

Presentation of Ibo Culture Through Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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Abstract

This research paper spotlights the practice of the Ibo culture who lives in Nigeria via Chinua Achebe's THINGS FALL APART. This novel projects the entire life of the Ibo people. When the British enter into the land of Africa, the Ibo people revolt against it and they don't want the British to rule their nation which results the native to lose their self identity. After a great struggle the people of Ibo lost their life in the form of sacrifice which is the evidence to tell the braveness of the Ibo whose village is Umuofia. The novelist clearly visualizes the real essence of the Ibo by projecting the different characters like Okonwo, Unoka, Ikemefuna, Ezinma, Oberika etc. The Ibo can be symbolizes innocence as they have a lot of superstitious belief. This novel depicts the life of a man, Okonwo who is one of the reputed leaders of his clan and about his tragic end.

Keywords: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Culture, suppression, masculinity, loss of own identity, belief, justice

African Literature sharply on issues such as cultural configuration, racial discrimination, displacement, suffering, rootlessness, suppression and subaltern. In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe explores the views of Igbo culture and the superstitious belief followed by them. The Igbo culture was frequently expressed as **Ibo culture**. Achebe penned this novel as a reaction to prove that African people are not a backward people. They are also equal to possess same identity as others.

Igbo culture refers to a clan of people survive in Southern Nigeria. There are several tribes, one of those tribal people were referred as Igbo people. Each and every clan they followed some age-old traditions and cultures. They also practice some superstitious belief. Those cultural contrasts are unfolded through Chinua Achebe in the novel *Things Fall Apart*. This novel also describes about social customs and values had been falling apart as a result of developments within the society itself.

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Things Fall Apart is a historical novel that reveals about ancient cultural and tradition followed in Umuofia village by Igbo people. The Umuofia is a village that was created by author. This novel drafted in the perspective of third person narration. Okankwa was the protagonist of the novel. People have their own desire and goal to start a new life ahead. But in this novel Okankwa was forced to bring up his family, because his father unoka was not a responsible man. Okankwa got name and fame by winning the wrestling match, but he struggled a lot to attain a position. The tradition of Africa is revealed here. They have some self-moral which was conveyed through Okankwa's hardworking nature.

In Umuofia village there was a meeting arrange by Ezeugo. Both native people and clan people must attend the meeting. The Igbo people are scared of nights. Because they believe that evil spirit roam during night time. So no one comes out from the house. The meeting was arranged during night. There was no moonlight, darkness crumbles over there. The Igbo people were scared and frightened during night. The meeting was about igbo clan women was killed by other clean. So the igbo clan people laid to condition, one is to accept the crime or to wage a war. The other clan accepted the crime and igbo people also asked for a young boy and vergin to igbo clan. They were also ready to send a young boy and virgin. Okankwa expected a war but their accepted the conditions. The young boy name is Ikemefuna. The boy was sent to okankwa house.

Unoka was an irresponsible father and used to drink often. He went to agbala (orcle) and enquired that nothing gross in his land. Unoka has no care about land, he just sowed seats and waited for yield. Chelo got wroth and shouted "go and work". Unoka is cutterly a lazy man and due to his laziness his limps got swelling. According to Igbo culture swelling is a 'deadly curse' of earth goddess Ani. He did not work and waited for yield that made him to undergo deadly curse. Unoka was left inside forest and he dies. After unoka no one was there to bring up the family.

*"Unoka was an Ill-fated man. He had
A bad eni or personal god, and evil
Fortune followed him to death, for he had no
Grave. He died of the swelling which
Was an abomination to the earth
Goddness. When a man was afflicted
With swelling in the stomach and the
Limbs he was not allowed to die in
The house. He was carried to the Evil
Forest and left there to die. There
The story of a very stubborn man*

*Who staggered back to his house and
Had to be carried again to the forest
And tied to a tree. The sickness was
An abomination to the earth, and so
The victim could not be buried in her
Bowels. He died and rotted away
above the earth, and was not given
the first of the second burial. Such
was unoka's fate."*

- *chapter-3.*

All the burder fall are okankwa's heart. Okankwa struggled a lot and met nwakabi, he helped okankwa. Nwakabi give yam seeds, okankwa also planted. But there was no rain and sun blistered the land. There was no yield. Okankwa toiled a lot to manage the situation. The sufferings taught him to move forward and handle the situation with stable mind.

Masculinity is one of the main feature of african people. The men posses braveness, violent and active. But the masculinity was not in unoka's behavior. Rather he is a thoughtless fleste player, drunker and idle man. Okankwa was humiliated because of his father attitude. Nwoye also follows unoka. Ikemefuna was valour and showed his masculinity.

