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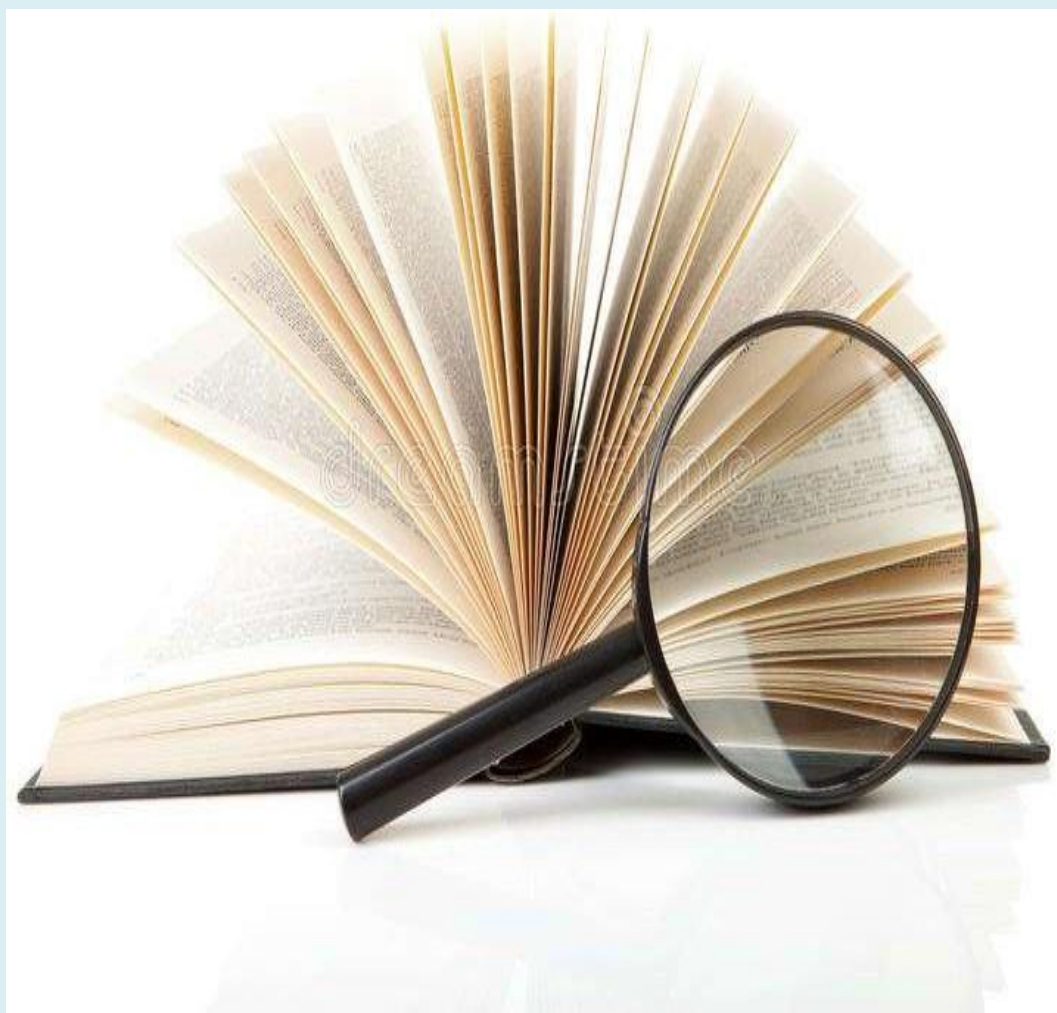
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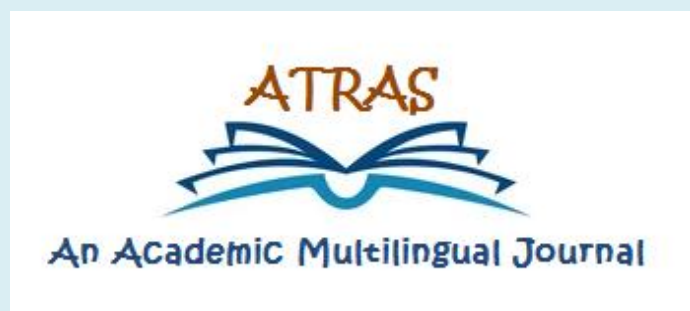
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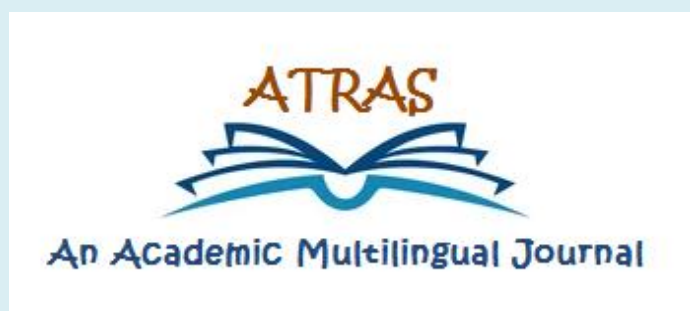
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Workplace-Context Syllabus Design towards ESP Learning and Teaching Materials Development

MBENZA Enock Enock

ISTM/Kisantu

English teacher

Email: mbenza.enock@yahoo.fr

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Abstract

This article, which was part of a project undertaken at the Higher Medical College ISTM/Kisantu entitled “Syllabus Development for Nursing Students”, deals with the issue of inconsistency between classroom ESP teaching materials and the real-life context in which students have to use them. Too often, what students learn in the classroom does not match the kind of language they will find in the target setting. Therefore, the present article proposes a systematic approach to syllabus design and materials development that reflects the specific language encountered in the target situation. It uses the context of a first-year nursing class in the DRC. The outcome of this approach is a workplace-context syllabus design which draws content from the target working environment of learners and reference books to come up with learning and teaching units which suit ESP learners’ needs.

Keywords: curriculum, materials development, syllabus, workplace-context syllabus design

MBENZA Enock Enock, Email: mbenza.enock@yahoo.fr

1. Introduction

It has been noticed that many colleges and universities, DRC in particular, use ESP teaching and learning materials which do not reflect both the real learning needs of learners and the actual workplace needs (interaction on the job). Many students wonder why an English course was inserted into their curriculum. They are already demotivated due to the six years of English language learning in secondary school without attaining communicative competence (Rubango, 2019).

When they arrive at higher education, most students already have preconceptions about English learning. And this is emphasized by the kinds of content used in class, which are rooted in the Grammar-Translation Method and structural approach (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Thus, the classroom materials used do not prepare learners for the specific context in which they are learning English.

The above challenge results from the inadequacy of designing materials that would meet the needs of learners in different subject programs, especially the kind of materials which mirror the real-life needs of learners learning English.

This article advocates effective syllabus design and materials development in ESP based on analyzing the prospective workplace context for which English will be needed and used. The proposed design will help ESP teachers develop teaching content (units and activities) which matches the real target situation. Thus, the article aims at providing an overview of English language teaching in the context of DRC, highlighting the place of English language teaching in Congolese higher education in general, and specifically in the context of the higher institute of medical techniques. Finally, it presents the rationale for using a workplace-context syllabus design, and the six stages required to implement this design in various teaching situations. The outcome of this process is an elaboration of a syllabus which answers the basic questions of *why*, *what*, *how*, and *where* in designing and developing materials.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Context of the Democratic Republic of Congo

English is not the first language in Congo. It is considered a foreign language. Congolese People learn to interact and communicate mainly with foreigners. Due to its ever-growing international status, the Congolese government has instructed its mandatory teaching and learning from secondary school to higher education.

In secondary school, English instruction begins from the first form and goes straight up to the terminal class (six years). Pupils spend two to five hours (periods) a week learning English. The English classes are taught chiefly by qualified EFL teachers who graduated from teachers'

training colleges. Upon completion of secondary education, each pupil is believed to have learned the English language for almost six years.

In higher education, English language learning and teaching are mandatory in almost all subject programs. Most classes include thirty to seventy-five hours of English instruction. They are taught as modules that can take three days to a whole week to complete. Expository lecturing remains the primary teaching strategy used in many colleges and universities in DRC. By the end of their training, a graduate student is supposed to have been taught English for two or three years, depending on the program specification.

Yet, although the abundant hours of English learning and teaching are allocated to both secondary school and higher education, many Congolese students remain unable to interact and communicate in English.

Many authors have investigated the causes of such difficulties. Kabule (2021) highlighted some weaknesses of English teaching and learning in secondary schools in Goma. He noted that most Congolese secondary school students cannot communicate in English. The researcher identified students' negative attitudes towards the English language and the lack of teaching strategies as the main causes of communicative competence inefficiency.

Similarly, much earlier, the lack of communicative competence had also been identified as one of the most problematic skills in first-year classes in Rubango's investigation (2019). The researcher conducted research with a sample of 750 learners (259 females and 491 males) of English at UEA/Bukavu. The outcome showed that students' inability to communicate in English was due to a lack of background knowledge, shyness, and interest in English language activities.

Unlike the two authors above, Kashindi (2020) attributed Congolese students' communication failures to the use of teacher center teaching approach which leaves no room for learners' independent learning. He acknowledged learner autonomy as a way to improve students' communicative competence.

These three authors all agree on the fact that most Congolese learners spend many years learning English in both secondary school and higher education, but they end up unable to hold conversations in the target language. They attribute this problem to learners' low motivation for learning and teachers' classroom autonomy. However, the roots of this issue may also be found in the kinds of teaching and learning materials that influence learners' motivation and the teacher's role in the classroom.

2.2 The Context of the Higher Institute of Medical Techniques

Higher Institute of Medical Techniques (in French Instituts Supérieurs des Techniques Médicales, ISTM in short) are colleges spread all over DRC which aim to train students in medical fields of nursing, laboratory, health workplace management, paediatrics, midwifery, etc.

Students learn medical knowledge to apply in their prospective careers through a structured curriculum that includes English courses.

ESP courses are inserted in those fields. There are English for nursing, English for lab technicians, English for health managers and so on. Although the titles of those classes sound specific and specialized, the teaching and learning materials reflect a standard format based on grammar instruction as a central element.

Syllabuses in those courses mainly use activities and tasks drawn from the Grammar-Translation method such as fill-in-the-blanks, word completion in sentences, and reading comprehension (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Even though those activities alone cannot make learners communicatively competent, they constitute a core component of many ESP handouts. This emphasizes the difficulties of communicating in English.

The answer to this issue, common in many Congolese colleges in general and ISTM in particular, is nowhere to be found but in materials design. From Hutchinson and Waters' definition (1987, p. 96) to Tomlinson's (2011, p. 2), materials development is a process of collecting, evaluating, selecting, and writing one's learning and teaching content (units, lessons, activities, tasks, quizzes, etc.) to be used in real EFL contexts. The outcome is a syllabus which constitutes one of the primary elements of interaction between teacher-learner, learner-learner, learner-English, and learner-outside world.

Mundele's needs analysis of nursing students at ISTM/Kinshasa (2021) has proposed some key topics to include in the syllabus design. They range from the identification of people, departments, equipment, and objects in a hospital to key medical terms and documenting processes and procedures in nursing care. These findings show the necessity of designing teaching and learning content based on what students will likely find in their prospective workplaces.

The following lines state the rationale for using a workplace-context syllabus design and suggest different steps for designing materials based on the future workplace situation of students with appropriate language to be used on the job by taking into account the DRC context. This approach has been used to generate teaching materials for first-year nursing students at ISTM/Kisantu.

3. Designing Learning and Teaching ESP Materials from Workplace Context

3.1 Workplace-Context Syllabus Design

The researcher suggests collecting, evaluating, and selecting lessons, activities, etc., which fit the prospective tasks of students on the job. This should be reflected in all four language skills, vocabulary, and grammar elements. Students should be taught the kinds of grammatical features primarily used in their careers, common words, phrases, and expressions

used at work, and the appropriate topics of communication and interaction. For instance, a first-year nursing student needs to learn the proper issues to talk about when receiving a foreign patient, how to make up sentences and ask questions on those topics. The proper words and expressions to use.

This suggestion is backed up by literature. Firstly, selecting teaching materials directly from the kinds of language and tasks students will encounter in their profession fosters the contextualized, purposeful use of language (Crawford 2002, p. 84; López-Barrios & Villanueva de Debat 2014, p. 41). Students will directly connect the use of English and its real-life application. Secondly, a such connection will increase both their instrumental and integrative motivations (Harmer 2007, p. 102; Thomas 2014, p. 15). They will enjoy learning English because the tasks involved deal with their fields and future career. Thirdly, the teaching materials designed in this way will be realistic and authentic. Authenticity lies in creating and organizing content from everyday activities met on the job (Bouzidi 2009, p. 10). Fourthly, students will be affectively and cognitively involved in the learning process (Crawford 2002, p. 87). They will be curious and motivated to learn a set of language features that they can use immediately with people in the working environment (Stockwell 2013, p. 164).

In short, designing ESP content in this way makes learning English contextualized and purposeful. This design ensures the authentic and realistic component of the teaching materials, which, in turn, motivates students and engages them effectively and cognitively. In addition, it enables learners to learn materials that “adjust to the times and demands of work” (Rasyid & Zuriyati 2021, p. 174). The benefits of this syllabus design work like a cycle in which one element enforces and, or depends on the other, as illustrated below:

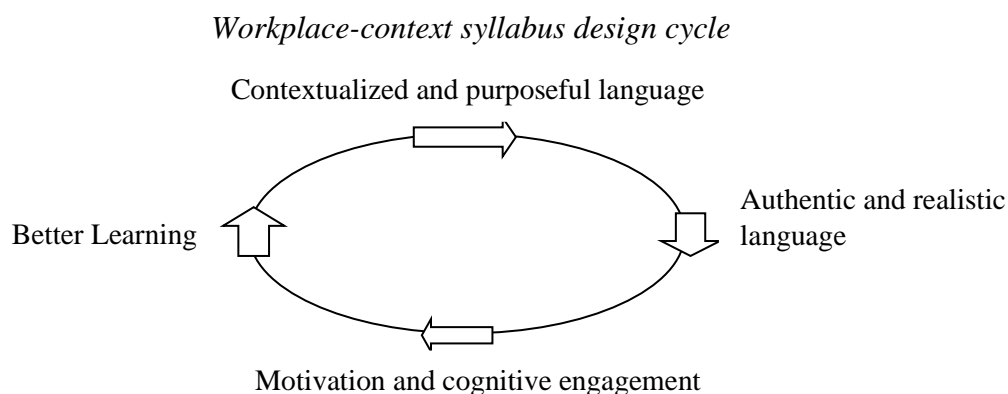


Figure 1. Workplace-context syllabus design cycle

3.2 Implementing Workplace-Context Syllabus Design

This approach is centered on one of the two components of needs analysis, referred to as situational analysis or Target Situation Analysis (TSA) (Hutchinson & Waters 1987; Long 2005). The choice of this term relies on the paradox of teaching English to Congolese students. As long as the English language keeps the status of EFL in DRC, one may ask *why to learn it*, and *where to use it*. Although the Congolese higher education program answers these questions (that is, to communicate for question one, and; in the workplace and specific fields for question two), those two questions remain of paramount importance and still pose problems to implement in ESP teaching. Part of the problem is the difficulties (facilities, time, oversized classes, short time preparation, resources, etc.) of conducting a complete needs analysis at the beginning of an ESP course.

To overcome those difficulties and answer the above questions, the researcher proposes conducting a target situation analysis that is easy to carry out, avoids obstacles of a real needs analysis process, and above all, deals with the immediate communicative needs and wants of students. Unlike Bouzidi's three-step approach (2009) to fill the gap between ESP content and workplace linguistic expectancy, the present article suggests six of them. They are illustrated using the context of a first-year nursing class.

1. What are the core recommendations of the English language teaching program of the class involved?

This step is carried out in the administration phase. It consists of collecting and reading the guidelines and directives made by the Minister of Higher Education regarding the teaching goals of English instruction in each class. In DRC, the Minister in charge releases every year an official teaching program to be used in all colleges and universities. It lists the overall expected objectives in each class regarding required competence during professional placement.

2. What is the specialized core knowledge expected of students during the placement?

This is the beginning of the planning phase during, which the core knowledge required of a student in the workplace is assessed. In the case of this paper, the placement here reflects the working environment of the nursing student. Thus, this assessment is a twofold process:

a. What are the main subjects in the curriculum?

The teacher has to collect the main subject courses and list the core objectives of each in terms of essential knowledge. For instance, for a first-year nursing class, such information can be taken from courses like *general healthcare techniques* because it includes the main ability that each fresher should know.

b. What are the central notions expected in the workplace?

This type of information is gathered through visiting hospitals and health centers where students are to complete the placement and ask charge nurses, ward sisters, or other professionals responsible for evaluating placement. The latter provides the kinds of knowledge they expect each of their interns should exhibit.

3. What are the core skills expected of students during the placement?

As far as the difference between skills and knowledge is concerned, the teacher has to collect and list a set of abilities required for nursing fresher. Subject teachers, hospitals, and health centers will provide this information through talks and observations of student nurses in action.

4. What are the core responsibilities and tasks expected of students during the placement?

The primary responsibilities and tasks are everyday duties done in hospitals or health centers. The teacher has to make a list of them and determine the appropriateness of each based on students' required knowledge and skills (Malicka, Guerrero, & Norris 2019).

5. What are the core language features in the core responsibilities, tasks, skills, and knowledge expected of students during the placement?

After collecting data from steps 1-4, then comes the first step of writing a syllabus design. It consists of identifying the lexis and discourses used in the working environment. This is done through:

a. Visiting two health workplaces and asking for permission to record the kinds of discourses that are commonly used in different nursing tasks, skills, responsibilities, and knowledge.

b. Collecting English for nursing books and matching the above discourses with the book contents (see materials evaluation Hutchinson & Waters, 1987 for a complete analysis of this stage).

6. What are the core functions, notions, vocabulary, and forms based on the core workplace situations expected during the placement or on the job?

This is the step of deciding on the final design of the syllabus. The researcher suggests an eclectic communicative approach to syllabus development which includes the following components:

a. Goals and objectives (based on the recommendation in step one)

b. Notions and grammar (based on the core knowledge in step two and the core skills in

step three)

- c. Functions (based on the core skills in step three)
- d. Vocabulary (based on the core knowledge in step two and the core skills in step three)
- e. Activities and tasks (based on the core responsibilities and tasks in step four)

These six steps form the framework of workplace-context syllabus design as shown here:

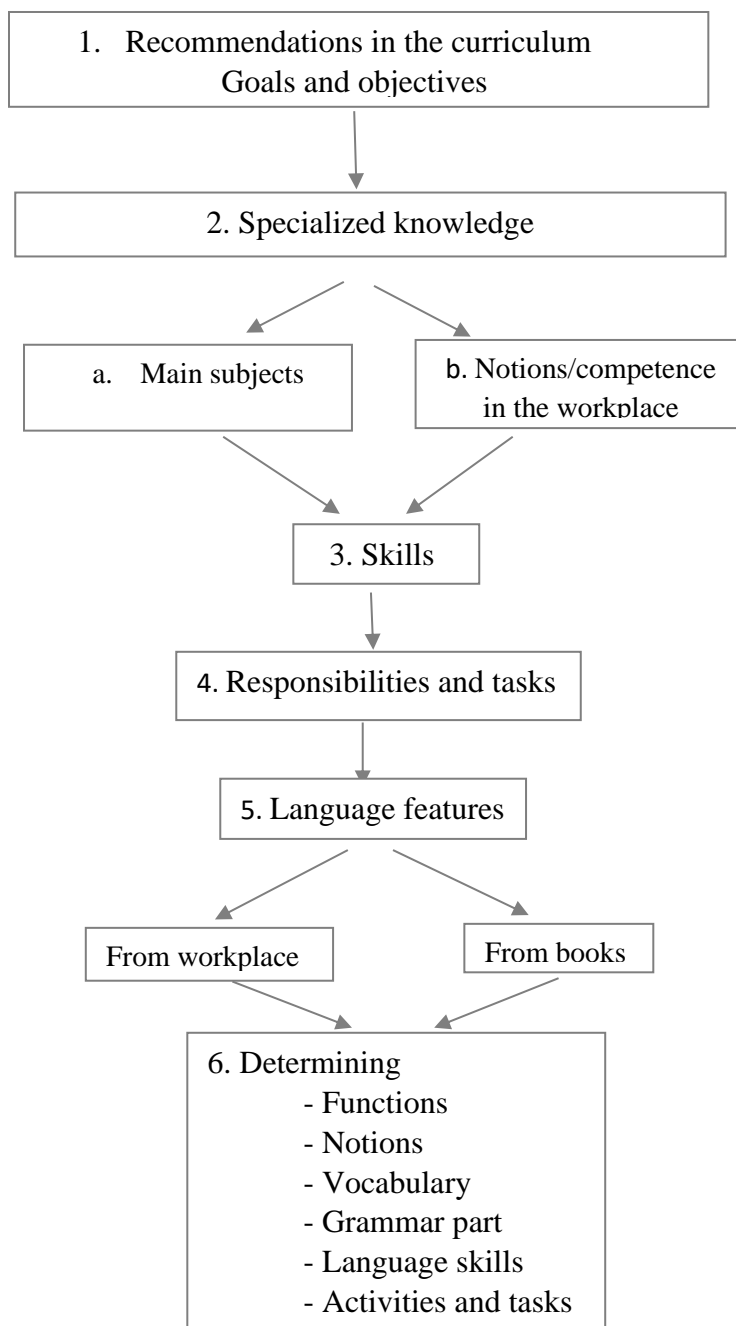


Figure 2. The six-step framework of workplace-context syllabus design

The above suggestions were applied to design a syllabus for first-year nursing students at the Higher Institute of Medical Techniques of Kisantu, DRC (ISTM/Kisantu). The result is below:

Table 1. *The workplace-context syllabus design sample*

Units	Functions/ Speaking	Vocabulary	Grammar focus	Reading	Writing	Communica tive activities/ task
Unit 1: The hospital teams	Asking and talking about professions	Medical professions	Wh-questions (what) with the verb to be	Reading about local hospital teams in a newspaper	Writing about one's placement in hospital teams	Comparin g hospital teams of two different local hospitals and health centers to be drawn on a poster

The above sample illustrates what has been previously mentioned. It includes all the components dealt with in the target situation analysis. Unit titles are designed according to the notions of the core knowledge in step two. Functions and speaking are chosen from the core skills in step three. Vocabulary words are selected from step two and the language features in the core responsibilities, tasks, skills, and knowledge in step five. The grammar part comes from steps two and three. Finally, communicative activities are designed based on the daily duties, responsibilities, and tasks of nurses in step four.

In addition, the two extra components of reading and writing are added for two simple reasons. First, they show the integrative aspect of language skills known as the integrated-skills approach. The four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, plus knowledge of grammar, lexis, and notion, occur simultaneously in communication and interaction (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p. 106). Also, it is widely acknowledged that one skill enforces another one. Through listening, one improves speaking, and through reading, one can improve writing (Sreena & Ilankumaran 2018, p. 670). Thus including all four skills in the syllabus design enhances effective language use, and maximizes language learning.

Secondly, as far as the target situation needs and the individual learning needs of students are concerned, the four skills reach out to accommodate the wants of students and the necessities. Many learners are motivated to learn an ESP course where there is a mixture of speaking, listening, reading, and writing tasks, plus various learning styles (Burns & Slegel, 2018; Spolsky, 1989; Stockwell, 2013).

3.3 Some Points to Consider When Using a Workplace-Context Syllabus Design

1. Firstly, the workplace-context ESP syllabus design is not product-oriented but rather process-oriented. Identifying the language features of the target situation and producing materials is not the end of the process. The ESP teacher has to consider the latter as a starting point that goes all way up to considering other language learning factors such as students' motivation, emotion, engagement, and attitudes, plus the different dynamic ways their brains process the learning contents.
2. Secondly, although the above suggestion can be said to be based on the language-centered approach as opposed to the skills-centered approach and language learning-centered approach (Hutchinson & Waters 1987, p. 65), one cannot ignore the necessity of identifying first of all the target situation before defining the kinds of skills, strategies, and learning factors of that target situation. In the same way, this article claims that it is up to the ESP teacher to include all the precedent factors in the course design once the workplace needs have been analyzed.
3. As mentioned previously, this syllabus design does not account for all the processes involved in needs analysis. Yet, it allows ESP teachers, who are often urged to produce handouts urgently, to come up with first-hand teaching materials in a shorter time by simply examining the main subject topic areas of the class concerned (drawn from the core knowledge and the core skills) and appropriate communicative activities to implement (taken from the core responsibilities and tasks). As such, it reduces the stress due to the burden of designing ESP content for engineering students, while the only engineering word the teacher knows is a hammer.
4. The suggested approach helps in ESP teacher development. Too often, ESP teachers, who are asked to teach content in an unfamiliar field, feel stressed out and come up with either irrelevant teaching materials or long reading texts related to the area. One can guess the outcomes of such a design! Thus, by identifying the real needs of what English will be used for and where, the teacher can narrowly select content relevant to students and at the same time, educate themselves on those unknown field concepts. As a result, they will acquire both knowledge of the subject areas and expertise on how to design any syllabus for whatever class involved.
5. Lastly, ESP teachers should not only rely on the information they receive from subject teachers, administrative nurses, nurses, or any other professionals involved but also by observing all those stakeholders in action in the workplace, as suggested by Smoak (2003).

4. Conclusion

This article aims at providing English teachers in general, and ESP teachers in particular, with a systematic approach to syllabus design and materials development called workplace-context syllabus design. The latter is a tool that helps in designing materials based on the working environments of learners. To do so, there are six steps to take to come up with teaching and learning content that reflects the kind of language students will need to use in their specific context. Each step includes some sub-steps that require collaboration from all the stakeholders involved, such as the subject teachers, in-services workers, and English teachers. To illustrate the efficiency of this approach, the researcher uses the class of first-year nursing students at ISTM/Kisantu to produce materials that match the students' communicative competence needs.

About the Author

Enock MBENZA received a bachelor's degree in English language teaching from Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Mbanza-Ngungu, ISP/Mbanza-Ngungu, in DRC, in 2019. He teaches medical English in general duty nursing, lab technique, and nutrition. His research interests include ESP syllabuses and materials design, as well as ELT in large classes. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7008-6450>

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Translation of Rabindranath Tagore's Poetic Works: A Critical Survey

DINESH Kumar
Assistant Professor of English
Dyal Singh College, Karnal
Email. Id. Dineshkarnal1@gmail.com

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Abstract

We, human beings, exist in a world where one witnesses ongoing communication in different languages. Everything is possible only with the help of translation. The translation is considered an automatic extension of anything verbal and valuable we intend to communicate. The process of communication passes through three different levels-personal, linguistic and cultural. Everything, full of philosophical ideas, is transferred from one generation to another, from the past to the present time, depending on persons who can move words, sentences, images, and themes from one language to another language. Translation has an essential and significant role in a country like India, where we come across different varieties of languages used by people living in other regions of the country. It is the result of translation that we get different versions after we translate any work. The Bhagavata stories, and retellings of the *Ramayana*, and the *Mahabharata* are examples of this regard. The *Kathasaritsagar*, the Jataka, and Hitopadesa are narratives that inspired the spread of hybrid stories. People from various corners of the world are familiar with well-known works only by utilising translation into different languages.

Keywords: Language, ideas, translation, art, target language, source language.

Since ancient civilizations, human beings have been sharing their ideas through language. While translation, using one language results to achieve incredible feats and also building a grant tower towards heaven. But, with time, there have been several languages to articulate one's ideas and express them in different mother tongues. In that situation, the need for translation was observed by human beings.

In India, there are many languages spoken by people, but despite this, there is unity in diversity which means that the Indians are united using a bond. Language contributes in that direction a lot, as when we move from one state to another state or from one region to another region, we, certainly need a man who can make us aware of what the people from other states, territories, and regions are talking about. Our unity is also due to the understanding of different languages in India, as everyone can translate the regional languages into English.

In this age of globalization, one can find the importance of translation from earlier times. At present, the ideas spread like wildfire, and a single miscommunication can cause a war, so in that situation, the importance of quality translators is required more than ever, as George Borrow says that translation is, at best, an echo.

The term, 'translation' has variously been described and interpreted since time immemorial. Few interpret translation as the falsifier of the original. It is generally a carryover of meaning from the source language to the target language. For others, it is the transference of meaning from the source language to the target language. But, all these definitions of translation are not entirely accepted and rejected.

Translation study is the new academic discipline related to the study of the theory and phenomena of translation. By its nature, it is multilingual and also interdisciplinary which encompasses languages, linguistics, Communication Studies, philosophy and a range of cultural studies.

In this way, all the definitions given above are partially true, but inadequate to describe the meaning of translation in the true sense of words. All the latest theories have rejected the notion of the original being direct and translation as secondary. There is no such dichotomy that exists between the original and translated text as some consider that the original is itself a translation of ideas, perceptions, and so on.

Indian Writing in English is a rich reservoir of translated works. It has played a significant and vital role in shaping the crux of the different Indian philosophies and ideologies. There are some writers in the Indian context like JayantMahapatra, Kamala Das, BhishamSahni and GirishKarnadwho translated their works themselves. Rabindranath Tagore, a Nobel Laureate, is one such versatile genius whose translated works are as important and famous as his original works are. In the beginning, Tagore wrote his works in Bengali, but later on, he translated them into English.

Tagore's poetic style, which proceeds from a lineage, established by fifteenth and sixteenth-century Vaishnava poets, ranges from classical formalism to the comic, visionary, and ecstatic. He was influenced by the atavistic mysticism of Vyasa and other *rishi*-authors of the Upanishads, the Bhakti-Sufi mystic Kabir, and RamprasadSen Tagore's most innovative and mature poetry embodies his exposure to Bengali rural folk music, which included mystic Baul ballads such as those of the bard Lalon. These, rediscovered and re-popularised by Tagore, resemble nineteenth-century Kartabhaja hymns that emphasized inward divinity and rebellion against bourgeois *bhadralok* religious and social orthodoxy. During his Shelaidaha years, his poems took on a lyrical voice of the *monermanush*, the Bauls' "man within the heart" and Tagore's "life force of his deep recesses"; or meditating upon the *jeevandevata*—the demiurge or the "living God within"; this figure is connected with divinity through appeal to nature and the emotional interplay of human drama. Such tools saw use in his Bhanusimha poems chronicling the Radha-Krishna romance, which were repeatedly revised over seventy years.

In English, his works are equally significant as these translations enjoy the same reputation as in the original language, Bengali. Tagore is generally known for his masterpiece, *Gitanjali*, a collection of poems first published in Bengali and later on, translated into English. It was in the early year of the twentieth century that his translations of this collection came before the readers. *Echo from the East and West* is the collection that contains his translated works. Translating the poem from one language to another is very difficult, and it was also the same for Rabindranath Tagore.

After that, in 1913, *The Crescent Moon*, a poem written in Bengali, was translated into English. Most of the poems in this Volume are written about small children, as the title was also *Sisu*. The original literary features in this volume were not paid much attention to by Tagore as he did not retain the characteristics of actual writing. In 1916, another collection by Tagore, *Fruit Gathering*, was translated by keeping in mind the failure of the earlier groups. He took the poem from the *Balaka*, but he solved it by keeping in view the form and intellectual content of the poem. To possess all these qualities as is while translating is a very tough job. As Tagore does not include complex poems in this translated work, all the features incorporated by him make him a different poet.

In 1918, the translation of 138 poems from the collection, *The Lover's Gift and Crossing* was not of good quality. The author seems to be free while translating these verses. One cannot identify the original poems in many cases. Similarly, the poems from the collection, *The Fugitive* are highly deprived of poetic quality hardly any of these poems are abridged properly. After this translated work, Tagore did not try any other of his volumes to translate.

The reason behind it was the pitfalls and shortcomings of the translation that Tagore realized after going through his works. In this connection, in 1915, Tagore admitted to William Rothenstein about his translated work that his translations were prose, and he aims to make this composition as simple as possible by providing lyricism. He did not want to add any complexity and poetical conventions to his works in translated form. In this way, it is pretty evident that while translating his poetic works, Tagore was very much familiar with the true nature of his translated works.

