Africa. The aim of colonialism was to exploit the natural, economic and human resources of an area to benefit the colonizing nation. Slave trade, change in traditional tribal

culture and religion introduced by the European colonizers changed the history of African modes of thought, patterns of cultural development and ways of life for ever.

As the Igbos were moderate, hospitable and respectful to other religion, they adopted a conciliatory stance in the early dealings with the missionaries. In *Things Fall Apart*, we find that the general people at first did not take the missionaries seriously, and made fun with them by calling them 'lepers', 'crazy men' etc. "The clan was worried but not over much"(110).The people listened patiently to the Christians and then expected the missionaries to pay equal attention to their own viewpoints. But, soon they realized that the missionaries had come to destroy the entire system of Igbo customs and beliefs in order to convert the people to Christianity. "Some Igbo communities rejected the British annexation and backed this up by preparing for war. Many of these battles were fought under the Umbrella of the Ekumeku movement."(xiv)

Because of the practice of some brutal customs like murder for murder, separation of lower casts (osu), throwing the twins in the forest, some deprived Igbo people were eagerly waiting for change and the missionaries took the advantage of converting them by preaching sweet words of Christianity and the Bible. Quest for the new was another reason for accepting a new religion. Those who were confused remained silent and did not take any action to prevent foreign activity that would bring destruction to tribal life. Naturally, the protest of the conservative tribes ended in smoke most of the time for the indifference of common tribal people, and tribal unity started to fall apart. Kenalemang in her essay, "*Things Fall Apart: An Analysis of Pre and Post- Colonial Igbo Society*", asserts thus: "Because of the confused state of mind of Igbo not knowing whether to reject or embrace these changes, it ultimately led to their fall mainly because of their loyalty to the language"(2010). In this way, colonizers increased their power and encounter between the converted tribals and the old tribals started. For this reason, after the arrival of the British rulers in the 1870s, gradual encounter between the Igbo and other ethnicities near the Niger River "led to a deepening sense of Igbo identity."(Chuku, 2005:145)

Certainly, colonial rule is one of the great causes for the change in and death of ethnic culture in Africa. The Igbo had no centralized government and defense force to resist foreign attack. They had some village leaders

and strong people to protect the clans from attack other villages. The religious head was the representative of the clan. Though the religious head had some administrative power, he had to work with the consent of the village leaders. As a result, European colonizers captured and established indirect rule in Igbo-land without any massive protest. In 1900, Lord Frederick Lugard established indirect rule in Nigeria. During the later part of the 19th century, most of Africa came under political control of the European rulers. “The colonial rulers introduced the post of Warrant Chief as Eze (traditional rulers) where there were no such monarchies” (Illogu, 1974: 63). The evidence is found in Achebe’s novel *Arrow of God*, where most of the incidents are based on the theme of rejection of the post of Warrant Chief by Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu. Ezeulu rejected the British rulers’ offer of warrant chieftaincy, because he was determined to obey his own god Ulu’s order. He told the court messengers that he would only worship his ancestral god and would follow his order; he would work according to his wish and could not obey any foreigner’s order. In *Things Fall Apart*, the arrival of the white man and his culture indicated the death of Igbo culture. European colonizers did not honor the tribal customs and tried to convince tribesmen that the white man’s ways were better. The colonizers encouraged the tribal people who accepted their religion and way of life by giving them power and position. As a result, son started to fight against father, brother against brother.

The introduction of Warrant Chiefs and court messengers brought the loss of freedom and democratic political system of the Igbo. The colonizers were the cause of the Igbo people’s agony. In *Things Fall Apart*, court messengers are seen to take bribe from the villagers and the court messenger’s murder by Okonkwo gives the confirmation of Igbo tribe’s protest against the warrant chiefs, court messengers but their protest resulted only in penal expeditions. The British government introduced direct taxation into the ‘untaxed provinces’ of the Southern parts in the late 1920s. As a result, anti-tax riots occurred in 1927-1928. Not only that, the Igbo women were included in taxation; and their protest in 1929 is known as “Aba Women’s Riot” (Gordon, 2003: 87). These protests forced the British administration to recognize the native government in the 1930s and 1940s, leading to an improved system of native administration. The new administrative system remained active until 1952. Later, it gave way to a regional government system that led to the way for constitutional reform and prepared the Nigerians for political independence. In October, 1960, the Igbo people with other Nigerians

became independent from the United Kingdom. Nigeria formed a coalition government of conservative parties. They are-

the Nigerian people's Congress (NPC), a party dominated by Northerners and those of the Islamic faith; and the Igbo and Christian-dominated National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, who became Nigeria's maiden Governor General in 1960. Forming the opposition was the comparatively liberal Action Group (AG), which was largely dominated by the Yoruba and led by Obafemi Awolowo. (Udofia,1981: 435-447)

In addition, slave trade made Nigeria a violent land. In *Things Fall Apart*, Umuofian villagers were afraid of being caught up with the slave traders. Colonial rule brought cultural, political and economic change in Nigeria. Colonialism claimed that it worked as the foundation of modern democracy in Nigeria. During colonial time all the decisions were made under the British government.

Obviously, colonial rule changed living conditions of tribal people. The tradition of building houses out of mud walls and thatched roofs changed, and houses started being built with cement blocks and zinc roofs. New roads, hospitals, churches and schools were established in many parts of Igbo land. Igbos were greatly benefited from the introduction of schools and education in their society that helped them to know the world in new light. Kenalemang in her essay on "*Things Fall Apart: An Analysis of Pre and Post-Colonial Igbo Society*" said:

Because of it, today most Igbos are literate individuals who have dilated their knowledge to be more enlightened. The Europeans also taught Igbos about their own culture, and although the Igbo found it difficult to transmit from their own culture to that of a stranger, they learnt something new from it. (2013)

In addition, 'electricity' and 'water supply' came in the early 20th century and altered the life-style of Igbo people. Though the Nigerian Civil war or Biafran War (July 6, 1967–January 15, 1970) had taken lives of several million Igbos and destroyed their normal livelihood, still, they are

found in many African countries, particularly Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Liberia and Dakar as hard workers.

At present, Nigeria is the seventh most populous country in the world and is called the giant of Africa for its large population. Still, above fifty ethnic groups live there; of them, the largest ethnic groups are the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. As a result of the influence of colonialism, almost half of the population practice Christianity, and they live in the south and the central part of Nigeria. Some of them live in the north and follow Islam. Traditional religion, Igbo and Yoruba are followed by a minority of the population. All these prove that Nigeria is a country of many religions and many cultures. Ojukwu, in his *Because I am Involved*, said:

It has become a part of our history that the Igbo's have manifested their zest for adventure and industry in their roles as national public servants, educators, captains of industry and commerce, financials and philanthropists, and contributed in no small measure both to the emancipation of Nigeria from colonial rule and the progress of developing the country. (1989)

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out that in this dissertation, the term 'tribe' refers to a group of people of the same race and with the same custom, language, religion etc, living in a particular area and often led by a chief. Chinua Achebe in his novel *Things Fall Apart* portrays the tribal people's response to colonial invasion, and for this, he has chosen the Igbo tribe of Umuofia in Nigeria. In this novel, Achebe shows a deep insight into the social and cultural riches of the Igbo tribe in the pre-colonial and early colonial period. But, with the arrival of the colonial invaders, Igbo traditions started to change. With the onset of new culture, new religion, new people, the Igbo traditional belief, custom, culture, religion, family structure, function and social stratification were all affected. Though they were hospitable, temperate, respectful to other religion, they protested against colonial invasion to keep their own tradition safe from aggression, but most of the time failed for lack of organization, weapon, trained manpower and courage. This novel is one of the best accounts of tribal people's protest against colonialism. We are to mark how that protest suffered from weakness and lapses coming from tribalism.

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CHAPTER TWO

IGBO LIFE-STYLE AND ITS ENCOUNTER WITH COLONIALISM IN *THINGS FALL APART*

Achebe has used the story of Okonkwo, a yam farmer, wrestler and strong individual of Umuofia in Nigeria, in his novel *Things Fall Apart* to illustrate the life-style of Igbo people and what happened to Igbo society at the critical moment of the coming of the white men and the tribal people's response to them. A close study of the novel gives evidence that *Things Fall Apart* is a novel set in Igbo-land towards the end of the nineteenth century when the British colonizers were beginning to set up colonies in West Africa. For the arrival of foreigners with new ideas, values and religion, the traditional ideas started to fall apart. With great mastery Achebe has shown the causes of such change and how the Igbo responded from the position of their tribal culture.

The most striking quality of *Things Fall Apart* is, in fact, its emphatic account of the Igbo society of its setting. Achebe has not quite gone out of his way to romanticize traditional Igbo culture and may indeed have shown it incapable of withstanding the unforeseen dangers posed by the encroaching colonialism. But in many respects he presents the indigenous way of life as altogether well founded in its religious and ethical systems and traditions. (Okpewho, 2003: 25-26)

In Part One of the novel, we find a community of nine related villages in Umuofia, really situated in the West African country Nigeria just before the arrival of the European colonizers. In fact, the West African coast-particularly the mouth of the Niger and the Calabar Rivers- has been visited and even settled by Europeans for a long time and they started to import some food crops, gunpowder and muskets into inland. Though the Umuofian villagers had never seen a white man, nor even the Mbantan and other seven villagers, they had only heard stories about white men who 'took slaves away across the seas.' (p. 99)

In the first few chapters of *Things Fall Apart*, we learn about the life of Umuofia before colonialism came by following the life of Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel. Apparently, this is a 'story' about Okonkwo, a farmer, wrestler, warrior and strong individual and the episodes are designed to reveal his character who throughout the whole novel, struggled with the changes taking place in his tribe. He is known as one of the strongest, most honorable tribal men, but as the white man started to come in Igbo-land, tribal people started to change. Okonkwo could not accept the change and was worried as he found his clan's men as weak as his father Unoka. Okonkwo, throughout his life, was driven by fear, a fear of change and losing his position in society. Tribalism gives importance to personal achievement. In his clan, "old age was respected...but achievement was revered"(p.6). Okonkwo tried to achieve what his father had failed to get in his lifetime. Physical strength, hard work, wealth and title were the identifying factors of a person's position in society. Unoka, the father of Okonkwo, was known in his clan as a great debtor who failed to get any title except of that of 'Agbala'. He was the object of Okonkwo's shame and agony all through his life. Unoka failed to feed his family and at the very young age, Okonkwo had to grow his own yam to feed his "mother and two sisters". Okonkwo's inner hatred for his father inspired him to be a successful man. He ruled his family with iron hand to show his manliness. He beat his wife in the time of peace as he did not want to be weak like his father. Okonkwo's personal achievement gave him feeling of security, and this feeling of security created distance between father and son, between hardness and softness. Okonkwo's life became meaningful when his community respected him for his heroism. He tried to secure his position at any cost. Okonkwo did not hesitate to kill the boy whom he reared and liked because he wanted to prove his bravery and loyalty to the community's decision at any cost. Community got first priority, not the family and personal feeling. Confrontation between Okonkwo and Obieraka after the killing of Ikemefuna, "You sound as if you question the authority and the decision of the Oracle, who said he should die", (p. 46) confirm his tribal characteristic. Okonkwo valued the community's order ignoring his own relationship with the boy.