Ikamefuna was sent by other clan people. He was homesick and looking strange of the behavior of Igbo people. He was took care by okankwo. They started to stuffing Ikemefuna with food, but later he adjusted and adapted the situation. Ikemefuna was well-versed in hunting that made Nwaye to become closer to Ikemefuna. Then he behaved like one of the member.

"The week of peace" another cultural practice followed by Igbo people. During this week they wait for yield of their crops. Okankwa also planted yam seeds and waited for yield. The Igbo people believe that if they maintain peace of a week with family and neighbour then they could get better yield. This was one of superstitious belief followed by Igbo people. Okankwa violated the religious belief because okankwa's behavior. Okankwa's third wife ojiugo was combing hair without preparing food for him. So okankwa beats ojiuyo violated the rule. Priest Ezeani informed okankwa to sacrife something from home to Anis shrine. This was the punishment for okankwa because of violating the rules. Whatever they planted they got good yield and profit. The people started to celebrate the moment with feast. Everyone expected wrestling match but okankwa was happy on hardworking and got yield. So he was not interested in celebrating the feast.

Though Okankwa was a brave man he too has some inability. Okankwa's wife, Ekwefi, used to mock at him because he is weak in hunting. Everytime he goes out for hunting but he would not bring anything. When Ekwefi, but this time also he missed the aim. Okankwa was completely a valour man. He started loving Ikemefuna like his son Nwoye. Those sars were expressed through anger. He has hidden fatherly love towards his child but that was exposed through his wrath.

Superstitions belief was part and parcel of Igbo people's life. They started living with superstitions belief. The child which survives after six years only will last long forever. Chelo was priestess of Agbala. She was a widow and enquired about Ezinma's health to Ekwefi. This was one of the blind beliefs they followed. Though it may be true or not, their culture framed these beliefs. Ikemefuna and Nwoye became close and elder to Nwoye. Okankwa was pleased to see the relationship between them. Nwoye was lazy after joining with Ikemefuna. He also started working. But Nwoye was irritated on doing household work. So he did not help his mother. Okankwa was happy that Nwoye did not work at home. This shows how patriarchal society was followed. Oracle has ordered clan people to kill Ikemefuna. Ezudu comes to Okankwa and informed about Ikemefuna's killing plan. He advised Okankwa not to participate in Ikemefuna's death.

“Ogbuefi Ezeudu:” They have that custom in obodoani, if a man dies at this time he is not buried but cast into the evil forest... they throw away large numbers of men and women without burial.”

- *chapter-4*

Evil forest is not a good sign for Igbo people. In evil forest, where 'Unoka died and twin babies died. Ikemefuna was taken to Evil Forest. He was uncomfortable but he believed Okankwa and moved further. On the middle of the forest Ikemefuna was attacked. Everyone started striking Ikemefuna and he was shouting. No one helped him. Finally Okankwa blows a strike and kills Ikemefuna. Okankwa has lots of cases towards Ikemefuna but as a clan leader he should abide the rules and regulations. After the death of Ikemefuna, Okankwa was drenched with sadness and did not eat for two days.

Ekwefi's daughter Ezinma she was nine years old and was attacked by Iba disease. Iba is a dreadful disease that attacks people and finally leads to death. Ezinma also was attacked by Iba. Ekwefi runs here and there to save Ezinma. Because Ekwefi's only surviving child is Ezinma. All other nine children died. Here also they have many superstitious beliefs bounded to their culture.

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When the child who after death re-enters its mother's body and waits to be born again. There was also a stone called Iyi-uwa, As the child grows the Iyi-uwa stone must be broken. Then only the child would survive longer. Ekwefi has broken the stone and Ezinma was also crossed age of six. She was confused that why the fever was attacked to Ezinma. Iyi-uwa the stone that links ogbanje and spirit of the world.

***“it is iba, said okankwa as he took
His machete and went into the bush
To collect the leaves and graves and
Barks of tree that went into making
The medicine of iba.”***

These are several cultural practices followed by Igbo people. The cultural changes lead the people's life to grow or destroy. It depends upon their wish. So the novel “things fall apart” explores many cultural faiths of Igbo people. The Igbo people slowly started to convert to Christianity. The clan leaders were put in jail, because to change the mindset of Igbo people to convert to Christianity. Okankwa also being a leader, he could ask about the people's benefits. So the district commissioner sent an messenger. But Okankwa killed the messenger. He knows that the Igbo clan people never fight against the white people so, he hanged himself. At the end of the novel he could not bring justice, to Igbo people. But he gave his utmost effort for the benefit of Igbo people. Okankwa was a proud man and hanged himself to prove self justice as a brave man. This article focuses on the Igbo culture and superstitious beliefs followed by Igbo clan people.

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