The other translators in Indian Writing in English comprise authors like Bhabhani Bhattacharya, who also contributed a lot in the field of translation study. During 1922-1929, there was the translation of three significant works and Bhabhani Bhattacharya's *The Golden Boat* is the most prominent one. It includes 32 poems from his works having lyrical quality and story-telling features. The poet has arranged all these poems in which rhyme and meter are meticulously used by the author. But, while translating these works, the author considers only the element of the story. In that direction, the imitation of Tagore's style of prose can be witnessed vividly. He did not translate those words that were repeated and did not sound good in prose narratives.

In changing the title also, Bhattacharya felt relaxed while translating, as can be seen through the poem *Guru Govinda* where the source title was a little bit different. The freedom taken by Bhattacharya in this regard was to make the Western audience understand everything. This translated version had no more print or editions, later on, by India's Jaika Publishing House.

Among the Indian translators who worked on Tagore's poem to translate it from his native language to the English language, the name Nagendranath Gupta cannot be overlooked and underestimated. His collection of translations *Sheaves*, contains the translation of 80 poems, in 1929 by him. This collection was, further, published by Philosophical Library, New York in 1951. Gupta, in the introductory part of the publication, admits that is written in free verse, and he faced a lot of difficulties in providing rhyme and meter while translating these verses. To solve a lyric poem is the most tedious and typical job, he admits in this connection. He says that a good lyric is a sparkling little jewel. One finds every facet carefully cut by the poet's jeweller, and its setting is the language in which it is composed. Duplication or imitation of such a gem may prove to be mere paste.

Between 1955 and 1957, there was the translation of four works by three authors. *Syamali*, a collection that was translated by Sheila Chatterjee in 1955, is a translation of Rabindranath Tagore's Bengali poem, *Syamali*, in Bengali. While solving this work, she showed remarkable skill and efficacy while showering appreciation, William Radice says that the author has demonstrated her efficiency to translate this collection (Radice, 1999, p. 23).

Aurobindo Bose, one of the leading translators of the time, also showed his accuracy and skill. While translating some works he shows his dexterity in translation in the poems, *A Flight of Swan*, and *The Herald of Spring* published in 1955 and 1957, respectively, by John Murray. Besides, the credit for translating three other volumes- *Wings of Death* (1960), *Latter poems of Tagore*, and *Lipika*. The reason behind translating the works for Tagore was that Bose showed reverence and respect for Tagore through his translated work.

Kumares Ray also contributed a great deal in translating Rabindranath Tagore's works. His most notable translated work, *Glimpses of Tagore's Poems* in English verses in which there is an amalgamation of 23 poems. He showed his assiduous and minute skill in translating Tagore's works. Tagore has endeavored to translate the selected poems after considering the form, theme and tone of the original lyrics. Although some others might have tried to solve his

poems, they did in a bit casual way, on the other hand, his effort is sincere, loyal, and consolidated.

In 1960 also, there was another productive and fruitful period of translation of Tagore's verses in one of the significant volumes of translation of *One Hundred and One*, which he edited by Humayun Kabir and published by Asia Publishing House. This anthology came with the effort of 18 translators all of which Amalendu Bose and Lila Roy rank at the top.

The year 1969 witnessed the emergence of two volumes translated by Sisir Chattopadhyay titled, *Patraput*, and another by *Fifteen Longer Poems* of Rabindranath Tagore by Rabindranath Chaudhary. *Patraput*, a translated work by Chattopadhyay, in which fifteen poems from Bengali are included. It does not comment anything about these translations and merely said that he translated the severes by Tagore because he did not have much time to do so.

Rabindranath Chaudhary translated the anthology, *Fifteen Longer Poems*, readers witnessed an essential and significant change in the title. It was, later on, published in 1975 with the title, *Love Poems of Rabindranath Tagore* by Orient Paperback. At the outset of the collection, he points out that the Westerners would not have neglected Tagore if they had come in contact with an authentic translation.

In the first half of the 1970s, we can get two books, one by P.Lal and Shymasree Devi, *Last Poems*, and the other was *The Last Poem of Rabindranath Tagore* by Pritish Nandy. On the review of both collections, William Radice did not find these volumes well translated. It was later on in the 1980s that Brother James Talarovic learned Bengali and then prolifically translated Tagore's poems. Between the years 1983-86, he completed the translation of five volumes published in Dhaka: *Gitanjali*, *Noibedya*, *Gitimalya*, *Gitali*, and *Sonar*.

In the 1980s, more than six new translated books published in which we can include Sudhamayee Mukherjee's *Some Songs of Rabindranath Tagore*, Aruna Chakravarti's *Songs of Tagore*, Pratibha Bowes' *Some Songs and Poems from Rabindranath Tagore*, in Sisir Kumar Ghosh's *Forty Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*, Shafi Ahmed's *Tagore Eleven*, Arun K. Sill's *Gitanjali*, and William Radice's *Selected Poems*.

In this way, several translators have shown their keen and minute interest in translating most of Rabindranath Tagore's poetical works. Their inclination towards Tagore's poetry speaks volumes of his popularity as a poet whose works were appreciated by the writers of subsequent generations.

In this way, translation from one language to another language requires adequate skill to transfer the meaning from the source language to the target language. While translating from one language to another there is only a transaction between two languages, but also a negotiation between two cultures. Culture is also a dominant factor because many difficulties arise in finding the equivalent textual and literary material of the source language in the target language. It is an essential important fact that both culture and language are interrelated aspects that should be taken as vital elements for the translation of one language into another.

About the Author

Dinesh Kumar has presently been working as an Assistant Professor of English at Dyal Singh College, Karnal (INDIA) for the last 17 years. He has 40 research papers to his credit. Apart from it, he is the sole author of three books: George Orwell's Social Vision: A Critical Study (ISBN 978-93-87646-79-7); and Voices in Literature. (ISBN 978-93-87276-79-6), Feministic Ethos in Pre-Independence and Post- Independence Indian Literature: A Comprehensive Study from Lambert Publication, Germany (ISBN NO. 978-620-3-921908). He has also reviewed two books by foreign professors-first, English Language as Mediator of Human-Machine Communication by Natalia Lazebna, Associate Professor, Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic University, Ukraine with ISBN NO. 978-81-948672-1-0, and the second is a poetry book, Drops of Intensity by an Italian poet, Gerlinde Staffler. He is also rendering his services as an editor and a reviewer in some reputed International Journals since 2014.

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A Cognitive Semantic Analysis of Metaphoric Expressions in Fulfulde

Amodu, Eneojoh Jonah (PhD.)

Abdullahi, Hadiyyah

Department of English and Literary Studies

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Amodujonah1@gmail.com

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Abstract

Cognitive semantics sets out to explore the nature of human interaction with awareness of the external world and build a theory of conceptual structure. This aligns with how humans experience the world. In doing this, the central aim of this paper focuses on the cognitive semantic analysis of metaphorical expressions in Fulfulde. This paper adopts Deliberate Metaphor Theory as a theoretical framework, and the population covered in the data sampling is Adamawa State Nigerian speakers of Fulfulde. Some of the striking findings include the following: when conceptualizing metaphor, Fulfulde speakers do not follow the pattern that the target domain projects and; that the relationship between the components of metaphor does not solely rely on physical experiences of the world. The paper concludes that Fulfulde's culture plays a vital role in producing a conceptual metaphor, Fulbe, believes that marriage is between and among humans and of the opposite sex, unlike other cultures.

Keywords: cognitive, communication, context, Fulfulde, metaphor, semantic

Amodu, Eneojoh Jonah, Email: Amodujonah1@gmail.com

1. Introduction

People interact and communicate with one another in society through the use of language, which is not only a tool for exploring environmental resources but also for the communication of thoughts. However, a metaphor is an effective vehicle for the conveyance of meaning. Using it often is not an easy task as interlocutors often find it challenging to establish the bond between sense and communication. This difficulty constitutes the interest of this paper which seeks to examine how Fulfulde speakers conceptualise metaphor. Hawkes (1972) observes that the term metaphor is taken traditionally as the basic form of figurative language. It is “a decorative additive to language, used in special ways, and at specific times and places” (p.1). A metaphor is a special device for special occasions across time and space for literary and non-literary contexts.

However, contrary to the literary or traditional perspective, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) developed a linguistic perspective that examines metaphor as a property of concepts that form one thing in terms of another rather than being considered as just a word or a creative literary device that serves an artistic or aesthetic function. This view does not only incline one to admit and think of metaphor in terms of the life of language, but it differentiates metaphors as they appear in figurative language (literary) and metaphors that are part of thought processes (linguistic).

Two types of metaphors are considered in linguistics which Lakoff and Johnson (1980) classified as conceptual metaphor and linguistic metaphor. Conceptual metaphors are metaphors that are produced to understand the *Target domains* through the *Source domain*. Source domains are conceptual domains from which metaphorical expressions are drawn, while the target domain is used for the concept area to which the metaphor is applied. The Conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A RACE leads to linguistic metaphorical expressions like:

She is off the track
 He will lose the race
 I don't think you will win this love competition

(Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p. 8)

Here, domain A (LIFE), which is the *target domain*, is abstract and is understood through domain B (RACE), which is the *Source domain*, because it constitutes a substantial bodily experience. Bandt (2004) sees Cognitive Semantics as the study of meaning in the embodied human mind (p. 1). The notion of Semantics in this context is functional and representative in the sense that, meaning is approached as a function in the processes of thought and communication. The paper adopts Cognitive Semantics, an approach to Semantics that focuses on thoughts or abstract ideas. Cognitive Semantics sets out to explore the nature of human interaction mindful of the external world and to build a theory of conceptual structure that is in accordance with how humans experience the world. The motivation for this paper arises from the fact that while many

empirical studies have discussed metaphor in Cognitive Semantics, studies on its use in Fulfulde are scarce.

2. Review of Related Literature

This section reviews literature related to the study and is arranged into major parts: Conceptual Review, Authorial Review, and Theoretical Framework. It begins with the conceptual review by defining metaphor from a literary and linguistic perspective, Cognitive Semantics and Semantics. The empirical studies were carried out by scholars in the field of cognitive semantics and metaphors by identifying and critiquing the literature that is related to the present study. Finally, the research identifies and discusses the theoretical framework suitable for the study.

2.1 The *Fulbe* and their Culture

The term *Fulfulde* is the name given to the language by its speakers. The ethnic group is called *Fulbe* (which is the plural and *Pullo*, is the singular). Fulfulde belongs to the Atlantic geographic grouping within the Niger-Congo family. Mukosky (1981) observes that there are no figures based on the census on which one may rely to give the reliable population of the *Fulbe*. *Fulbe* is identified with a variety of names. The names include *Fula*, *Pulaar*, and *Pulle*. These varieties are necessitated by linguistic or geographical differences, but Non-native speakers use the Hausa term “Fulani” to refer to the speakers and the language itself but Arnott (1970), in Muhammad (2006), adopts the name *Fula*. He further presents six major dialectal areas for the entire Fulfulde West-East continuum:

- (a). Futa Toro (Senegal)
- (b). FutaJalo (Guinea)
- (c). Masina (Mali)
- (d). Sokoto and Western Niger
- (e). North Central of Nigeria and Eastern Niger
- (f). Adamawa (Fombinarre)(91)

Traditionally, most *Fulbe* is cattle herders. Through the centuries, many have turned to politics, they have successfully settled down, and established their kingdoms between Senegal and Cameroon by the 19th century, after conquering the Hausa by about 1810. In addition, authorities like Ba'mikko (2005) aver that there has been a steady movement of *Fulbe* roughly from the region known as Senegal, Niger, Adamawa, within West Africa and beyond. *Fulbe* has

its roots in North Africa and the Middle East. They later intermingled with local West African ethnic groups.

Fulbe communities have become predominantly nomadic, and they exist as a less organized social system. The Sokoto Caliphate was, by far, the largest and most successful legacy of Fulani power in Western Africa. Before it was defeated by European colonial forces, throughout the 19th century, Sokoto was one of the largest, most powerful and most organized empires in West Africa until 1903. The Sokoto Caliphate included several emirates, the largest of which was Adamawa, others include Gombe Emirate, Gwandu Emirate, Bauchi Emirate, Katsina Emirate, Zazzau Emirate, Hadejia Emirate, and Muri Emirate (*woylaare*)

Every language is unique in its way, and so is the processing of metaphors. Studies have been carried out in English on the cognitive analysis of metaphors, but little attention has been given to the indigenous languages in Nigeria. Cultures across the world differ, so this paper investigates the universality and variations in the use of metaphors as cross-cultural studies carried out in metaphors and cultures across the world differ. Metaphors are categorised as linguistic or literary, but this paper only focuses on linguistic metaphors from the perspective of Cognitive Semantics. Therefore, the work focuses on the *fombinare* dialect in Adamawa State, Nigeria because it is the standardised dialect used to write many textbooks and translations of the Holy Quran. This paper is limited to doing a Semantic analysis of Metaphoric expressions in the Fulfulde language because it is also a new and emerging linguistic topic with challenging research possibilities.

In this study, it is essential to differentiate between metaphors as they appear in figurative language (literary) and metaphors that are part of thought processes (linguistic). Miller (1979) defines a Metaphor as a figurative language that displays the connection between two items: which leads to the transfer of one entity to another. This form of transfer is called a figure of speech, as Hawkes (1972) calls it tropes, turning a language away from literal meaning towards figurative meaning.

On the other hand, Black (1993) views metaphor at a Cognitive-Conceptual level, a level different from treating metaphors as mere concepts of language. He argues, metaphor is the interaction of systems by implication of two domains. This means having an experience through another pre-existing phenomenon. That is why Knowles and Moon (2006) claim that metaphor involves a relationship between a *source domain*, the literal meaning of metaphorical expressions, and a *target domain*, the domain of which the experience is being described by the metaphor.

Cognitive linguistics deals with language in a way that is compatible with what is known about human reason and treats language as reflecting and revealing the mind. That is why Geegaerts and Cuycken (2007) view Cognitive linguistics as the study of language in its cognitive function, where cognitive refers to the crucial role of intermediate informational structures in our encounter with the world. Evans and Green (2006) classify Cognitive linguistics into two domains: Cognitive Semantics which deals with the relationship between experience, embodied cognition and language. While the Cognitive approach to grammar deals with the theories of grammar, the present study is concerned with the former.

Cognitive Semantics investigates the relationship between experience, the conceptual system and the Semantic structure encoded by language. It represents an approach to the study of the mind and its relationship with embodied experience and culture. Sweetser (1990) proposes that cognitive Semantics sees linguistic meaning as a manifestation of conceptual structure, and nature with the organisation of mental representation in all its richness and diversity, and this is what makes it a distinctive new approach to the linguistic meaning which constitutes the interest and background of this study.

In an attempt to prove that culture plays a vital role in the conceptualisation of metaphors, Matsuki (1995) examines Metaphors of Anger in Japan and observes that all the metaphors for Anger in English analysed by Lakoff and Kövecses (1987) are found in Japanese. At the same time, there are enormous numbers of anger-related expressions that are found in the Japanese concept of “hara” (literally, ‘belly’). This is a culturally significant concept because it is unique to Japanese culture, and so the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS (IN THE) HARA is limited to Japanese. The fact that the Japanese shares all the anger metaphors in English and have some uniqueness to its culture shows the connection with this paper. In the sense that, there is a cross-cultural variation which the present study seeks to investigate.

To show the value of indigenous language, Jabaka (2004) carried out a study on A Comparative Analysis of Fulfulde and Morphological English processes. Jabaka, however, targeted explicitly at Nigeria. Some states have adopted Fulfulde in certain areas as the *Lingua franca* and regard Fulfulde as a prestigious language because of its association with Islam, the dominant religion in Northern Nigeria. In Cameroon, it is estimated that non-native speakers of the language are approximately four and a half million compared to half a million mother-tongue speakers. In Nigeria, the case is no different in Adamawa and, to a lesser extent, in Bauchi, and some parts of Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, and Kebbi. The connection between Jabaka (2004) and the present analysis is the focus on Fulfulde, as Jabaka did not attempt to integrate the concept of metaphor from a cognitive perspective as this paper does. The study, however, investigated morphological processes at the semantic level of analysis, the issue of derivative verbs and how class suffixes contribute to preventing ambiguity and unintentional misinterpretation. This relates

to the current paper in the sense that, Semantics plays a vital role in the realization of meaning which makes the work relevant to this present study.

Similarly, Okpe (2012) engages in A Semiotic analysis of the use of Metaphor in Selected Works of Wole Soyinka. She states that the study of metaphor is a unique way of understanding cognitive capability and its viability as an indispensable tool for solving problems in language understanding and acquisition. The study explains that metaphors contradict the traditional opinion of what metaphor is, as Lakoff and Turner (1989) see metaphor as a reflector, stressing that it is central to the understanding of culture and the world at large. The analysis of the work postulates that conceptual metaphor was a revolution that gave metaphor a new focus. The study views Metaphors as having a central role in human perceptual and cognitive processes which is relevant to the present study. The findings show that metaphors are rooted in thought, not just language. It also conceives metaphors based on bodily experience and imagination, among other things. Experience is also one of the major bases for the construction of concepts. This means that conceptualisation is a mental process that is knit to bodily experience. This also indicates the link between Okpe's study and the present study. Okpe also deployed the use of the eclectic model to tackle the multi-faceted nature of metaphor which guides the present study.

Oduh (2015) examines how "Nonce Words act as Conceptual Metaphors in some Nigeria Newspapers" and claims that Nonce words also known as coined words are used in metaphorical language which helps in the understanding of how language users use metaphor in context and how it functions. The study observes that, the theory of cognitivism in language derived from the notion of what individuals know about language and the world around them is by association, relating the unfamiliar to the familiar. This is a primary association to the present paper. The study finds out that, there are different forms of nonce words and the extent in which they are used in metaphorical context. The study claims that nonce words fill lexical and communications gaps and are temporary words in the spur of the moment. The study investigates conceptual metaphor with regards to nonce words in novel metaphor and that metaphor can conceal or reveal its bases and ideologies through literature. Also, the mind of children can be manipulated to accept certain assumptions through metaphor which is contrary to the view of metaphor in literature as a flowery or novel language.

The paper employs an eclectic procedure of Lieber's (2004) framework on lexical semantics and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The Metaphor Identification Procedure of Vrije University (MIPPVU) was used in the data analysis. The justification of Oduh's (2015) approach by Lieber (2004) is based on the assumption that the meaning of a suffix and that of a base combined gives the meaning of the derived product. One of the shortcomings of Oduh is its inability to explain the theoretical framework the work claims to have used. Another shortcoming of the study is that one of the research questions is not clarified because nonce words are contextual, and the researcher was asked if nonce words affect meaning as used in context.

In a related study, Tyler (2017) examines “Religious Metaphors and Structural Complexities” Majority of religious works associated with conceptual metaphor focus on the linguistic and sentential contexts of language while ignoring the phonological aspect of truth. Religious metaphors are accurate or patently literal in specific sentential contexts. Religious metaphors are direct and complex in nature. God is the only phenomenon to exist before existence itself and is the source of everything, so explaining the Christian God “is that the quality of God is derived from an underlying metaphor GOD IS BEING – ITSELF.

Furthermore, Tyler states that metaphors, as used in the discipline of Theology and Religious Philosophy, are derived from the philosophical works of Paul Tillich during the mid - 20th Century “*God is transcendent, infinite, not limited by the structure of creaturely existence ...*” the analysis that God is not a being at all, means God cannot be discussed in literal terms because it will violate the ultimacy of God and the intention should not even be made. So how does one assign properties to such an unknowable entity? From the result, the study distinguishes a similar process in religious metaphor from the operations of conventional metaphor for several reasons. As religious metaphor takes on the function of religious ritual in its expression of abstract, sacred domains, it can become conventional, in the sense that it is commonplace.

One of the study’s shortcomings is as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) state, it is believed that metaphor is accurate because nothing is objective beyond what the body can conceive of. It would be inaccurate to label religious metaphors as embodied (p. 45).

In a related study, Koki (2017) anchors the Cognitive Semantic study of Hausa symbolic Expression as used by Kano State Politicians” where politicians, use metaphors to convince their supporters. Because of the nature of metaphor, it affects the speakers, which inherently affects the essence of the source and target domains the speakers have to employ. The researchers employ Critical Metaphorical Analysis as both the theoretical framework and method of data analysis. The theory is made of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus linguistics. The use of identification, interpretation and description of metaphor in the analysis of the work guides the present study. Koko demonstrates the theories of metaphor concerning the concept and how Political metaphors prompt the explanation of the Speech Act Theory of J.L Austin. The study also explains how language performs an action which is a crucial feature of human activities, especially in politics. The nexus with the present study is the exploration of metaphor from a Cognitive Semantic perspective.

3. Deliberate Metaphor Theory

The theoretical framework associated with the present research is Deliberate Metaphor Theory (Henceforth DMT). It advances metaphor studies into a period of new and exciting research challenges and possibilities in various fields. Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT) is a theory proposed by Steen (2017) about the properties of metaphor in language use and discourse. It has emerged over the past decade in a series of publications developing new ideas and interpreting existing research from that perspective (Steen 2008, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015, 2016). Steen (2017) proposes an operational definition of Deliberate Metaphor Theory as “...

potentially deliberate when the source domain of the metaphor is part of the referential meaning of the utterance is used”(p.9.)

The tenet of DMT by Steen (2017) states that the first assumption of DMT is that metaphor is as cross-mapping as thought. According to DMT, deliberate metaphor concerns the intentional use of metaphors as metaphors between the sender and addressee. This definition minimally implies that language users, in production or reception, pay special attention to the source domain as a separate reference domain.

The second central assumption of DMT is that metaphor in language use is not just a matter of language and thought but also of communication. In any situation, utterances are produced by cognizing people (thought) who are jointly aligned in their exchange of communication. This means that languages use a linguistic, conceptual and communicative dimension, and all languages used are described as related to these dimensions.

The central prediction of DMT is about attention Steen (2017) a metaphor is used deliberately when its structure signals the addressee to move away their attention momentarily from the target domain of the utterance or even phrase to the source domain evoked by the metaphor-related expression. This hypothesis is about attention to the source domain which is highly specific; it focuses on the mandatory representation of the source domain as part of the situation model in utterance processing. Deliberate metaphor is different from non-deliberate metaphor in that non-deliberate metaphor does not involve the intentional use of metaphor as a metaphor between the sender and addressee.

4. Methodology

This section focuses on the processes of data collection and analysis. It also discusses the instrument of data collection and techniques. This includes the sources of data, research instruments for data collection, data collection technique, Validation of transcription, sampling and research procedures

4.1 Sources and Forms of Data

The paper uses both secondary and primary sources of data. The fundamental differences between primary and secondary data are; the term primary data refers to the data originated by the researcher for the first time, while secondary data is the already existing data collected by other agencies. Thus, the research uses unstructured group discussion and Corpus design.

4.5 Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument includes a corpus design and a cellphone recorder. Drawing upon the different opinions concerning corpus design, as Sinclair (2004:16) elaborates a corpus is a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research. The justification of corpus-based metaphor research explores the systematic metaphorical patterns of certain expressions in a language in specialized genres. A representative corpus should consist of the range of text types the corpus is set out for. For instance, a general corpus should include as many text types as possible (academic text, fiction, news, religious text, etc), since its purpose is to provide an overall description of a language.

5. Data Collection Techniques

Having explained the instrument of data collection, the paper engages in an unstructured group discussion, observation and participation method with the people to make it natural and informal. The researcher records the conversation without the participants' knowledge so that the discussion is void of tension. The researchers listen and participate in the conversation by choosing eight different interpersonal contexts.

At the end of the conversation, the researcher goes through the recording and converts it to writing by transcribing and translating the recording from the source language to the target language. To tackle the problem of metaphor translation, Ivir (1987) states that recordings and text are to be analysed by metaphor analysis through transcription. According to him, three factors can interfere which are *linguistic-based issues*, that is, differences in the structures and systems between the SL and the TL, *pragmatic-based issues*, that is, contextual factors outside the languages that may impede communication through the translation process and lastly *culture-oriented matters*, that is, the conventions practiced in a community. This makes understanding ideas cognitively expressed by a writer through conceptual mappings, as pointed out by Lakoff (1993), often challenging. The difficulty increases when translation is attempted.

5.1 Validation of the Transcription

With the help of Fulfulde scholars, Dr. Umar Bamikko from Federal College of Education Yola and Dr. Aminu Abdulmalik from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Department of African Languages helped verify and validate the data.

5.1.1 Sampling

This study targets the speakers of Fulfulde. The population covered in this study is Adamawa State speakers of Fulfulde, specifically Girei town in Girei Local government. Fulfulde is the language of the environment. All the correspondents fall within the age bracket of 15-50. The aim of choosing *fombinaree* dialect is to limit the research to a specific dialect as there are six others.

5.1.2 Analytical Procedure

Steen (2017) proposes six stages in identifying deliberate metaphors using the Deliberate Metaphor identification Procedure (DMIP) coding scheme. These are:

1. read the entire text to get a general idea of what the text is about;
2. apply the Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit (MIPVU) to find all metaphorical lexical units (metaphor-related words, or MRWs);
3. look at the first MRW;

4. determine whether the source domain of the MRW is part of the referential meaning of the utterance in which the MRW is used;
 - a. if ‘yes’, mark the MRW as potentially deliberate, and proceed to step 5;
 - b. if ‘no’, mark the MRW as non-deliberate and proceed to step 6;
 - c. in case of doubt, mark the MRW as potentially deliberate, and add the code WIDLII (When in Doubt Leave It In). Then, proceed to step 5.
5. if the MRW is coded as potentially deliberate in step 4, describe *how* the source domain of the MRW is part of the referential meaning of the utterance; and
6. look at the next MRW.

6. Data Presentation and Analysis/ Sample Analysis

The analysis for this paper is precisely cantered on the metaphorical expressions in Fulfulde. The data collected were analysed using tables with the following sub-headings; Metaphorical Expression, Metaphor, Target Domain, Source Domain, Deliberate or non-deliberate.

Table 1. Marriage is human

Metaphorical Expressions	Type of Metaphor	Target Domain	Source Domain	Deliberate or Non Deliberate
Ta ta’udebbboJuddo Do not marry a tall woman	Conceptual Metaphor	Marriage	Human	Potentially deliberate

The example above contains one lexical unit identified as metaphor related word, also known as MRW by MIPVU. The adjective “tall” is related to metaphor at the linguistic level of utterance meaning. Comparing the contextual meaning to the dictionary meaning of the words, no similarities were found. Thus, the word is used metaphorically. At the conceptual level of utterance purpose, the word ‘tall’ is also metaphoric, it comes from a different associated domain than the target domain which is “Marriage”. This means that the meaning of the MRW which is concerned with “height” does not capture the target domain sense, which is concerned with ‘Marriage’.

In determining whether the MRW “tall” is potentially deliberate or not at the level of communication, the analysis examines if the source domain “status” is part of the referential meaning in the utterance. In this case, the adjective ‘tall’, has a conventionalised sense

description available in the dictionary as “having a greater than average height” (OA1). This does not match the target domain of ‘Marriage’. Here ‘tall’ expresses a cross-domain mapping from the target domain of ‘marriage’ to a source domain of ‘status’ and it does not capture the meaning, as a result, the metaphor can be taken to introduce a new perspective on the target domain.

The referential importance of the utterance will thus be, ‘do not marry a woman having a greater than average height’. This makes ‘tall’ a potentially deliberate metaphor because the concept of ‘marriage’ is not about the physical feature of the woman but rather the physical distance between the man and the woman. This is one of the reasons why Fulfulde culture encourages Endogamy.

Table 2. Politics is a war

Metaphorical Expressions	Type of Metaphor	Target Domain	Source Domain	Deliberate or Non Deliberate
<i>To konutimmai, belimtatamaiybe</i> <i>If war not finish, count not death bodies</i> You cannot count the death bodies before the war is over.	Conceptual	Politics	War	Non deliberate

The example above identifies three lexical units as MRW by MIPVU. In this analysis, these three lexical units are identified as metaphor-related words at the conceptual dimension because they come from different domains with the target domain of “Politics”. The lexical unit “dead” has a basic sense available in the dictionary as “no longer alive” in fact it looks like there are no cues in the utterance that point to the source domain in the referential meaning of the utterance.

Also, the target domain “war” has a sense description available in the dictionary as “a situation in which two countries or group of people fight against each other over a period of time” as a conventionalised description and also captures the referential meaning of the utterance. Consequently, the verb at first glance can be viewed as non-deliberate. It can also be spelt out as ‘you cannot count the (no longer alive) bodies before (a situation in which a group of people fights against each other over some time)’. Here the expression is non-deliberate because when people talk about war, they do not pay distinct attention to the source domain as a separate domain of reference.

Table 3. Anger is colour

Metaphorical Expressions	Type of Metaphor	Target Domain	Source Domain	Deliberate or Non Deliberate
Berndemaakobelwikurum <i>Heart his/her black</i> Her/His heart is black	Complex	Anger	Colour	Potentially deliberate

In the above sentence, black is identified as a metaphor-related word utilizing MIPVU. This lexical item comes from a domain of colour which is different from the source domain (Heart) and part of the internal organ of the body. Consequently, ‘black’ at the conceptual level is related to metaphor. According to Merriam -Webster dictionary, the ‘heart’ is ‘the organ in your chest that pumps blood through your veins and arteries. Therefore, black is related to metaphor at the level of thought (linguistic level).

Then, to determine whether the MRW ‘black’ counts as a potentially deliberate metaphor, when observed is seen that the target domain Black plays a pivotal effect in deciding the referential meaning of the source domain. Because the attention to the source domain is highly specific, it focuses on the mandatory representation of the source domain as part of the utterance processing. The complete and coherent lexical entry of the words would therefore be ‘the organ in your chest that pumps blood through your veins and arteries’ is ‘having the very dark colour of coal or the night sky.

The sense description of the utterance contrasts with the basic meaning of the lexical utterance “a heart” which pumps blood that is red in colour, in contrast, to “black” that is very dark like coal or the night sky. Consequently, this is a poetic appreciation of anger by Fulbe. ‘Anger is Colour’ (black), which has the lexical entry ‘having a solid feeling of being upset or annoyed is a catchy grandness quality of anger depicted with colour. Thus, ‘Anger is Colour’ and be translated as Anger resides in the heart where emotions are felt, and the colour (black) is attributed to something bad.

6. Discussion

When conceptualising metaphors and selecting domains in communicative expressions, Fulfulde speakers do not follow the pattern of the Lakovian theory that the *target domain* must be abstract and the *source domain* is concrete as Fulfulde conceptualise POLITICS IS RELIGION, REALITY IS GOD which is both abstract. This shows that the relationship between the metaphor components does not solely rely on physical experiences of the world.

Metaphors can be conscious and potentially deliberate and not automatic or unconscious as the dominant theory of Conceptual Metaphor proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claims. Language users are sometimes attentive to their choice of words with a specific communicative function. This does not exclude the fact that some metaphors have gained access into the domain of literal language or everyday language. Conceptual Metaphors like LIFE IS A JOURNEY or TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY.

Every language is unique in its way so is the process of metaphor in every language. Fulbe culture, especially regarding marriage, conceptualizes that MARRIAGE IS HUMAN. Thus the metaphorical expressions like *Do not marry a short woman, Do not marry a tall woman, fair or dark*. In this sense, marriage is a bond between a male and female as opposed to other cultures where bestiality is practiced and even legalized. Some cultures also recognise the same-sex-marriage where conceptual metaphors like MARRIAGE IS MEN and metaphorical expressions like ‘my fathers are celebrating their wedding anniversary or my father is pregnant’ can be possible and viewed as obscure or demonic in other cultures.