Okonkwo tried to hold to his position, and that of his people, and when the white missionaries came to change Umuofia, he revolted. The clan was his pride, his own culture was perfect for him and his people, and there was no question of compromise on the issue of his clan's prestige and sovereignty. In the concluding chapter, we find him committing suicide to get rid of foreign rule. Suicide goes against the Umuofian

tradition, because there is no heroism in suicide, as it is one kind of escape from reality that only the cowards take. But, in this novel, Okonkwo's suicide reminds the reader that his suicide is a revolt against surrender to slavery.

But really, the main concern of Part One of *Things Fall Apart* is to give us a detailed picture of the life-style of tribal people as it had remained unchanged for many generations. Achebe gives a very lucid description of their cultivation process, of their disputes and how they were settled, of their social rituals, for example: harvesting festival, marriage ceremony and formalized modes of address and discussion. In addition, in the remaining chapters of Part One, some other customs of Umuofia are introduced. For example: traditional new yam celebration in Chapter Five, traditional wrestling competition in Chapter Six and killing of Ikemefuna, a boy of Mbaino, as revenge for a woman's murder in Chapter Seven.

Achebe has penned down a vivid picture of Igbo traditional marriage customs and rituals in chapter eight and ten. To them, "marriage should be a play and not a fight" (51). Here we see Akueke (Obierika's daughter) was given much importance. Women were the most important part of society and they participated in the social ceremonies with men. In the Igbo community, women were free to do any work, were allowed to go out of the house for buying or selling products. The European demand that they brought women's freedom was invalid in the case of Igbo tribe. But, one important thing was that Igbo women were not allowed to grow yam, their staple crop. Only the men were allowed to grow yam. In that society there was a division of men's and women's crop. Women were allowed to grow only women's crops, "like coco-yams, beans and cassava. Yam, the king of crops, was a man's crop" (p.16). As there was division even in cultivation system, the women folks of those families, who lost their male members in war or disease or who had careless husbands like Unoka, had suffered a lot only for illogical tribal custom. In Bangladesh, for example, women of Garo and Khashia tribes with matriarchal systems get more freedom than other tribal women of Bangladesh. The tribal women of our country do not have any restriction for growing crops. The suppressed Igbo women were waiting for the change of brutal tribal customs, and when the missionaries came with the new law, they eagerly accepted it, leaving the old order. The women got rid of tribal violence with the assistance of Christian missionaries and the

missionaries used the women for increasing their manpower in the colonized countries.

In Chapter 10 of *Things Fall Apart*, we find the exercise of local tribal but very much modern and democratic adjudication in the settlement of matrimonial disputes by the assembled elders and the *egwugwu*. The masked *egwugwu* settled the dispute between Mgbafo and her husband Uzowulu who were the inhabitants of Umuofia. Mgbafo was taken away from her in-laws house for her husband's physical torture. The *egwugwu* gave every one chance to speak in front of the people and took decision after consulting with the leaders of nine villages. The European colonizers demanded that they had introduced the culture of sitting together for discussion and brought the democratic systems to African countries. But, the above-mentioned tribal meeting disproves that claim. Tribal people, as in the case of the Igbo tribe of Umuofia, followed democratic systems. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe has shown how democratically Igbo tribe arranged meetings at the market place where every body could give opinion when they faced any crisis. For example: after the murder of a woman in Mbiano, after the killing of the sacred python by Enoch, after the arrest of the village heads and after their release. At all these time, the Igbo people gathered together for collective decision.

However, Achebe has exposed tribal belief in magic, mystery and superstition. The tribe considered some incurable diseases to be result of abomination to the earth goddess, and the "victim could not be buried in her bowels" (p.13). So, they were left in the Evil Forest to die. In *Things Fall Apart*, Evil Forest represented the magical power of the missionaries who were able to survive there and the orthodoxy of the tribal people. Christian missionaries' survival in the Evil Forest changed the mentality of some members of the Igbo tribe, and the conflict between them started to emerge. Witch doctors (Okagbue Uyanwa) played a great part in bringing change in their life. In Chapter 10, medicine man Okagbue Uyanwa mutilated Okonkwo's dead child and buried it in the Evil Forest to prevent its further coming. The incident is described as follows:

He brought out a sharp razor from the goatskin bag slung from his left shoulder and began to mutilate the child. Then he took it away to bury in the Evil Forest, holding it by the ankle and dragging it on the ground behind him. After such treatment it would think twice before coming again, unless it was one of the stubborn ones who

returned, carrying the stamp of their mutilation—a missing finger or perhaps a dark line where the medicine-man’s razor had cut them. (p. 55-56)

There is no scientific basis of all these. The tribal people were superstitious and never thought scientifically. So, when the Christian missionaries protested against that system, and gave shelter to both twin-bearing mother and her twins, naturally Christians became an opponent party. Achebe has described Igbo life; they were habituated in a system that they did not require any gross change; they were able to lead the community very well where foreigners’ presence was not necessary. Naturally, when the tribe of Abame found the white man in their clan, they killed him to protest against an invader’s trespass. Christian missionaries were not accepted in any of the clans. Sometimes they forcefully captured tribal areas and killed people as they did in Abame. Though European colonizers talked of civilization and democracy, they did not demand any compensation for killing their people without any apparent reason or did not call any meeting among them but killed the people of Abame and later established colony at that place. In *Things Fall Apart*, missionaries and the British government are found to come to Umuofia at the same time and want to prove that they were in Igbo-land only for the betterment of tribal people who were far away from civilization.

Though some of their social rituals, for example, throwing the twins in the Evil Forest and separating the ‘osu’ from normal human chores, may seem brutal to us, the Igbo people have their own values and ethics and lived a very strongly and firmly knit life. In tribal society, people were concerned about their place, position and duty towards the community and followed social codes before the arrival of European rulers. In brief, it can be said that Achebe has portrayed the picture of a stable, anxiety-free, happy society where people gave importance to personal achievement. Though there was no king or no direct government to govern the tribe, it did not create any difficulty in their life as the title-holders of the clan gave their opinion after taking the opinion of common people. Sometimes the chief priests and oracle gave warning or opinion to guide the clan. There was no formal ruler and no struggle for power and position. Communal welfare was the main concern. Lloyd in his *Africa in Social Change* truly writes:

African society, it is reasoned, remains classless, for the elite are not seen as exploiting the masses. The people are united against external powers; ethnic divisions within should soon, therefore, disappear. The political party is synonymous with the nation, and the efforts of the individual can only be achieved within the party. The uniformity of African societies, in their struggle against colonialism and in their own values, provides a basis for Pan-Africanist ideologies and organizations, transcending the political rivalries of neighboring states and the difficulties of economic cooperation. (1972:281)

Part One of *Things Fall Apart* ends with the banishment of Okonkwo for killing Ezeudu's sixteen year old son through one accidental gun explosion during a funeral ceremony. Killing a member of one's own tribe was a great crime, and tribal punishment was banishment from the country. As the killing was accidental, Okonkwo's punishment was half of aimed killing, seven years exile in Mbanta, his mother's village, with his wives and children. Obierika mourned the loss of Okonkwo and questioned the reasoning behind the punishment for an accidental killing. Thus, Part One ends with the end of Okonkwo's successful career and settled life in Umuofia.

Part Two of *Things Fall Apart* (Chapters 14-19) is full of incidents related to tribal culture and the European colonizers' arrival in Abame, Mbanta and Umuofia. Obierika (the best friend of Okonkwo's) was looking after his affairs in Umuofia. His visit to Mbanta is very important; because, Achebe used him as his mouthpiece in the novel; from him, we come to know about the arrival of the first missionaries in Abame and the encounter between the missionaries and the tribe. In Chapter 15, we come to know from Obierika about the arrival of the first British Colonizer in Abame and tribal response to him. When the tribe got prediction from the oracle that "the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them" (p.97), members decided to kill the harbinger of the foreigners and hanged the bicycle in the 'silk cotton tree' to avoid further invasion. Igbo tribe was concerned over the sovereignty of the clan. Tribal people tried to protest against their entrance at the very beginning to stop the destruction of the clan. But, lack of farsightedness of the people of Abame was the cause of their defeat. They did not take the matter seriously, though the oracle had warned them to be careful. They failed to understand that it was unwise to "kill a man who says nothing" (98). Their suspicion was true; the iron horse rider was the

harbinger of foreign rule in their country. “They should have armed themselves with their guns and their matchets even when they went to market.”(p. 99)

The colonizers adopted the technique to kill almost all the people of Abame to take revenge, and demonstrated their power to discourage further revolt and revenge. They brought fear among them in the very beginning by killing people and made division among them. For this reason, when Okonkwo wanted to protest and prepare his tribe for war, most of them remained silent remembering the history of the destruction of Abame. Before the arrival of the white man in Abame, people of Umuofia, Mbanta and Abame only heard about “white men who made the powerful guns and the strong drinks and took slaves away across the seas”(99). But they did not believe that story, and remained careless of their clans’ protection. With the changing world, they should have changed themselves, their ways of life and socio-political systems. They lived a carefree life before colonialism and colonial invasion had not bothered them enough to establish a defense force. If they had organized a defense force in all the communities, they could have resisted. Moreover, some people were neglected all the time and the community never thought of their welfare. They should have thought of the suppressed people’s revolt against the clan which would bring great destruction to the clan. For, the suppressed people became the source of the colonizer’s power and weapon for creating conflict in the clan and defeating them. In Part Two, there is also a hint in Obierika’s words of the possible visit to Umuofia by the foreigners and future uncertainty, “who knows what may happen tomorrow? Perhaps green men will come to our clan and shoot us.”(p.100)

In Chapter 16, Obierika informed that Umuofia had become the victim of colonization. The missionaries had come and built their church there, converted the lower casts, *efulefu*. The matter was a ‘source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan’(101), and ‘chielo’, the priestess of *Agbala* called the converts ‘the excrement of the clan, and the new faith was a mad dog that had come to eat it up’(101).The priestess did not want their presence and the first conflict between the missionaries and the clan started at her direction. In spite of the warning of the priestess, village elders gave the missionaries land in the Evil Forest so that it became their grave yard. The villagers’ blind faith in religion brought their destruction. Tribal hubris for superiority of religion led them to offer the land, and

they forgot the warning of destruction. If the people had given importance to reason, they could have avoided the destruction of the clan.

The missionaries adopted techniques of religion and music to attract the tormented souls like Nwoye, who was suffering from his father's rudeness, Ikemefuna's murder and the cry of the twins in the forest. The speech of brotherhood and love attracted many 'callow minded' converts like Nwoye. When the Christian missionaries started their activities in Mbanta, common clansmen did not accept them at first and did not pay any attention to them as they tried to prove Igbo religion 'deceitful' and 'fake'. To the missionaries, Christianity was the only religion for eternal peace and brotherhood. The clash for superiority of Igbo and Christian religion made the matter complex. Though Christianity demanded itself to be a universal religion of brotherhood, it denied the validity of other religions' and failed to get importance to Igbo people who made fun with them for their irrationality of calling the Christians 'mad', 'leper' etc.

Later, we see the missionaries asking for land to build church, and there was a discussion among them as the elders were divided in their opinions. Since the Igbo people did not really want them in their clan, they were worried about their 'going to live among them'(p.103). The Umuofian elders offered them the land of Evil Forest to bring an end to the intervention. They had the belief that the missionaries would not be able to live in the Evil Forest. "If a gang of *efulefu* decided to live in the Evil Forest it was their own affair. One came to think of it the Evil Forest was a place fit home for such undesirable people"(p.110). The Missionaries were undesirable to the tribal people, but still they gave them a place for living. This they did only for their lack of scientific knowledge and strong faith in Igbo religion. They failed to understand that only a place can never be the cause of death of people. For tribal narrowness coming from ignorance, they failed to think correctly about an incident from any correct perspective. The villagers never thought, what would happen if the missionaries survived.

Positive response to colonialism was found among those who had been suppressed for generations. Among them, the lower caste or 'osu' and twin-bearers fled to Christian Church in the hope of getting rid of age-old violence. When the Igbo tribe of Mbanta offered the missionaries land in the Evil Forest, suspicious tribal people waited for the result. After

seven market weeks, hesitant tribal people's hesitation turned into firm determination. They were determined that there was something special in the new religion that could save them and change their life-style. "The villagers were so certain about the doom that awaited these men that one or two converts thought it wise to suspend their allegiance to the new faith" (p.107). But when they survived, tribal people started to get converted into Christianity in a body. Depressed women also started to be converted. Among them, Nneka, the wife of Amadi, was the first; for, she had thrown her twin children in the Evil Forest for the fourth time, and was "very heavy with child"(107). Amadi was a prosperous farmer. Naturally when Amadi and his family accepted Christianity, other villagers were also inspired. In the mean time, the missionaries started to convert boys like Ikemefuna who were tired of the restrictions and brutality of tribal culture. Thus, the clan started to break and the Igbo tribe started to face crisis.

Those who adapted the culture and religion of the Christian missionaries became the source of their strength. In this novel, the zealous converts known as '*osu*' tried to violate the law of the earth by killing sacred python. It also started the conflict between the church and the clan. The incident of the killing of the 'royal python' turned the whole clan against them as it was a question of the superiority of tribal religion. According to the Igbo religion, God would take action against his abomination. Igbo tribe did not take any action against the violation of religious belief and waited for god's work, and the true existence of Igbo religion was proved when Okoli died suddenly. But they wanted to show their wrath against the offence and decided to ostracize the converts from the mainstream and all social dealings as they had followed the missionaries' order and abandoned their own religion. The conflict between the over-zealous converts and the whole tribe of Mbanta was restrained by the death of Okoli and victory of tribal religion and the belief- that 'the gods were still able to fight their own battles' (114). And the simple, honest, god-fearing clan saw 'no reason for molesting the Christians' (114). Okoli's death once again proved the real magical power of Igbo religion. Igbo tribe's confidence was so strong that they felt, if the missionaries became more troublesome than they were, they would simply drive the colonizers out of the clan. The Igbo people claimed that they were very concerned about their religion and their clan's sovereignty.

Through this incident Achebe contested the idea of Christianity as the only one true religion and the claim that other religions were false and

baseless. Igbo religion was also true and authentic. The gods of Igbo tribe can fight their own battle. What the tribal people contested was the idea of Western superiority and supremacy of Christianity. Though the European missionaries claimed their religion to be a religion of mercy, they have been presented in *Things Fall Apart* as ruthless and heartless in imposing their faith and rule on the Igbo tribe who were already rich in religion and on ruling system. Achebe depicted the life of Igbo tribe who had rich values, beliefs, rituals and customs and that they were bound to leave under the tactful pressure of the Christian missionaries.

Though the tribal people of Mbanta were accepting the new religion, they failed to come out of tribal mindset. When the out-casts or *osu's* came to accept the new religion, converted tribal people protested violently. Their question was: 'what will the heathen say of us when they hear that we receive *Osu* in our midst? They will laugh'(111). But, Mr. Kiaga made them understand that those people need god's mercy more than others. 'Before God,' he said, 'there is no slave or free. We are all children of God and we must receive these our brothers' (p.111). Mr. Kiaga's speech on universal brotherhood influenced the tribal people to leave their age-old tribal culture and religion. Though Christianity boasts of universal brotherhood, they consider people of other religions to be heathen. This contradictory attitude of missionaries led the tribal people to take action against them. The missionaries' aim was to change Igbo culture, religion and identity. After converting the tribal people, the missionaries changed the new converts' name and they lost their identity and got new Christian identity. If the Europeans were really concerned for the Igbo tribe's welfare, they would have developed their real life without converting them. We know how the Igbos were very dynamic and progressive. They wanted change, wanted development of their country. The colonizers wanted to dominate over the tribal people, rule them, oppress them, and so, they created division in the community by converting the traditional Igbos and made them dependent on them so that they could exploit them.

Although the rulers and the ruled remained far from each other, a great portion of the rulers' habit, culture, religion, likings, belief, disbelief, dress were automatically absorbed by the ruled. Thus, a hegemonic relationship bound them together. This relationship is mostly marked by the juxtaposition of the oppressors and the oppressed that are bound together by mutual hatred. For example: Nwoye did not love the new religion and the Christians but the violence of his own religion and his father's strictness made him flee to Christianity. He was influenced by the

sweet songs of Christian brotherhood, not any inner feeling for Christian religion. On the other hand, the 'osu' and the mothers of twin children wanted to get rid of their misfortune. They were the source of their apparent independence, but really slavery was their ultimate fate.

In Part Three of *Things Fall Apart* we find the changing Umuofia, the native village of Okonkwo and his resolve to drive the missionaries away through war to make the land free from invaders. But, things had changed, and the situation moved in another direction after the establishment of the Church and later a court and a district commissioner to punish the common peoples' offences against the white man's law. At the court, "the District Commissioner judged cases in ignorance. He had court messengers who brought men to him for trial (123). For example: they were tried for throwing away the twins in the evil forest and molesting the Christians. They were arrested, charged fine and compelled to work for the government. Physical punishment was the same for both common people and title holders. The court was the place for tribal people's agony, and Okonkwo, like other elderly people, thought, 'we must fight these men and drive them from the land' (124). But, Igbo people were temperate and practical. As they were used to survive fighting against natural disasters all the time, they gave importance to reason, not to emotion.

Igbo tribe had two ways for getting rid of the colonial rulers. Firstly, they could wait until the colonizers returned, being tired. Secondly, the Igbo could drive them away by fighting. For the second option, they were not properly ready because they had no centralized government and army. For tribal in-fighting, their willingness, weapon and own people were enough. But, for war with a colonizing country, their power was very limited. A planned war needed lot of things which they were lacking. Tribal protest against foreign invasion in Abame once again made them think deeply. The tribe of Abame killed the 'iron horse rider' missionary to stop colonization. But, they were attacked in the market place and killed. The colonizers adopted unfair means to stop revolt. For that reason, when they started their own government in Umuofia later, the older and wiser people remained silent to avoid further destruction.

The new government gave converted tribal people power and position. Later, they became the source of the British government's power in the colonized countries. The government worked in the colonized countries

with the help of those converted people. In *Things Fall Apart*, tribal people of Umuofia and other villages could easily drive away the colonizers development of nationalism and nationalist unity; but, for their own people's collaboration or betrayal, they failed to do it. Tribal people's inner agony and helplessness has been described through Obierika's words, 'If we should try to drive out the white men in Umuofia we should find it easy. There are only two of them. But what of our own people who are following their way and have been given power? They would go to Umuru and bring the soldiers, and we would be like Abame.'(p.124)

In addition, those who were suppressed and neglected generation after generation wanted to get rid of the old order that gave nothing but took power, position and social status. For example: the 'osus' in *Things Fall Apart*, were treated as outcasts, were dedicated to a god and were set apart as "a taboo for ever"(p.111). Their next generations also bore the responsibility. They were treated as outcasts, had to lead separate lives in a fixed area of the village near the great shrine. They could only marry in their own casts, could not cut hair or shave, could not attend an assembly of the free borns, could not take shelter under their roofs, and even after death, they were buried in the Evil Forest without any funeral. They had the hope of being accepted by the church, and were accepted by Mr. Kiaga. The newly converted segregated casts became the source of the increasing power of the missionaries. All the osus of Mambanta were converted, and most of them got position and power later and worked as the tools of imperialism.

Missionaries very tactfully diverted tribal people's attention to the new religion. In *Things Fall Apart*, missionary Mr. Brown won over the heart of Umuofian people by his friendly attitude. He made friendship with Akuna, one of the greatest men in Umuofia and learnt about tribal culture and tribal people's attitude to foreigners. As the common people were very much keen to maintain their own ritual, missionaries understood that a "frontal attack on it would not succeed" (p.128). So, he started a school, and gave importance to education and convinced the guardians to send their children to school in the hope that "the leaders of the future would be men and women who had learnt to read and write" (p.128). Missionaries persuaded tribal people by saying that, if they did not send their children to school, people from other places would come to rule them. They also gave the example of native court. Their technique of education helped them to spread their empire quickly. Though at first

common people sent the slaves and lazy children but later began to send their brilliant children also with hope of future power. Even sometimes they, like Ezeulu in *Arrow of God*, sent their sons to keep a watchful eye on the missionaries. They also established hospitals and gave free treatment to local people. The aided people later became their admirer and the source of their power

As religion and education went hand in hand, mission grew from strength to strength, and because of their link with the new administration, they earned a new social prestige and emerged as a new social class which was absent in early Igbo society.