From the above, several findings were made. Metaphors beyond literary devices can be linguistic too. One does not also need any unique talent or skill to be able to use metaphor as many classical scholars claim. This paper observes that; when conceptualising metaphor, Fulfulde speakers do not follow the pattern of the target domain to communicate and the source domain as claimed by the dominant theory of conceptual metaphor; the study finds that the relationship between the components of metaphor does not solely rely on physical experiences of the world; one of the striking findings is that Metaphors are not automatic and unconscious, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim, due to the reason that, there are metaphors which are deliberate and conscious among language users especially MARRIAGE and RELIGION metaphor; and Fulfulde culture plays a vital role in producing conceptual metaphor, *Fulbe* believe that marriage is between and among human and of the opposite sex, unlike other cultures.

Some experiences differ from culture to culture, while some physical experiences are common to all humans. Language users may reasonably hypothesize that some metaphors are universal while others are culturally specific.

7. Conclusion

The central aim of the paper is to analyse metaphorical expressions using the cognitive semantic model. Thus, metaphor is perhaps the most important means by which language develops, changes, grows, and adapts itself to changing needs of language users. When metaphors are successful, they “die” from being overused—that is; they become so much a part of our everyday language that we cease thinking of them as metaphors. Following this line of reasoning, metaphor is pervasive and essential in language and thought. It is not just a way of naming, but also a way of thinking. It is a figure of thought as well as a figure of speech. It is a process by which language users understand and structure one field of experience in terms of another domain of a different kind.

About the Authors

Amodu, Eneojoh Jonah (PhD) is an Associate Professor with the department of English and Literary Studies where he researches, teaches and supervises undergraduate and postgraduate students in Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics and Stylistics.

Abdullahi, Hadiyyah holds a Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s degree in the English Language from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

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Representation of Moral Values and Immoral Disputes in J.R.R. Tolkien's Novels

Gokulapriya T, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Arulmigu Palaniandavar Arts
and Science College for Women, Oddanchatram, Dindigul (Dt.), Tamilnadu, India.

dr_gokulapriya11@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper aims to emphasize and teach good morals and ethics through *The Hobbits*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion* to give good changes in people's minds and succeed in life with a positive attitude. In these novels, J.R.R. Tolkien portrays good characteristics of people and the benefits of moral behaviors. Also, he focuses on the evil attributes of human beings and the fate of their life due to following immoral qualities. The objective of this study is to know how moral values help for a happy and peaceful life and study how immoral acts give faults and evil destiny.

Keywords: Immoral Qualities, J.R.R. Tolkien, Moral Values, *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*

Tolkien's Novels, Email: dr_gokulapriya11@gmail.com

1. Introduction

As a children's literature writer, J.R.R. Tolkien gives importance to the concepts relevant to children's life that led them to recognize the reality of life through factual concepts such as growth, loss, success and failures. In the present world, the situations and the mental attitude of human beings are extremely changed; people do harmful activities against society and the environment, without considering the effects of immoral acts. To know and clarify the effects of moral values and corrupts, this paper examines the primary reasons for a worthy and peaceful life and elucidates the evil characteristics, immoral acts, the sufferings and challenges met for their deeds.

2. Literature Review

Tolkien's works are fundamentally optimistic and assert that beauty and goodness will ultimately triumph, although there is an unavoidable price to be paid. Because Tolkien's works are stylistically romantic, they turn the minds and hearts of the reader to a "golden age," a time of great prosperity and peace, a time of enlightenment". (Hyde, 2002, pp.165-166)

Through the research, *Fantasy Literature and Christianity: Morality in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit*, Pavic signifies the moral ethics and Christian values are seamlessly presented in the books of Tolkien and she states that Tolkien gives life to the characters which help the people to see the truth of their lives in an entirely different light.

Even though his religious convictions are not so explicit in *The Lord of the Rings*, the influence of Christianity is evident in most of the main characters' inner moral struggle, their values and ethics, their belief in providential design, their hope and their persistent fight for the freedom of their people. Many of his characters fighting for the good cause can be compared to Jesus Christ, while the evil one share some traits with Satan himself.

Tolkien was a man of strong convictions and he firmly believed in Christian values and doctrines. (Pavic, 2016, p.18)

In the research *J.R.R. Tolkien and the Morality of Monstrosity*, Fawcett describes the monsters' cruel characters thought moral to the people through how not to be in life. Fawcett states that Tolkien remains conscious of the genuine moral role of the various races; the Dwarves have changed their good responsibility because of the wars in the Third Age, the Dragon possessed shameless greed and the Orcs are represented for their deadly corruption.

Tolkien's concept of the monster as a blending of past myth and contemporary belief is central to the complexity of Middle-earth, and has been an inspiration for later writers of fantasy literature. His monsters are a blend of past and present, changing the moral context of the creatures from the epic heroic narratives into modern war-time frameworks; Tolkien draws ancient ideas of good versus evil into a modern, post-war world by creating monsters with sympathetic voices, creatures who undergo a narrative downfall and codeswitching villains. (Fawcett, 2014, p.177)

Through the research, *The Problem of Greed in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*, Chris Larimore denotes how the characters of Middle earth are corrupted by powerful greed. He states that all over *The Hobbit*, the Dwarves are driven by greed which puts together the poor Bilbo Baggins with the dwarves to leave their comfortable life. Most of the characters in these two novels are tempted by the deadly sin of greed that destroyed their mind.

In a world where companionship, trust, pride and dignity are the ruling forces of morality, greed and material wealth hold no place in the social order of things, and all those that pursue these negative morals almost always come to an end, with very rare instances of repentance. A lot can be learned from characters such as Thorin and Boromir, as both openly repent of their lust for power and wealth, albeit on their deathbeds. (Larimore, 2012, p. 68)

3. Representation of Moral and Immoral Deeds

J.R.R. Tolkien's works are based on the contrasts between hope and despair, light and dark, good and evil, and enlightenment and unawareness. His novels primarily emphasize the human desires for power, money, wealth, and precious materials to destroy life and lead to unsuccessful and hostile life. In the novels *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion* the hobbits Bilbo, Frodo, Sam, Pippin, and Merry are loyal to their companions Gandalf and Aragorn; accept whatever they ask to do to save the world from the evil characters.

They give respect and support to their elders and friends who follow good values in their life and oppose the persons who are corrupt the people and society. Bilbo proves himself as a good companion and trustworthy person to his companion; protects the companionship in each struggle and unsafe place, Thorin respects him and lets Bilbo be a leader in their journey

The hobbits come out from their comfortable lifestyle at the request of Gandalf and struggle a lot with their friends to achieve their quests and never give up their tasks even though they are confronted by a lot of evil creatures. They help each other, and without having any greediness and pride, they complete their quest successfully.

Morgoth, Sauron, Smaug, Fëanor, Eöl, Saruman and Thorin never give respect to their relatives, friends and their feelings. Even at the end of their lives, they were unable to accomplish their ambitions because they were solely focused on themselves. They missed everything because of their pride, impatient, and carelessness.

Tolkien suggests that forgiving one another is a vital social deed to restore peace to the world. The hobbits, Rohan Men, and Gandalf refuse to imprison their foes Gollum, Saruman, and Sauron; instead of that show mercy and advise them to stop their dishonest behavior and live a peaceful life.

In *All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections*, Mahatma Gandhi writes that a strong person forgives others whereas a weak person cannot. Despite having the opportunity to murder Gollum for the ring, Bilbo chooses to forgive him and let him live. Bilbo's mercy helps his cousin Frodo in his quest; Gandalf states that "the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many" (*The Lord of the Rings*, 2007, p. 78).

The finest ornament for a man is humility, all other decorations are worthless. The elf Elrond invites all creatures to come together and decide the fate of the Ring. He never feels proud of his extraordinary powers, which include the ability to heal any form of harm. He supports and encourages Frodo when others mock and ridicule his decision to carry the ring to Mount Doom. Because of his kind and sincere demeanor, he is regarded as a knowledgeable and greatest leader.

Tolkien portrays traits like kindness, generosity, and hospitality spread happiness and hopefulness; these traits help people be believed by others and open up more opportunities. In the Indian mythology known as the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna states that good deeds never result in the wrong destiny. As he mentions the eagles are respected and believed to be noble and brave creatures because they protect nature and be loyal to those who helped them.

Tolkien emphasizes that people should not forget who helps them in their struggling time. Gandalf helps and saves the greatest Eagle Gwaihir and their family from the poisoned arrows and evil creatures, for that, they come to help Gandalf and his followers throughout their quest. They take responsibility for Gandalf's life and help Bern, Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam to save them from evil characters and hazardous situations. The Lord of the Eagles Gwaihir comes

with other eagles to carry Bilbo and his friends from the burning treetops to save them from wolves and saves Frodo and Sam from the fire mountain. For their effort, and helping tendency, they are praised and admired by everyone.

Even though Saruman mocks Gandalf for being with the hobbits and helping them to achieve their quest, with patience, Gandalf tells Saruman that “things are now moving well require the union of all our strength” (*The Lord of the Rings*, 336). In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna states that a wise man lets go of all outcomes, good or bad, and concentrates only on the deeds; Gandalf overcomes all the obstacles and inspires others as wise people.

Tolkien depicts that everyone honors the Arda figure Tom Bombadil even though he is a mysterious individual; he confronts the evil forces with confidence, courage, effort, and virtues; he saves Frodo and his companions from the enormous Willow tree and invites them into his home where he provides food and protection. His values, courage, humility, and taking responsibility for the forest allowed him to live a pleasant and peaceful life with his family.

Tolkien suggests that people become virtuous when they give up their four vices which are jealousy, desire, anger, and cursing others; and those who exhibit virtues like kindness, generosity, and social responsibility give benefits to them. He implies that excellent monarchs and leaders look after their people and provide what they need; these qualities enable Gandalf and Aragorn to provide good leadership to their friends. They value and prioritize the opinions of their friends and companions, value and uphold self-respect, self-discipline, humility, acceptance of personal and social responsibility, never dismiss or undervalue others, and take care of them.

Tolkien suggests that purity, courage, patience, faith, and persistence are the keys to greatness which enable one to conquer all the challenges in life. According to the famous devotional Tamil poetess Avvaiyar, when individuals donate water at the base of a coconut tree, it takes time to produce coconuts at the top of the tree; until the task is finished, people must be patient to reap the full advantages. And she declares that people should never make assumptions about individuals based on their appearance; a palm leaf may be huge, but it has no fragrance, whereas a little magizham flower has a lovely fragrance.

A person's physical stature or appearance has nothing to do with their intelligence, ambition, and capacity to win, no matter how great the adventure or how many monsters or challenges are experienced throughout life, according to the protagonists in Tolkien's works. Tolkien emphasizes the importance of maintaining an unbreakable connection with everyone; despite their diminutive size compared to others, they are prepared to take on any difficulties to protect their world and inhabitants. They are kind people who lead simple lives, forgive others, and welcome everyone as a friend. Rather than accepting gifts themselves, they give gifts to those in need.

The hobbits, Tom Bombadil, Elrond, Beorn, Bard, and most of the women characters such as Goldberry, Glorfindel, and Galadriel give more importance to their family and friends and protect them from perilous situations. They never give importance to prosperity and authority and be friendly with everyone. They give importance to unity and believe unity is the strength to face any situation and endanger creatures. Their well-intentioned acts help them to achieve their quest successfully.

The good characters encourage the readers to take and create opportunities, accept changes, and bring out from their comfort zone to see the reality of life. Tolkien emphasizes that everyone must have courage, confidence and determination to attain their aim. Courage can make people wealthy, intelligent and even strong; when people desire to fulfil their dreams, they must be confident to face a lot of risks or difficulties to get closer to their goals. And also, courageous people can change impossible things into a possible one. Courage and confidence let people act continuously to pursue the proper purposes.

The hobbits are depicted as small creatures, but they undertake journeys because of their moral courage, self-assurance, and tenacity. They stand up to huge creatures like dragons, orcs, wolves, and the Black Rider. Tolkien suggests through the hobbits that individuals must possess the bravery to overcome worry, fear, uncertainty, hurdles, pressure, impending events, discomforts, misunderstandings, and any other hindrance to achieving or upholding the best version of existence. "Courage will now be your best defense against the storm that is at hand – that and such hope as I bring" (*The Lord of the Rings*, 2007, p. 980).

With courage and good intentions, Bilbo helps his friends; his moral courage is portrayed through his encounter with Trolls, Gollum, Goblin, Spider of Mirkwood, the dragon Smaug, the King of Wood-Elves and Thorin. He is afraid to oppose others at the beginning of the adventure, but he develops himself as a hero and achieves a worthy life.

Tolkien states that to live a better life, people must avoid the deeds which destroy their fame; people's dishonorable acts such as pride, temptation, and greediness ruin their fame. Even though Sauron and Saruman are loyal and responsible persons, in the beginning, their allure and greed for power change them into wicked persons who never cared about others' well-being and forget their noble characteristics. Greediness and temptation are evil in life that never help to develop good qualities, inner talents, and skills, and also never allow people to recognize their real noble character.

According to Tolkien, even the good characters such as Morgoth, Sauron, the Elves, the Dwarves, Saruman, Gollum, and Boromir have surrendered to temptation which has turned them into arrogant and cunning individuals. Morgoth is attracted by God's power and the Elves' Silmarillion; Sauron is fascinated by the Ring's power and his desire for the title "Lord"; Smaug is enthralled by the Dwarves' treasure; the spiders are seduced by the valuable gifts. The other characters such as the Black Riders, the Trolls, and the Orcs become their masters' slaves which let them suffer till the end. When their leaders hide in spectral areas, they suffer greatly to protect them.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, When Frodo gives her the Ring, Galadriel refuses to take it because she fears it would turn her into an evil being like Sauron. She claims that the mighty Ring has been corrupting her mind for years since she has been craving its power; she leads a deserving life and she is revered by all for her kindness.

In the *Ramayana*, Ravana is one of the remarkable persons at the beginning, but because of his pride, envy, greediness, and temptation, no one gives respect to him and his words; for his illicit acts, everyone hates him. Similar to Ravana, Melkor and the Elves were initially the greatest nobles, but because of their arrogance, greed, and desire for the Silmarils as well as their desire for retribution, they lose good friendships and support from their relatives which are the main cause of their demise.

Thiruvalluvar states that if a person gains wealth and power through his dishonest deeds, it is like keeping water in a wet clay pot that will break quickly. As he said, Tolkien portrays that Morgoth, Saruman, Sauron and Smaug gain their wealth and power through their dishonest deeds but lose them as soon as possible. Because of their betrayal, selfishness and greed for power, they break all their relationships with superior people and break promises and social support.

Tolkien denotes that nobility of birth and wealth are useless if they are prideful and arrogant; Thorin and Fëanor hate those who are given trouble to them and take revenge against them. They feel pride because of belonging to the Kings' family and their ability to create elegant and priceless stones Jewells that lead them to be against everyone and never accept anyone's opinions. They act according to their wish and dominate others to achieve their selfish goals. They never consider the opinions, sentiments, or goodness of their followers, which causes them to run into numerous problems and monsters. Because of their unpleasant behavior, they also lose their respectable traits, friends, and family members.

Being the first-born and noblest species in Middle-earth lets the Elves feel proud of their way of existence. They are divided into different groups and build kingdoms for themselves, each type of elf struggles with Morgoth, Sauron, and their followers who are looking for the One Ring and the Silmarils to dominate the world. This causes the Elves to dwell in discomfort areas and live without peace of mind.

King Denethor declines Gandalf's help and prefers to murder himself instead of giving up his power and pride. Saruman rejects mercy shown to him because of his pride which leads to his death; the Ents take over Isengard and siege Saruman's Tower of Orthanc, but Gandalf decides to protect Saruman, but he refuses this concern politely. Even though they have high values and power, due to having no wisdom and pride, they suffer till the end of life.

According to Yudhishtira in *the Mahabharata*, anger is an enemy that is hard to overcome, and greed is an unending illness. Tolkien illustrates how the Dwarves' anger with the dragon and greed for the treasure caused them to lose their peace of mind and comfortable lifestyle; they sought revenge on the dragon, which caused them to suffer from beginning to end. The Dwarves' only intention is to recover the treasure; they have not considered any justification for their illegal actions. With their impatience, desire for vengeance, sense of pride in their wealth, and jealousy of the Elves' abilities and possessions, they endure a great deal of hardship, including being captured by Elves, Goblins, Spiders, Wolves, and Orcs.

Morgoth, Sauron, Saruman, Smaug, Thorin, Fëanor, and Thingol have no patience and faith; they lack the strength to confront others and hide in shadowy areas out of fear. For instance, Smaug's arrogance, jealousy, and greed led him to hastily destroy the Dwarves' territory, to possess the Dwarves' enormous pile of treasure. His arrogance lets him use his fury fire to burn down the surrounding areas so that no one would ever be able to access it. Without taking rest, he consciously protects the treasure. Supremacy, priceless gems, and wealth tempt good people, which leads them to their unhappy ends. Wise people despise ungrateful behavior and value tolerance and forbearance.

Tolkien depicts the problems and difficulties brought on by excessive materialistic lifestyles, irresponsible modernization, rapid industrialization, urbanization, globalization, and the impact of foreign cultures which degrade the ethical and moral standards of the world.

The Hobbit emphasizes the effects of courage, greediness, and hospitality. Courage assists Bilbo to develop himself from a timid person into a hero; greediness is portrayed through the Dwarves, Gollum, and Smaug; hospitality is represented through good characters like the Elves, Bilbo, Beorn, and Lake-men Bard are helping others without expecting anything from them.

The effects of friendship, comprehension, forgiveness, the thirst for power, the struggle between good and evil, and accepting responsibility are emphasised in *The Lord of the Rings*. The hobbits, Gandalf, the elves, the men, and the dwarf Gimili all show compassion and friendship by helping one another to overcome challenges until the end.

The fight between good and evil, as well as the consequences of pride, greed, and jealousy highlighted in *The Silmarillion*. Melkor, Fëanor, and Sauron are used to illustrate pride, greed, and envy through the horrible activities that endanger their lives.

4. Conclusion

This study highlights that having a sound mind and good habits instead of prosperity, physical attractiveness, or wealth makes a person live a happy and pleasant life. The hobbits, Gandalf, Aragorn, the Ents, and the Elves' characteristics suggest friendly nature, humility, courage, patience, faith, and generosity that increase tranquilly in the universe. Tolkien suggests that in the modern era, people give more importance to power and wealth and destroy nature and humans in their desire for power, treasure, and prosperity. Through the earlier life of the hobbits, Tolkien denotes that in the pre-modern age, people give preference to a pleasant and peaceful life.

Tolkien characterizes each evil character in different ways to teach morals; the temptation of mind, concentrating only on ego-centric concepts, selfishness, anxiety, not thinking about their life and goals, cruelty, and having no patience are the main reasons for the downfall of all the evil characters. Due to their sinful deeds, they hide in dark places, have no communication with others, live with anxious minds, lose their good friends and relatives, have no strength and courage to face anyone, and suffer physically and mentally till the end of their life.

Tolkien indicates how a person can increase their self-worth and personal growth through kindness, generosity, friendship with good people, hospitality, loyalty, patience, faithfulness, harmony, forgiveness, humility, wisdom, tolerance, determination, responsibility, sincerity, sacrifice, confidence, courage, belief, giving importance to unity, hard work, optimistic thoughts, and being willing to take risks to live a better life. He also teaches how to give reputation to little things.

Additionally, he explains how having pride, temptation, anxiety, fear, impoliteness, greed, anger, hypocrisy, hate, regret, grudge, wicked characteristics, treating others as a slave, judging someone by their appearance, being afraid to carry out good deeds, spreading rumors, having a desire for other people's possessions and wealth, adhering to evil things and creations cause people to lose their dignity and strength.

Tolkien emphasizes that people should maintain a positive attitude while dealing with hardships, problems, and sorrows which encourages them to grow as brave individuals whose persistence and bravery enable them to confront dangerous situations. He also emphasizes that material prosperity and outward beauty will never bring true happiness, but the proper moral decisions and actions help to reduce the problems and get more opportunities to achieve their goals.

In Tolkien's depiction, good always triumphs over evil; even though the people are afraid and helpless, their enthusiasm for learning new things and defending the earth from evil creatures propels them to take chances and participate in daring acts that enable them to deal with any situations, find solutions to issues, feel a sense of unity, and be firmly grounded in reality. They never sense pride or greed in their mind and never try to corrupt others; they are being loyal, kind, courageous, and also forgiving of others' mistakes, which leads them to have a pleasant and affluent life throughout their lives.

About the Author

Dr. Gokulapriya.T is an Assistant Professor in English at Arulmigu Palaniandavar Arts and Science College for Women, Oddanchatram. She has published some articles in UGC CARE journals and chapters in well-known books. She has participated in and presented papers at National and International Conferences and Seminars, and she has four years of research and two years of teaching experience.

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Images of the Female Character in Nigerian Christian Television Drama Serial: Lekan Asikhia's *The Gatekeepers* in Perspective

By

Solomon Adedokun Edebor, *Ph.D.*

Department of Languages and Literary Studies
Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
E-mail: edeborsolomon@abuad.edu.ng

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Abstract

All over the world, controversies regarding the perception and relevance of women in society remain unabated. Prior research on Nigerian literature has largely focused on women's depictions in written and oral literature, as well as films with little attention paid to Christian television drama serials. This paper, therefore, examines the portrayals of the female character in Nigerian Christian television drama serials to categorise female stereotypes that arise from such representations, even as it interrogates whether such representation reinforces socially constructed feminine notions. The study is significant because it extends the frontiers of knowledge by contributing to the existing body of scholarship on soap operas worldwide. Besides, its usefulness in the portrayal of women in Nigerian Christian television soap operas may provide the stimulus needed by producers of this genre to (re)examine their positions on the portrait of the female character offered to the Nigerian audience. Gerbner's cultivation theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and Carroll's feminist film criticism were used as the theoretical framework, while Lekan Asikhia's *The Gatekeepers* was purposively selected owing to how women are portrayed in it. Data from the serial were subjected to content analysis using the descriptive approach. The drama serial differently depicts eight signifiers of stereotypes of women. The persistent stereotypes are those that depict women as the tolerant wife who bears her husband's promiscuity and assault; the stay-at-home wife; the adulterous wife who engages in sexual immorality due to financial incentives/sexual gratification; the nasty stepmother that hurts her stepchildren and co-wives; the horrible and intrusive mother-in-law; the nonchalant mother whose actions are characterised by inconsiderateness and avarice; the femme fatale that brings calamitous events upon her victims; and the career woman with failed relationships or marriages. The paper concludes that the depictions of the female character in Nigerian Christian television plays are largely infused with a wide range of socio-cultural stereotypes. Thus, socially constructed feminine notions are reinforced by producers of Nigerian Christian television drama serials.

Keywords: Christian television drama serial, empowerment, oppression, patriarchy, stereotype, *The Gatekeepers*, women

Solomon Adedokun Edebor, E-mail: edeborsolomon@abuad.edu.ng

1. Introduction

Over the years, women have made significant impacts on different aspects of society. Their relentless contributions in the sociocultural, political, and economic spheres have been acknowledged, particularly by scholars who have underscored the importance and relevance of women in history and in this contemporary time (See Osondu-Oti & Omole, 2016; Dasylva, 2013; Onwubiko, 2012; Awe, 2002; Acholonu, 1995). Indeed, one can safely assert that the kismet of women has somewhat improved in recent times, considering the overwhelming advocacy for gender mainstreaming, thanks, in part, to the UN agenda, which many countries have keyed into.

However, women's importance, dignity, reproductive rights, and immense contributions to human, material, and national developments are still looked upon with certain air of inferiority, suspicion, and/or outright disregard in some countries, most especially, in Africa where patriarchal hegemony still holds sway, where women are still largely and systemically pigeonholed into defined gendered roles. For instance, aside from the exemplary cases of Rwanda, and a few other African states like South Africa, Mauritania, and Mauritius, which have recorded remarkable progress toward gender mainstreaming (Osondu-Oti & Olominu, 2018, p. 174), most African nations are yet to truly embrace the notion of equality of both sexes for collective and national developments.

Despite whatever gains that might have been recorded in recent times, therefore, most traditional African societies remain highly patriarchal, where men are expected to lead the public domain, while women are to manage the home front. Acholonu (1995) calls attention to this marginalization when she notes how the African woman is "trapped in the claws of the taboos and the restrictions that only help to propel male chauvinism" (p. 217). Osondu-Oti and Omole (2016, p. 20), similarly succinctly capture this patriarchal construction of women and men in Africa, noting how roles of men and women are socially constructed, with men expected to work in organisations outside the home, while women are expected to do household chores. Aidoo is swift in lending a voice, noting that this reality not only reinforces gender differences and differences in preoccupations but also less importance attached to women and their social roles, thereby effectively denying them any important standing within the social structure (p. 17).

The foregoing assertions foreground women's enslavement by cultures and traditions that are gender prejudiced in favour of the male folk. In this regard, being a woman throws one off the ladder of dignity, consideration, respect, and recognition. Owonibi (2004) highlights the implication of this social injustice, pointing out that the patriarchal order which makes women occupy less recognised positions in society is caused by men's manipulation. Thus, "... the society... see the female as abnormal to the male's normality, thereby categorizing her as 'sub-human,' an epiphenomenon and a product of after-thought" (pp. 3-4).

Consequently, the woman, as the dominated gender, is rendered voiceless, coerced into submission, and subjugated physically and psychologically. Attempts to promote women's rights and empowerment, and correct decades of injustices meted to women due to their gender construction have consequently led women to organize themselves into socio-cultural groups, which have culminated in feminist movements aimed at ensuring equal social status and opportunities with their male counterparts. Given their importance, it is no surprise that issues relating to women have continued to dominate conversations worldwide, particularly at conferences, seminars, and workshops.

In Nigeria, the condition of women has not improved significantly in many key areas. Admittedly, improvements can be said to have been witnessed in certain areas like the school enrolment of the girl-child and the attainment of career heights- although having what Osondu-Oti and Omole (2016, p. 20) termed the "Success penalty" as a consequence. However, the representation of women in important positions in political decision-making, for instance, remains a far cry (Osondu-Oti & Omole, 2016, p. 174; Adu, 2008). Just like many other African countries, the nation remains highly patriarchal and approaches as women, right from the cradle, are shackled by obnoxious sociocultural and religious expectations, practices, and beliefs. Katrak (1987, p. 163) beams a searchlight on this reality, noting, "as a female child grows from childhood to womanhood to motherhood, she is controlled and owned by her father, her husband, then her sons".

The idea of 'equality of both gender' is, therefore, considered repulsive, evident in the rejection of the first Gender Equal Opportunity Bill presented in April 2016 to the Nigerian Senate. In this instance, the Senators passionately held the view that the nation's 'religion' and culture 'forbids' "women's equality with men" (sic) (Osondu-Oti & Olominu, 2018, p. 178). Of course, the Bill eventually passed the second reading in September of the same year following the removal of the word "equality". The position of the Senators ab initio, nevertheless, testifies to the roles that pejorative cultures and religious norms somewhat play in the marginalisation and dehumanisation of women in the country, and even beyond.

Scholars have drawn attention to some cultural hindrances that have continued to strengthen gender prejudice in Nigeria, contributing to women's perceived helplessness on individual and collective levels. Identified in this regard are obligatory motherhood, preference for male children, polygyny, derogatory myths, and oppressive proverbs (Edebor 2021, p. 185; Dasylva, 2013, pp. 435-436; Balogun, 2013, pp. 25-31). Amaefule (2021, pp. 17-19) adds other resources of sexism in Nigeria like heavy bride price and the dowry paid on and over women, thereby giving the impression of being purchased by their husbands; obnoxious widowhood practices that men in a similar circumstance(s) are excused from; and women's denial of opportunities to inherit property left behind by their late husbands, even after not being "given the grace – except in few areas – to inherit something at their own father's compound". In a similar vein, religion, in its varied manifestations, is viewed as another potent tool that has been used to subjugate women for centuries. In what seems like a bold attempt to protect the dignity of the African religion, Aderibigbe (2013, p. 699) posits that traditional African religion expressly acknowledges and adores women owing to their protected and prized roles in society.

What Aderibigbe (2013), however, fails to mention, as Edebor (2021) points out, "are instances in which religious practices are used to control women. An instance is an *Oró* worship which forbids women- but not men- from staying outdoors during its celebration" (p. 106).

The Christian religion does not necessarily perform better in some respects going by the writings, teaching, and preaching of some theologians, scholars, and renowned Christian thinkers all through the centuries, particularly at the beginning and middle of Christian history. For instance, Tertullian in his treatise, *On the Apparel of Women*, sees women as "the devil's gateway... the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: the first deserter of the divine law" (qtd. in Amaefule, 2021, p. 8). John Chrysostom similarly calls a woman "a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil nature, painted with fair colours" (qtd. Norris 1998, p. 125). In Thomas Aquinas' assessment, a woman is naturally "defective and misbegotten" (*Summa Theologiae* 1, q. 92, a. 1, qtd. Amaefule, 2021, p. 8). Amaefule (2021, pp. 5-6) also underscores women's demeaning stature in the Jewish morning prayers in the past, particularly the way they were regarded as Gentiles, slaves, and inferior to men in all things.

Again, some passages in the Bible have been said to be misogynistic due to what is professed as the women-denigrating nature that they embody. Such verses include Col.3:18; Eph.5: 21-33; Eccl. 7:26; Gen. 3:16; I Pt.3:1; I Cor. 1:7-9; I Tim. 2: 11-14; Gen 2:18-25; and I Cor. 14:34-35. The acknowledged culpability of the Christian religion in disparaging women, no thanks to contemptuous statements credited to Church fathers and other shreds of evidence dug up from the Bible, has birthed what Amaefule (2021) refers to as "Christian feminist theology", defined as :

a form of liberation theology that deals with the liberation of women from the shackles of oppression and patriarchy.... a kind of protest theology, a reactionary theology, that attacks, and critiques such aforesaid male domination in both the Church and theology. However, calling it a reactionary theology is only one part of the story. The other part is that it is also a constructive and proactive theology. It is a theology that advocates gender equality and the proper placement of women in the scheme of things in society, the Church, and theology. It makes a case for a much more complementarity between the two sexes, male and female, that make up humanity. (p. 3)

While no attempt is being made in this paper to critically examine the concept of Christian feminist theology, there are pieces of evidence to show that Christian religion, just like other world religions, has not been, until in recent times, giving women the much-expected opportunities to express their potentials in all facets of life and stand for their rights. In what seems like an acknowledgment of this lacuna, Pope John Paul II, in a letter addressed to women throughout the world on the eve of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, apologised, on behalf of the Church to women, for being exploited, dominated and relegated to the margin of society down the centuries, contrary to Jesus's attitude to women (p. 3).

Indeed, proponents and exponents of Christian feminist theology have always referenced Jesus Christ's reactions and interactions with women as exemplars of what relationships with women should be generally. Therefore, having recognized that there are sociocultural, and even religious encumbrances against women, there is a need for a holistic interrogation of every aspect of society to raise the conscious level of people against every agent(s) that can further propel the propagation of actions that are inimical to the wellbeing of the female folk. This is particularly significant in this instance considering the pivotal roles that forces like culture and religion often play in shaping and determining mass media outputs, thereby influencing not only the viewer's perception of social reality but also strengthening other established stereotypes that are injurious to women (Endong & Obonganwan, 2015, p. 103).

This understanding, therefore, elicits the desire to interrogate the portrayals of women in Nigerian Christian television drama serials due to the paucity of scholarly research on them. This is imperative considering their impact on Nigerian society, especially in defining values for their audience, and shaping their opinions, attitudes, perceptions, actions, emotions, and beliefs (Edebor, 2010, p. 1; Ogunleye, 2003, p. 121). Of course, some studies have been carried out on Nigerian Christian plays, television drama, and video films (see Edebor, 2010; Ukah, 2010; Adewale, 2008; Ogunleye, 2003; Oha, 2002; Adesina, 1998; Agoro, 1996; Adedeji, 1973; and Adedeji, 1971). However, none of these previous studies focused on the representation of women in Nigerian Christian television dramas. The current effort will, therefore, examine the portrayals of the female character in Nigerian Christian television dramas. Specifically, the study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions: (1) What are the recurrent female stereotypes in Nigerian Christian television soap operas? (2) Is the representation of the female character in Nigerian Christian television soap operas laced with a wide range of socio-cultural stereotypes, which show that the producers of Nigerian television soap operas reinforce socially constructed feminine labels? *The Gatekeepers*, written by Busayo Asikhia, and directed by Lekan Asikhia will be used as a case study in this regard. This study is significant in that it extends the frontiers of knowledge by contributing to the existing body of scholarship on soap operas worldwide. Besides, its usefulness in the portrayal of women in Nigerian Christian television soap operas may provide the stimulus needed by producers of this genre to (re)examine their positions on the portrait of the female character offered to the Nigerian audience.