Marxists who feel obliged to retain and use terminology of class and exploitation use it to describe the relationship between African states and the colonial and neocolonial powers. The Africans are thus members of a single class, the consciousness and cohesion of which are fostered. In traditional society, the chiefs were not exploiting the masses; the leisure which they enjoyed was the just reward for the efforts of their youth; they are seen not as tyrants but as defenders of their people, feeding them in times of poverty, safeguarding them from the attacks of their enemies. (Lloyd, 1972: 280)

During that time, the missionaries turned tribal people's attention to the new religion, new government and new trading stores. Not only foreign products were the centers of their attention, but also some local products (palm oil, kernel) became very costly and "much money flowed in Umuofia" (p.128). People started to be rich by selling local products. Thus, communal society turned into capitalistic society. Capitalism took the place of communalism or tribalism. That was the cause of Okonkwo and tribal people's great anger against colonizers. With the arrival of a new way of life, people started to think from new light. With the arrival of money in Umuofian villages, their life-style started to change. Money gave them purchasing power, and whoever had money, had power. As a result, a new class started to emerge in Umuofia. The warriors, heroes and title-holders lost their demand, superiority and authority in society. For that, great warrior Okonkwo's return from exile did not create any impression in the village, which was the cause of Okonkwo's great wrath against the colonizers who broke their tribal unity. In the new order, an *osu* also could be rich and powerful, and that the tribal people could not

tolerate. Okonkwo's wrath was against the new system that broke all the previous bonds those tied the tribe together. The incidents which started to break the clan had to do with Okonkwo's great thought and anxiety, and 'he felt a strong desire to take up his matchet, go to the church and wipe out the entire vile and miscreant gang.'(108)

In Chapter 22, we find conflict between the Christian missionaries and the Umuofian people. The issue was unmasking an ancestral spirit, i.e. masked *egwugwu*, by Enoch, a convert, the son of a snake-priest who was believed to have killed and eaten the sacred python. He dared to tear off one *egwugwu*'s mask which was a great offence. The incident occurred during the annual ceremony which was held in honor to the earth deity. Igbo tribe believed that the ancestors of the clan emerged again as '*egwugwu*', through tiny ant-holes. The *egwugwu*'s role was important in Igbo society, as they gave all the social and judicial decisions of the clan and also led the social rituals. So, unmasking an *egwugwu* was a great offence in the eye of the tribal people, which Enoch did to show his hatred for the old order. Enoch is the symbolic representation of the zealous converts who worked as the weapon of the British rulers. In Abame, we find a group of converts led the Christians to the way of Abame for doing mass destruction. If the converts were not with them, it was difficult for the European rulers to enter into Abame. Enoch's audacity aroused the *egwugwu* of Umuofia and other neighboring villagers. Some of the elders of the clan went with charms and amulets, and they destroyed Enoch's compound. The furious assembly of the Umuofian villagers made Mr. Smith and others afraid and they realized that their 'physical resistance' (132) was not sufficient. The confrontation between Ajofia, the leading *egwugwu* of Umuofia, and Mr. Smith hinted that the clan did not want the foreign people any more in their own land. Ajofia's order, "Tell them to go back and leave us alone" (p.134), was the outburst of the tribal people's hatred for the missionaries. As the Igbo respected other religions, they proposed Mr. Smith to learn and understand tribal culture. Tribal decision was to destroy the colonizers' holy place and the people burnt the church to take revenge against their holy spirit's dishonor.

Destruction of the Christian church is the indication of the Igbo tribe's concern for independence. Religion was in their heart, and when the Igbo tribe found its abomination by the intruders, they took action against them. Christian missionaries at first tried to prove Igbo religion false and converted tribal people. But, the tribe wanted to show that their religion

also was true. In Chapter 21 of the novel, we find a confrontation between Akunna and Mr. Brown, where Akunna wanted to establish Igbo religion as true and superior to Christian religion. Akunna said, “You say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth. We also believe in Him and call him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods” (p.127). Through Akunna in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe contested the idea of Christianity as the only one true religion, and claimed that Igbo religion was as rational and real as the Christian religion. However, the idea of the supremacy of Christianity was in the center of repeated crime that the Christians committed against the Igbo tribe. It started to change the tribal way of life and religion. For that reason, unmasking the masked spirit (*egwuegwu*) or killing the sacred python became great issues for the tribal people. “At the heart of the tragedy of the confrontation between the colonialists and the Igbo people is thus the hubris with which they treat one another. It is pride of one’s identity and being absolute about whose culture is better that seals a violent confrontation and suicide attempts when either side refuses to compromise”(Chin-Yi, 2014:136). In this sense, Okonkwo’s suicide may be considered to be tragic and heroic, for his was the hubris not to surrender to the invaders’ judgments.

Igbo people were more temperate and democratic than the European colonizers. At the heat of the moment, they did not do any inhuman work. The tribal people of Umuofia wisely contained their anger to talk to them. Their custom and religion taught them to be temperate and sympathetic to other people. The villagers gave importance to others’ religion, respected it, let people follow it but could not bear any insult. The Igbos also proposed to the missionaries, “You can stay with us if you like our ways. You can worship your own god. It is good that a man should worship the gods and the spirits of his fathers. Go back to your house so that you may not be hurt. Our anger is great but we have held it down so that we can talk to you.”(p.134)

From the confrontation it became comprehensible, custom and religion were the main issues of tribal people’s dispute with the colonizers. Igbo tribe did what their custom allowed them to do. When the Igbos felt that their custom was neglected or even violated by the outsiders, they protested against it in a body. The tribe refused to leave any internal matter in Mr. Smith’s hand because they thought, “he did not understand our customs as we do not understand his. We say he is foolish because he does not know our ways, and perhaps he says we are foolish because we

do not know his. Let him go away”(p.135). During the moment of the great crisis, Igbo tribe showed the superiority of their religion and custom. Igbo religion taught them to be polite, temperate and respectful to other religion, as tribal religion was broader than the Christian religion. Though Christianity claims mercy and universal brotherhood, it fails to accept other religion as true as it is. The Christian missionaries called people of other religion heathen, and tried to convert them to Christianity at any cost. Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart*, tried to say that not only Christianity but also Igbo religion was true and authentic.

After the destruction of the mission-church, the leaders of Umuofia were invited for a meeting with the District Commissioner in his headquarters. In spite of their suspicion of danger, they accepted the invitation, as “an Umuofian man does not refuse a call” (p.136). Here, once again, Achebe proved the superiority of Igbo custom, and at the same time, revealed the fakeness of Christianity’s supremacy. The missionaries failed to show the greatness of Christianity in front of the Igbo leaders whom they called as heathen and savages. As the politeness of the District Commissioner impressed the tribal people, they removed weapons to show due respect to the government. But, the District Commissioner’s adoption of an abominable trick to arrest them and the way of taking fine from them was totally opposite to the tribal culture. The elders of Umuofia went to the court to show respect to their invitation, it was the tribal culture, they showed due respect to the District Commissioner, it was their politeness. But, the British people, being polite and civilized apparently only, were really brutal which the leaders failed to understand. Jean Paul Sartre truly said, “No one can treat a man like a dog without first regarding him as a man.”(Memmi, 1995: 17)

The court-room scene, where contradictory attitude of the British government and the tribal people is shown, is important. There was no practice of democracy in the District Commissioner’s judgment. He did not give the leaders of Umuofia any scope for self-defense, which was violation of human rights. The District Commissioner’s speech, “If any man ill-treats you we shall come to your rescue” (137), reveals his contradictory attitudes. Though the colonizers demanded that they had brought a peaceful administration to uncivilized tribal areas so that they could live in peace, their treatment and the ironic hospitality they got from the British Government disproved the demand. The Igbo people knew how to evaluate and entertain a guest, which the British rulers did not know. Pretension and enslaving attitude of the colonizers made the

leaders speechless. The court took two hundred bags of cowries from the arrested village leaders' family-members as compensation, which was against tribal culture.

In Chapter 23, anxiety, fear and tension over the forthcoming danger made all people thoughtful. The colonizers brought disorder and disharmony in tribal life, though they demanded themselves to be the harbinger of peace. The colonizers were the cause of their unhappiness; they set fire to their 'Forest of Arden'. The inner feelings of the Umuofian villagers are depicted in the following lines-

It was the time of the full moon. But that night the voice of children was not heard. The village *ilo* where they always gathered for a moon-play was empty. The woman of Iguedo did not meet in their secret enclosure to learn a new dance to be displayed later to the village. Young men who were always abroad in the moonlight kept their huts that night. Their manly voices were not heard on the village paths as they went to visit their friends and lovers. Umuofia was like a startled animal with ears erect, sniffing the silent, ominous air and not knowing which way to run. (p.139)

Instead of joy and secret dancing, "every man in Umuofia went about armed with a gun or a matchet" (p.136) to take action against the colonial government. The colonizers' tyranny was so unbearable that the villagers were unwilling to tolerate them any more. Not only the Colonizers but also the converts were the cause of their oppression, and the tribal opinion was to fight against their own people. Okika's speech, "We must root out the evil. And if our brothers take the side of evil we must root them out too. And we must do it right now" (p.144) was the eruption of the tribal people's hatred against colonialism that grasped their culture, religion and socio-political system and at the same time enslaved them in the name of civilization. The Igbo sovereignty was at stake for the missionaries, their courts and converted Igbos' overzealous activities. Though at the very beginning, tribal people tried to stop the colonizers' entrance into tribal areas, they failed for lack of modern weapons, religious belief, superstition and simplicity.

When the Igbo tribe of Umuofia was taking decision about their next action-plan against the colonizers, the court messengers' sudden arrival

changed the atmosphere of the market-place. Okonkwo's hatred against the court messengers made him speechless as the court's order to stop the meeting was against tribal sovereignty. The white men wanted to take away every right from the colonized people to make them their slave, and this Okonkwo could not tolerate. He took revenge against them by killing the head messenger. The silence of the clan made it clear that "Umuofia would not go to war"(144). Okonkwo's killing the court messenger alone is also tribal in nature. In tribalism, there is no place of weakness, and heroism is honored. Okonkwo, throughout his life, gave importance to action, avoided reason and emotion. When Okonkwo found that the clan was divided and would not take action, he alone advanced to do his duty.

The common people did not show any revolutionary initiative after Okonkwo's killing the head messenger; rather they tended to flee as he failed to command them or influence them to follow him. Though his work was heroic in the eyes of the tribal people as tribalism gave importance to personal achievement and heroism, he failed to be a leader. Okonkwo's own people did not appreciate his work as they were confused. As a leader, he did not give any speech to influence his clan's men and did not make them understand the importance of freedom. As a result, his tribe's men failed to understand him and he failed to make them understand their duty. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu also did not give any direction to his clan's men after his imprisonment in Okperi. As the Igbo had no centralized government and no specific leader, they failed to create awareness in favor of war. Okonkwo individually showed his hatred and heroism as the people, like dead man, lost every power to protest against oppression.

Lots of reason worked behind the tribal people's inactivity at the killing of the court messenger. The tribal people were practical; they had the knowledge of the white men's magical power and powerful guns. In front of the powerful guns, their matchets were quite useless and tribal people's attempt had big chance of failure. Moreover, colonialism brought frustration, hesitation and alienation in tribal life. "Alienation did not exist in traditional African societies; and in as much as it exists in African society today, it is the result of colonialism, of the domination of one country by another" (Lloyd, 1972: 280).The people were worried for the future uncertainty of the new generation, as the colonizers predicted about the connection between the new generation's power and position and the British government. Previous history of other clan's destruction and the tribal people's involvement with the colonizers created

complexity in the clan. Fascination for the new order that would bring them power and position was another reason for their inactivity. Moreover, their family members had already diverted and benefited. If they followed Okonkwo, they would have lost the chance of prosperity. Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart*, has shown how colonialism destroyed a culture and its unity.

The concluding chapter (25) gives pieces of information about tribal culture, tribal reaction against colonial invasion and the colonizers' attitude to the primitive tribe. Here, Okonkwo's suicide once again proved that death was preferable to dishonor. He wanted to fight alone, fought alone and committed suicide to get rid of the slavery to colonial invaders. Okonkwo, like many other tribal people, was independent-minded, rejected imperial rule and wanted relief from colonial invasion that destroyed the harmony of tribal life. Okonkwo, throughout the whole novel, tried to resist against the changes taking place in his tribe. He was known as one of the strongest and the most powerful men of his tribe, but with the arrival of the white men, other tribal people started to change, and that Okonkwo could not accept. He found the shadow of his father in the clan who were unwilling to fight, and that was the reason of his wrath and fear of being one of what kind of people he hated all through his life. Okonkwo tried to remain strong against the tide of change, though he appeared to be the only one. Killing the court messenger was one last attempt to save the tribe from the weakness and influence of colonial invasion.

Obierika's speech in front of the magistrate, "that man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia, you drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog" (p.147), was a tribal revolt against colonialism that led a hero like Okonkwo to commit suicide. Tribal people's unwillingness to accept the new religion and government easily was the cause of the colonizers' violence against the Igbo people. Taking away everything from the natives, the colonizers made them the petty subject of their literary pieces. The tribes were just the source of their wealth, power, position and experience. The tragic death of a hero of the Igbo clan gave the European rulers new idea for writing literature. Everywhere they did injustice in the name of justice.

Okonkwo's death reminds us once again that his tragic death is not insignificant. His death proved him to be keenly nationalistic, and his

rejection to the British colonialist idea of white supremacy and white superiority. Blacks can also be equal, if not superior. Western missionaries diluted the tribal identity by culturally conquering them and forced them to adopt their beliefs and ways of life. The missionaries adopted the technique of direct and indirect force to make them obey and accept the British rule and religion. Achebe whole-heartedly tried to protect his own tribal identity against the imposition of a Western identity that destroyed Igbo people's tribal identity and deprived them of their religious beliefs and practices. Let us quote from Chung-Yi's essay, "Colonial Violence in *Things Fall Apart*":

At the heart of Achebe's novel is thus post-colonial resistance of the idea of white supremacy and western superiority. Achebe does not believe in yielding to the white universalism in religion because he describes the process as a process of violence which drives Okonkwo to despair and suicide because it has razed his identity and religion to the ground. (2014: 134)

To conclude our interpretation in terms of the exposures and pointers placed by Achebe, Umuofia had not been a blank slate before colonialism came. Before colonial invasion, they had very rich culture and religious beliefs, customs and rituals which the British colonizers destroyed mercilessly in the name of civilization. Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart*, very beautifully depicted the cultural and religious riches of the tribal people in every chapter and at the same time showed how tribal people protested against colonial invasion to save their own ways of life. The conflict between Christianity and the old religion and gradual victory of the new religion, custom and government made Achebe nostalgic. He wrote, "It was like the good old days again, when a warrior was a warrior" (136). Achebe places one elegiac tone in his novel where people mourned for old custom and religion, where people were happy with their own glories. The change was so unexpected and unacceptable that the tribes of Abame, Mbanta and Umuofia tried to resist against the annexation of these. For cultural and political freedom, they revolted which we also find in Hutu, Tutsi and other ethnic groups in Africa. When Okonkwo saw the inevitable change and failed to influence his people to fight against the invaders, his tribal heroism drove him to kill the court messenger, and at last, he committed suicide to avoid surrendering to an alien government.

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CHAPTER THREE

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACHEBE'S AND OTHER WRITERS' WORKS ON COLONIALISM

Achebe presents the colonial experience from an African perspective. In his *African Voice*, Achebe wrote:

The last four or five hundred years of European contact with Africa produced a body of literature that presented Africa in a very bad light and Africans in very lucid terms. The reason for this had to do with the need to justify the slave trade and slavery... This continued until the Africans themselves in the middle of the twentieth century took into their own hands the telling of their story. (Brainy Quote.com)

Things Fall Apart is definitely not the first African novel, but it is probably the first work in which the novelist set out to represent the African experience in a narrative that is different from other colonial novels. The cultural complexity in the life of the Igbo tribe in Western Africa during colonial invasion is the focus of *Things Fall Apart*. After its publication in 1958, this novel has served as a model for other African writers to think from African perspective. Achebe wanted to give hint to his readers that the Africans did not hear of “culture for the first time from Europeans” (Duerden, 1979: 7). Presentation of the simple but glorious history of the Igbo tribe, their dynamic life-style, strong and rich culture before colonial invasion prove his argument that the African tribes were also civilized, the Europeans were the invaders and destroyed their unity; they destroyed Igbo tribe's cultural identity in the name of civilizing them.

A close look at Achebe's biography gives us a history of his writing novels in different settings. The incident took place at University College, Ibadan; Achebe was introduced to some famous European writers who had set their novels in Africa, such as Joseph Conrad, Joyce Cary and Graham Greene. They wrote about Africa from Europeans' points of view. To them, the colonizers were the civilized nation who had brought light to dark Africa. In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow thinks about the

glorious past of Europe. Achebe thought that those books had to be read in 'different light'. After reading *Heart of Darkness*, he realized that he was one of those "savages jumping up and down on the beach." When he faced this kind of situation, he realized that "someone has to write a different story." (qtd in Gikandi, 1996 : xvii)

Achebe was the writer to present Africa and colonialism in a different light, in his first novel *Things Fall Apart*. Here, he shows that the future of African writing would not depend on simple imitation of European literary forms giving priority to colonialism, but on presenting colonialism with all its destructive effects on native culture and government. The subject of Chinua Achebe's novels is the tragic end results of African encounter with Europe. He has chosen the tragic mood as opposed to the comic treatment of the similar theme in Oyono's and Beti's novels, though these two authors are no less serious than he. His novels deal with the social and psychological conflicts created by the white man and his culture into the self-contained world of African society and the disorder in the African consciousness that followed. In his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, we find destruction of the African tribal life and culture under the influence of European colonizers' exploitative rule and politics. The harmonious livelihood of Igbo community was disrupted by the intruders who came to them in the name of civilization which was not new to them. They were already highly civilized, quite modern. They had thirst for knowledge and wanted to know what was inside other religions and cultures. But, through pretension, in the name of civilization, the colonizers enslaved the people and made division among them. They changed the social structure and things started to fall apart. Their protests against foreigners' interference in the social and cultural affairs prove that they were eager to hold things together. Okonkwo's suicide symbolizes his personal rejection of a new order that took away his political autonomy in the clan and brought about the collapse of the old order.

Furthermore, in *Arrow of God*, Achebe focuses on Igbo tribes of Umuaro where British rule is well established and people are bound to obey their rule but not religion fully. Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu, is unwilling to take the colonizers' post of "Warrant Chief". The whole incident of his arrest and denial signifies that they were unwillingly obeying others' rule. The Igbos were dynamic, civilized and eager to accept new things. Their superior intelligence makes them think that "those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying *had we known* tomorrow" (2010:47). For this reason, Ezeulu sent his son Oduche to learn white people's

knowledge, wanted him to be as keen in foreign language as to write it in left hand, speak fluently— all these things attest that they were ready to accept new things, but hated slavery, others' rule in their domain. As previous experience of the end- result of tribal protest was bitter, the Igbo people tried to avoid war and obeyed foreign rule.

In Achebe's *Arrow of God*, protagonist Ezeulu's tribal rigidity led him to reject Winterbottom's proposal of taking the post of Warrant Chief. Ezeulu was satisfied with the Igbo-god Ulu and was unwilling to accept the colonizers' post. Acceptance of the post of Warrant Chieftaincy means acceptance of slavery that Ezeulu rejects. Here we find similarity between Ezeulu and Okonkwo who were against the violation of tribal culture. They have also the fear of losing image among members of the community. As tribalism is their main stay, they do what the tribal ideology impels them to do. In spite of his weakness for Ikemefuna, Okonkwo kills him to go by tribal sense and uphold his heroic image in the tribe as tribalism appreciates heroism and discourages weakness. Okonkwo's fear of being called 'agbala' directs him to go against his will and he suppresses his soft feelings all the times. Achebe presents the same duality in the character of Ezeulu in *Arrow of God*, where he sends his son Oduche to learn the white men's knowledge, though he does not like their rule in Umuaro. He knows, with the changing world, they should change, as, "[T] the world is like a mask dancing. If you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place"(47). In *Okperi*, he is inspired by the white man writing in the left hand and feels the urge to learn the knowledge of white man to know what is 'karismatic' in that knowledge. He sends Oduche as a spy among them to bring the good things from them. Ezeulu knows, with the changing world everything will change, and his ideology, way of life also would be changed. Still, he rejects the white man's proposal as he does not want to go out of tribal ideology and his own religion. His rejection of Warrant Chieftaincy and imprisonment in the guard room creates his heroic image once again and that is what he desires. He rejects the request of village elders to eat the 'sacred yam' and denies to declare the day of new yam as the leaders of Umuaro do not take any action against his dishonor in *Okperi*. Both Okonkwo and Ezeulu are against colonial invasion, but they fail to inspire the people to fight against the foreign people. Ezeulu's internal conflict is presented in his conversation with the ancestral spirits in the shrine. Both of them know that they are unable to resist the forces of colonialism's destruction of their tribal life, they try to overcome; when they fail, take action alone. Ezeulu's refusal to declare the "new yam day" is one kind of rejection of his own community that fails to understand him.