2. Theoretical Framework

George Gerbner's cultivation theory, Albert Bandura's social learning theory, and Noël Carroll's feminist film criticism are the paradigms that form the base of our theoretical framework for this paper. Gerbner's cultivation theory holds that individuals who are heavily exposed to television are more susceptible to its messages as they can easily internalize such messages, thereby ending up with a generalized worldview (a stereotype). Gerbner *et. al* (2001:1) point out that "Television is the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history". As such, Cultivation theory holds that "Those individuals who spend more time watching television are more likely to view the world in a manner that reflects the frequent,

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but are otherwise comparable" (Gerbner et. al, 2002, cited in Idegü, 2011: 69). This is because, as Gerbner points out, "heavy television viewers tend to take the social reality portrayed by television as real life" (cited in Chari, 2008, p. 141).

Gerbner et al (2001, p. 16) further harp on how television causes a major "cultivating and "acculturating" process, which systematically exposes people to a selective view of society on nearly every aspect of life. In other words, television contributes to the viewers' conceptions of social reality as it tends to shape people's beliefs, values, and attitudes. Gerbner et. al pointedly indicate that "... most of what we know, or think we know, is a mixture of all the stories and images we have absorbed... (which) are likely to become the basis for a broader world view, making television a significant source of general values, ideologies, and perspectives as well as specific assumptions, beliefs, and images".

Considering that television can legitimise any repeated warped portrayals of women by stereotyping gender-related qualities and activities along traditional gender-role lines, repeated exposure to such stereotypical portrayals has deleterious consequences as it can shape people's beliefs about women and ultimately influence people's attitudes towards them and even the way women perceive themselves. Such understanding makes it expedient to examine and vehemently repel any stereotypical manifestation of the female character in whatever mold, television drama inclusive.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning theory is also relevant in this paper as it posits that people learn new behaviours by vicariously experiencing the actions of others. According to Bandura (2011, p. 31), "Much of what we learn is through the power of modelling....". Social Learning Theory posits that learning usually takes place, not only in formal situations such as in classrooms but also by observing models. In Barker's view (2011), "the largest portion of learning to adapt to society takes place through such observational learning" (p. 8). Models employed in this observational learning can be real-life people or mass media characters, such as in television or radio drama. The theory, therefore, underscores the capability of the mass media in producing models that the audience can pattern their lives after. The danger here, however, is that should the mass media repeatedly expose people to characters, roles, or behaviours that are stereotypical in nature, there is a likelihood that they form attitudes and stereotypes. People may end up modelling them despite their deleterious effects, due to how they have succeeded in influencing their conceptions of social reality.

The last theory relevant to our engagement in this paper is feminist film criticism, specifically the image approach developed by Noël Carroll in his seminal paper entitled *The Image of Women in Film: A Defense of a Paradigm* (1990). He later reproduced the approach in his book, *Theorizing the Moving Image* (1996). Carroll's thesis is predicated on the possibility of studying the image of women in film (in this case, television drama serials) without a recourse to psychoanalysis, which, admittedly, has informed many of the other approaches in feminist film criticism. In Carroll's (1996) view, such an attempt will call:

... to our attention, the ways the imagery of women in our culture recurringly (sic) portrayed them through a limited, constraining, and ultimately oppressive repertory of characterisations.... Insofar as the ways of representing women in popular media in some way influence or reinforce the way real women may be construed, the study of the recurrent imagery of women in film, especially where the relevant options were either impoverished and/or distorting, provided an inroad into one of the sources, or at least, resources of sexism in the broader society. (p. 349)

Carroll's (1996) exposition on the image of women in a film makes him emphasise the theory of emotions as a theoretical foundation for the image approach, believing that should help in accounting for whatever measure of influence recurring images of women in popular media may have on how people think of women in real life. The theory states that people learn to identify their emotional states in terms of paradigm scenarios, which also shape their emotions. In this case, the study of the image of women in a film might be viewed as the search for paradigm scenarios that are available in our culture and which, by being available, may come to shape emotional responses to women. Quoting Ronald de Souza, Carroll (1996) states:

... we are made familiar with the vocabulary of emotion by association with paradigm scenarios. These are drawn first from our daily life as small children and later reinforced by the stories, art, and culture to which we are exposed. Later still, in literate cultures, they are supplemented and refined by literature...". (p. 356)

Carroll (1996) explains further that "Given a situation, an enculturated individual attempts, generally intuitively, to fit a paradigm scenario from her repertoire to it" (p. 356). Carroll has noted that there is a continuous accumulation of paradigm scenarios throughout life and that the emotions elicited in the process, become more refined and more culturally dependent. While noting that paradigm scenarios have certain advantages over competing hypotheses about the best way to characterise the cognitive and conative components in emotional states, Carroll is quick to point out that the notion of paradigm scenarios has something to tell one about a component of emotional state; hence, he suggests how recurring images of women in the film may have some influence on spectators.

Carroll (1996) asserts that most paradigm scenarios are acquired through sources such as gossip; observation and memory, stories told us by friends and school teachers, stories told us on our caretaker's knee, self-help books, newspapers articles, films, plays, novels, and TV shows (p. 356). He emphasises how these scenarios may influence someone's emotional behaviour. In Carroll's view, male emotional responses to women, for instance, will be shaped by the scenarios that they bring to those relations; hence, his submission: "One way to construe the study of the image of women in film is as an attempt to isolate widely disseminated paradigm scenarios that contribute to the shaping of emotional responses to women"²⁵ (p. 357).

Carroll (1996) has underscored some approaches to studying the image of women in film. One such is to identify negative recurring images of women that may have some influence on the emotional response of men to women, bearing in mind that such negative portrayals of women are capable of supplying paradigm scenarios that may shape the emotional responses of real men (and women) to real women. Carroll goes further to opine that

Recurring, negative images of women in film may warp the emotions of those who deploy them as paradigm scenarios in several different ways. They may distort the way women are attended to emotionally by presenting wildly fallacious images.... Or, the problem may be that the range of images of women available is too impoverished: if the repertoire of images of women is limited in certain cases, for instance to contraries like mother or whore, then real women who are not perceived via the mother scenario may find themselves abused under the whore scenarios. (p. 357)

Carroll believes that such negative imagery should generate special interest as it may illuminate some of the sources or resources that mobilize sexist emotions. Another identified perspective to the image approach is the study of positive images of women in film. This, Carroll believes, may play a role in positive emotional responses to real women. Furthermore, the image approach looks for recurring images of women in film with marked frequency, without commitments to how women always appear in film, even as it makes no claims to how all (male) viewers respond to those images.

The three theories examined above will be applied in reading *The Gatekeepers*, a Nigerian Christian television soap opera. Particular emphasis will be placed on the portrayals of women in the serial, highlighting their implications, particularly in shaping the viewer's conception of reality, beliefs, and attitudes, and whether such present wildly misleading images that serve as sources or resources of sexism in the broader society.

4. Methodology

In conducting this research, the primary data are taken from *The Gatekeepers* written by Busayo Asikhia and directed by Lekan Asikhia. The choice of this television drama is predicated on the fact that it remains the first Nigerian Christian television drama with a wide range of female characters. Besides, it is the first indigenous longest-running Christian television drama that somewhat mirrors the standard British/Mexican soaps, as it has 52 episodes with each episode running for an hour, even without intermittent commercials. The duration makes in-depth developments of the various characters portrayed possible. The whole episodes constitute the sample size for analysis.

It is noteworthy that the serial is not analysed episode by episode; rather, it is treated as a story. This approach is adopted because the serial is first and foremost a story (although having some sub-plots), but has been divided into episodes due to the structure of television drama serials. A content analysis procedure is employed in this paper. This involves watching, analysing, and discussing images of the female character as shown in the selected television

serial using Gerbner's cultivation theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and Carroll's feminist film criticism. The study is also critical because the various images of women given in the serial are subjected to rigorous scrutiny to identify the recurrent stereotypes of women that are differently portrayed in the drama and the implications of such representations on the viewer. The paper adopts the descriptive approach in presenting its findings and discussion, thereby concluding whether or not the representations of the female character in Nigerian Christian television drama serials are laced with a wide range of socio-cultural stereotypes.

5. Women Through the Eyes of the Silver Screen: *The Gatekeepers (TG)* in Focus

The Gatekeepers (henceforth TG) is a Christian TV drama written by Busayo Asikhia and directed by Lekan Asikhia. The 52-episode TV drama serial, widely acknowledged as the first indigenous longest-running Christian serial drama in Nigeria, tells the interwoven stories of eight major families: Kunle and Tinuke, Bola and Tunmise, Adelana and Banke, Benson and Jumoke, Bishop Badmus and his wife, Femi and Labake, Ronke and Biola, and Mama Esther and Deji Banjoko. The serial follows the lives of these diverse characters, revealing those that exude Christian virtues of love, forbearance, and obedience, as well as those that display objectionable traits of debauchery, disobedience, occultism, and unrestrained quests for power, influence, and wealth, among other things. The drama particularly foregrounds several important themes like domestic violence, barrenness, extramarital relations, and love and forgiveness, all of which accentuate the tempo of the serial.

However, of utmost importance and relevance to our engagement in this paper is the depiction of women in the serial. *TG*, it should be pointed out, portrays women at diverse levels in different roles, imbuing them with what can be considered positive or negative traits. For instance, Tunmise, Jumoke, Banke, and Angelina are not only irresponsible, insensitive, and/or materialistic wives, they are equally manipulative, adulterous, and wicked, which shows them as negative/evil characters. Tunmise's adulterous nature, for example, makes her see nothing wrong in sleeping with and getting pregnant for Sesan, a randy man, even while still married to Bola. She deliberately takes all necessary precautions not to get pregnant for Bola so that she can easily end their marriage and return to Sesan who is rich enough to satisfy her inordinate financial and material needs. As a bad and irresponsible wife, Tunmise bothers less about Bola's welfare as she deliberately comes home late after spending most of her time with Sesan. She also intentionally makes life horrendous for Bola, harassing and disgracing him everywhere. On one occasion, she pours dirty water on him and their neighbours for meddling in her affairs. Tunmise never offers Bola any support in his search for a job; rather, she hides the interview letter that is brought for him. She also refuses to help with the payment of their expired house rent, yet she vehemently kicks against the free accommodation that Tinuke and Kunle Coker provide them in their new house, insisting that Bola must secure alternative accommodation within one week.

Tunmise further makes attempts on Bola's life by poisoning his food at different times, just as she maltreats Bola's mother, forgetting how she intervened by convincing Bola not to back out of his proposed marriage to her. At a point, Bola's mother has to kneel for her to let peace reign. She later confesses to Labake: "... I want to deal with Bola and Mama", yet she has no tangible reason to offer for her action. As far as Tunmise is concerned, marrying Bola is a

mistake, and a nightmare she wants to wake up from to go back to her boyfriend, Sesan. Having studied Tunmise's behaviour for quite some time, Bola comments sorrowfully:

Oh my God! The greatest mistake I ever made in life was to marry this woman. She is not giving me joy; she is not taking me seriously at all. Ah! And I have always been fair to her. I love her. Despite the fact that all my friends have girlfriends, I chose not to because of my faith. Why did I make this mistake in my life? ... I have missed it.

Tunmise's self-centredness and materialistic nature further manifest in how her attitude towards Bola changes the moment she discovers that Bola has secured a lucrative job with MIGMAT Oil Company, so she starts reconsidering her plan to end their marriage. She never hides the fact that she is mainly in the marriage for material gains. Jumoke is another example of a bad wife and a nonchalant mother. She fails to give an audience to her pastor and even fails to heed his counsel to pray for Benson, her husband, to avert an impending danger. She also dismisses Tessy's nightmare concerning her father (Benson), insisting she has better things to do than wasting her time praying for Benson. Benson's untimely death, however, sobers her as she admits her wrong and laments: "I have failed; I am a loser. I have allowed the enemy to destroy my home. I killed my husband. And the pastor warned me." Ordinarily, one would have assumed that Benson's death taught her one or two lessons. Quite unexpectedly, Jumoke's actions afterward demonstrate that making money is more important than anything else in her life. This explains why she has no time to attend to her children's emotional and psychological needs. Jumoke believes she has fulfilled her motherly role as long as she meets up with her children's material needs. Tessy captures Jumoke's (her mother's) neglect in this manner:

I have always been telling you, Mummy. All you ever care for is your business. You think everything is money. All you ever think of is your trip from one country to another: today Canada, tomorrow America. You never care about us. You never give us any attention. Your businesses are your children. All you do is to leave us at the mercy of the house help and the driver. Anytime I felt like discussing my experiences with you, you always turned me down. Anytime we need your counsel as a parent, even when Dad was alive, you never care about it.

Interestingly, Jumoke always has reasons to justify her actions, especially with talks like "... You know...I'm the only one in charge of the company your father left behind.... All my running (around) is for you and your brother". Her neglect later has dastardly effects on Tessy and David as they commit incest which results in an unwanted pregnancy. It is by sheer providence that Tessy does not die in the process as she takes some harmful substances to abort the pregnancy.

Bishop Badmus' wife also fits into the category of a bad, temperamental, and covetous wife and mother. Like her husband, she is carried away by her inordinate ambition to be like Bishop Mathew's wife in ministry, and so has no time for her children, especially Dayo who later becomes a popular prostitute. She betrays her temperamental nature when she quarrels with her husband and wrongly accuses him of infidelity when he tells her how Mrs. Philip has been trying to manipulate him. Her refusal to join her husband in prayer that night makes it possible for Mrs. Philip to destroy her home and her husband's ministry.

Also, Banke's actions reveal her vengeful nature. Although she seems like the easy-going type at first, her merciless character surfaces the moment she gets to know of her husband's (Adelana's) debauchery. To her, terminating the lives of Toyin and her son, Lolu, is the proper thing to do to secure her marriage. Her unforgiving spirit manifests further in how she pours hot water on Adelana and damns the consequences by refusing to take him to the hospital for medical care. Rather than feeling sober for causing her husband's untimely demise, she takes her cruelty to the next level by using her witchcraft power to kill the two daughters of Adelana's younger brother because he threatens to avenge his brother's death. Banke sees nothing wrong in causing Bimpe's (her younger sister's) violent death since it will make her get witchcraft powers to fight her husband's family. She never considers the fact that it was Bimpe that made her aware of Adelana's extramarital relationship. Her excuse is, "I have no other option if indeed I want to be protected from my enemies" — referring to her husband's family members.

Banke becomes worse as she manipulates her friend, Jumoke, to join her witchcraft cult, claiming that Jumoke needs the protection and influence that the cult offers. However, she never reveals to Jumoke the attendant consequences of joining the secret cult. Even when Jumoke expresses her disinterest in the cult, she threatens to harm her. As it later turns out, Banke's real interest is not to fortify 'her friend' against any evil attack, but to ensure that she loses, at least, one of her children due to her deep-seated envy. Therefore, when Jumoke's daughter (Tessy) could not be killed or harmed in any way, she manipulates Jumoke so that she can die in Tessy's place.

Angelina, in her case, is materialistic and wicked as she never hesitates to offer her only child as a sacrifice for her admittance into the Shadow of the Widows' cult in a desperate effort to become rich and powerful. Bola's mother's actions similarly fall short of expectations. For instance, she bothers less about Bola's jobless state. However, the moment Bola secures employment with MIGMAT Oil, she turns out to be the first to make it known to her neighbour, Adufe. Her careless talk makes Adufe resolve that Bola must marry her daughter, Funke, at all costs. Ordinarily, one would have expected Bola's mother to be mindful of her actions considering the pains and humiliation Bola has experienced in life, particularly at the hands of Tunmise. But, as it turns out, her action of telling Adufe how rich Bola has become exposes Bola to the danger of being charmed and made to marry Funke against his will.

Labake, however, differs considerably from these characters as she demonstrates her faithful and forgiving nature by enduring Femi's infidelity, public embarrassments, and constant merciless beatings. Rather than engaging in physical fights with Femi, she chooses to remain patient with him, while praying to God for a change of heart. In one instance, when Femi drives off and leaves her behind simply for asking that they pray together before going to work, she decides not to quarrel with him; when she later sees another lady in his car who addresses her rudely, she maintains her composure despite knowing that the lady is her husband's mistress and that Femi is following the lady home to pay her house rent. In another instance, Femi mercilessly beats her for getting pregnant, even when he never stops having unprotected sex with her, or agrees to her having family planning.

Other female characters, like Tinuke, also exhibit some positive behaviour similar to that of Labake. Tinuke is loving, forgiving, and accommodating. She is a tower of strength for her husband, Kunle, as she helps him grow his counselling ministry. Her accommodating and forgiving nature manifests in how she treats her mother-in-law nicely despite her meddlesomeness and fiendish schemes occasioned by her barrenness. The fact that her mother-in-law wants her to run mad never stops her from joining Kunle in praying for her restoration when her evil plan boomerangs.

Again, some female characters are portrayed as manipulative, intrusive, deceptive, cruel, and inconsiderate. Adufe is a cruel and diabolical stepmother. Aside from using charms to marry Tinuke's father and send her mother away, she sees nothing wrong in killing Tinuke's father and inheriting all his property. Her monstrous nature manifests further in how she constantly maltreats Tinuke, turning her into a hawker and eventually making her drop out of school. In one instance, she beats Tinuke mercilessly before sending her out at night for losing her goods to some thugs that attacked her. Adufe never bothers about the well-being of Tinuke who now embraces a life of cheap prostitution in her desperate attempt to keep body and soul together. Instead, Adufe shows off her inhumane nature by using charms on her and banishing her from her father's house. Again, Adufe manifests her greedy and wicked disposition by preventing her daughter, Funke, from marrying her police lover, insisting that she must marry Bola who is richer. She goes as far as using a charm on the police officer so that he can forget about Funke while she tries desperately to kill Tolu, Bola's fiancée so that Funke can marry Bola without hindrance.

Also, Kunle and Femi's mother is meddlesome and evil as she makes life difficult for Tinuke and Labake, her daughters-in-law. She constantly mounts pressure on Kunle to send Tinuke away and marry a new wife to have a grandchild after eight years of 'fruitless' marriage. Besides, she sees Tinuke as a rival and force that is preventing Kunle from taking care of her. Her constant refrain about Tinuke is, "... She is depriving me the enjoyments of my son. She wants to eat where she did not sow..." (sic). She, therefore, goes as far as calling a family meeting on Kunle and Tinuke, claiming that Tinuke has cast a spell on her son so that she can always manipulate him. She sows seeds of hatred for Tinuke in her daughter, Joke. Her evil nature manifests further in how she engages the services of Dayo, a prostitute, to disrupt Kunle's marriage. She later casts a spell of madness on Dayo for asking her the balance for the job done for her. She also does not hesitate to use the same spell on Tinuke when her plan to send her away fails.

Again, Kunle and Femi's mother makes life horrendous for Labake, Femi's wife, claiming that she does not take proper care of her. She, thus, causes constant quarrels between the couple. She demonstrates her animosity towards Labake by supporting Femi's decision to send her packing for getting pregnant again. She sits down and supervises Labake's eviction from her matrimonial home, stating repeatedly, 'You had better go'. She never desires Femi and Labake should reconcile. She only stops her wicked acts towards her daughters-in-law after her plan to make Tinuke run mad boomerangs on her.

Tinuke's paternal grandmother is another meddlesome mother-in-law. She is a thorn in the flesh of Tinuke's mother whom she hates with passion for not bearing another child for his son, Mayowa. Without prior notice, she brings Adufe to stay with Tinuke's parents on the pretext that she is to serve as their maid. When Mayowa kicks against the idea, she threatens to make their home a living hell which makes Tinuke's mother quickly agree to Adufe's stay. But then, her motive is to ensure that Adufe gets married to Mayowa. As it turns out, Adufe is evil as she not only uses charms on Mayowa so that he can "fall in love" with her and impregnate her, but she also kills him and takes away his fortunes after sending Tinuke and her mother away with her charms.

Bola's mother is similarly meddlesome and insensitive. First, she pressurises Bola into marrying Tunmise against his will., not minding the fact that Bola is not convinced about the relationship any longer. Her excuse is that Bola's decision will humiliate her in front of her friends and admirers. Though she is fully aware of the physical and emotional traumas that Tunmise made her and Bola go through before Tunmise's untimely demise, she never stops mounting pressure on Bola to marry another wife. Surprisingly, she is not willing to accept Tolu as Bola's new wife. Her excuse is that Tolu will bring him ill luck, not knowing that Adufe, her supposed friend, has merely deceived her in an attempt to get Tolu out of the way so that her daughter, Funke, can become Bola's new wife. After treating Tolu with disdain, she announces to Bola her decision regarding their proposed marriage:

You have not seen the woman you will marry... if you marry Tolu, she will not have children and even she will be the one to send you to the early grave.... Let me tell you the truth... You cannot marry her. Never! Over my dead body!

To underscore her resolve, she walks Tolu out of her house after refusing the provisions that Bola and Tolu had brought for her. Her manipulative attitude, in her bid to have her way, clearly shows that she has learnt nothing from her nasty experience with Tunmise. Rather, it indicates how meddlesome, impulsive, self-seeking, officious, and manipulative some mothers-in-law can be, thereby bringing avoidable problems into their sons' marriages. As for Bola's mother, she (un)wittingly serves as the gateway to many of the marital problems that dot Bola's life.

Similarly, Angelina is evil as she instigates Banke against her husband, Adelana, counselling her to deal ruthlessly with him for impregnating another woman. Her unguarded counsel makes Banke pour hot water on Adelana which eventually results in his untimely death. She also encourages Banke to join Shadow of the Widows' cult even when she is well aware that Banke's admittance into the cult will cost her the life of her only sister. Her wicked nature further manifests in how she uses her witchcraft power in destroying the life of any man that has sexual relations with her, like the case of Deji Banjoko who eventually runs mad. Angelina never stops her wicked practices until her nemesis catches up with her, as she dies untimely, following the divine deliverance of Deji Banjoko from her shackles.

Mrs. Philip is another ruthless character as her sole mission is to go after successful men purposely to destroy their lives and become wealthy thereby. She inflicts Bishop Badmus with epilepsy after wrecking his life and ministry. She even offers him as a sacrifice for the renewal of her covenant with Shadow of the Widows' cult.

Mama Esther is another materialistic woman because her marriage to Deji Banjoko is driven by her quest for material possessions. At a point, when the thought of possibly ending her marriage to Banjoko crosses her mind, she quickly dispels the idea to maintain the financial and material benefits she enjoys in the marriage. She only regrets marrying Banjoko following his madness and his family's insistence that she should either sell the house Banjoko built in her name or make available eight hundred thousand nairas for Banjoko's treatments abroad.

6. Findings and Discussion

From the close examination of the female characters portrayed in TG, it is evident that there are positive and negative perceptions of how women are portrayed at different levels, most especially at the family and the economic/professional levels. A good number of female characters are portrayed as wicked, dependent, sly, money-oriented, diabolical, irresponsible, meddlesome, inconsiderate, jealous, wayward, manipulative, immoral, unsupportive, troublesome, unreliable, and/or deceitful. Angelina, Banke, Dayo, Bola's mother, Jumoke, Tunmise, Mrs. Philip, Adufe, Mama Esther, Tinuke's grandmother, and Kunle and Femi's mother largely fit into these descriptions, going by their (re)actions. All these characters (save Kunle and Femi's mother, Dayo, Bola's mother, Mama Esther, and Jumoke, who eventually turn over a new leaf), therefore, constitute bad models who are punished in front of the audience for embodying anti-social values that are being promoted by the drama, as stipulated by Bandura's social learning theory.

Also, it is discovered that some other women are portrayed as sensitive, caring, forgiving, supportive, enterprising, peace-loving, faithful, and tender-hearted. Tinuke and Labake mostly conform to these descriptions and are, therefore, regarded as good models in front of the viewer to convert the value grids that are being promoted by the drama into behaviour. Beyond any doubt, portraying women with either positive or negative character traits in this drama is beneficial to the viewer. First, it emphasises that society is peopled by good and bad women; and, as such, generalisations about women's behaviour based on one's experience with a particular woman or a set of women may be inaccurate. Besides, it is implied, through the depictions of characters like Tinuke, Jumoke, Kunle, and Femi's mother, that irresponsible depraved, and/or promiscuous women can be transformed if given the right motivation. Again, the results of the actions of some of the female characters underscore the need for the audience to carefully make their choices in life as they ultimately define them and also determine whether or not society will be a better place for all.

Presenting women in conflicting positions is a clear demonstration of the fact that writers and producers of TV drama understudy human nature in general and Nigerian society in particular. This is evident in positive and negative roles often assigned to women, purposely to reinforce people's perceptions of women in Nigerian society. There are, nevertheless, some fundamental issues in the serial under reference, particularly about stereotypical depictions of most female characters. The specific recurrent stereotypes in the serial are those that portray women as the tolerant wife, the adulterous wife, the stay-at-home wife, the femme fatale, the nonchalant mother, the nasty stepmother, the horrible mother-in-law, and the career woman.

In this serial, Bola's mother, Tinuke's grandmother, and Kunle and Femi's mother fit into the description of the intrusive and horrible mother-in-law as their actions have dastardly effects on their daughters-in-law. Kunle and Femi's mother, for instance, does everything in her power to ruin Kunle's marriage because of her deep-seated hatred for Tinuke, especially because of her transient barrenness. She even desires that Tinuke should run mad and so makes efforts to cast a spell on her. She similarly causes constant quarrels between Femi and Labake, and even supports Femi's decision to send Labake away. Tinuke's grandmother is not better off as she brings another woman, Adufe, into Mayowa's house (her son's house), insisting that Adufe must live with them. As it turns out, Adufe destroys the family and inherits all of Mayowa's property. The only mother-in-law that shows some measure of consideration for her daughter-in-law is Bola's mother, but then she cannot be absolved from blame as her meddlesomeness forces Bola to marry Tunmise who becomes a thorn in his flesh. Even after Tunmise's untimely death, she never stops interfering in Bola's marital life, and this almost makes Bola commit another marital error.

Undoubtedly, there are bad mothers-in-law in society; but then there are good ones too which, (in)advertently are not given prominence in this drama. Such recurrent presentation of a mother-in-law with negative traits could, therefore, be deleterious as it is, among other things, capable of striking terror into the hearts of many (un)married Nigerian ladies, and even making them hope for a man without a mother or pray for speedy death of such an existing mother. Aje-Ori's (2010, p. 101) position is apposite here:

Mothers-in-law are a subgroup of women and when women are portrayed this negatively, it undermines the contributions that women make to society..... Such images might lead women to fear marriage... Bad in-laws exist, but when the bad is depicted more than the good, it cultivates a mean world syndrome in people.

The point being made here is that writers and producers of Nigerian Christian television dramas should be mindful of stereotyping mothers-in-law in such a manner that further reinforces prejudiced beliefs of people about women. Instead, they can consider presenting an alternative perspective that either celebrates or captures a more balanced depiction of the mother-in-law-daughter-in-law relationship so that their outputs will not be deemed counter-productive and/or sexist.

Similarly, *TG* portrays stay-at-home wives who depend on their husbands for survival. Mama Esther is a fine example as she has no identifiable business or works even though she is a graduate. She lives off Banjoko which makes it impossible for her to assert herself. Her marriage to Banjoko is simply based on the economic benefits she gets from the union. This makes it impossible for her to do away with him even when his second wife publicly humiliates her. Ronke is also a full housewife as her relevance is restricted to caring for her children's wellbeing. Undoubtedly, the actions of her philandering and negligent husband, Biola Adeyanju, evidently show that he sees her importance only in taking care of their children and satisfying his sexual urge. While there might be nothing wrong with a woman being a full housewife, failure to explore the totality of the woman, in terms of showing her enterprise, and expertise, and also demonstrating her daily toils in an attempt to meaningfully contribute to the economic status of her home could be injurious to the advocacy for women's empowerment and recognition. Besides, it is a non-acknowledgment of the laudable contributions of women who have excelled in different fields of human endeavour. Rather, it is confining women to domestic affairs, which can be viewed as endorsing oppressive traditions, especially when their relevance is seen in the light of Chukwuma's (1989) submission:

... female character's trained ambition revolves around marriage and procreation. Her other female obligations ranged further to cooking the family meals, honouring her husband's bed, on invitation; and other items merging with the home environment peacefully. (p. 2)

Chukwuma's statement shows how women can easily be enslaved by cultures and traditions that are gender prejudiced in favour of men folk. Osofisan (2001) holds cultural practices responsible for such prejudice against women, noting:

Several scholars have recognised both prejudice, which endures against women, as well as the laws which consolidated and encode this prejudice, are born from mental attitude inculcated in the individual by the cultural processes of his or her development. (p. 5)

It should, nevertheless, be acknowledged that there are women portrayed in different professions and/or economically empowered positions, including as journalists, nurses, doctors, businesswomen, teachers, secretaries, etcetera, just like their male counterparts. Normally, one would assume that the producer has demonstrated that women's capabilities and relevance should not be limited to the home front alone as they can likewise make laudable contributions in different fields of human endeavour, if given the much-desired opportunities and empowerment. However, it is largely observed that most of these women are portrayed as career women with failed marriages/relationships. It is generally noticed, in this instance, that for a woman to be portrayed as successful, economically empowered, and/or professional in elite jobs, some extraneous and/or compromising circumstances are often involved. This is the case with Tunmise who has to keep on sleeping with Sesan to continue getting money to stock her supermarket, even while still married to Bola.

Also, Debby acts as Bishop Badmus' secretary but has to sleep with him from time to time to meet up with her financial obligations; both Bishop Badmus' wife and Jumoke have to sacrifice their homes to do well in *their* chosen careers; Banjoko's first wife is a nurse but she experiences a failed marriage for over ten years; Angelina and Banke Adelana are widows who have to use the glory of men they sleep with to make successful business women. The skewed portrayals of women in all these instances serve no useful purpose to the women's folk; rather they give the viewer erroneous impressions about women's resilience, capability, strength, virtuousness, and self-esteem.

The image of the adulterous wife is another prominent stereotype that is depicted in *TG*, amplified through the character of Tunmise who is not only involved in an extramarital affair with Sesan due to financial inducements, but also makes life unbearable for her husband, Bola, and his mother. She even makes attempts on Bola's life by poisoning his food. Tunmise, therefore, falls into the cultural definition of a bad and unfaithful wife. Her actions certainly validate the popular Yoruba maxim that depicts women as capricious, especially concerning marital and sexual issues:

Baa fi gbogbo ile nla jin kolekole, kope o ma jale die kun; bi a si fi gbogbo odede jin iyawo agbere, kope o ma tara re f'ale ("Give a mansion to a thief - that does not prevent him from stealing; give a promiscuous wife all you have in a beautiful house - that does not preclude her from selling herself cheaply to a paramour"). (Cited in Balogun, 2010, p. 26 italics in the original).

The nasty stepmother is another stereotype and this is evident in the character of Adufe who not only kills Tinuke's father and inherits all his property but also uses charms to send Tinuke's mother away. Thereafter, she starts maltreating Tinuke whom she eventually turns into a hawker. When Tinuke revolts and accuses her of causing the misfortunes that befall her family, she casts a spell on her and banishes her from her father's house. Adufe's depiction is a testament to the cultural belief in Nigeria that stepmothers are generally evil and can engage in any diabolical activity in their desperate attempt to make their children outdo the children of their co-wives. What is, however, generally observed in this serial is that no attempt is made to create an alternative stepmother whose character is dissonant with Adufe's nature. Given Carroll's (1996, p. 349) assertion that "... the ways of representing women in popular media in some way influences or reinforces the way real women may be construed", the likely detrimental implications of this kind of persistent depiction of wicked stepmothers in Nigerian television drama may be far-reaching, especially on the impressionable viewer.