In his third novel, *Arrow of God*, Achebe thus returns to the theme of destruction of the tribal world. It is a more complex and ambitious book than the earlier two. It has benefited from the definitions and insights which the two earlier books have provided. With greater confidence and control and with a deeper assurance, Achebe sets out once again to show in the 'historical process' the inadequacies and limitations with which man confronts the worlds he claims to rule. Ezeulu's denial of the post of Warrant Chief is his direct protest against colonial invasion and European rule in their land. Though it was an important post, he denied it. He was the religious and executive head of Umuaro and other villages where everything happened with his consent. Colonialism tried to seize Ezeulu's political autonomy, and acceptance of the colonial post 'Warrant Chief' would have been one kind of submission to colonial rule that Ezeulu rejected. In chapter eight of *Arrow of God*, there is a meeting among the young people of Umuaro against the European rulers' injustice to the road construction laborers. They decided to go to the elders of Umuaro to "tell them they could no longer work on the white man's road" (2010:85). Nweke Ukapaka and other villagers' anger is the expression of their abhorrence for colonial rule that not only oppressed them but also made division among them. Their inner hatred is reflected as follows:

Anyhow the question which we shall beg Unachukwu to ask him is why we are not paid for working on his road. I have heard that throughout Olu and Igbo, wherever people do this kind of work the white man pays them. Why should our own be different? (87)

We find lots of similarity between works by Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o who also writes about Africa from the Africans' point of view. Ngugi's novels have been perceived largely as discourses on cultural decolonization. They involve the quest for a new socio-political order. His narratives are steeped in Kenya's historical landscape and at times border close to direct allusion to actual historical personages and events. Through his writings, Ngugi portrays a peaceful pre-colonial Africa, the injustices of colonialism, the glorious struggle for freedom (Uhuru), the betrayal and violence of the common people in the post-colonial period and the flexibility of the people against neo-colonial consumerism.

Ngugi, in *The River Between*, also presents the tribal people's response to colonial invasion through the conflict between the villagers of Kameno, the home of the traditionalists and Makuyu, the living place of the

recently converted Christian Kikuyu. Joshua, a fanatic Kikuyu preacher is the representative of Christian missionaries who try to establish mainly a Christian community in Makuyu. He, like Enoch in *Things Fall Apart*, tries to break the tribal convention and wants to establish a new culture in the community. Chege, an elderly leader of Komeno, is the representative of old customs and he tries to restore traditional Kikuyu values as he understands them. Like the 'chiefo' of *Things Fall Apart*, he says, "these followers of Joshua would bring so many divisions to the land that the tribe would die" (Wa Thiong'o, 1965: 5). Chege tries to protest against colonial invasion in his village with the help of his son Waiyaki and sends him to Siriana missionary school for learning about the hidden treasures of Christianity. In *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu, also sent his son Oduche to Christian school to learn their knowledge to use the acquired knowledge for their own development.

Ngugi, in *The River Between*, presents a tribal ritual—circumcision—especially female circumcision which was mandatory for one to become a Kikuyu 'woman'. Reverend Livingstone, in accordance with the Presbyterian missions, ordered to ban female circumcision among the Christian Kikuyus. But, this was violation of tribal culture and threw the Christians into sharp conflict with traditional values. The controversy is clearly embodied in the character of Muthony, one of Joshua's daughters, who runs away to join the circumcision ceremony in the other ridge. Being an uncircumcised Christian female, Muthony feels culturally isolated from the majority of the Gikuyus, because tribalism gives importance to communal identity and rejects individual self. Muthony's desire to get back cultural identity lies in her conversation with her sister—"I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful, to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe. Yes, the white man's God does not quite satisfy me. I want, I need something more" (p.26). Muthony's tribal propensities led her to follow the traditional ritual that will give her the identity of a Gikuyu woman. She is the representative of old customs; to her, tribal identity was more important than anything else in this world.

Consequently, Muthoni's death divided the Kikuyu people, and three kinds of reaction were found among people. People of Kameno believed that the missionaries had poisoned Muthoni when she was in the hospital; Joshua blamed it on "satan's" influence over the "pagan" Kikuyu. Christian missionaries blamed the unhealthy process, and refused to admit the children of parents who had not abandoned the ritual of female circumcision. Waiyaki's foundation of new school, Mariosioni is the

result of tribal people's protest against cultural bias where the custom of circumcision was allowed. Specific tribal rituals were the identifying factors that differentiated one tribe from another. Naturally, when the British rulers dishonored their core cultural practices, they could not take it easily. It is unquestionable, "the abolition of *irua* [circumcision] will destroy the tribal symbol which identifies the age-groups, and prevent the Gikuyu from perpetuating that spirit and collectivism and national solidarity which they have been able to maintain from time immemorial" (Kenyatta, 1962:130). When Waiyaki started a separate school, in the eyes of tribal people, he became the savior against the domination of Christianity. Here, both Joshua and Waiyaki are tribal in nature. Though Waiyaki had confusion over the necessity of women's circumcision, he did not want to go against the tradition to change it. They gave importance to emotion, and not reason; and this was the weakness with tribalism which brought division among them. If they changed the tradition with time, they could have avoided destruction of the clan.

History informs that female circumcision became a very important issue in Kenya during the 1920s. For, it was a ritual of the natives, and to preserve it means to preserve the custom which was being destroyed by colonial rule. Jomo Kenyatta noted, "the moral code of the tribe is bound up with this custom and that it symbolizes the unification of the whole tribal organization" (1962:129). Their establishment of the militant organization Kiama, to protect the tribal ways, is another kind of tribal protest against colonialism. The Kiama required an oath of loyalty to uphold tribal purity and Waiyaki violated it as he fell in love with Nyambura, an uncircumcised daughter of Joshua, and both were executed later. Though Waiyaki worked for keeping tradition alive, he also was executed for going against tribal decision, as tribal identity was more important to the people of Kameno than personal feeling or choice. His execution was the representation of tribal protest against accepting anything that went against tribalism. Obstinate nature not to change with the change of time and technology led them to be doomed. Waiyaki's failure was to lead the community in the proper direction, to help people to change with time, and his tragic end was similar to that of Okonkwo who wanted to hold his control in society, to drive the colonizers away but did not lead them in the right manner, and accepted inevitable death.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi presents the history of Kenyan resistance to colonial rule through four main characters who are all from the Gikuyu village of Thabai. 'Mau Mau Movement' occurs when the Europeans

took over the most agriculturally developed areas, specially “the White Highlands”. At that time, native Africans were compelled to work as hired laborers for the white men in exchange of low wages. To present the ‘Mau Mau Movement’ as a just resistant movement, Ngugi created Kihika, the leading voice of the freedom movement. He is found to speak before a large crowd to encourage the guerrilla warfare against the British. In this novel, his disappearance in the forest with many other young men with arms, and capture of the ‘Mahee’ police post, declaration of emergency and arrest of many young men of Thabai one year later, including Gikonyo and Mugo—all such happenings are the consequences of tribal people’s protest against colonial invasion. Harry Thaku is portrayed as a charismatic leader who backed the foundation of independent Schools and the independent Churches to protect tribal culture (circumcision).

“The Mau Mau Movement has been a controversial historical topic not only among the Europeans but the Kenyans themselves as they argue over whether or not it was a primitive and irrational movement led by the religiously fanatic Gikuyu and how it should be remembered in national history” (qtd. in Lawrence, 2010). John Lonsdale remarks, “It has lived in British memory as a symbol of African savagery, and modern Kenyans’ are divided by its images, militant nationalism and tribalist thuggery” (1993:37). It is apparent that in the novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi uses Kihika to refute charges of terrorism against the British rulers. They are given to kill the foreigners to establish their own political identity. Kihika defends, “we are not murderers. We are not hanging men—like Robson—killing men and women without cause or purpose” (1967:190). The British rulers regarded the “Mau Mau Movement” as a tribal movement limited to the Gikuyu. But, Ngugi in *A Grain of Wheat*, presented a meeting scene at Rung’ei Market where “[T]here were, however, plenty of speakers from Murunga and Nairobi. There was also Luo speaker from Nyanza showing that the movement had broken the barriers between tribes” (1967:14). It means that, the Mau Mau Movement’s essential beginning was tribal, though later it became a national movement.

In *The River Between*, Chege tried to protest tribal destruction by educating his son Waiyaki in a mission school at Siriana, where he would learn European culture and techniques to lead his own people. Chege, Ezeulu and Okonkwo tried to uphold their own tribal ideology, their pride in own culture, religion, wisdom, and heroism forbade them to accept an

alien culture and rule. European colonizers wanted to change the ancient Igbo tribal culture calling it savage, and they presented themselves as the bringer of light in the darkness. But, the tribal people wanted to prove that civilization was not new to them; they were civilized, their cultural practices were important to them, and so they were bent on continuing those practices at any cost. In *The River Between*, a conflict between Christian missionaries and the villagers of Kameno took place over the practice of tribal culture of 'woman circumcision' which was the tribal way to be a Gikuyu woman. In *A Grain of Wheat*, the heroic deeds of the community leaders in their struggles against the British rule in the early colonial period were repeatedly told from one generation to another, and Kihika was inspired at his early age. Ngugi presented it as follows:

Kihika's interest in politics began when he was a small boy and sat under the feet of Warui listening to stories of how the land was taken from people. . . . Warui needed only a listener: he recounted the deeds of Waiyaki and other warriors, who, by 1900 had been killed in the struggle to drive out the white man from the land; of Young Harry and the fate that befell the 1923 Procession; of Muthirigu and the mission schools that forbade circumcision in order to eat, like insects, both the roots and the stem of the Gikuyu society. . . . Kihika's hearts hardened towards 'these people', long before he had even encountered a white face. Soldiers came back from the war and told stories of what they had seen in Burma, Egypt, Palestine and India; wasn't Mahatma Gandhi, the saint, leading the Indian people against British rule? Kihika fed on these stories: his imagination and daily observation told him the rest; from early on, he had visions of himself, a saint, leading Kenyan people to freedom and power. (1967:83) (qtd. from Prasansak, 2004: 44)

It can be said in brief that both Ngugi and Achebe tried to present the sufferings of the Sub-Saharan people caused by the atrocious intervention of the European colonizers. Both of them wrote with hopes for an independent Africa with its own culture, own socio-political identity, though the setting, style and techniques of the writers were distinct from each other.

Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian born writer of international repute, is an artist proficient in multiple genres of literature. Not only does he write for the stage but is also active in directing and producing theater. Soyinka believes that the role of performative art is very important in shaping and regenerating the culture and political identity of a people and a nation. Art connects cultures of a people with the celestial and the archetypal primitive sources of beginnings. Soyinka's belief in the interrelation between a culture's art and its cosmic history is manifested in his depiction of Yoruba tribal cosmology.

In addition, Soyinka is a student of and contributor to the Western philosophical and artistic traditions. Throughout his texts, Soyinka uses the works of Nietzsche, Sartre, and Fanon as well as re-writes ancient Greek drama. He wants to question the idea of the "feeling intuitive African" in opposition to the "rational thinking European". It is not a question of conflict between reason and emotion, but a difference of worldviews and modes of thought. The Africans find it ridiculous to compartmentalize the mind in this way. Soyinka describes the Western obsessions with the nature of the human subject as a neurotic weakness. In *Myth, Literature and the African World*, Soyinka discusses the intellectual history of the search for the African essence and whether the essence is destroyed for the majority of Africa during the colonial "clash of cultures". Soyinka places himself in opposition to the search for "Africanness" by Negritude writers by proposing that the majority of the Africans "never at any time had cause to question the existence of their Negritude." (1976: 135)

Soyinka, in *Death and the King's Horseman*, presents a ritual of the tribal culture of the Nigerian Yoruba tribe—the ritual suicide of a Yoruba King's chief horseman. In Yoruba cosmology, there are three worlds—the world of the living, the world of the dead and the world of the unborn. Death is the way of journey from living world to the after-world. In Yoruba culture, when the king dies, he is accompanied by his horseman who guides him on his journey between worlds. According to tradition, the king is buried after a month of his death, and on the day of his burial, the horseman must die so that they can travel together; otherwise the king's spirit will wonder across the earth and bring harm to the Yoruba people. The horseman of this play, Elesin Oba, eagerly accepts the traditional role, as he reveres custom. The religion proclaims it to be a peaceful journey from one world to another that relates honor and prestige to both

the horseman and his family. Elesin is ready to accept his fate and his desire to obey the tribal custom is presented as follows:

I am the master of my own fate. When the hour comes
Watch me dance along the narrowing path
Glazed by the soles' of my great precursors
My soul is eager. I shall not turn aside. (1975:10)

But, the District officer of the territory, Simon Pilking, interrupted the ritual, arresting Elesin as the custom of suicide is barbaric and inhuman to them. Soyinka here wants to show that the death of the King's horseman is less a suicide than a peaceful journey from one world to another. As the disruption of the ritual means the violation of cosmic order of the universe and the future of the community will be in danger, people react violently and blame Elesin and Pilking. The community's reaction against colonial intervention is reflected in Iyaloja's confrontation with Pilking who hesitates to let the courier of Elesin's message to the dead King into his cell. Iyaloja, 'mother of the market', says:

White one, you have a King here, a visitor from your land. We know of his presence here. Tell me, where he to die, would you leave his spirit roaming restlessly on the surface of the earth? Would you bury him here among those you consider less human? (1975)

We learn from Soyinka's *Myth, Literature and the African world* that in the Yoruba world, everything exists in a large background of history and awareness of the gods and the universe. While living is a personal experience, everyone is a fragment of a bigger reality. Thus, every action has an impact on everything. All the Yorubas and the entire world are interconnected. This is why the community is so close and so attentive when it comes time for Elesin to follow his king to the afterworld. It affects everyone, alive or dead, because it has little to do with Elesin personally. It is not his choice or decision; it is something that will happen. So, suicide is presented as a social act in this play. Olakunle George in his *Relocating Agency: Modernity and African Letters*, said:

Feudalistic barbarism is an important mechanism of communal regeneration. The Elesin, at the moment of self-sacrifice, embodies the collective social and psychic aspiration of the Oyo community; he is a ritual scapegoat who mediates the world of the living, the dead, and the unborn. His death thus ensures renewed harmony between the three levels of existence constitutive of traditional Yoruba cosmic order. Indeed, on Soyinka's terms, "suicide" is a misnomer. That is, Elesin's death does not turn on a brutalization of the corporeal body; rather, it operates via an "act of will" through which his total being submits to a monitored dissolution almost an aesthetic in essence (2003: 153).

Thus, we find a conflict between Western culture and communal culture in *Death and the Kings Horseman*. Olunde, the eldest son of Elisin is a physician, and has knowledge of western culture, tries to make Pilkings understand that his father's suicide is not only a personal act but also a communal act. Communal belief is related to it and the community members must have the right to follow their own tradition. As the foreign rulers have no idea and respect to Yoruba tribal culture, Olunde warned Pilkings not to interfere in his father's suicide. In *Things Fall Apart*, the same kind of protest is found in Obierika's question about custom that the British rulers do not understand. "How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad" (124). When Olunde fails to make Pilkings understand their ritual, he commits the ritual suicide instead of his father to save his people. Here, Soyinka shows Olunde's suicide as a kind of protest against colonial rule that undermines their culture, religion and identity. At any cost, they are ready to follow their own culture as they do not like other's rule in their country.

At the same time, Olunde is the representative of tribal characteristics. Though Olunde is well educated, he wants to obey the tribal order to show his heroism so that people could not call him coward. Okonkwo's suicide contains the same kind of protest, to get rid of foreigner's judgment. His struggle is also against a 'new Umuofia', one that would tolerate and accommodate the White Imperialists, and one that is intent on eliminating the warriors' values for the 'old Umuofia' Okonkwo represents. Iva Gilbertova asserts thus:

As for the colonial factor, I do think that however unpolitical the conflict of the play may be in its author's intention, in the effect

there is much political and anti-colonial comment about it. The information it brings in this respect is not new, but it is the energy of the revolt that impresses the power of the resistance, the depth of sadness, of the despair and the contempt the African character expresses, referring to the whites' own values, to their weak points. (qtd. from "Tragedy of Colonial intervention: A Study...)

Gilvartova understands that Soyinka's play, in spite of authorial intent, would make for significant colonial protest. This anti-colonial protest, this questioning of the ideologies of the colonialists and their failure or reluctance to understand the culture of the colonized, is represented in many forms throughout the play.

Elesin's self-sacrifice is an acceptable cultural practice, because it honors the continuation of the community. Though Elesin's duty is considered strange and barbaric by the colonialists, it is a part of the ritual of life that forms the Yoruba beliefs in reconnecting life, afterlife, and the unborn. Olunde's suicide expresses respect for communal belief and protest against foreign rule. At any cost, he tries to keep the tradition alive. While Okonkwo's suicide is a direct response to the destruction colonialism has brought for Igbo cultural practices and beliefs, and while Elesin commits the ritual suicide, it is done within a context the colonialists have forced upon him. As the praise-singer says to Elesin after his son's body has been brought to his jail cell, "Our world is tumbling in the void of strangers, Elesin"(p.62), Olunde's death, caused by colonial interference, compromises these practices as well. Iyaloja, the mother of the market, remarks: "The gods demanded only the old expired plantain but you cut down the sap-laden shoot to feed your pride"(Ibid.). Colonialism does more than simply distort the tribal cultures in African societies, it endangers the cultural responses to them.

We find a comparable kind of communal practice—"satidaha"—within some South-East Asian communities such as Indonesia, Nepal and India. Satidaha refers to a ritual in which a recently widowed woman commits suicide by burning herself on the husband's funeral pyre. Raja Rammohan Roy, Bengali reformer and founder of Brahma Samaj, began a large scale campaign against the practice in 1912. But, "[H]e was at loggerhead with certain section, who wanted that Government should not interfere in religious practices and filed a counter-petition for making a law banning Sati Practice"(Dodwel,1932:140). Rammohan appealed to

William Bentinck, the Governor of Bengal, to pass law banning Sati Practice and the practice was banned by a law passed in 1829 in Bengal Presidency. “The ban was challenged in the courts by means of a petition signed by about 800 individuals, and the matter went to the Privy Council in London. The Privy Council rejected the petition in 1832, and the ban was upheld” (Kulkarni, 1996:192). Still now, we hear the news of “satidaha” coming from remote villages of India. It gives the evidence of their endeavor to keep alive the communal tribal practices, though it goes against humanity. In all these examples of revolt, there is a common theme, the resistance of the oppressed (the Nigerian) against their oppressor (the British) who controlled their cultural, political, economic and religious lives according to their own way by “Bible, Business, and Bullet.”(Fafunwa, 1974: 74)

At last, it can be said that the writers mentioned above wrote about the impacts of colonialism on African countries and their responses to colonial invasion. Though Achebe, Ngugi and Soyinka follow distinct techniques, they have one common aim to reveal the true nature of imperialism and the distress of the colonized people coming from colonial invasion. Karl Marx, in his *The Future Results of British Rule in India*, noted, “[T] the profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization lies unveiled before our eyes...in the colonies, where it goes naked” (1968:88). Jean Paul Sartre reached a similar conclusion when he wrote that “the striptease of our humanism took place in the tropics, and in the colonies the truth stood naked.”(1963:7, 21)

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CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

A tribe is a group of people having a common ancestor or a common leader who share the same language, religion and custom. On the other hand, colonialism is imposition of one culture, colony, religion and government over people of another region or country who have their own socio-political identity. In this dissertation, my endeavor has been to show how Achebe's natural setting of *Things Fall Apart* takes the readers to Nigerian villages where Igbo tribes were leading a very simple but well-governed life. In nine villages of Umuofia, tribal people worked for livelihood, enjoyed tribal festivals in full mirth, solved local judicial and legislative issues in very modern and democratic ways. When life became delightful in the villages of Umuofia, Achebe, by his mastery of art takes our attention to another direction, where all the complexities of modern world started to appear, where foreign intruders slowly penetrated into religion, governance, and gradually captured the Igbo land. At the same time, Achebe presents Igbo tribe's endeavor to protect tribal traditions from colonial invasion and the clash between tribal people and the colonial invaders.