Moreover, it is found that some women are presented as tolerant wives. Labake, Ronke, Mrs. Banjoko, and Labake's mother are women that fit into this stereotype. Labake, for instance, has to endure Femi's immoral acts. She once laments about her agonies to Tunmise, "... I do all things alone. I plan alone; I sleep alone; I eat alone. And, what is the essence of the marriage?" Later, she sobs out while discussing with her pastor, "He still drinks, keeps late nights. He doesn't even eat my food anymore. The worst aspect of it is that he engages... in extramarital

affairs. He doesn't even keep it from me.... He separated me completely from his room.... He hates me...." Labake also has to put up with Femi's imposed decisions. A case in point is when he just comes home one day and announces to her that they have to change their church to Bishop Mathew's church and that is final. Interestingly, this imposed decision happens after he has become a Christian— a trait that shows his blotted patriarchal ego as a man has not altered in any way. Before then, Femi had singlehandedly made some similar impositions like banishing her to the children's room, and commanding her not to get pregnant again, even when he will not stop having unprotected sex with her.

It is worthy of note that *TG* links the suffering of wives in Labake's state to the wrong choice in marriage or the fact that their husbands are not Christians. The serial further makes it clear that the lonely nights, beatings, neglect, infidelity, and impositions that these women are subjected to are expected to be borne by all wives who desire to win the hearts of their wayward or abusive husbands. Tinuke describes how to win over such husbands in this manner:

The only way to win him over is to be patient. Allow yourself to suffer. You must be a fool— a complete fool— if you have to win your husband to yourself... there is no other shortcut. You must suffer.... the key is suffering, patience, and to be a complete fool (sic).

Tinuke's submission in the serial is a clear endorsement of women's subjugation, which is at variance with Emecheta's (2012) position, "... I still believe in families... I have no sympathy for a woman who deserts her children, neither do I have sympathy for a woman who insists on staying in a marriage with a brute of a man, simply to be respectable" (p. 553). Tinuke's position is, therefore, an attempt at trivialising domestic violence which many women are subjected to in their marriages. By implication, women that try to reject such intense anguish and assert themselves and their rights are cast in the cultural mould of bad and impatient wives. This is evident in the case of Ronke who stands up to Biola's irresponsibility, beatings, and immorality. She is blamed for Biola's untimely death because she cannot endure his rough treatment and continue praying for him to escape the ghastly accident orchestrated by Jumoke. Tinuke describes women as the gatekeepers that determine what happens in their families:

A gate is like a wall... like a fence.... The woman is like a protector; she is like a shield... she stands in the gap for her family. So, if she does not understand the role of a gatekeeper, then she will be missing a lot and her home is in danger.... It is whatever the woman wants for her home that will stand. If the woman wants peace, love, joy, and progress in her home, that is what will happen. But if she wants sadness, sorrow, discouragements, and backwardness, that is what will stand. I hope you remember the case of Adam and Eve. God had beautiful plans for Adam and Eve, but Eve destroyed the purpose and counsel of God for their family. Imagine if she had not disobeyed God; imagine if she had not taken the fruit from the devil, our lives, and the world would have been better today. But because of her disobedience, she destroyed God's purpose and counsel for manhood... Of course, the woman is the gatekeeper.

Tinuke's assertion holds women responsible for whatever goes wrong in the family. This is like giving men the license to do evil and then blaming it on their wives. For instance, Biola's death is blamed on Ronke, not on his promiscuity which makes him a soft target for Jumoke's evil plan; Benson's death is blamed on Jumoke for not praying enough for him, not on his son who colluded with some miscreants to rob his father; and Bishop Badmus' fall into immorality is blamed on his wife for not being patient enough with him. Of course, Tinuke's standpoint has its springboard in the biblical teachings that show that God hates divorce (although the Bible somewhat approves of it based on immorality) and that women must submit themselves to their husbands (Ephesians 5: 22). But then, emphases are not equally placed on those portions of the Bible that stress that husbands must love their wives and that both must submit to one another (Ephesians 5: 25; Peter 5: 5b).

The fact that only aspects of the Bible that highlight women's submission are often amplified has made some scholars consider religion as one of the instruments of the subjugation of women in society (Moaddel, 1998 p. 108). The portrait of women as long-suffering wives, in this circumstance, therefore, stereotypes wives as individuals that have limited or no option but to continue putting up with their bestial and immoral husbands, even when their lives and wellbeing are threatened. In many instances, as evident in the drama, such women/wives are rewarded with the husbands coming to their senses, apologising to their wives for their mistreatment with a promise to be better husbands. One is left to wonder what would have become of characters like Labake if she had died or developed life-threatening complications as a result of incessant battering from Femi, even in her pregnant state. Such a skewed depiction of the tolerant wife, therefore, is capable of encouraging domestic violence and irresponsible actions on the part of the men folk. Besides, it offers no practical steps in ending assaults from one's spouse, beyond prayers. Sadly, other possible approaches like going for professional counselling are unexplored in the serial.

Besides, women are stereotyped as the femme fatale as they bring disastrous events upon others. Adufe, Mrs. Philip, Angelina, Tunmise, Banke, and Rebecca are women that largely exhibit this villainous nature. For instance, Mrs. Philip uses her charm and occult power to seduce Bishop Badmus and ensure he sleeps with her, thereby rendering him useless as she casts a spell of adultery and epilepsy on him. This is aside from destroying his home and ministry. Adufe, in her case, hypnotises Tinuke's father and makes him her lover. She, thereafter, turns Tinuke's mother to her maid before sending her away with her evil power. She later kills Tinuke's father and then inherits his property. She never spares Tinuke as she turns her into a hawker and prostitute before casting a spell on her, which makes her leave her father's house without a definite destination. She even almost kills Tolu in her desperate desire to make Bola marry her daughter, Funke. Both Angelina and Banke similarly use their beauty to seduce men purposely to destroy them by donating their souls to Shadow of the Widows' cult and taking over their fortunes.

7. Conclusion

This paper has interrogated the place of women in society, emphasising how obnoxious socio-cultural practices and objectionable religious sentiments have contributed significantly to the marginalisation of women despite their immense contributions to the socio-cultural and political developments of society. Specifically, the paper has examined Lekan Asikhia's *The Gatekeepers*, a Christian television serial, highlighting recurrent female stereotypes that are portrayed in the serial. Eight indicators of stereotypes of women that are differently depicted in the TV drama include the tolerant wife, the stay-at-home wife, the adulterous wife, the nasty stepmother, the horrible mother-in-law, the nonchalant mother, the femme fatale, and the career woman. The paper affirms that the serial under reference has largely reinforced socially constructed feminine labels which can be injurious to the realisation of the dreams and aspirations of women in general. Given the fact that films can empower women, facilitating their ability to undertake actions that can help in eliminating destructive traditional practices on women (MacRae 199, p. 247), and also the fact that the cinema can help in the construction of people's consciousness, "penetrating the minds of our people, influencing their everyday social behavior, directing them...." (Hondo 40), there is a need for writers and producers of Nigerian Christian television drama to harness and utilize the potential of this important aspect of the mass media in demonstrating immense contributions women can make (and have been making), even to nation building. Therefore, while it may be imperative for producers of Nigerian television serials to take cognisance of the paradoxes in society and reflect them accordingly vis-à-vis biblical injunctions to foreground certain moral lessons, care should be taken not to characteristically stereotype women, especially as backdrops by limiting their activities and usefulness to the domestic sphere without demonstrating their relevance socially, politically, and even economically in this contemporary time, as the consequences of these could greatly hamper the advocacy for self-reliance, recognition, empowerment, and more participation of women in the socio-cultural, political and economic life of the Nigerian society for global competitiveness.

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About the Author

Solomon Adedokun Edebor, Ph.D. is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Languages and Literary Studies, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Edebor does research in Gender and Cultural Studies, Film and Television Studies, African Literature and and Dramatic literature.

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Inclusiveness in Indian Graphic Novels: *Bhimayana* and *Kari*

Zahra Ahmad

M.A. English student, Patna Women's College (India)

zahra02ahmad@gmail.com

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Abstract

Graphic novels employing multimodal semiotic strategies and using verbal and visual mediums are micronarratives. Postmodernism and cultural studies gave rise to several genres focusing on petit narratives. Modern Indian graphic novels depict social issues of marginalization and exploitation, bringing them to the fore. It is simultaneously inclusive of varied themes in their narrative. *Bhimayana*, a critique of the hidden apartheid movement in India showing the struggles of Dalit icon Ambedkar, also includes as its themes: historical events and legislation, ecocentrism, zoomorphism, current happenings and subversion of Brahmanical hegemony. Similarly, *Kari*, a queer text showing the struggles and resistance of a lesbian, also includes themes of migration, alienation, ecology, disease, death, capitalist society and subversion of heteronormativity and patriarchy. This paper intends to analyse the themes and narrative techniques of two graphic novels - *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability* (2011) by Natarajan et al. and Amruta Patil's *Kari* (2008) to show the inclusiveness of varied issues. The paper also illustrates the social issues that are dealt with. It also demonstrates the purpose of graphic novels to give voice to those at the periphery and to show their resistance to the status quo.

Keywords: diversity, homosexuality, identity crisis, petit narrative, racism

Zahra Ahmad, Email: zahra02ahmad@gmail.com

1. Introduction

1.1 Graphic Novels

The term *graphic novel*, coined by Richard Kyle in an essay in the comics fanzine *Capa-Alpha* (1964), became popular with the publication of Will Eisner's *A Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories* (1978). Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A survivor's tale* (1986) was the most significant, while some other graphic novels are Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's *Watchmen* (1986), Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis: The story of a Childhood*. (2003) Manga Comics, the Japanese style of art, portraying severe issues like the effects of war, the bombing of Hiroshima etc., are considered its root.

According to US psychologist Eleanor Rosch's prototype theory (1973), a prototype consists of characteristic features unlike defining properties given by Plato and Aristotle. Thus, a graphic novel was known as a complex genre with several distinctive gradable types: "1) multilayered plot and narration, 2) multi referential use of color, 3) complex text-image relation, 4) meaning-enhancing panel design and layout, 5) structural performativity, 6) references to texts/media, and 7) self-referential and metafictional devices" (Hesche, 2016, para. 1).

According to Eisner (2008) in *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*, graphic novels are: "universally understood images, crafted with the intention of imitating or exaggerating reality" (p. 3). He further comments that focus on graphic elements like page layout, unique techniques and excellent colours minimized the stress on literariness leading to its criticism. Graphic novels employing multimodal semiotic strategies are an amalgamation of verbal and visual mediums to tell a story. For aeons, it was considered a book of entertainment for children. But it gradually evolved to become a cultural artefact. This transformation is evident in the content and form as they epitomize the apprehensions of the age, unlike their original purpose. It encompasses the revolts of the marginalized, depicting the division between the subaltern and the mainstream. Christensen (2006) says, "in contrast to superhero comic books, graphic novels are more serious, often nonfiction, full-length, sequential art novels that explore the issues of race, social justice, global conflict, and war with intelligence and humour." (p. 227)

Indian graphic novel includes social issues and protests in society. It has its root in Anant Pai's *Amar Chitra Katha*, an Indian comic series. *Tinkle*, *Diamond Comics* and *Chacha Chaudhary* were other popular comics of the bygone era. Some foreign comic book series such as *Phantom*, *Mandrake*, *Superman*, *Batman* and *Spiderman* was also published later. Orijit Sen's *River of Stories* (1994) portrays socio-political concerns as a pioneering work.

The post-millennium graphic novels being popular literature, represent culture, and its multiple concerns, through repressed voices, thus becoming a highly politicized platform of discourse. It, therefore, blurs the line and disrupts the hierarchy of the social order. Many employ native art forms such as Gond Art and Payal Scroll pattern, which showed Indianness. Amruta Patil's *Kari* (2008), Parismita Singh's *Hotel at the End of the World* (2009), *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability* (2011) by Natarajan et al., *Sita's Ramayana* by Samhita Arni (2012), Suhas Sundar's *Odayan* (2013) are few examples.

Nayar (2016) in his book *The Indian Graphic Novel* said, “the ethnographic regional novel, the urban satire and other popular forms of Indian fiction in English one now add, with pride, a brave new medium and genre: the graphic novel” (p. 3).

1.2 Postmodernism

The term postmodern was coined in the forties by Arnold Toynbee, a historian. It was a movement that included every realm: literature, art, and culture. According to Fedosova (2015), postmodernism has several characteristics. Postmodernism challenges standard norms and canons. Some basic features of postmodernism include:

rejection of strict rules of a plot construction; the ironic attitude to reality; a discourse fragmentariness; collage; montage; hybridity of genres; paradoxicality; playing with the text, with time, and with the reader; intertextuality; citation; pluralism of styles; a multilevel text organization; orientation at the plurality of text interpretation; a principle of reader’s co-authorship, etc. (p. 79)

Hutcheon (2004), in her books *The Politics of Postmodernism* and *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, gives several features of postmodernism. In the former, she differentiates postmodernism from modernism saying, “In general terms, it takes the form of a self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement” (p. 1).

According to Lyotard (1979) in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, postmodernity is incredulity towards the metanarratives, representation and universalization. It is anarchic and anti-systematic.

Postmodernism has three possible interconnected but dissimilar meanings as proposed by various theorists: Roland Barthes, Jean Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson. It can have a connection with power shifts and the dehumanization of the era after the Second World War.

Some characteristics of postmodern work are extreme self-reflexivity, irony and parody, the breakdown between high and low cultural forms, questioning of grand narratives, visuality and the simulacrum versus temporality, late capitalism, disorientation and fragmentation.

All types of postmodernism depend on the method of deconstruction to study socio-cultural conditions. It has given rise to micro-narrative and petit narratives that talk about local practices and events as one of the realities and not as universal. It questions and negates metanarrative giving voice to the marginalized section.

Postmodern theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari gave a philosophical meaning to rhizome, from the Greek word ‘rhizoma’, meaning roots. According to them, several things exist in the postmodern culture, which does not come from a single origin instead it grows from everywhere and is the same at each place. Since it does not have a centre, postmodern culture resembles a rhizome structure.

1.3 Cultural Studies

Culture comes from the Latin word ‘colere’, meaning to inhabit, care for, till, and worship. It is “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d, par. 1) Cultural Studies developed in 1964 with the start of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. The efforts of Marxist scholars like Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart (*Uses of Literacy*) and Raymond William (*Culture and Society*) led to the start and growth of cultural studies. It widened the study of literature by forming its relation with “the prevailing social, material, historical and ideological conditions” of a particular age. (Gupta, 2008, p. 1) Moreover, it expanded the purview of literature by including “pamphlets ..., non-written texts, and even cultural phenomenon of various kinds.” (p. 1) Cultural study is interdisciplinary and dynamic, leading to civilization. It shows the resistance of dominant ideology through popular culture and subculture. It provides “space for the study of hitherto unheard voices like those of women, Dalits, or other marginalised communities” (p. 10). Popular culture is the culture of the masses or subordinate groups.

2. *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability* (2011)

Bhimayana by Natarajan et al. is a critique of the hidden apartheid movement in India, which portrays the struggles of the Dalit icon, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. The book draws material from Ambedkar’s autobiography *Waiting for Visa*, which recounts his experiences of untouchability, oppression and struggles. The Pradhan Gond tribal artists Durgabai Vyam and Subhash Vyam have done the illustrations. The book, written as a frame story, is divided into five sections, namely, One Day, Water, Shelter, Travel and The Art of *Bhimayana*. The story has a local setting, starting with a conversation between an upper-caste man and a lower-caste woman at a bus stop. Though it appears as a biography of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, it is a multilayered text giving space to various things. It is inclusive of various topics depicting postmodern rhizome structure.

The title subverts Brahmanical hegemony and forms a counter-narrative against them. The novel exposes the hidden apartheid system in India. Taking a powerful subaltern move challenges and disrupts dominant ideologies and depicts the inhuman treatment meted out to a large section of people on the grounds of an age-old caste system still creating havoc. Postcolonial critical literacy focuses on ecocentrism and making a global impact. By modelling on the lines of the sacred Hindu text *Ramayana*, the story of Prince Ram, *Bhimayana* takes a political turn. Comparing the heroic deeds and struggles of both, an alternate epic of heroism was created, portraying a common untouchable hero.

On one level, *Bhimayana* can be called a biography of Ambedkar. Subjugation, oppression and discrimination form a song to his life, highlighting the power relation between upper and low caste. The novel depicts his traumatic experiences right from childhood to adulthood. The concept of purity and pollution marks the hierarchical caste system. The book also portrays his struggles and resistance in fighting against the caste system. The chapter Water, depicts the denial of potable water to young Ambedkar in school, while the irony is that his father, as a government employee, was building a water tank. While travelling to his father’s place, he says, “... that trip, when he was ten years old, was the first time he had been forced to face the full reality of caste-” (Natarajan, Anand, Vyam, & Vyam, 2011, p. 45). The chapter Shelter, portrays that caste discrimination continues

irrespective of high education or wealth. Ambedkar, despite having a job and being educated at Columbia University, was deprived of shelter in Baroda. Ambedkar begs for cover, “I implore you - let me stay for a week at least.” (Natarajan et al., 2011, p. 68) He had to choose between life and shelter. Ambedkar faces humiliation and was denied proper transportation causing an accident in the chapter Travel, after becoming an established icon of Dalit. One of his followers said, “We are mahars ... Babasaheb, the tongawallas wouldn’t drive you here ...” (p. 81).

The story also presents the resistance put up by Ambedkar. He protested and campaigned for the rights of the lower caste and organized Mahad satyagraha against the prohibition of access to water from the Chavadar Tank. He said, “We are going to the tank to assert that we too are human beings like others.” (Natarajan et al., 2011, p. 48), thus creating alternate history. He also tried to get a separate electorate for the lower caste however failed. While framing the constitution, he tried to propagate equality to all.

Apart from portraying Ambedkar, the book also deals with social and political issues. The story starts with a discussion on the reservation, an affirmative action by the government to uplift the lower caste, who are blamed for the scarcity of jobs. The conversations bring out the resentment and hatred of the upper caste against reservation and lower caste. There is a subversion of dominant ideology at various levels- the title, the use of tribal art, the creation of alternate history, and protests. Thus, it can also be called a book of protest.

The various legislations of the constitution to combat the caste system are incorporated into the body of the text. Historical events like the Round Table Conference, letters penned by Gandhi, Mahad satyagraha movement: to allow Dalits to drink water from Chavadar water tank also find space here.

Primary source materials are used in the form of Newspaper cuttings. It shows the deplorable conditions of Dalits which continues even in contemporary times despite government policies. There are several newspaper clippings in the text: In the village of Khairlanji, the Bhotmange family were beaten to death, “gruesome incident occurred ... news of this brutality did not enter the mainstream news ...”, “Two Dalit teenagers were assaulted ... in Uttar Pradesh’s Rae Bareilly ...”, In Madhya Pradesh “Dalit killed for demanding wage.” (Natarajan et al., 2011, p. 13), “The Hindu: Dalit siblings thrashed by the landlord for shelter” (p. 73). They show that *Bhimayana* is a dissensus bildungsroman as Dalit bildungsroman is a story of reversed growth of Dalits hindered by various reasons. “The dissensual bildungsroman may therefore read as the narrative rupture between the rhetoric of equality, democracy, rights and the lived experience of destitute, Dalits, homeless and mentally ill.” (Nayar, 2012, p. 99) The story critiques the hypocrisy of society and the government, by exposing caste-based discrimination in contemporary times.

Pradhan Gond tribal Art has been used here for illustrations. Pradhan Gond community are “traditional keepers of their people’s cultural heritage and lineages ...”. (Natarajan et al., 2011, p. 100) Ecology, nature and animals predominate the painting of the tribe as they believe in the interdependence of man and nature depicting ecocentrism. They paint in bright colours with natural colours from charcoal, soil, grains, and moa grass. Colours work together to convey the atrocities of segregation based on caste. Zoomorphism is displayed, as inanimate objects represent animals- train expressed as coiled snails. The Gond artist uses the ‘digna’ pattern, “traditional auspicious design patterns applied to walls and floors in Gond homes - as a way of dividing up a page” (p. 102). Speech

bubbles are shown as a bird's beak, scorpion tail and thought bubble. Bhimayana defied the conventional rules like sequential art forms and rectangular framing of the western graphic novel. Indian art depicts the Indian issue.

Bhimayana is thus a collage of different topics put together. It is a multilayered text showing inclusiveness to various issues. The marginalized voice comes to the forefront with the reflection on casteism, brutality, human rights, legislation and subversion of the dominant ideology. Tribal art also finds space.

3. Kari

Kari by Amruta Patil is about a queer protagonist who struggles to establish her identity and get accepted, in a heterosexual normative society. The queer theory explores and opposes the oppressive power of a patriarchal society, which propagates heterosexuality. The story is from the perspective of the eponymous character, Kari and her view of the world around her. The text starts with failed suicide attempts of two lesbian partners, Kari and Ruth. Popular literature brings the 'othered' class to the mainstream as well as draws our attention to varied issues in a postmodern way. The text is inclusive of various things, presented as one of the realities. The themes of homosexuality, alienation, love, lust, friendship, loneliness, cultural difference, the corporate world and ecology are depicted vividly through images.

The cover of the book is red and black coloured. The colour red symbolizes death, passion, sexuality, blood, and a stop (symbolizing a traffic light), while Kari's expression shows alienation, scorn and contempt in her eyes.

Sexuality plays a pivotal role here and is visible in different types. The unacceptance by the heteronormative society of lesbian partners, Ruth and Kari is depicted. They attempt double suicide. However, Kari is saved by a sewer and Ruth by a safety net, finally parting ways. The glaring class difference also becomes evident. Kari's life in the aftermath of a "slipshod surgical procedure" follows (Patil, 2020, p. 3). Romance has been devastated and dismantled throughout. The nude picture of Kari observing herself in the mirror, casual sex in the bathroom, and the image showing the love-making of Ruth and Kari are very different in representation. Deromanticizing of sex occurs instead of glamourizing. Therefore, nothing looks provocative, rather appears as a matter of fact. Her roommates, Angel (her ailing friend) and Lazarus (her colleague) often question Kari due to her difference and show non-acceptance, as she explores the city. There is, however, respect for diversity, which is challenging to accept but still accepted. Heterosexual couples Billo and Zap or Vicky, Delna and Orgo are live-in partners who practice couple swapping and group sex also. Nothing appears obscene since occurs as one of the many things, in a postmodern way. There are different levels, and all are accepted. In contrast to Mahesh Dattani's writing on homosexuality, Amruta Patil's *Kari* presents sexuality as one of several ideas.

Migration is an important theme in the text. The characters Kari, Billo, and Delna come to a metropolitan city Bombay from small towns. They live in a tiny and shared space due to financial issues- bookshelves act as walls and toiletries of five people are accommodated in a single small toilet. But women in small towns lack freedom, individuality and the opportunity to have a say and choice. Since city life has less stereotyping, girls trade privileges and choose freedom in place of a large home in small towns. However, in city life, alienation, loneliness and subversion of home as a

haven, are very much present. Kari feels “The only person who always wants to talk to me is Mamma. Every Friday, at 10 p.m., is the long call home” (Patil, 2020, p. 21).

Ecocentrism takes into account the entire ecosystem, including living and non-living components. Ecology is another topic that finds space here. Environmental issues have been put forward right from the start. Kari falls into a sewer and is saved from a suicide attempt but mentions the stinking river in the surrounding. She says, “I was saved by a sewer, by the stinking river of effluents that snakes past our neighbourhood, the one our buildings avert their faces from.” (Patil, 2020, p. 8) The images on pages thirty-two and thirty-three show the deplorable condition of the city with dirt, filth and an overflowing drainage system. The smog city with polluted air is problematic to breathe. Later, Kari talks about the stench coming from the sewer. She says, “It’s hard to fathom the exact composition of the smell. It must have something to do with the city’s digestive system. When a digestive system is unwell, it poisons the body with toxins of its own making” (p. 41). There is also mention of how heavy rain causes water logging to immobilize the city. “First rains! ... Road and sewer are one.” (p. 52) The city’s turmoil juxtaposes with Kari’s mental turmoil. Moreover, it also depicts the subversion of divisions. The usage of potted plants as an ashtray shows the disregard for nature.

Disease and death also appear as one of the many realities. Though literature always over-romanticized it, here, it is denoted as an alien romantic idea, where death comes typically after disease. Thomas Gray’s *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* (1751) mourn death. However here, Angel is sick, undergoing treatment, actively dying and struggling to live and pay bills. The text, unlike movies and traditional literature, depicts no sympathies; it portrays physical death, as one of the many worries. The office immediately finds a replacement and regular work continues showing no time to mourn. The disease has been coupled with hospital bills, while death is associated with replacement. Multiple dynamic ideas are portrayed; one is challenging the other without romanization and nothing is the central idea. Ruth and Kari are saved by a safety net and a sewer respectively. It just represents the difference between the suicide of different classes of people.

The Metropolitan city forms the setting of the story. Working in the corporate world is laid bare. Delna worked as Head and Foot stand-in and had to be satisfied with the meagre role she got. Kari worked in an advertising company. Two aspects of the same city are exposed: the presence of glamour contrasted with open sewers. Professional life hardships become apparent. As Kari comes to her office after failed suicide, she says, “Work, on the other hand, is unaffected by the waxing and waning of personal moons.” (Patil, 2020, p. 10) She had to write an advertisement for an international hair product brand called ‘Fairytale Hair.’ Her work is rejected thirty-six times before the final accepted version. Ironically, her boss tells her, “to bring in the sex, bring in the glamour, and discover my inner fox.” (p. 11) The corporate world objectifies women and uses sex to sell all products, including Fairytale Hair. However, Kari’s imaginary world is without men, as seen in the advertisement she creates and her imaginary house, the crystal palace. As the story progresses, we witness Kari’s resistance, acceptance and creation of her identity. She attends an award ceremony with ‘2mm buzz cut’ hair and declares never to suicide for anyone. Despite the Indian constitution legalizing homosexuality in 2018, it is still considered taboo in India. However, the text shows acceptance.

Ideas of past and present appear in continuation. Kari sometimes remembers Ruth and sometimes muses about her parents. Graphic novels experiment with time and space. Space between parents and children, as well as space in the city, is depicted.

The map on page forty-three talk of unexplored places. It is a postmodern idea. Bombay, a metropolitan city, has a lot of unknown areas and Kari finds a home with a cat that might be real or a fabrication of her imagination.

The place of home as a haven is subverted here. Kari is not comfortable in her parental home so leaves for Bombay. A shared apartment in Bombay is also not very comfortable, and lacking privacy. For her, “The thought of home is oppressive” (Patil, 2020, p. 10).

The relationship between Kari and Angel depicts friendship with affection and care. While Kari, Delna and Billo also show good camaraderie. Kari also forms a friendship with Lazarus, her colleague. Context has been given to every idea, even Billo, Delna, her roommates’ background, mother and boyfriends.

Kari is thus a collection of several realities showing inclusiveness. Petit narratives are present, which have a rhizome structure of postmodernism. Sexuality, migration, ecology, disease and death, metropolitan city, and the idea of past and present together have been given space.

4. Conclusion

Postmodernism and cultural studies have made the study of petit narratives possible. They have provided a platform for the inclusion of micro-narrative. Thus, by giving a voice to the marginalized, othered sections are brought to the mainstream. Popular literature is a narrative that tells tales of masses and local issues and shows resistance against the status quo. *Bhimayana* and *Kari*, the popular literature, are petit narratives. *Bhimayana* challenges the Brahmanical hegemony by employing postcolonial critical literacy. While *Kari*, the story of the queer protagonist, contests heteronormativity by using queer theory. Both texts try to disrupt binaries and critique society as well as the government for discriminating against the subalterns. However, they are multilayered texts, inclusive of several issues that form a sort of collage. Deleuze and Guattari, postmodern theorists' rhizome structure which proposes the absence of a single central point of origin, is evident here. *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability* reflects on themes of casteism, brutality, human rights, social issues, legislation, subversion of the dominant ideology, and tribal art. Similarly, *Kari* explores sexuality, migration, ecology, disease and death, metropolitan city, and the idea of past and present. Both texts are thus inclusive of several issues.

About the Author

Zahra Ahmad is pursuing MA in English from Patna Women's College(Autonomous). She authored 'My Stories' vol. 1 and II, for primary schools. She has published and presented research papers both at the national and international levels. Her recent publications include poems in Setu Magazine, RIC Journal, Das Literarich, Live Wire and research papers in The Criterion, Motif, Langlit and Re-Markings. She is an academic editor of the esteemed New Literaria Journal and a reviewer of The Expression: An International Multidisciplinary e-Journal.

email – zahra02ahmad@gmail.com

My Twitter handle- @ZahraAh61829728

Instagram- zahra.ahmad.79219

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Erasure of Gaps in the Terrain of Women Translation: Unveiling of Differences and Ideology in Anjana Sankar's *To the Work Place*

RESHMI S

Assistant Professor in English
MES Asmabi College, Kodungallur, Thrissur
Kerala, India- 680671
resritsan@gmail.com

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Abstract

The scope of translation and interpretation witnessed a tremendous shift in recent times as a form of intellectual investigation or research. The role played by translation in moulding culture accentuated intellectual curiosity among bilingual or multilingual writers, and this pioneered a distinctive field of studies known as Translation Studies. The definition of translation as a process of mediation through ideology and identity is culturally positioned. Involvement and engagement between women writers, women characters, and women readers have paved the way for a new space in the process of translation, which is based on the re-examination of gender issues. The feminist theoretical world has perceived translation as production and not reproduction. The process subjected to refining the notions of invisibility, and equivalence is intended to juxtapose the effects of patriarchal social and cultural domination. The woman translator will be bounded by the power dynamics and such translated works employ gender constructs through the process of subversion. It becomes possible for women translators to create and legitimize a text outside the gender binaries. The act of resistance is perpetuated by translated writings when it comes to articulating the continuing presence of a historical undesirability. The paper explores the history, politics, and identity issues in the translated work, *To the Work Place* (2008) by Anjana Sankar. The study attempts to employ the critical theory 'The Politics of Translation' by Gayatri Spivak, who perceives translation as an effective practice that fulfills the feminist goal of achieving women's solidarity and how language becomes a clue to the working of the gendered agency. The tyrannical dominance of men has veiled the lives of Namboothiri women in Kerala to a greater extent. The hidden turmoils in the lives of such elite women are poignantly encapsulated through the translation. This becomes an act of unveiling the history, memories, and identities to the global readers beyond nation and race. The female collective initiative to overcome the patriarchal norms steered the lives of women who are on the thresholds of progression and deny confinement.

Keywords: elite subaltern, gendered construct, ideology and identity, workplace, translation studies.

RESHMI S, Email: resritsan@gmail.com

1. Introduction

All is set for the battle, all is set for the battle
The preparations are made inside the kitchen
We are the Sapatnis who are dissatisfied but
We will not destroy each other.

(Anjana Sankar, *To the Work Place* (1948/2008, p.177)

The literary framework of Postcolonialism and Cultural Studies has critically interpolated with the process of translation which, in turn, paves the way for the concept of ‘cultural Translation’. The mapping of postcolonial experience is well portrayed by employing cultural interaction between two cultures. Similarly, the act of translation involves a parallel collaboration between two languages. The amalgamation of textual translation and cultural translation generates a fusion or hybrid culture. Cultural Translation thus becomes an approach for legitimizing literature. Translation theory describes the strategy of ‘foreignization’, which involves the original reorganization of the receiving language. The translated works thus maintain the ethos of the unique culture even when delineated in a foreign language. The writers who undergo translation are bilingual writers who have creative insight into native and source cultures. Translators transmit tradition, culture, beliefs, and rituals from one linguistic domain to another linguistic realm, and they are endowed with the massive responsibility of preserving and adhering to the underlying convictions without dismantling its totality.

Translation makes it possible for cultural and information transfer between languages. The literary background and the cultural memory of the translators impact both the reading of the source text and their ability to classify and reconstruct the complexity of the content. Steiner (1975) defines “the usual modes of translation as a process by which a message from a source language is transferred to the target language” (p.29). On a linguistic level, translation is the process that identifies the elements of the “pure language” from which all languages originally sprang and to which they all return. On a creative level, translatability validates the universality of classic texts.

The translator's task is to recognize and give way for expressing the affinities with the concerned texts and authors. To Derrida (1985), "Translation is writing...a productive writing called forth by the original text" (p.153). Translators, on a universal basis, recognize the complexities inherent within the semiotics of language and culture as well as the rendering difficulties of signs in the target language. The cultural discrepancies between the host and the target language and the balancing of linguistic and cultural equivalency are serious issues faced by the translator. In Translation Studies, the concept of "remediation" is referred to by Lefevere (2002) as "rewriting" or the interlingual translation of texts. Translation produce works in a new environment for a set of new readers and creates transcultural memory, which implies the shared knowledge of the past encompassing many countries and cultures.

2. Literature Review

Gayatri Spivak's essay 'Translation as Culture' emphasizes two critical perspectives of translation- the first perspective establishes translation as traditional, comprehending and forming interlinkages with the past; the second perspective reinforces a progressive approach wherein translation is viewed as a process of transcoding. These two perspectives cling on to cultural memory and identity formation. Spivak (2012) identified the distinctive variations between translation and transcoding in cultural translation. Translation as transcoding gives weightage to gain, and adaptability, whereas translation as reparation represents nostalgia and feeling of loss. For Spivak, translation is the fundamental and inevitable aspect of human life; language occasionally transcends rules with the prime objective of shifting between varied perspectives of translation.

The Translation is viewed as an intimate act of reading by Spivak, and she says a translator needs to be a well-versed person of culture and becomes answerable through the process of writing and translating the original work. Through this argument, Spivak posits the postcolonial writers and theorists who dealt with dislocation and discrimination. The employment of the word 'translation' as a metaphor for diasporic backgrounds delimits the act of comprehending cultural and linguistic experiences in the era of globalization according to Spivak (2012). Through 'The Politics of Translation,' Spivak demarcates translation as an act of grasping the other and the self. The translator engages with the text.

The multi-dimensional and universal dynamics of a language are transcended through the process of translation, thus reaching a broader circle of people. Lori Chamberlain admits in *Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation* that the translators, irrespective of gender, are commonly grounded by the same power relations dictated by the conservative society along the lines of gender. She argues for the subversion of ideology to initiate the process of translation with flexibility. When it comes to the portrayal of women across cultures, translation becomes a tool of empowerment. Cixous (1976) has stated:

Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes and rhetorics, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reverse discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word “silence.” (p. 886)

The paper deals with the possibilities and significance of translated work titled *To the Work Place* by Anjana Shankar. The writer chronicles the lives of women set against the historical framework of early twentieth-century Kerala culture and society. The work addresses the concept of “elite subaltern” inscribed within the logocentric framework of patriarchy. The inferior position of Namboodiri women, represented against the backdrop of social, religious, and cultural history, is brought to visibility by the deed of translation. It is informed by the elderly female members to unmarried girls “there’s no going against your husband’s wishes. Otherwise, you’ll pay a heavy price” (p.170). *To the Work Place* depicts the lives of women surrounded by the strict patriarchal and patrilineal codes, assigning an exclusive space to women within the kitchen during adolescence, depriving formal education, observing ceremonial isolation of widows, and casting out or excluding women from family and community if they decide to argue, challenge or oppose any of the frameworks placed upon them.

The discourse of women’s papers and translation of women’s writing has always incorporated the experiences of oppressed and exploited women. The bilingual portrayal records and concentrates on the women’s need for self- articulation crossing the assigned borders and boundaries. Such representation embodies innovative self-oriented undercurrents of the emancipation of women. Simon’s (1996) *Gender in Translation* posits that women translators experience both familiarity and unfamiliarity in the process of translation, and they owe credit to their contribution to feminist writing upon which they have inextricable bondages. The reports of female authors give way to a preoccupation and fixing of body and mind; looking through the lens of one’s self echoes subjectivity and individuality. The play

cannot be catalogued solely as a linear narrative of women's lives but as replications and reminiscences comprising both cognizant and insentient politics of discourse. It vindicates the notion that the life narratives centering women characters tend to throw light upon the gendered lives and history of women.

The Brahmin women of Kerala have undergone scornful status inscribed by the codes of a hegemonic patriarchal society, which stands in dark opposition to the privileged position of their male community. Narratives from Kerala focussed on the lives of these Brahmin women popularly referred to as Antharjanams. The term "Antharjanam" is a Namboodiri caste name, which means "one who lives in the interiors." The work that shed light on the lives of these women astutely brought out the plight and poignancy of the Namboodiri women. The marginalized status imposed on these women is articulated as a historical undesirability based on gender differences and the narratives obliterate the chronological boundaries restricted by the past order. The notable female writer from the Namboodiri community, and the pioneer literary figure who shaped Kerala's Feminist writing, Lalithambika Antharjanam and Devaki Nilayamgode have admitted that their society looks down upon the birth of a female child. Thus, the cultural disrespect of women begins from their labor, and the part played by translation in reconstructing the gender specificities in the framework of provincial history is highlighted.

3. Analysis

The play centers around three girls – Devasena, the orphan girl to be sold off in marriage but saved by two activists of Antharjanasamajam- Parvathy and Devaki. The latter was modern with an educated outlook, emphasized the need for liberating their community, and voiced against the practice of treating girls like cows or vessels, and men marrying women to fulfill the role of a domestic maid in the family. Parvathy's husband treats her as an object of male pleasure and serves the duties assigned in the kitchen. She interrogates, "wasn't it insolence to marry such a young girl to the old and ailing patteri. Wasn't the wedding a mere pretext to get someone to manage the kitchen/ Such men should suffer a worse fate than that! In these modern times, girls cannot be married off without their consent" (p.171). Devaki breaks the sacred thread and throws it on the husband's face, leaves out the house. This is a moment of self-realization that women collectively feel "We shall not live in sloth anymore and destroy ourselves. Shouldn't we live like women? Shouldn't we? (p. 170).

The work was penned when gender discrimination was at its extreme. Staged in 1948, the play raised our concern about the issues like women's education, dress reform, monogamy, widow marriage, inter-caste marriage, etc. The play echoes the need to end women's slavery and advocates the rights of women and their privilege to live in a society like males. The women revolted against caging themselves in the name of aristocracy, "Going off somewhere when you please and as you please, without telling me anything...that won't do" (p.184). The Antharjanams are determined to work towards equality and empowerment. Devaki says, "I am not prepared to live as his slave. I'll leave him and his family and walk away, proclaiming my freedom" (p. 184). Devaki's husband desisted her from attending the workplace, but she is firm in proclaiming, "freedom is the monopoly of man and slavery that of women...we are husband and wife – not master and slave" (p. 186). Highlighting the defense of women to face patriarchal regulations and control, the work erases the borders of Kerala and it universalizes the experiences of such women struggling hard to assert their identities amidst obstacles and hardships. The translator unravels the identities of women from the male-dominated canonical literary history of Kerala. The text that sheds light on the account of a region will indeed hold the attention of national and international audiences in the annals of Feminism.

The translated work outlines the physical and psychological development of a woman being encircled and engulfed within a heap of rigid conventions such as marriage before puberty, denial of education, marriage with older men, and prohibition of widow remarriage, among many issues. Namboodiri girls were prohibited from moving beyond their houses or occupying the verandah. The Brahmin women hold superior status compared to other women, but they were not emancipated from social taboos. The patriarchal dominance and assertion are implemented through oppressive customs like Ghosha or veil system, illiteracy, dowry, child marriage, and polygamy to degrade the women. Womanhood itself is looked down and discriminatory practices are imposed upon the female child. Negligence of education allowed women to remain subservient to men. The role played by women in transforming society has inspired social reformers to pay attention to the upliftment of Namboodiri women. The women activists in Yogakshema Sabha actively participated in the movements, Antharjana Samajam and Yachana Yatra, organized to establish "Thozhil Kendram" or work place. These women erased the caste hierarchies and began to work collectively for the peasants and workers. This allows them the opportunity to challenge caste hierarchy and women's subservient position in marriage and family. The character Savithri comments, "If Gods don't

practice untouchability, why should we? Are we above Gods? (p.172) and “Aren’t they human beings” (p. 173) is the answer of Devaki when her husband raises the question- “If we mingle with low-class people, we will be in trouble” (p. 173).

Anjana Shankar’s work chronicles Brahmin households as a hidden domestic realm that obstructs and hampers female subjectivity. The practice of “sambandham” allows only the elder male Brahmin to marry from his community resulting in polygamy. The resulting emotional pain and anguish undergone by widowed Namboothiri women are also represented with poignancy. The progressive measures adopted by Yogakshema Sabha to uplift Namboodiri women become a crucial indicator in the feminist empowerment upsurge. The domestic space defines, redefines, and regulates the delineations of women within the borders of the female realm. Devaki’s husband comes up with the argument, “How can women discard their husbands, forget their duty of child rearing and go away? How will this world function? ...It wasn’t for nothing that our ancients devised the concept of division of labor!” (p.179). Devaki retorts to her husband’s question, “what’s wrong with Kitchen work? “you mean that I should give up all else and become the kitchen woman, isn’t it? (p. 179). The gap between gender equations within the community aggravates the subaltern status of women. Breaking the binaries and focusing on women’s selves through translation paves the way for an emancipatory experience. The cloistered lives of elite Namboodiri women within the domestic realm facilitate a revolt through literary translation.

The play *Thozhilkendrathileku* (1948) has imprinted a literary landmark in the history of Malayalam literature as the first women’s collective theatre experiment. The assigned roles for men were performed by females themselves, and they received support from a group of Namboodiri youth. The work was translated as *To the Work Place* after six decades, that is in 2008 when the status of women in Kerala society underwent a drastic progression. Antharjanams were forced to cover themselves with a cloak, and a large umbrella if they need to move out of the house. They were raised with an overwhelming sense of inferiority right from their childhood. Young girls experienced widowhood, and remarriage was prohibited. Women did not exercise ownership over land and the dowry system thrived.

Nationalism and radical leftist thinking had a remarkable influence on Malayali Brahmin reformism. Influenced by the revolutionary ideas, the reformation of women’s lives became the need of the hour, and Antharjanams gradually decided to break the conventions. They began to look for ways to promote financial independence. Antharjanams emphasized

the importance of work for women and thereby asserted their independence. When men discarded the concept of work place, women accepted it as an attempt to find solace from the everyday kitchen work. Their collective efforts, initiatives, and measures adversely bothered the rigid foundations of the Namboodiri community by demolishing all the age-old evil practices such as exchanging young orphaned girls for money. Treated as a familial burden, the girls were married off to aged grooms under the pretext of charity marriage; Parvathy reacted, “selling girls for money under the guise of marriage...Don’t you feel ashamed to act so brutally, without any human feelings?” (p.188). The real-time experience of a thirteen-year-old orphan girl named, Kavungara Bhargavi, forms the crux of the plot. Raised by her uncle, who has decided to marry her off to a senior and immoral Namboodiri groom, in return for money, she has attracted the concern of the Antharjanasamajam. Considering her plight and protesting the practice, the commune freed her from the shackles of captivity. Antharjanam’s initiative of establishing a workplace, where lessons were imparted in spinning, weaving, stitching, and the Hindi language, became a solace for all the Namboodiri women to escape from patriarchal interventions.

4. Conclusion

Marginalized women from Namboodiri community emerge as protesting warriors and self-asserting individuals, whose voices become audible beyond the borders of Kerala to depict the concealed uproar and protest in the lives of Indian women. The insensitive humiliations agonized by the Namboodiri women and the resulting gendered exploitation of women have been restricted with compassion. The turmoils of women in the Namboodiri community are dependent upon their status in India, but this role has witnessed significant changes in the decades. The women who were once restricted within the domestic realms of household and outdated customs are now liberated. Caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy, the governing dictates of social order, lead to the objectification of Namboodiri women. A translation says Huetius (1683), “a text written in a well-known language which refers to and represents a text in a language which is not as well known” (p. 103).

About the Author

Dr Reshmi S is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Research Department of English, at MES Asmabi College since 2012. Her areas of interest include Gender Studies, Postcolonialism, Literary Theory, and Diaspora Studies. She is passionate to explore academic and research realms in Literature.

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Female Genital Mutilation in Somalia: The Memories and Mimesis of Pains in Ayaan Hirsi Ali's *Infidel: My Life*

Olumide Olugbemi-Gabriel

Department of Languages and Literary Studies,

Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Email: olumideog@abuad.edu.ng

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Abstract

Female Genital Mutilation — also known as female circumcision — is a highly controversial practice that has aroused a cacophony of voices and research across disciplines. This paper privileges Ayaan Hirsi Ali's memoir, *Infidel: My Life* to underscore the implications of FGM on the bodies of victims. A discursive engagement of an existential issue that affects the lives of millions of African women and girls daily marks the significance of the study. More specifically, the study holds both socio-cultural and religious significance based on its intent to show that the often-mouthed socio-cultural, religious and superstitious justifications for FGM are no longer tenable in today's globalised world. A content analysis method is adopted to isolate the nuanced experiences of circumcised/mutilated women in the text. These experiences of FGM victims are analysed within the theoretical framework of Third World feminism; which is a theory that flags FGM as patriarchy's agenda to police women and their bodies. The traumatic accounts of pains and sufferings shared by circumcised/mutilated women in Ali's memoir are crucial to the formation of condensed feelings of empathy and rage that are capable of causing effective attitudinal change concerning the controversial practice. This paper finds and recommends that the most persuasive campaigners against FGM remain the survivors whose stories deserve to be at the forefront of the anti-FGM campaign(s).

Keywords: Culture, Female Genital Mutilation, Memoir, Patriarchy, Sexuality, Ayaan Hirsi Ali's *Infidel: My Life*

Olumide Olugbemi-Gabriel, Email: olumideog@abuad.edu.ng

1. Introduction

Global campaign on the socio-cultural and religious practices hitherto known as Female Circumcision (FC) but now classified as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has crystalised and reached a critical point. The practice is as controversial as it is polarising, and the disagreements on the appropriate terminology confirm the contentious nature of the practice. Therefore, it is essential to state that to free itself from entanglements associated with the politics of terminologies, concerning all surgical operations by which a part or all of the female genitalia is removed based on socio-cultural and religious demands, this paper prefers to maintain a middle ground approach on the terminologies debate. Following the controversy on what terminology best explains the practice, this paper supports the employment of the dual term ‘female circumcision/female genital mutilation’ (FC/FGM).

With the benefit of hindsight, this paper acknowledges that the term ‘female circumcision’ is close to ‘male circumcision’ in a way that vitiates the original intent as well as the effect of the practice on the female body/sexuality. Though the use of ‘female circumcision’ is less intrusive and offensive, it appears simplistic of the vicious, brutal nature and effects of some of these practices – especially the two more severe types, infibulation and farooni – on the sex[uality] and well-being of millions of girls and women. On the other hand, it is imperative to clearly state that the term ‘female genital mutilation’ recognises the harm caused by the practice. Therefore, in consideration of legitimate concerns about terminologies, this paper agrees with Rahman and Toubia (2000) and UNICEF (2013) that ‘female circumcision’ (FC) and ‘female genital mutilation’ (FGM) be used together. FC/FGM not only links the old to the new, but it also represents in terms of signification, an honest attempt to admit the validity of both terminologies; and also serves to prevent the foreclosure of critical debates on the practice on the grounds of inappropriate terminology.

This study is significant because it engages an existential issue that affects the lives of millions of African women and girls daily. More specifically, the study holds both socio-cultural and religious significance based on its aim to show that the often-mouthed socio-cultural, religious and superstitious justifications for FGM are no longer tenable in today’s globalised world. Invariably, the study’s two main objectives are: to show that the pains, trauma and complications associated with FGM support the agency and urgency of the push for its abolition; the utilitarian

capacity of literature in the anti-FGM campaign is accentuated by the harrowing accounts of victims in Ali's memoir, *Infidel*. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following questions: Does FGM come with physical pains, trauma and nuanced health complications for victims? Do the first-hand accounts of FGM victims in Ali's *Infidel* give credence to the usefulness of literature within the framework of the anti-FGM campaign?

2. Literature Review

Without equivocation, FC/FGM debate/campaign has engendered multidisciplinary perspectives and an enriched body of works on the sociocultural practice and the implications for circumcised/mutilated bodies. Specifically, many of the studies on FC/FGM concentrate on anthropological/sociological, public health and law/human rights perspectives. Toubia (1988, 1994) and Mandara (2000) focus on FC/FGM from the public health perspective. On the other hand, Kenyatta (1966), Hosken (1982), Lightfoot-Klein (1989), Walker and Parmar (1993), and Table (1993, 2007) interrogate the socio-cultural issues underpinning the practice from an anthropological dimension. From the prism of law/legislation, FC/FGM has also received the academic attention of Rahman and Toubia (2000) and Leye and Deblonde (2004), following the beaming of global searchlight on the practice and its eventual framing as a human/women's right issue.

Instructively, recent literature on FC/FGM practice captures the nuances that underpin ongoing debates on the issue based on emerging realities. In their research, Titilayo, Palamuleni, Olaoye-Oyesola, and Owioye (2018) posit that religion is a key factor in the sustenance of FC/FGM in practicing societies. According to the study on religious perception and the attitudes of men towards the campaign for the discontinuation of the practice in Nigeria, the odds against discontinuation are significantly lower "among those whose religious belief requires" FC/FGM (Titilayo, Palamuleni, Olaoye-Oyesola, and Owioye, 2018, p. 20). The study finds that 89% of men whose religion does not support the practice subscribe to discontinuation, while its conclusion aligns with this paper's position that religion is a crucial factor in the general attitude of men and women alike to FC/FGM. In a similar vein, a study conducted in the Iraqi Kurdistan region by Abdulah, Sedo, and Dawson (2019) identifies religion, low education and locality (whether rural or urban) as factors responsible for the prevalence of FC/FGM practices. The study finds that mothers who support the practice have low or no education and represent 34.4% of respondents.

In addition, 46.3% of the girls surveyed are circumcised, which indicates a high prevalence of FC/FGM in rural Iraq. In recognition of the public health challenge posed by the practice to Iraqi women and girls, the study recommends that access to education and awareness needs to be created to increase knowledge about the harmful effect of FC/FGM among practising people.

The work of Williams-Breault (2018) not only represents an attempt to privilege FC/FGM as human rights issue following the plethora of national and international legations in that regard, but the study also appropriates the critical roles that education and women empowerment play in the agenda for eradicating the socio-cultural and religious practice. The study indicts FC/FGM as a violation of international conventions conceived to protect women and girls from oppression, harmful practices and violence. Therefore, it concludes that education together with empowerment offers the best panacea to the menace of FC/FGM in the world. Furthermore, Bukuluki (2021) identifies FC/FGM practices as the manifestations of strong social conventions and norms in practicing communities; a position that aligns with Ali's *Infidel's* denouncement of the practice as one that marks dissenting women/girls as social misfits. Underscoring the human rights and public health dimensions of the debates on such traditional practices, Bukuluki (2021) avers that "(...) female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is rooted in social motivations that do not have health benefits, and it constitutes a violation of human rights for girls and women" (p. 209).

Most of the previous studies on FC/FGM concentrate on a discursive engagement of the practices from anthropological, sociological, public health and human rights perspectives, which indicate the diverse nature of discourses on the issue. Buttressing this position, Shell-Duncan and Hernlund (2000) posit most appropriately that: "(...) the body of literature on female "circumcision" is quite scattered and disparate, falling into diverse fields such as anthropology, demography, epidemiology, history, public health policy, law, social work, psychology, women's studies, and political science" (p. 1). However, within that body of extant literature on FC/FGM, not much attention has been paid to studies that engage the practice(s) from a literary exploration (literature as a discipline) standpoint. In addition, the specificity of memoir (the memories of circumcised women) deserves scholarly attention within the corpus. This paper fills that gap by beaming searchlight on Ali's memoir, *Infidel*, which documents the pains and trauma of FC/FGM on circumcised bodies. More so, the capacity of literature to transcend multidisciplinary boundaries has been acknowledged by, those who submit that:

Literature extends outside itself to forms of human experience beyond disciplinary boundaries, making it evident that the rigid separation of disciplines by myopic specializations can in the long run lead only to counter-productive and paralyzing isolation. Literature, as the hub of the wheel of knowledge, provides the logical locus for the integration of knowledge. Omobowale (qtd. in Owonibi, 2011, p. 59)

Literary works on FC/FGM date back to late 1930. Many of these texts, particularly Huxley's *Red Stranger* (1939), Ngugi's *The River Between* (1965), Nwapa's *Efuru* (1966), Farah's *From a Crooked Rib* (1970) and *Sardines* (1982), El Sadaawi's *Woman at Point Zero* (1983) and *The Circling Song* (1989), and Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1993) are fictional texts. The texts mentioned above treat the subject and victims of FC/FGM from perspectives which oscillate between condemnation and ambivalence to the outright indictment. However, the sensational story and memoir of a Togolese woman, Fauziya Kassindja, who gained asylum in the US on claims that she escaped the shackles of forced marriage and circumcision in her homeland, helped to galvanise interest in such stories. As a result, other circumcised/mutilated women summoned the courage to give voices to their pains, traumas and experiences in written accounts, on the back of Kassindja's memoir, *Do They Hear You When You Cry?* (1998). Other FC/FGM-inspired memoirs include but are not limited to Dirie's *Desert Flower: The Extraordinary Life of a Desert Nomad* (2001), Korn's *Born in the Big Rains* (2004), Ali's *Infidel: My Life* (2009). Therefore, this paper not only adds to the diversity of voices on FC/FGM, but it also anchors a literary investigation of the practice in the specificity of memoir.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

For this paper, feminism is the preferred theoretical framework because it is an ideology/theory that has evolved over the years as a potent weapon in women's battle for equality in a world socially programmed to make them inferior to men. In agreement with Asante and Mazama's (2005) assertion that "gender is necessarily a factor to be raised in any critical, political, economic, behavioral, or cultural discussion" (p. xxxi), this paper's choice of feminism rests in its intention to understand and question the place of women in a patriarchal world order, where they (women) are socio-culturally programmed for abuse, and to playing second fiddle within power relationships. To be more specific, this paper's leaning towards feminism is anchored in the latter's

interest in women's oppression in terms of power relations, gender roles, gender politics and sexuality.

However, this paper is mindful of the complexities surrounding feminism as a gender theory that has mutated over the years. Since the rejection of the universalisation of women's experiences which was the case before feminism mutated, women outside western hegemony began to question "... some of the organizing premises of Western feminist thought" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 111), which do not accommodate women outside western culture and experiences. Therefore, the mutation of feminism became inevitable as alternative feminisms were offered and have become available in various formidable strands. Hence, the feminist strand of choice for this paper is Third World feminism because FC/FGM practices are essentially buried deep in the culture and traditions of so-called Third World countries. More so, Mohanty (1991) and Narayan (1997) postulate that Third World feminism recognises how culture and traditions are instrumental in the oppression of women within national boundaries; while also questioning Third World socio-cultural values such as FC/FGM, the Indian practice of Sati, Chinese foot binding, and Arabo-Islamic purdah as signifiers of age long discrimination against women based on their sexuality.

Furthermore, this paper employs a content analysis procedure for the discursive engagement of the text. Ali's *Infidel: My Life* is purposively selected for this study because of its hermeneutic privileging of the pains, trauma and complications of FC/FGM in the lives of circumcised/mutilated women. Based on a qualitative research method, Ali's text is subjected to descriptive and detailed analyses to signpost the pains and trauma inflicted by FC/FGM on women, as well as the contributions and usefulness of literature to the campaign for eradicating the practice worldwide.

4. Memoir as an Important Trope of FC/FGM Pains

'Truth is stranger than fiction' is a famous statement that reflects the importance of memoirs and other non-fictional works as far as literature is concerned. Memoir refers to a collection of stories of life-shaping events that happened in a memoirist's life. As a piece of literary work, the memoir is classified as "a collection of personal memories of an individual's life as recollected by that person. It is a collection of moments, experiences and events surrounding the private and public life of the writer" (Olugbemi-Gabriel, 2016, p. 146). Therefore, the contents of a memoir are expected to be as accurately factual as possible since they represent the recollection of events as the writer remembers them. In essence, a memoir is a well-crafted story about an

eventful and exceptionally pivotal period of the author's life. Invariably, Ali's *Infidel* falls into this important categorisation as it both appropriates and emblematises the difficulties that are associated with being born into FC/FGM practising societies. However, the stories retold in memoirs must not only be compelling but are also expected to carry the ambience of being readable and relatable, two attributes which exist against the memoir's character of allowing an expression of self on one's terms.

For a memoir to be impactful and be capable of birthing a campaign or compelling attitudinal change, one of the most distinct strengths must find expression in its inherent capacity to strike a connection or relationship of meaning with the reading public. Lending credence to this assertion, Balzer (2011) avers that "memoirs are powerful and full of feeling, and they stick with you unlike books from other genres" (p. 3). Therefore, it matters at this juncture to state that the ability of memoir to stick with a reader makes Ali's work crucial to this paper's attempt to identify FC/FGM as a brutal sociocultural and religious assault on women's sexuality in Somalia and elsewhere. Ali deserves commendation for committing her memories of the sociocultural practice to writing because what becomes clear is the fact that it takes an incredible amount of courage and bravery to write memoirs because they can bring back the pain and suffering that memoirists have endured in their journeys through life. Thus, Ali's memoir puts in focus the power of personal memories of pain being suffered and carried by victims of FC/FGM not to mention the critical role these condensed memories can play generally, to engender a change in attitude, which can lead to the abolishment of the practice. Primarily, this paper aims to accentuate the usefulness of literature (memoir) in implicating FC/FGM practices as vestiges of religious orthodoxy and an embodiment of ritualised ignorance.

5 . Ali's *Infidel*: Haunting Memories of FC/FGM Pain

Infidel is a fascinating memoir, a crucible of personal experiences, written to document the pain, misery and, alterations in the life of the author, especially during her growing-up years. Lurking within the beautifully straightforward narrative is Ali's desire to use her memoir to push for the liberation of women's personhood and sexuality from the "mind-forged manacles" (*Infidel*, 2009, p. xii) of ignorance, traditions and religion, which FC/FGM represents amongst her people. Ali deserves commendation for finding a place within the varied issues raised in her memoir to

give prominence to how, amongst her people, Somalis, FC/FGM is representative of male supremacist ideas, which sanction female misery and pain.

Ali identifies Somalia, her homeland, as a predominantly Muslim third-world country that is overwhelmed by social stratification, religious bigotry, bitter clan rivalries, warfare and repression. These existential conditions in Somalia are superimposed on an ancient foundation of man-made tyrannies of traditional beliefs, superstition, and religious orthodoxy. She avers that FC/FGM's most virulent type, infibulation – the preference of most Somalis – is necessitated by societal agenda to own and control women's sexuality, in a bid to reaffirm the supremacy of men as enshrined in religious codes and expectations. Although Hosken (1982) and Talle (2007) posit that FC/FGM practices predate Islam, the religion has appropriated the practice because it represents Islam's interest in controlling women and feminine sexuality. Ali establishes the nexus between Islam and FC/FGM in her memoir, positing that:

Female genital mutilation predates Islam ... in Somalia, where virtually every girl is excised, the practice is always justified in the name of Islam. Uncircumcised girls will be possessed by devils, fall into vice and perdition, and become whores. Imams never discourage the practice: it keeps girls pure. (p. 31)

Although “it is worth noting that orthodox Islam does not prescribe female circumcision” (Talle, 2007, p. 104), the exploration of the obvious relationship between Islam and FC/FGM in *Infidel* privileges its vital contribution to the “debates about the relationship between religious or customary ‘cultures’ and practices identified as harmful to the health, dignity and/or sexual well-being of women” (Bennett, 2011, p. 93).

In Somalia, Ali confirms that FC/FGM procedure is carried out on teenagers between the age of five and thirteen. She also confirms that an uncircumcised girl is the subject of terrible abuse, taunts and jeers, especially from her mates and society in general, for being the carrier of an impure body. Among the Somalis, “little girls are made “pure” by having their genitals cut out” (p. 31). Ali describes the harassment and humiliation of an uncircumcised girl in her elementary school:

(...) the kids didn't even want to be seen with this girl. They spat on her and pinched her; they rubbed sand in her eyes, and once they caught her and tried to bury her in the sand behind the school. The ... teacher didn't help. Once in a while, he called her *damnin*, dunce, and *kintirleey*, too. (p. 30)

Somali society has a name for women/girls with intact genitalia; they are dismissed and othered derogatorily as "*kintirleey*" which means "she is with the clitoris" (p. 30).

Ali avers that in Somalia, the need to amputate the clitoris is buried deep inside a superstitious belief system and the sado-masochism of religion: "I gathered that this hideous *kintir*, my clitoris, would one day grow so long that it would swing sideways between my legs" (p. 32). Unfortunately, this is the situation in most practising societies, where the justification for the practice is not only built on religious belief, but also on the foundation of ritualised ignorance forged in timelessness and mythology. For instance, among the Yoruba (my ethnic group) of Nigeria, a popular superstition serves as the impetus for FC/FGM practice. This particular superstition, which was narrated to me by my mother, rests on the belief that if the clitoris is not removed, it would most certainly lead to the death of a baby, who ultimately dies when the clitoris touches its head as it emerges from the birth canal. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

Thus, the myth created around the potential risks of an intact clitoris by FC/FGM practising societies, together with a disregard for the relevance of the clitoris as the site of sexual desire and enjoyment for women, only serves to emphasise the open craving of patriarchal and religious societies to deny women the agency for sexual expression and the ownership of self. Ali's memoir clearly shows that the desire to clip the clitoris relies on a misogynistic power structure, especially one that views the feminine organ of pleasure with trepidation. Writing on the perceived threat of the clitoris to patriarchy, Boddy (2007) posits that:

(...) the clitoris is the female analogue of the penis, hence both sexes are endowed with qualities the penis represents. Yet far from unseating the binary archetype, they seem to sustain it by implicitly valorizing the male, subsuming the female, and advancing a model of gender that stakes presocial anatomy as its (cultural) ground. Still it is understandable that for those committed to this view, removal of the clitoris entails an irreparable diminution of feminine value – the ultimate violation of natural female "essence". (p. 59)

The clitoris - quite a sensitive part of the woman's sexual anatomy - is generally acknowledged as an erogenous zone and the primary source of sexual pleasure for women. Showing its centrality to female sexuality, Carroll (2013) describes the clitoris as "an erectile organ of the female located under the prepuce; an organ of sexual pleasure" (p. 111). The description establishes the clitoris's similarity to the male organ in erectile signification and also accentuates why patriarchy wants it amputated.

In a patriarchal world of heightened masculinity and gendered inequalities, the clitoris, being an imitation of the penis, rivals the male genitalia and is thereby marked for elimination. The amputation of the clitoris using FC/FGM practices seeks to obliterate "a girl's 'hard parts' and make a woman forever soft and feminine" (Johnson, 2000, p. 218). Additionally, by undermining the clitoris, a patriarchal world ensures that the privileged sex retains the power of sexual superiority, together with the right to enjoy and express sexual pleasure. On the other hand, practising societies being traditional and religious, expect women to be submissive and to remain coy or silent on how they feel about sex and during sexual intercourse, even within the boundaries of legitimate relationships. Therefore, it becomes evident that FC/FGM is an extension of time-forged gendered inequalities, from which women have suffered untold hardship over many centuries under the rule of privileged patriarchy. It is then safe to argue that the socio-cultural cum religious practice is unambiguously a representative of male supremacist ideology to own women's bodies and to maintain the upper hand in sexual power relations as alleged by feminists.