Although, tribal people most of the time tried to resist, but for simplicity, naivety and lack of weapon, manpower and to some extent courage and practical knowledge of modern world's foreign policy, their endeavors failed. In addition, some of the brutal customs of the tribes, for example, murder for murder, throwing the twins in the forest, separating the lower casts from normal social life, made it easier for the foreign invaders' to invade. The cunning, farsighted, business-minded European colonizers easily captured the sub-Saharan tribal areas in the pretext of establishing Christian religion. The Igbo tribes of Nigeria are the focus of my study. In this dissertation, I have explained tribal people's response to colonial invasion in the light of Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. In this novel, we find the civilized ways of the Igbo people of Umuofia in Nigeria who protested against the British colonizers' injustices and tried to drive them away from Igbo-land, but failed for the cunning and pretentious diplomacy of the Christian missionaries and their government.

The novel presents the Igbo tradition of doing any work or taking any decision in tribal ways and still, now a days, some of them move tribally. As they follow a well-structured socio-political system, they can easily lead their everyday life without other tribes' help. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe explains foreigners' intervention to be quite unnecessary for the tribal people. In the harmonious life of the villagers of Umuofia, suddenly the arrival of the white messenger in Abame, riding an iron horse (bicycle) and the tribal decision to kill him to stop further annexation, add hints of new dimension to their tribal life. Latter happenings came gradually, chronologically, and tribal people's representative Okonkwo and other clan- heads joined an attack of the church for their unmasking an 'egwugue' proverb that they were free and wanted freedom at any cost. History claims that ethnic loyalties provide for West African people a sense of identity with the values of their own cultures, which balance the feelings of inferiority that derived from the borrowing of western technology and the imposition of Western styles of living. Traditional West African societies were basically tribal, not feudal, and small private entrepreneurs played an important role in the economic development of African states. "The transition from tribal society to modern state-directed economics raises a new set of problems not covered by the classical studies" (Lloyd, 1972: 13). With the arrival of new government in Umuofia, their tribal economic system began to change into capitalistic economy which most of them were unwilling to accept.

Colonizers came from Europe where they had already overcome the weaknesses of Feudalism, and the bourgeois gave attention to humanity, and gave women right for casting vote. Humanity became the prominent factor in Europe, and they were humanistic to their own people. But, when they came out of the West for colonization, which is the offshoot of capitalism, in African or other countries, they worked as oppressors. For coming from advanced society, the colonizers' weapons were more powerful and practices were more humanistic than traditional tribal practices. The missionaries' behavior and preaching attracted people. In fact, the missionaries' and the colonial rulers came together, the missionaries' life-style, culture, religion were more attractive and acceptable to some tribal people who were the victims of more backward brutal culture. To Nowey, tribal customs were less humanistic than Christian practices. Like Nowey, other victims of tribal culture found the new culture of the Christians more logical than tribal culture, and later they turned into colonizers' power to rule the natives.

My opinion is that the weaknesses of tribalism could be overcome in native ways, and for that, they did not need other's help. As Achebe shows in *Things Fall Apart*, such practices as—throwing away of the twins, the *osu* caste system, human sacrifice and exiling a person for inadvertent murder were already being questioned from within by Obierika, Ezeudu and others. Achebe presents here the raising of questions for the Umuofian tribal practices through Obierika's thoughts—

When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat on his obi and mourned his friend's calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he has committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? (1996: 88)

But, without attempting to understand the workings and logic of traditional African practices, the European rulers illogically and deliberately labels the entirety of African practices as primitive, barbaric and savage. To change the age-old custom, they used merciless ways and forcefully converted people into Christianity which is also an offence. Colonizers tried to establish their superiority over the conquered subjects, rejecting their own values, and it was another cause of conflict between the tribal people and the colonizers of Umuofia.

When the colonizers interfered into Igbo local affairs and started to capture their land and at the same time converted people, the latter group protested against it in their own ways which might be practically ineffective, but the tribal resistance is important in this regard. The people of Abame attempted to resist against the invaders' intervention by killing the 'iron horse' rider, as they believed, he was like 'locusts' who would bring other alien people to the Igbo- land to make division among them. It is an evidence of their consciousness of their tribal identity that they did not want to lose. Igbo people tribally protested against the undermining of ancestral spirits i.e. unmasking an *egwugwu*, as the incident was an attack on their tribal cultural and religious belief and identity. Destruction of the Christian church is the symbol of their anger against European missionaries who, without having any knowledge of tribal custom, call it bad, dishonor it, and inspire the converts to abandon it.

In addition, the superiority of the Igbo tribal religion is proved because they did not kill any person for violating their custom, whereas in the name of civilization, the colonizers savagely killed all the people of Abame for just killing only one white man. Question of civilization also arises when, in the name of meeting with the village elders, the District Commissioner imprisoned them, dishonored them and took compensation from the village-heads. Okonkwo's suicide is the protest against colonial invasion that took away his own identity, his individualism. When Okonkwo finds his own community falling apart and he is unable to stop the change, he killed the court messenger, and that was an act of protest against colonization. His inner hatred against slavery led him to commit suicide. Igbo tribe was culturally more civilized than the European colonizers. What they lacked in was modern technology and change of traditional customs and these they could bring about without other people's help.

Obviously, culture is the identifying factor of a community, and the large ethnic groups are united by cultural features which are also what distinguish them sharply from neighboring groups. The factors which have united the various Igbo-speaking people cannot unite them with the Yoruba society. For conflict over communal superiority, all Nigerian people failed to unite. Ethnic superiority endowed with a ready basis for political separatist movements not only in Africa but also in the Indian Sub-continent where the communal issue of "religion" was the cause of its partition into India and Pakistan. In fact, ethnic loyalty was convenient for the ruling groups who feared opposition from the ruled groups, and exercised this technique of oppression to subdue their protest. In the very beginning, colonizers created panic among them about their power in colonized countries. They killed all the people of Abame not only for killing 'a white man' but also to show them the consequence of protest. The Umuofian villagers' helping other court messengers to escape was the cause of the colonizers creating panic among them. They knew, if they killed the messengers, their destiny would be the same as the villagers of Abame.

Okonkwo's killing of the head messenger at the market place is the result of his inner hatred to foreign rule that took away his political autonomy. As I have mentioned earlier, tribalism gives importance to communal belief and evaluates personal achievement. With the arrival of the white people, communal unity started to lose strength as well as beliefs. In Umuofian villages, title-holders are dishonored by foreigners who have no

right to do so in that land. Okonkwo understands, if this condition continues, he will mislay his autonomy in the clan that he acquired by hard labor and physical strength. Loss of tribal identity is equal to loss of life. He is unwilling to let his communal values be undermined by foreigners and kills the messenger to protest against colonial invasion. He knew very well that the clan would not join him in the fight but his tribal characteristic influenced him to fight alone. He was against change and all through his life, he tried to protect his communal culture. His personal feeling was restrained to show respect to communal belief. But, as a central character, he failed to create proper awareness among the tribe and failed to guide them properly. It was his fault that led him to commit suicide. He committed suicide to keep himself out of the foreigner's control. Thus, Okonkwo's suicide proved that death is preferable to dishonor. Tribal people hated slavery to foreign invaders, prized self-respect and individual identity, and they were ready to protect their own cultural practices at any cost. It is quite unnatural to go for civilizing a community that is already civilized, have their own glorious history and socio-political order. As they were dynamic, they were able to develop their nation without others' help or intervention. Achebe, with great mastery, tried to establish these ideas.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe also shows the positive response of the tribal people to colonialism. The out cast *osu* get normal social life after the arrival of the white missionaries. Generation after generation, they were neglected and treated as inhumans in the community. Christian church accepted them as brothers, and gave them human right and power in society. Twin-bearing mothers also get relief after their arrival and missionaries were a source of blessing to them. It is really very painful for a mother to throw her innocent living infants into the forest for them to die without any apparent reason; they have to do it only to obey the tribal ritual. Like Obierika, they thought about the logic behind the cruelty, and when they failed to get any solution, they waited for change. When the missionaries came and promised them to give shelter, they took the offer as they were waiting for it. Later, the victims of tribal brutality composed the strength of the European rulers who worked for their rule in the colonized countries. In *Things Fall Apart*, convert *osu* and twin-bearing families at first worked for them and the conflict between tribal people and the missionaries occurred for the violation of tribal law by the converts. The converts' inner hatred against tribal custom was the reason of their over-jealous activities, and they wanted to take revenge for their suppression with the help of more powerful foreign people who could

defeat the less powerful tribal people. Abiola Irele in his essay, “The Tragic Conflict in the Novels of Chinua Achebe” writes as follows:

His novels deal with the social and psychological conflicts created by the incursion of the white man and his culture into the hitherto self-contained world of African society, and the disarray in the African consciousness that has followed.

Things Fall Apart, as the title suggests, is concerned with the dislocation of the African society caused by impact with another way of life. The reconstruction of Igbo village life is directed at revealing the forces at work both inside and outside traditional society that prepared the way for its eventual disintegration. (p. 81-82)

If Igbo tribe changed their tradition like the Eneke bird, they could have avoided the destruction of the clan, could be able to tie things together. Achebe used the example of Eneke bird, “that has learnt to fly without perching” since “men have learnt to shoot without missing”(1996:16) to illustrate that, after the arrival of the missionaries, the village heads should have been more conscious about the drawbacks of the clan that could be the cause of their division. If they were able to change with the passage of time, like Eneke bird, they could be able to hold things together.

Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is a criticism of the passing away of traditional Igbo customs, rituals and beliefs which have been brought to destruction by the British colonizers. The novel describes a situation of profound cultural complexity, a society in which the norms of conduct and institutions of governance are in the process of “falling apart”. But we cannot say that Achebe shows the new order in an absolutely hostile light. The Christians are depicted as people who brought a new kind of order to Igbo land, though this is not necessarily an order which Achebe approves of for Igbo community. For, in the name of peace and mercy, Christian rulers mercilessly imposed Christianity on Igbo people, destroyed Igbo religion and imprisoned them. Christianity is not what Achebe targets, but the mercilessness that destroyed another religion or another culture that has been practiced from generation to generation. Achebe thus mourns for the passing and loss of the pre-colonial Igbo order which he presents as magical, and at the same time he is

“reconstructive and centers on recovering an Igbo past that has been neglected or suppressed by historians who would not or could not write from an African perspective.” (Begum, 2003:160)

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