Not surprisingly, feminists believe that anti-women practices, such as FC/FGM, represent the reaction of an insecure patriarchal structure and the hegemony of sexual pleasure to feminine sexuality – which the clitoris represents. The underlying assumption is that men alone prefer to enjoy and express feelings of sexual pleasure. Women, by socio-religious conditioning, are expected to suppress any urge, which can result in the expression of the same feelings in traditional societies. Feminists have argued strongly that until the advent of their movement/ideology, society expected women to "cater to male sexuality with barely a nod to women's desires" (Eltahawy, 2015, p. 114). Thus, the socio-cultural and religious need to suppress the sexuality of women gives urgency to FC/FGM, which removes the offending clitoris, an action tantamount to 'clitoris envy' and the equivalent of Freudian derision of feminism as 'penis envy'.

Underscoring how these societies prepare women for a life of servitude to men, Ali illustrates how Somali girls are deliberately groomed and cultured to neglect self in deference to the approval of others: "In my childhood, the self was neglected. You pretended to be obedient, good, and pious for the approval of others" (p. 251). Therefore, patriarchal justification for FC/FGM cannot be excised from the main body, buried deep in a sexual power relationship that casts the woman as the weaker partner. In that case, the "removal of the clitoris entails an irreparable diminution of feminine value" (Boddy, 2007, p. 59), in a way that such removal forecloses the presence of feminine challenge to male supremacy. Ali's *Infidel* suggests that because the hyper-masculinity of African patriarchy undervalues the female person, it contrives FC/FGM as a medium of policing African women's bodies, often burying it under the existing religious and traditional belief system.

In *Infidel*, Ali reiterates that the need for a woman to remain a virgin until her wedding night remains an impetus for FC/FGM in Somalia and, by extension, in practising societies. To enforce total compliance with the societal code of behaviour on chastity, patriarchy contrives superstition and myths around female sexuality. On this ground, disincentives to any challenge to patriarchy's dictates on women's acceptable behaviour are couched in supernatural terms. The reason for this societal demand on women is not far-fetched as overtly patriarchal "African (...) societies supported sexual norms that minimised misconduct and capriciousness. Depicting sexuality in supernatural terms thus prevents deviance and excesses, unites the collective and reinforces the need for socially acceptable conducts" (Izugbara, 2011, p. 537). These societies are known to indoctrinate their female members, starting from a tender age, to shun deviance and rebelliousness and, to accept practices like FC/FGM, despite the pain and complications associated with them.

In Somalia and most practising societies, FC/FGM is projected as an honourable act, a rite of passage that solidifies families and maintains a societal sense of order and cohesion. Ali intones that society ties the virginity of girls to the honour of their families. Therefore, "(...) if a girl's virginity is despoiled, she not only obliterates her honor, she also damages the honor of her father, uncles, brothers and male cousins. There is nothing worse than to be the agent of such catastrophe" (p. 6). Interestingly, the custodians of family honour are essentially the male members of a girl's

family. However, an understanding of honour that privileges men as its sole custodians underscores how misogyny and male supremacist ideology are deployed to service enlightened self-interests.

The honour of Ali's family is at stake following the blunt refusal of her father – a US-trained anthropologist who prides himself as a modern man – to have any of his two daughters circumcised. Ali's father's position clearly shows that, all over societies where FC/FGM exists as a norm, there are pockets of resistance inspired either by exposure to western education as exemplified by Ali's father or through the agency of proselytisation (Joshua in Ngugi's *The River Between* and Catherine in Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* readily come to mind). With a personal conviction built on the foundation of western education, Ali's father, Abeh, vitiates FC/FGM as a backward cultural practice of which his daughters would not be allowed to partake: "My father was a modern man and considered the practice barbaric. He had always insisted that his daughters be left uncut. In this he was quite extra-ordinarily forward-thinking" (p. 31). However, whether in rural or urban areas, those who live in traditional Third World societies always have their paths dogged by the influence of culture. Trapped in a timeless partition described as 'tradition', these peoples are often "separated from contemporary experiences, collectively identified as 'modernity'" (Bennett, 2011, p. 92). It is then instructive that Ali's grandma, as a custodian of ancient customs, repudiates her son-in-law's claim to modernity which is Ali's father's valid ground for denouncing FC/FGM. Therefore, when the opportunity presents itself – Ali's father is in jail as a political prisoner, and her mother travels on a trade mission – it dawns on Ali that: "Grandma would ensure that the old traditions would be respected in the old ways" (p. 31).

Ali's grandma's scant regard for her son-in-law's denouncement of FC/FGM represents the triumph of tradition over modernity, which is often the reality in practising societies, where even educated and sophisticated persons come under intense pressure to conform to a social norm. Ali's grandma's support for FC/FGM serves as an acknowledgement of what the alternative holds for Ali and her sister in a society that attaches purity and marriageability to the practice. The old woman defends herself against the accusation of cultural misconduct and betrayal of trust, following the circumcision of her granddaughters without the permission of any of their parents. Confirming her 'good' intention and the clarity of her purpose, the old woman resorts: "Imagine

your daughters ten years from now – who would marry them with long *kontirs* dangling halfway down their legs?” (p. 34). Ali's grandma's position also exposes the dilemma being faced by parents in practising societies, especially the reluctant ones, who face the challenge of whether to accept or turn their backs on a practice that offers their children the benefits of societal acceptability and, ultimately, marriage.

Infidel joins the rank of other literary works which have indicted FC/FGM as a painful and dangerous procedure that violates the rights of women to the sexuality and dignity of a person. Like other works of the same category, *Infidel* portrays the intense pain suffered by victims as well as the grim realities and grave complications associated with FC/FGM practices. Ali describes her circumcision at the age of five:

(...) an itinerant traditional circumciser from the blacksmith clan, picked up a pair of scissors. With the other hand, he caught hold of the place between my legs and started tweaking it, like Grandma milking a goat ... Then the scissors went down between my legs and the man cut off my inner labia and clitoris. I heard it, like a butcher snipping the fat off a piece of meat. A piercing pain shot up between my legs, indescribable, and I howled. Then came the sewing: the long, blunt needle clumsily pushed into my bleeding outer labia ... When the sewing was finished, the man cut the thread off with his teeth. (p. 32)

Ali's recollection and description of her circumcision are detailed enough to point to the crudity and cruelty of FC/FGM. Ali's vivid accounts of her circumcision procedure elicit feelings of empathy for her and rage towards a cultural practice that inflicts indescribable pain on a five-year-old child to guarantee chastity and the purity of her body.

Ali equally employs the circumcision experience of her younger sister, Haweya – who is circumcised with her at age four – to illustrate how FC/FGM operations are sometimes marked by accidents, which can cause additional lifelong pain, trauma, and physical scars: “I do remember Haweya's bloodcurdling howls (...) Haweya must have struggled more than (...) I did, or perhaps the women were exhausted after fighting us, and slipped because the man made some bad cuts on Haweya's thighs. She carried the scars of them her whole life” (pp. 32-33). It is imperative to situate Haweya's accident within the paradigm of what is ‘normal’; that is, the human body's reaction to pain, especially when the reacting body is that of a four-year-old. Haweya's resistance

is not only the normal bodily reaction to pain; it also represents her stoic protest against a cultural practice which inflicts excruciating pain on an individual to satisfy societal norms and expectations. Notwithstanding the reality that practising societies use FC/FGM to gauge and celebrate a person's display of courage and bodily control, the expressions of pain that manifest in muffled groans and ear-piercing shrieks during the procedure and in tears of pain during urination later, show the limit of human resistance to pain.

Infidel also joins the body of literary works that have explored the complications associated with FC/FGM practices. Ali's memoir identifies difficult urination and the possibility of post-circumcision bladder damage due to the retention of urine: "(...) my bladder was bursting, but it hurt too much to pee ... when I urinated the flash of pain was as sharp as when I had been (sic) cut" (p. 33). The author implicates FC/FGM for its capacity to cause adverse health complications in the bodies of circumcised/mutilated women. One of such complications is bladder damage because a freshly circumcised woman/girl would usually hold urine in the bladder longer than it is necessary, fearful of the excruciating pain which usually results from the contact of urine with a fresh wound. Furthermore, Ali identifies bed wetting as another implication for FC/FGM victims. "We all started wetting our beds after the circumcision" (p. 34), she writes. Mandara (2000) reports difficulty with urination and how "30.3 percent" (p. 102) of examined circumcised women suffer from vesicovaginal fistulae (VVF) – an abnormal condition in which there is a connection between the bladder and vagina, leading to uncontrolled leakage of urine. The bedwetting episode of Ali and Haweya, which starts after they are circumcised/mutilated, establishes a correlation with the prevalence of VVF incidents among circumcised women, as reported by Mandara (2000).

Since FC/FGM purportedly safeguards virginity, curbs sexual desire and panders to religious sentiments on purity, sex and sexuality talks are considered taboo and disallowed in practising societies to perpetuate a state of silence and ignorance: "Somalis almost never talk about sexuality directly. The subject is shameful and dirty" (*Infidel*, p. 112). Thus, a Somali woman's sexuality belongs to her family, which claims the right to own that body by sewing up the woman's genitalia to guarantee her virginity and prevent her from dishonouring the family. In this sense, no one tells a Somali woman who the owners of her body are because she just knows:

In our household, the whole subject of what was between your legs was taboo ... I was a Somali woman, and therefore my sexuality belonged to the owner of my family: my father or my uncles. It was obvious that I absolutely had to be a virgin at marriage because to do otherwise would damage the honor of my father and his whole clan – uncles, brothers, male cousins – forever and irretrievably. The place between my legs was sewn up to prevent it. It would be broken only by my husband. (p. 72)

Patriarchy, while freeing itself from the demands of imposed chastity, places that burden between the legs of women. To perpetuate the myth of superiority, patriarchy disregards the pain and complications that FC/FGM imposes on women's sexuality and health.

Even on the wedding night, avowed as one of the most memorable nights in a person's life, many circumcised/mutilated women only manage to live through the horrors of that night as sex becomes an ordeal for them. For an infibulated newlywed, on the night that is known in Somalia as 'Night of Defloration', sex is excruciating and brutal because tradition expects the groom to either cut the woman open with a knife, take her to the hospital for a deinfibulation operation, or prove his masculinity by pushing through the scar tissue between her legs with his penis. In Ali's memoir, three different experiences of first-time sex (night of defloration) exist to buttress this surreal ordeal: that of Haweya's friend, Sahra; Ali's friend, Jawahir; and Ali's own experience. Recounting her ordeal, Sahra:

(...) told Haweya what it was like when Abdallah had first tried to penetrate her after they were married: pushing his way into her, trying to tear open the scar between her legs, how much it had hurt. She said Abdallah had wanted to cut her open with a knife, because she was sewn up so tight that he couldn't push his penis inside. She described him holding the knife in his hand while she screamed and begged him not to. (pp. 90-91)

When Abdallah could no longer stand the intense screams and tears of the pain of his wife, "he agreed to take her to the hospital to be cut" (p. 91). Thus, Abdallah's decision to discontinue coitus in preference for Sahra's deinfibulation in a hospital saves both of them from a horrendous ordeal fraught with the dangers of physical and psychological injuries.

Jawahir's first sexual experience is more complicated than Sahra's. Unlike Abdallah, who decides to excuse himself from the encumbrance of cultural expectation and pseudo-masculinity, Jawahir's husband prefers to tow the line of tradition. In Jawahir's case, Ali, her husband: "(...) didn't cut her with a knife, just with his penis. It took a long time, and it hurt" (p. 113). At the end of the couple's first sexual intercourse, Jawahir suffers genital injuries that require her to: "apply Dettol to the parts that were bleeding" (p. 113). The author succeeds in casting FC/FGM as a practice that ensures the domination and brutalisation of women through sex; despite sex being one of the most intense and alluring experiences of humans.

The triad experiences of FC/FGM-related coitus pain shared by Ali continue with the details of her own 'Night of Defloration' experience, which is not remarkably different from that of her friends. Providing a vivid description of that horrible night with her husband, Mahmud, she writes: "He gasped and shoved and sweated with the efforts of forcing open my scar. It was painful and took so long. I gritted my teeth and endured the pain until I became numbed" (p. 143). In unflattering terms, which show how ugly sex often turns out for infibulated women like her, Ali describes the aftermath of sex with her husband: "My scar hurt so much that I could barely stand up" (p. 143).

Sadly, the narratives of the sexual encounters of infibulated women, exemplify a deliberate attempt to situate how FC/FGM damage the sexual life of millions of African women. Thus, it is easy to conclude that due to unpleasant sexual experiences, some circumcised/mutilated women may develop psychological problems, including frigidity – an aversion to sex – which in turn can lead to marital problems arising from an inability to conceive. The position above is supported by the studies of Lightfoot-Klein (1989) and Toubia (1994), which report on circumcised/mutilated women's tendency to show anxiety over whether their lack of sexual satisfaction would prevent them from getting pregnant, thereby putting a strain on their marriage due to childbearing expectations in practising societies. Ali's descriptions of painful sex in her memoir reinforce Boddy's (2007) argument that the matter of "female sexuality is ... a medical and moral issue" (p. 51). In that light, FC/FGM practices should not be tolerated, owing to the incalculable damage they do to the sex[uality] of women.

Infidel also attests to the fact that FC/FGM-related fatalities are often recorded. These fatalities are products of the crude manner and conditions under which the operations happen. An average reader cannot miss the implication of Ali's circumciser using bare teeth to "cut the thread off" (p. 32) the bleeding wound between her legs during her circumcision. Ali's memoir also shows that FC/FGM procedures are done without anaesthesia and sanitisers, thereby causing horrific pain, bleeding and, sometimes, death from infected wounds: "Many girls die during or after their excision, from infection. Other complications cause enormous, more or less lifelong pain" (p. 31). Without equivocation, the memoirist rejects FC/FGM because: "The entire procedure was torture for all" (p. 33) women who ever experienced it. The portrayal of the intense pain, suffering, and complications that circumcised/mutilated women endure in the immediacy of FC/FGM operation and much later send a strong signal from the author that this ancient ritual to the gods of virginity and chastity have no place in today's world.

Furthermore, it is imperative to state that Ali's *Infidel* succeeds in bringing to the fore the existence of another form of FC/FGM, which was thought to have been abandoned or had gone into extinction. Known among the Somalis as *Farooni*, this form is more severe than infibulation, already documented as the most invasive by scholars (Shell-Duncan and Hernlund, 2000; WHO, 1995). *Farooni* is so extreme that it can be easily said that victims have had their entire genitalia scraped away. Ali encounters a distressed victim of *farooni* while working in The Netherlands as an interpreter for a Dutch doctor, who could not understand his patient's unwillingness to undress for a scheduled medical examination of her genitalia. Ali recounts the feelings of shock and horror they have when confronted with the sight of *farooni* circumcision:

(...) when she climbed onto the table and he looked between her legs, he snapped back with shock, and swore. Then he angrily ripped his gloves off, because no steel tool was getting inside that. This girl had no genitals at all, just a completely smooth panel of scar tissue between her legs. This was the *farooni*, the excision so extreme that the woman's whole genitals are scraped off and mend into a hard band of dark skin. I had never seen one [...] but I knew what it was. The doctor, though, thought the girl had been burned. The whole medical team seemed shocked. (p. 213)

The extremity of farooni can shock every right-thinking person, forcing one to question why such extreme brutality is necessary to guarantee that a girl remains a virgin and chaste as legislated by misogynistic expectations.

Ali's portrayals of FC/FGM in her work can shock the reader into action against these practices, which she also succeeds in casting as a kind of gender-based violence. While appropriating her personal experience and those of other circumcised/mutilated women, Ali proceeds to privilege FC/FGM "as a kind of trauma" (*Infidel*, p. 231) from which victims hardly ever recover. With clarity and courage, Ali makes a personal declaration in *Infidel* against all forms of FC/FGM procedure, calling the practice cruelty against women. She writes: "The excision of women is cruel on many levels. It is physically cruel and painful; it sets girls up for a lifetime of suffering" (p. 140). The exploration of FC/FGM in Ali's work serves as an impetus for ongoing efforts that strongly dismiss the practice over its inherent capacity to negatively alter the lives, sexuality and wellness of millions of African women/girls based on traditional and religious dogmas contrived by patriarchy.

6. Ali's Metamorphosis: From a Mutilated and Wounded Child to Committed Activist

Infidel chronicles the metamorphosis of a wounded child into a committed activist. Ali deserves commendation for sharing the gory details of her own experience in her memoir to undermine the planks of culture and religion on which FC/FGM leans in practising societies. Ali's memoir also validates earlier fictional works, such as Ngugi's *The River Between* and Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* that accentuate certain life-threatening issues associated with FC/FGM practices. Being a product of a society, which is both traditional and religious, and born into a world in the firm grip of men who demand the complete surrender of women to codes of suppression, Ali's work must be recognised as an act of deviance and protest literature. However, the defiance and rebellion of the memoirist have come with their price. According to Levin (2009), Ali succeeds in giving accounts of her own transformation as well as many FC/FGM victims: "from blithe, frolicking children into subdued, saddened spirits, whose earlier robust rebelliousness has been quelled" (p. 3). She also narrates how FC/FGM significantly alters the life of her sister, Haweya, the most energetic and rebellious of three siblings: "Haweya was never the

same afterwards (...) She had horrible nightmares, and during the day began stomping off to be alone. My once cheerful, playful little sister changed” (p. 33). Subdued and dazed by the brutality of her circumcision, Haweya is forever lost in the wall of protection that she constructs in her mind as a shield from the pain and trauma of patriarchal-mandated violence.

Therefore, this paper praises the audacity of courage represented by Ali's documentation of FC/FGM experiences in her memoir, *Infidel*. Born and raised in a society structured to culturise and nativise girls/women into the silence of acceptance of patriarchy and its oppressive tendencies, the exposure of FC/FGM pains by Ali is not only an act of defiance but that of profound bravery too. Interestingly, there is a Somali proverb that goes thus: “When you're born as a woman, you must live as a woman” (p. 49). The foregoing anachronistic proverb derives both its origin and strength from the misogynistic belief that a woman is born into playing second fiddle. Hence, Ali's raised voice against FC/FGM in Somalia – a society where the voices of women are muffled under cultural and religious manipulations – signals that the author has taken seriously the challenge: “(...) to expose *women's* ordeals despite patriarchal-mandated silence.” (Asaah, 2009, p. 85, not in original)

7. Conclusion

Recent times have witnessed a trend in which renewed interest and much premium are being placed on the agency and specificity of FC/FGM-inspired memoirs. Ali's *Infidel* appropriates the memoir genre to show self-consciousness, personal experiences of pain, trauma, misery, an awareness of human realities and bodily integrity to deconstruct the burden that FC/FGM places on women. The memories of pains documented in the text validate appeals for its abolishment as the personal accounts of Ali and the stories of other women reinforce the urgency to put a stop to FC/FGM practices worldwide. The paper finds that the hermeneutics of *Infidel* signpost the capacity of literature to implicate FC/FGM and other practices contrived by patriarchy to dominate women. Ali seems to have heeded the battle call of feminists for women to rise to the occasion and destroy every vestige of patriarchy wherever and in whichever forms they exist. Without any doubt, Ali employs the memoir genre for an unambiguous, authorial excoriation of FC/FGM practices in her homeland, Somalia and everywhere. But aside from the explicit condemnation of these practices, which *Infidel* privileges, the personal accounts of FC/FGM in the text strike a connection or relationship of meaning with the reading public than earlier fictional texts. Therefore, this paper finds and recommends that in the push to eradicate FC/FGM practices worldwide, the voices of victims must be recognized, accentuated and deployed for maximum impact because the most persuasive campaigners against these practices remain the survivors themselves.

About the Author

Olumide Olugbemi-Gabriel, PhD is a researcher and teacher with interests in Postcoloniality, English for Communication, Film Studies, Migrant/Diaspora Literature, Gender and Cultural Studies. He is a 2017 German government (DAAD/InProTUC) visiting PhD scholar at Technische Universität, Chemnitz, and served a two-year Nigerian government teaching tour at Islamic University in Uganda. His articles have appeared in leaned journals and books.

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Literature of Pandemic: An Analytical Study of Select Literary Texts

Shibasambhu Nandi

Mail: shambhunandi1235@gmail.com

B-7, Boys Hostel Central University of Rajasthan Campus

NH-8, Bandar Sindri, Kishangarh

Rajasthan (Pin: 305817)

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Abstract

Change is a natural phenomenon. Everything we come across changes with time. This change occurs through evolution, a continuous and ever-changing process. Humans' present form is also the result of evolution. The history of evolution proceeds through various unwanted incidents. One such is the Pandemic that occurs age after age belittling humans and their progress. It brings death, destruction, and enormous devastation for a certain period. Later, humans revive it and come back to their usual selves. Though humans use to forget the impact of epidemics with the flying of time, literary history bears it through its creative artistic works. From ancient times to the present, literature chronicles every incident. The present paper aims to depict the relationship between literary works and the Pandemic. It also attempts to explore various socio-economic facts that people had to undergo during the time of the pandemic. It may also try to present the nature of literary works, and how these texts express the problems of plague victim people, which resulted in physiological and psychological puzzles.

Keywords: destruction, evolution, literature, pandemic, phenomenon

Shibasambhu Nandi, Mail: shambhunandi1235@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The history of humanity chronicles many deadly diseases that have occurred in different ages since the creation of the earth. Sometimes it was caused by external natural phenomena, sometimes by any fatal disease, creating havoc and damage to the whole world. People are powerless victims in front of those diseases. They are mere toys in such conditions. Not all the time, people accept it easily; they try to fight against it with the help of science and medicine. Despite that, they have to bear extensive losses due to spreading diseases, making humans face the disruption of social, economic, and political equilibrium. After the Pandemic stage is over, people get relief from it. Still, it results in traumatic, psychological, and physical disorders. Generation after generation has to bear the adversative sides of the Pandemic.

One such Pandemic occurred during the twenty-first century named, Covid-19. After the Second World War, this Pandemic created a never-ending mark in the history of human civilization. It not only occurs in one country but has a worldwide impact. It disables the balance of nature and human society. China was the first country affected by the disease, and very soon, it spread worldwide. Its fast advances made people afraid. When a large number of people started to die all over the world, the WHO declared it an epidemic. Most countries followed the lockdown to protect their land from the hands of those who had come from affected countries. Bus, trains, cars, and even planes were also canceled. Every country closed down its markets, shops, schools, colleges, factories, and other working places so that no one came close to others and got affected by others. It is a disease that spreads through the air from one man to another. Within a few months, one human became the enemy of another human. Everyone feared that they could be affected by others who came close to him.

People used to wear masks whenever they needed to go outside and washed their hands when they returned to their homes. They started to follow social distancing. News channels are always used to highlight what steps should be taken to avoid the infection of the disease. People became jobless and spent their time in their houses morosely. The education system was the worse sufferer. Due to the lockdown, schools and colleges were closed. Students forgot their study time because they feared that anything could happen anytime. They lose their average energy in reading. Even in the family, everybody looked at themselves with suspicious eyes. It is as if they are their enemy living under one shed.

This disease caused uncountable deaths leading to a dramatic loss of human lives worldwide. Does it pose the existential question-who is the human? Are they mere puppets in the hands of fate? Living is a blessing to everyone during the Pandemic, as the number of deaths crosses one lakh per day. The majority of people lack social protection and need quality health care. During this Pandemic, no productivity was there. Due to the loss of jobs, people faced a financial crisis and could not feed themselves and their families. Millions of agricultural workers regularly faced high poverty levels due to this disease. And those who had been working outside their homeland could not be able to return to their homeland. The most tragic incident arrived when they died, and their dead bodies were buried without a proper burial.

Before Covid-19, European people faced Black Death, the second to strike Europe during the late middle ages. The first one is the Great Famine of 1315-1317. It affected Europe violently, causing the death of many people. The famine emerged with the bad weather in 1315. Farmers failed to produce crops until 1317. Alongside the crop failure, cattle disease caused the sheep and cattle to fall as much as 80%. The price of food began to be rising, and it became almost double. This brought great famine. People thought it was divine retribution. It also undermined the institutional authority of the church. The famine begot class warfare and political strife, disestablishing the entire region. They stole everything from others to feed their children and family members. The condition went so worse that people began to eat dogs and horses. Even the law-abiding people were restored to criminality only to continue their daily lives.

After the Great Famine, the Black Death created a black chapter in human history. It killed almost 75 to 200 million people. The infection is caused chiefly by the bacterium *Yersinia*. It affected the countries like North Africa, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Germany, and others. It was believed that a ship from Calais carried the plague to Dorset. It resulted in a drastic change due to the catastrophic death of the people. The lands became complete with dead bodies. This also caused the ruin of many landowners. The city population was diminished drastically. It caused the disappearance of almost a thousand villages in England. This enormous biological crisis led to sociocultural changes such as a shortage of labor, the end of serfdom, and the creation of a free peasantry. The global flu or influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 overlapped with

World War I. It was estimated that almost one-third of the population is affected by this disease. Around 50 million people died all over the country.

It's a fact that the pandemic occurs deliberately in history. Whenever it appears, it destroys a social structure, economic stability, and the psychological strength of the people. A pandemic is a phenomenon which makes humans aware of what to do and how to behave in front of any deadly disease. It on the one hand unites people and on the other develops the fighting spirit of the people. Helpless people acquire the ability to face the pandemic heroically. So, the pandemic is important. Sometimes pandemic is used to destroy a whole society to give it a new birth. This study shows how pandemics were used deliberately to bring out the good in humans. Through the analysis of various texts, it aims to point out the hidden qualities of people that are expressed in problematic situations. Its target is to present the nature of diseases and how these diseases help people to come out of them. The objective of the study is to depict the texts from the thirteenth century to the present to show how humanity has been deliberately facing pandemics age after age.

2. Definition of Pandemic Literature

A pandemic is something that deals with death, destruction and decay. It is the dark side of human history. Whenever a pandemic appeared, it created a huge impact on all things. Literature is one such that is intricately related to the pandemic. Literature, through its literary creations, tries to present the pandemic in its own form. Therefore, pandemic literature is that literature which deals with the effects of the pandemic on the arts. The relationship between the pandemic and literature is intertwined. Literature chronicles the pandemic age after age. Pandemic literature arouses the eyes of the readers as it helps them to know the socio-political condition of the pandemic time. Scientific diaries and history also provide an account of the pandemic, but literature is different from that as it can grapple with the pity and fear of the readers through the presentations of the ups and downs of the characters' lives. Through its presentation of the emotion of the characters, it attracts the attention of the readers.

3. Review of Pandemic Literature

If anyone investigates the literary works of writers of several ages, s/he can easily understand what types of epidemics appeared in human history. Literature states pandemics and epidemics through the production of various texts by multitalented writers who tried to present the outbreak and its impact on people of all classes. In the Bible, the plague is considered something that the Gods provide in the form of punishment. It may be viewed as a warning against the movement of Israelites instructing them to behave morally. This causal relationship between pandemic and sin is also found in Greek literary texts such as Homer's *Iliad* and Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. *Iliad* depicts the plague as divine punishment, which attacked not only men but also dogs and mules. There were uncountable deaths of men and animals. In *Oedipus the King*, the plague is a miasma rather than just a disease that brought huge destruction.

This mainly happened, as they believed because they allowed a cursed person to harbor there. The plague destroyed crops, animals, and babies. Besides, the Greek historian Thucydides and Latin post-Lucretius described the supernatural origin of the diseases focusing on the description of uncontrollable fear among the citizens. They believed that the plagues caused selfishness and avarice among people, and it did inflict on all irrespective of good and evil. Boccaccio in *Decameron* and Geoffrey Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* captured the effect of the plague that occurred in the Middle Age. They focused on the rise of greed, avarice, vice, and corruption among people and pointed to the degeneration of human behavior at that time. *Journal of the Plague Year* by Daniel Defoe gave a detailed narration of events, anecdotes and statistics regarding the 1665 Great Plague. Italian novelist Alessandro Manzoni pointed out the detailed description of the plague that hit Milan almost around 1630 in his two works *The Betrothed* and *History of the Column of Infamy*. English gothic writer Mary Shelley in her *The Last Man* described a future world ravaged by plague. The novel also depicted how people use to avoid each other during the time of the plague, mostly those people who considered themselves immune to the disease. Edgar Allan Poe in his short story "The Masque of Red Death" presented plague by focusing on the metaphorical element of death. Here the author meditated on the inevitability of death and how people were plagued by death. With the advent of the nineteenth century, the definition of plague started to change. People are not in a position to accept the plague as a divine phenomenon. Scientists describe that plagues are mainly caused by various

bacteria and germs that infect humans. People start to take the plague as a natural phenomenon. Jack London in *The Scarlet Death* not only gives the details of the plague but also presents humans' acceptance of the plague caused by bacteria. He also presents how the dead bodies decompose very rapidly releasing billion of germs. Marissa Meyer in *Cinder* describes the Blue Fever or the Letumosis disease that causes havoc on the people and quarantines a whole race. Carole Stivers in *The Mother Code* describes a future city which faces the death of human beings due to an unknown disease. The disease kills newborn babies and their mothers. It leads scientists to take the help of artificial mothers to bring up immune children placing them far away from the city.

4. Analysis of Select Pandemic Texts

Boccaccio described a detailed picture of the contemporary society of his time through his artistic work *Decameron*. His depiction of the terrible suffering scenes of people and their interpersonal betrayal affect the readers highly. The people affected by the Black Death were terrified when they saw the black marks growing on their bodies. They knew that this was the apparent symptom of death. Anyone affected by this could not survive. Their immediate death imagination made their minds unstable and agitated. As per Boccaccio, almost 10000 people died within the walls of Florence. He narrates the physical, social and psychological sufferings of the people on the streets with plague boils and buboes. Due to this plague, the social order was ruined. Most of the people withdrew to protect themselves. Robbers deliberately stole money and valuable things from the houses of the neighbouring people. The feudal order was out of work, ill and weak. People started to lose their faith in religion and God. The whole society was imbalanced.

Alongside feudalism and belief, the church system was destroyed. The world had become upside down. The church failed to deliver its religious message to the people. Its virtuosity was getting dimmed regularly. The church officials also engaged themselves in sinful activities. The holy men tried to seduce the girls of the town. One of the sacred men locked a girl in his cell and put the key to the abbot as he had noticed the abbot was coming towards him. When the holy man realized he could be caught red-handed, he fictionalized a false story and thus saved himself from being revealed. In this way, he ridiculed the rule-bound nature of the church's ideas of sin.

Though he was successful in keeping himself safe from the hands of the abbot, he broke the trust of the people and the church. He would not be taken as an example of virtue. Instead, he would be the epitome of depravity to whom bodily pleasure was more important than spiritual and humanistic value. Boccaccio's point of view was that plague ruined the usual mental set of all types of people. That's why they engaged in sinful acts without thinking about the outcome of it. The epidemic had demoralized their mental setup. They forgot their duty toward society and towards their profession. Though it may be the stupidity of the people not to understand the future impact of their activities, they did it only to benefit the ruined society. To them, the present helpful value of bodily pleasure was more important than the outstanding futuristic respectable works. They wanted to enjoy the present moment as there was no surety of the unpredictable future in this plague.

Boccaccio's depiction of the plague offers a realistic account of the epidemic, its symptoms, and its impact on the country's people. Through this work provides the tragic story of the plague as well as he sets the play as an example of jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, and virtue. Decameron can also be taken as an instance to the readers of how to overcome the plague and how love and purity dominate over any disease. It opens up a new way for the twenty-first-century citizen to come out of depression, disease, and mental trauma. It teaches modern people that the corona situation and social distancing are not new phenomena; it has continued since immemorial. Florentine people had armed themselves against the ongoing plague. They followed moderation and serenity to avoid the current situation. Even read many positive stories to overcome the epidemic and contain mental peace before the massive outbreak. So, Decameron can be taken as a remedy to face Covid-19 as it is based on the experience of people who, like Covid affected country persons, met a deadly plague once.

Journal of the Plague Year by Daniel Defoe is the second one that provides us with a clear picture of the great plague that devastated Europe in the eighteenth century. Defoe wrote the book as a warning informing the country people that plague in Marseilles could cross into England anytime. He advised people what to do to avoid the curse. It also describes the condition of London streets, alleys, churchyards, and pubs. People initially did not know they were affected by it, so they carried it unknowingly. Due to this plague, twenty percent of the people had to face death. The outbreak was believed to have started in December 1664 after the goods were

imported from Holland. Initially, the number of fatalities was few and restricted to St. Giles and Long Acre. By June, there was a sign of change as the disease spread throughout the whole city. Low-level fear and uneasiness began to grow among the city people. What kind of pathetic situation did city people face when a mother killed her children in her lunacy? The case not only creates fear but also gathers the readers' sympathy. His depiction of the people who regularly died on the street brings the reader's sympathy towards them, who have nothing to do but accept death openly. The dead bodies were laid on the road in such a way that they were of no value and were there just to be cremated by the government. The rest of the people who were alive used to avoid the highways full of dead bodies. There was no sympathy for fellow human beings. Earlier, people used to arrange a proper burial for dead bodies. Now the situation is different. People used to get scared of dead bodies as the dead bodies might infect the living ones. This work is a testimony to the grim reality of life. Fear of death has changed all the good of human beings. It is also true that everyone will try to save themselves and their near and dear ones when there is death in a life situation. It is the existential crisis of the whole city.

Years of Wonder: A Novel of the Plague by Geraldine Brooks is also centered on the theme of the Pandemic. It is based on the true stories of the village, Eyam. It was under the threat of a Pandemic spread in London and is carried on to the town through the character George. After him, most of the villages got affected by the disease. But the villagers made an excellent decision to save the entire city. They quarantined themselves and did not allow anyone to cross the village border. They sacrificed not for themselves but for the good of humanity. It may be that they could be cured of the disease if taken to the city hospital, but there also lies the risk that the city people might get affected by them. Their decision placed them as logically minded citizens of the globalized world. Through their self-sacrifice, they put themselves in the position of martyrs who sacrifice for the country's greater good. Besides, Anna's role in helping Michael Mompellion and his high-born wife set the example of good-natured human beings even in a state of dire crisis. Brooks presents two themes equally- weaving a highly readable tale of immense pain, degradation, and fear and of ultimate truth.

Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* is an apocalyptic novel, dealing with the issue of the Pandemic. To Mary Shelley, the disease was a common factor that shattered her mentally, physically, and psychologically. She lost her mother due to puerperal fever. Her son William died

at three after being attacked by malaria. Her daughter Clara died because of dysentery at age one. Even her husband, Percy Shelley, committed suicide. Deaths and diseases made her life unbearable. This led her to write the novel *The Last Man*, which speaks about the worldwide Pandemic of that time. The book is set in the twenty-first century. Lionel Verney narrates it. His friend was Benevolent Lord Protector. Verney, his friend, his sisters, and their lovers were engaged in an intricate relationship with each other, which made the government busy solving their problems. As a result, state officials failed to take immediate steps for the Pandemic. It led to a series of natural disasters that intensified the plague. Among the incidents are the black sun, tidal surges, earthquakes, etc. Several poets died because of this disease. It recounts the history of massive losses that Europe had to bear. People felt isolated and traumatized, which is reflected through the actions of the novel's characters. The book ends with the destruction of the human race.

Close to the side of the story of deaths, the novel also portrays the story of the extinction of human civilization, which collapsed due to the outbreak of the unstoppable plague. The human population started to become extinct daily. But Shelley argues that the Pandemic not only brings the destruction of the human race but also it helped nature to be nourished. The more people died, the more survivors emerged, making the biodiversity balanced. The world began to regain the natural beauty that was lost before the plague due to the development of Industrialization. Her novel presents a human-less world that is in the process of regaining its vitality. This work presents a world that was reviving its lost spirit and strengths.

Cholera that spread from 1817 to 1824 throughout the Indian subcontinent terrified humanity. The economic stability of the people was damaged after this deadly Pandemic. The prosperity of the nation is at stake at that time. The whole country had to encounter extensive loss. Despite its adverse side, it united the people irrespective of class, gender, and race. Their motto was to fight against the disease jointly. Survival was more important to them. Art, politics, and faith failed to define humanity; humanity is defined by fellow feeling, compassion, and community. The novel also makes it clear that humans are not the sole authority in the universe; humans are one of the species among others. If they need to survive, they must depend on other beings. This is the Post-anthropocentric view, which states that all beings on earth have equal rights. This stands in contrast to anthropocentrism, which argues that humans are the universe's

controlling factor. Humans are the most valuable and rational beings on earth; they must be protected at any cost. Due to this, humans dominate the whole world and try to control the lives of others on earth.

Albert Camus' *The Plague* is a documentary of the plague that destroyed the city of Oran. It was published in 1947. It is told from the point of view of a narrator. It presents a snapshot of life in Oran as seen through the author's distinctive absurdist point of view. This is the fictional account of the plague that Camus tries to present here. He offers people's experiences during the epidemic; it isn't easy to survive in such situations. First, in the city of Oran, rats started to die. People got afraid of sudden unnatural deaths. This fear transformed into a panic when one of the city people died from a strange fever. When the number of deaths increased, the government closed the city gates and quarantined the city, of Oran. People of that city believed that it was a divine punishment. Considering it, they started to leave the city. The problem occurs when in other places, they were treated as criminals. Tarrou, one of the characters, organized an anti-plague sanitation league, and many volunteers joined to help. The death toll is so high that authorities have to cremate the bodies. Characters watched each other die in front of them. They performed the role of the observer. Then the people started to fight back, though they knew very well that the victory was temporary over the plague as the bacteria would lie dormant in that city.

Camus' primary purpose is to show that the world is meaningless and absurd. There is no God or cosmic order. Humans are doomed to suffer and die. The town he presents is the microcosm of the whole universe. The book is more than a tale about the disease; it is also an intensely layered meditation on the human condition and the obligations humans have to undergo. It stresses the powerlessness of the individual characters to affect their destiny. It is an atheist world with no reason to blame fate or others. Camus uses the epidemic to explore relationships, community, and existence. It also may be taken as men's propensity towards chaos and evil while ultimately remaining good. The text uses plague to refer to how humans choose life. Do the people of Oran will accept the epidemic without any true thinking or accept death as a complex way of life and receive it as the gift of divinity? It lies in the hands of the humans whether they should face death bravely or flee from the fearful thought of death and accept life as it is. In this way, the book throws several questions relating to the nature of destiny and human conditions.

The Scarlet Plague by Jack London centres on the Red Death epidemic. The novel deals with the 2073 futuristic world in which the narrator recounts the events that happened sixty years before the novel's actual setting. The book is narrated by James Smith, one of the survivors of the Red Death disease. He was an English professor. The disease came out when he was young. Due to the rapid spreading of the disease, people felt scared of the disease. The victims' faces started to be scarlet, and they felt numbness in the lower portion of their bodies. Affected people died within 30 minutes of the disease. There was no cure at that time. The doctors failed to provide treatment to the patients. One day, while James was teaching, one of his students became senseless and died within a few minutes. The whole campus was sealed. When James came to his house, his family members accepted him with suspicion on him as they believed that he was also affected by that disease. Later, the whole area was affected by the disease. Only a few were there after the period of the disease was over. The Scarlet Plague provides a fictionalized account of the Pandemic Red Death that killed the lives of billions of people. It is similar to Covid 19 as both diseases decimated the human population and made human civilization suffer with bare survival. The novel also sets in 2013, six years earlier than Covid. The Red Death disrupted the usual way of people's lives, making them face socio-economic challenges. People at the beginning took the disease lightly, believing that the doctors would undoubtedly find out a way of the disease. But later, it resulted in a life-threatening one.

Like *The Scarlet Plague*, Marissa Meyer's *Cinder* is also a futuristic novel set in New Beijing. The title character is Cinder, who is a cyborg. She is a mechanic by profession. She has her companion Iko who is an android. She lives with her stepmother and two sisters. Their city is under the threat of Letumosis disease. Their neighbor Chang Sacha is the first one attacked by the disease. Later, Cinder's sister Peony also gets the disease. Their mother, Adri, thinks it is because of Cinder, Peony is ill as the infection spreads from the market, and Cinder works in the market as a mechanic. When the government accepts humans, androids, and cyborgs for the trial of the disease, Adri donates Cinder for the trial of the anti-dote, though Cinder does not do so as it may lead her to die untimely. But later, it is revealed that Cinder has the antibody immune. She has developed a healthy relationship with Dr. Erland during the trial process. Even Prince Kai, would be king of the city, like Cinder. Kai's father also died because of the disease. The

government quarantines the citizens who are affected by the disease. Their family members are also quarantined if they bear the light symptoms of the disease.

Cinder opens up a scope to critically discuss the characters that attacked and their attitude towards each other. Cinder's mother, Adri, is presented here as a foil to Cinder. However, Cinder's mother does not have any sympathy toward Cinder. When she knows that in the market, one of their neighbors is the victim of Letumosis, she does not allow Cinder to stay in her house. She does not have minimum love for Cinder; otherwise, she cannot send her for the trial of the disease. It may be that in the trial process, Cinder can die. She does not even ask Cinder whether she agrees with the fact or not. It is as if Cinder is her possession. Cinder has no opinion of her own; she has to obey her mother's orders. While the government officials have come to take Cinder away, she cries and requests her mother not to send her there. The disease may kill her. But Adri was too adamant to care for her earnest appeal. To Adri, money is more important than her daughter. She only wants the money the government will provide her family for sending her children for the trial. This is how the novel presents a different story of the mother-daughter relationship. The relationship between the mother and her daughter is upside down. It may also be that due to her Cinder identity, she is neglected by her mother.

Apart from Adri, her other sister Pearl always wants to get rid of Cinder. Like Adri, she also despises her vehemently. When Cinder returns to her house from the market, Pearl opposes Cinder. She supports her mother in not allowing Cinder in the house. Even when Cinder wants to join the ball, Pearl insults her, saying that a machine will dance! Peony, Cinder's other sister, is opposite Adri and Pearl. She always supports Cinder. She loves Cinder very much. While all her family members chide Cinder, she stands beside Cinder. Though Peony is identified as a victim of Letumosis, she does not believe that Cinder is the cause of her disease. She tells Cinder that she must not feel guilty for her disease. Cinder also returns her favor and love. When Cinder knows she has the antibody cell within her, she immediately goes to meet Peony, avoiding the risks of her life. There she informs her that the vaccine will come soon and she will not have to worry much. She has to be mentally strong and fit, as it will help her to fight against the disease. Even she requested Dr. Erland to give Peony the first dose of the vaccine. When the vaccine is prepared, she steals a vaccine for Peony and saves her life. This is how Peony and Cinder present

here an affectionate sisterly relationship. Amid betrayal, rejection, and avoidance, these two sisters represent love and trust in each other.

Cinder is also a story of an updated modern society where humans live and accept the citizenship of androids, medoids, and cyborgs. These artificial beings are also engaged in different fields of activities. Some androids work as newspaper reporters. Medroids are busy sending people into quarantine, and thus they save the lives of many people. If humans do the same work, they can also be affected by the disease. But Medroids cannot receive the disease because they are not humans but rather machines. They will not have to face death, unlike humans. People will not also be affected by them. Apart from that, androids and cyborgs are used for the trial process, which may indirectly reduce the deaths of people. If humans are used instead of artificial beings, they have to bear the adverse effect of the disease; it may be that the disease can infect them. Therefore, technology helps to save human lives.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that the Pandemic is a natural and normal phenomenon that has been happening since the birth of humans. It brings death and destruction to humans and the world. For a certain period, it continues to reign over humans. But after that initial period, every human started to fight against it. The more the day passes, it uses to lose its magnanimity. Apart from its opposing sides, it has its positive aspects. It reduces traffic accidents as no vehicles are on the road during the Pandemic. Nature gets time to recover itself. Many unknown animals have started to flourish in the natural world. Aquatic biodiversity improves as all the factories are locked due to the absence of men at that time, and there is no water pollution. The Pandemic helps to build genuine relationships with family members as all are quarantined at home. It also gives birth to a new wave of tools and systems like online e-service, home delivery, etc. The education system is also digitalized, which helps students to continue their study digitally. Staying at home gives the benefit of developing better hygiene as almost everyone may try to follow yoga and free-hand practices to make them fit mentally and physically.

Boccaccio's *Decameron* provides a brief account of love and trust among people despite the deadly conditions faced by people. It is the work that helps to build a positive mental set-up in a state of dire crisis. Geraldine Brooks' *Years of Wonder* is also a tale of logical-minded citizens who died through suffering and still not allowed the disease to spread all over the city so that the other citizens may be safe from the disease. Mary Shelly's *The Last Man* points out the posthumanism angle stating that every species on earth has the equal right to survive. It is a world of cohabitation and coexistence of all beings irrespective of humans, animals or other beings. Camus' *The Plague* questions the purpose of human existence. It depicts the helplessness of people in the hands of destiny and the destruction of the belief of humans in Gods and divine figures. *The Scarlet Plague* by London presents separate views of the family members. One member of a family appears strange to others if s/he has become the victim of a deadly disease. It is a novel about the internal division of family life. Whereas Meyer's *Cinder* brings up a new way of looking at the disease and its cure, as it is the novel that depicts the uses of artificial beings for the trial process of diseases. Earlier humans did not have the idea that cyborg figures can be taken for the production of vaccines. This novel makes clear the positive aspects of machines and artificial beings.

About the Author

Mr. Shibasambhu Nandi is a research scholar in the Department of English at the Central University of Rajasthan, situated at Ajmer, Rajasthan. He had completed his MA from The University of Burdwan in 2019 from West Bengal.

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Exploring Activist Poetics and the Nigerian Leadership in Ndubuisi Martin's *Answers through the Bramble*

Bartholomew Chizoba Akpah, PhD
Department of Languages and Literature
William V. S. Tubman University
Harper, Liberia
E-mail: chizobamnwakpah@gmail.com

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Abstract

Ndubuisi Martins, one of Nigeria's young contemporary poets, reincarnates the vagaries of Nigeria's neo-colonial desolation, which reflects a culture of mediocrity in Nigerian leadership and the continuous suffering of the masses. He lays bare in his poetry a strict disapprobation of dysfunctional and catatonic conditions that continue to widen the gap between the disadvantaged Nigerians and the political class that this study investigates. Thus, the significance of the study lies in the intervention of poetry as activism by Ndubuisi Martins to excoriate and negotiate better living conditions for the Nigerian masses. The study adopts Marxism literary theory which explores the consciousness of class struggle in the interpretation of five selected poems: "To a returning general"; "When you said..."; "silence is spirit"; "The Reports", and "Naija is a badly behaved poem". The selected poems were critically analyzed as reflections of Nigeria's leadership complexities that impose hardship on the Nigerian masses. This is what Martin's poetry fustigates in *answers through the bramble* as a literary activist and intellectual voice against the tyranny of the ruling class in Nigeria.

Keywords: Ndubuisi Martins, Nigerian leadership, activism, Marxism, Nigerian masses

Bartholomew Chizoba Akpah, E-mail: chizobamnwakpah@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Literature over the years offers itself as activism against social malady. Prominent African-American writers - Fredrick Douglass, Toni Morrison, Anna Cooper, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Amiri Baraka and the like have deployed literature as social activism against the stultification of humanity. The afore-stated writers for instance are widely known for challenging the ills of racial injustice and the subjugation of the black race.

Similarly, the consciousness of western incursion into the African space and the attendant imposition of colonial rule also sparked a greater deal, of activist literature from African writers. Imaginative writings like *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Things Fall Apart* (Chinua Achebe), *Petals of Blood* (Ngugi wa Thiong'o), *House Boy* (Ferdinand Oyono), *The Will to Die* (Can Themba), arguably typify activist literature on African colonialism. Other writers especially in the genre of poetry resonate with activist poetics which interrogates the cannibalistic nature of slavery in Europe and America. This is evident in T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland", James Grainger's "The Sugar Cane", Percy Shelley's "Ozymandius", Christina Rossetti's "My Dream", Gabriel Okara's "You laughed and laughed", Raza Ali Hassan's "On Imperialism".

Besides monolithic activist literature on themes of slavery and colonialism, African writers in recent times focus mainly on the staggering contemporary realities such as apparent hardship and dystopia characterized by social injustice and poor governance. Sule E. Egya's *Poetics of Rage: A Reading of Remi Raji's Poetry* undoubtedly represents and explores activist poetry exemplified in Raji's art. Also, Nigerian poets like Niyi Osundare, Ezenwa Ohaeto, Joe Ushie, Ifowodo Ogaga, Tanure Ojaide, Odia Ofeimun, Remi Raji share common activist poetics one gets in their forbearers like Wole Soyinka and Christopher Okigbo as poets cum writers whose literature justifiably portrays the truculent leadership that subject Nigerian masses to further privations.

Remarkably too, young Nigerian poets do not pretend to be onlookers in condemning the maladministration of the Nigerian state. They also deploy their art as activist writers to excoriate bad leadership while negotiating better welfare of the citizenry. Thus, young Nigerian poets like Ndubuisi Martins, Aduragbemi Ojo, Romeo Oriogun, Barth Akpah, Razak Malik, Stephen Khekehege, Utibe Hanson, Ifesinachi Nwadike. Funmi Gaji, Charles Akinsete among others, utilize their art in the documentation and condemnation of the pervasive insensitivity of Nigerian leaders against the Nigerian masses. The growing numbers of literary imaginations in the genre of poetry have shown that Nigerian poets unmistakably represent the voices and yearnings of the underrepresented and marginalized Nigerian citizens. This study sets,

therefore, to explore Martins' poetry as activism and advocacy for the masses' enhanced welfare in the face of the staggering insensitivity of the ruling class. Hence, the study is an addition to the growing poetics of young Nigerian poets in the national consciousness of leadership failure and a strong force and protest for good governance.

2. Literature Review

Nigerian Poetry and Literary Activism

The intellectual voices of contemporary Nigerian poets reverberate the dysfunctional conditions of the suffering masses. This is evident in the neocolonial oppression of disadvantaged Nigerians. Awhefeada (2017) expostulates that post-independence Nigerian literature reflects the drubbing of Nigeria's harsh conditions. The poetry of the 1980s and 1990s birthed activist poetry on themes of "military dictatorship and the many ills it bequeathed the nation". Among the many ills of military dictatorship are human rights violations, breach of the constitution, inflation, and poor governance. Nigerian poets of the military and post-military eras are on the same lane with the deprived and subjugated poor citizens as their advocates. This is exemplified in the poetry of Niyi Osundare, Joe Ushie, Tanure Ojaide, Odia Ofeimun, Harry Garuba, Molar Ogundipe-Leslie, Ada Ugah and others. Ada Uga's second collection, *Song of Talakawa* (1985) is made up of poems which represent the dispossessed and suffering masses. Her poetry without scruples demonstrates a poet who identifies with the *talakawas* (the poor).

Also, activism in Nigerian poetry dwells on themes and sub-themes like the despoliation of the environment and clamour for a safer environment. For example, Ojaide's volume *Delta Blues* (2002) typifies the resistance and activism against the ecological imperialism of the oil-rich Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The frustration and dehumanization of the people of Niger-Delta region, due to long years of environmental pollution, have invariably stirred eco-activist poetics in Ojaide's poetry. Nwagbara (2010) validates this when he writes succinctly that Ojaide's poetry echoes the coercive exploitation of the rich mineral resources in the Niger-Delta without recourse to the safety of the environment and the residents. The author writes further that Ojaide's poetry:

Highlights the system of exploitative environmental policies that place the multinational corporations represented by Shell, AGIP, Texaco, Chevron, and Mobil as well as the political elites above the people (the subaltern), thereby destroying the Nigerian environment. (p. 22)

Nwagbara's opinion above on Ojaide's poetry echoes intellectual activism via literary production against oil spillage and contamination of water, air, land, and the negative implications which affect the means of livelihoods of the residents.

Besides, activist poetics on the protection of the environment and the challenges of pollutions which negatively impact the flora and fauna of the ecological zones of the Niger-Delta, Niyi Osundare's "Deep Green" also represents eco-activist poetry on anthropocentrism. His poetry speaks against poor consideration for environmental balance. Chigurupati (2020) attests that Osundare expresses pain over the brutish and selfish human disposition to the environment. According to Chigurupati's words, Osundare "earnestly laments over the degradation, deforestation, and death of the ecology and human destiny thereafter" Osundare's "Deep Green (Once Upon a Forest)" justifies further:

Deep green, my testament, as I forage
through this forest of vanished glories,
my memory one shell of naked echoes

Roots have shriveled in
earth's heat-harrassed crypt
blighted leaves float in the wind
like flakes of careless scars

Long-limbed lumberman have
Laid low the loins of the land;
the Yes-I birds have left
with their rainbow songs

The desert marches towards the sea,
a haughty, implacable army...

Once (not too long ago)
I talked to trees in this forest
and trees talked back to me.

Deep green (Osundare, 2017, p.1)

Osundare's oeuvre strongly condemns the doom and gloom of deforestation that has become a threat to climate stability in Nigeria. One can conclude that Osundare's spiritual disconnection with the forest, because of the intruding activities of lumbermen is portrayed in "Deep Green". Thus, the ecological dimension of the poem is a testament to the poet's activist advocacy for the protection of the forest that has gradually become "forest of vanished glories".

In feminist struggle, activism in Nigerian imaginative art reflects the flowering of female voices whose creative works confront unequivocally hegemonic stances against women. Hence, Nigerian female writers challenge various patriarchal dominance and negative stereotypical underpinnings which limit the visibility of womanhood or relegate women to marginal space. Literary activism of Nigerian women writers gravitates toward resistance to oppressive male dominance and limitation to women's freedom of expression and right to existence (Akpah, 2018). Hence, activist literature of women's writings pushes women to live out of the circle of cultural exigencies which limit their aspirations. High-ranking Nigerian feminist writers include Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie, Sefi Atta, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, Buchi Emecheta, Unomah Azuah, Chinelo Okparanta, Lola Shoneyin, Chika Unigwe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and the like. Lola Shoneyin while responding to an interview with D'Clark (2020) is of the view that society should move beyond "the ecology of gender binaries". Shoneyin's literary activism and feminist advocacy manifest in her poetry collection: *So All the Time I Was Sitting on an Egg* (1998). Shoneyin's unapologetic body poetics deconstruct gender roles. She negotiates unhindered freedom for women's existence, choices, and aspirations for a better life. Shoneyin's radical feminist streak appears to be on the same terrain as Azuah's unrelenting feminist stance which counters poor imaging and limitation of women.

Literature undoubtedly is a potent activist force and instrument for the conscientization of every society. This means the masses need a viable literary production for activism and social change in Nigeria where leaders have failed the citizens whom Ojogan (2010) describes as "those who bear the yoke of oppression" and have no choice but to speak up in revolt.

3. The Marxist Orientation in Twenty-first-Century Young Nigerian Poets

Fyfe's (2020) essay "Marxism and African Literary Studies today" downplays the relevance of post-colonial Marxist evaluation of African imaginative art. Fyfe (2020) believes that there is the decline in socialism and Marxist struggles in Africa today unlike the days of political figures like Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, or Thomas Sankara in the 1970s and 1980s. While this may be true to some extent, a cursory look at the "Sorosoke" #End SARS

movement in Nigeria attests to the collective struggles and protests by the largely Nigerian youths against the brutality and excesses of the country's military and paramilitary agencies. The struggle primarily was a confrontation and call for the disbandment of the infamous Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), whose excesses have been criticized heavily. The #EndSARS movement expanded further to protest the ineptitude of the Nigerian political class. The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria reawakens the demand for social justice, financial accountability, and good governance. Adisa (2020) argues that #EndSARS protest was the Nigerian masses' struggle to "end capitalist oppression and exploitation". This presupposes that #EndSARS protests exemplify one of the core values of Marxism. For decades, the precarious state of the Nigerian entity which reflects in her ailing democracy warrants the masses' protests in major Nigerian cities of southern Nigeria.

Olaopa (2020) posits that in Marxist analysis, protests become inevitable and at the center of discourse because the capitalist society allocates power to the superstructure (the rich) leaving the poor to the margins and struggling for survival. Olaopa's position aligns with the avalanche of literary production associated with the #EndSARS protest. For instance, *SOROSKE: AN #ENDSARS ANTHOLOGY* edited by Verissimo and Yeku (2021) embodies the tales of the torturing, debauching and systematic dehumanization of Nigerians by the government's quasi-military agencies. The Marxist confrontation against the brutality of the notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad breathes in the poem "Bubu" by Yeku:

The streets are heaving with anxiety,
as screens and smartphones pour tales of grief
into your chest; you wonder what gestures
to end czars will unloose the tongue of bubu.

But alas, Bubu speaks, but of clouds without rain,
Dreaming hurricanes as he gaslights a nation
without fuel, in a paradise drained of life and lustre;

those who die are as the cattle of Daura, invisible. (p.34)

From the foregoing, one sees that the poet sits on the side of the #EndSARS protesters. Martins decries the battering of the land and the painful insensitivity of the Nigerian leader who is sarcastically referred to as Bubu which is a sarcastic reference for the Nigerian president, Buhari. The president's negligence in the heat of the protest unfortunately has made the land lose its "life and lustre". The Marxist inclination of the poem is exemplified again in Ndubuisi Martin's "Asking for Sunrise and Getting Silence" in the same anthology. In the poem, the

brutality of the state deployed to squelch the #ENDSARS mass protest reincarnates in the second stanza of the poem:

Asking for sunlight meant
We want too much desert after
A dinner of rhetoric, and all we get
Is the garrison sprinkle of blood,
The silence that yawns long after
D.J Switch let the digit eyes see
The way an answer comes in the regalia of blood
At Lekki gate. (p.28)

Ndubuisi's "silence" in the poem's title is a metaphor for oppression. Nigerian government led by retired general Muhammadu Buhari rather than tackle the concerns of the youths preferred bloodbath with the "sprinkle of blood" during the #EndSARS protest led by one of the leading protesters, "D. J Switch". Switch's camera captured the brutal killings of the protesters at the popular Lekki Toll Gate where the protesters had assembled for the protest.

Marxist interpretation of literary texts primarily explores the consciousness of class struggle, the oppressed and the oppressor, and the silenced and the silencer. It is a deliberate effort at investigating opposing forces – the struggles of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in which the latter aims at attaining positive transformation and improved status. Mambol (2016) argues that positive transformation occurs because of opposing forces between the two struggles. The product of such struggles often yields positive transformation. Straight from the shoulder, it is the quest for social transformation and improved welfare of the *hoi polloi* that stimulates literary activism of the Marxist orientation. Art thus becomes a tool for social transformation.

Marxism generally credited to Karl Marx aims at dialectical materialism which negotiates the overall progress of society. Mambol (2016) states further that dialectical materialism for Marxists as an effective tool exposes the secrets behind the social processes and their future course of development. Also, the common goal of Karl Marx, Luckas Bertolt Brecht and Louis Althusser who are the core proponents of Marxism is summarized in attaining fairness in the distribution of resources between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for the overall interest of social change and liberation. Therefore, the liberationist aesthetics which characterize contemporary and young Nigerian poets validate the continuous struggle for social change in their imaginative art.

4. Exploring Ndubuisi Martin's Activist Poetics in *answers through the bramble*

Ndubuisi Martins' jaunt into the Nigerian literary space began in 2017 with the birthing of his first volume of poetry, *One Call Many Answers*. Several of the poems in the collection navigate the Nigerian state with a strong mission to call out ineffectual leaders for the miserableness and alienation of the Nigerian masses. The symbolic hangover which lies in Ndubuisi's title seems the government has become helpless and lacks credible answers (solutions) to the agitations of the downtrodden as portrayed in Martin's *One Call Many Answers*.

In Martin's second collection, *answers through the bramble*, the poet's critical faculty and Marxist mission beyond a shadow of doubt come out boldly to condemn and challenge the pernicious marginalization of the poor by the Nigerian upper class and political leaders. The systematic marginalization over the years continues to deprive under-class Nigerian citizens.

Nigerian citizens have suffered years of military rule that were characterized by anguish, desultory misgovernance and the like. The incursion of the military into Nigeria's political space was a bad omen that negatively hampered the stability of Nigeria's democratic values. War, poverty, corruption, and ethnic and religious sentiments remain part of the fall-out of military irruption. Against this background, Martins rues the re-entry of a former army general (Buhari) into Nigeria's democracy as a civilian president. The poet adumbrates this in the poem: "To a returning general":

Let the mat spread through this path as we hail
the general who returns, four times denied,
now emerges with the heads of his four enemies
under his armpit, for the Aso carnival scrub,
the flavour of a repeated song on civil lips
(*answers through the bramble*, p. 12).

A discerning reader can easily interpret the satirical notion in the first stanza of the poem. True, due to the perceived failure of Goodluck Jonathan administration, which was characterized by corruption, especially in key government agencies, many celebrated the second coming of Buhari as timely even after he failed repeatedly the four times he contested. The artistic representation of the carnival-like atmosphere by Buhari's supporters is satirically depicted in the opening stanza of the poem as shown above. However, the mood of despair which suggests the tragedy of a nation justified by the vulturous disposition of the returning general pervades the last three stanzas of the poem:

We now step into the new baptism of change,
another maxim perennially renewed to woo us
we, whose sense of history is the very graveyard
of amnesia, we, who leave wound to fester flies until
our neighbours cope with the frequent fragrance
that defines our homeland.

We snore and snort for we are here at this Rome
where our rear-guard, old vicar is now a repentant
democrat, ready to enthrone silence and give sword
to the air, promulgate decrees and claim the see
of spirit, ready to cure the darkness on the land
with the grief of fictive Egypt .(*answers through the bramble*, p.12)

From the foregoing, Martins enunciates the baptism of fire evidence in the mass disillusionment of the populace because of the Buhari led administration which has failed the Nigerian masses with the phoney mantra of "change". Martin's anger switches to the oppressed masses who constitute the bulk of the electorates for re-electing Buhari in 2019 despite their apparent dissatisfying first term in office as a civilian president. It is worth stating that the poet's decision to include himself as part of the masses who had lost their sense of history with short-lived memory justifies his affinity and inclusion as victim of poor governance. They sheepishly continue to re-elect iniquitous leaders into public office. Martin's creative maturity is evident in how he carefully deploys irony and humor to dilute the searing temperature of pain that Nigerians face under the regime of Muhammadu Buhari since his assumption of office as Nigeria's civilian president in 2015.

It is ironical that the “retired army general” deserves “fourteen gunshots” for promoting obliquely characterized appointments in critical sectors of the country despite claiming that he “belongs to nobody and for everybody”. The raw absurdity of the rudderless administration of Buhari’s civilian regime activates the lamenting voice in Martin’s poetics despite his attempt to mask that in pigeon laughter. Thus, rather than promote equity and national cohesion, the administration of Buhari paid wispy interest to the abstruse diversity of the Nigerian state by promoting ethnic and religious sentiments. The audacious activities of herdsmen attacks across Nigeria exemplify this. Martins amidst humor alludes to this in the last stanza of the poem “to a returning general”:

Fourteen gunshots for the old general who belongs
to nobody and for everybody, who must answer
the surname of herds. (*answers through the bramble*, p.12)

Martin’s activist poetics sits in between the condemnation of Buhari-led administration’s perceived tacit support to the herdsmen and their villainous activities across the country. The poet calls for sanity in the polity. The poet’s Marxist sensibility and disapprobation against the “returning general” and his deplorable leadership failure are rekindled in the poem “when you said....” In the poem, the poet chronicles what has become the theatrics of election campaign promises which are plagued with deceit. In most cases, unpatriotic and greedy politicians deceive Nigerian electorates with fake promises.

Martins deploys his creative instinct as a public intellectual to portray the unending rhetoric of deception among the ruling class. Before the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, salvaging Nigeria’s economy, and security, and tackling corruption were the major campaign promises of the then-presidential candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Muhammadu Buhari. After Buhari emerges as President, the outcome of his performance in tackling corruption, insecurity and the ailing economy was far below the expectation of the electorates and at variance with the campaign promises made to them prior to the election. It is this irony of what was said (promised) and the reality that Martins ingeminates in the poem “When you said...”:

I waited through still-birther answers
after you, slay man, called.
When you said lies will steer the strife
Of your predecessor, we, eager parliaments
Parroted your creed, coveted your rhetoric...
we kept our doors open for the guardian star,
but here we have the scars of multiple stabs,
yours now outnumber the vilest of them.
(*answers through the bramble*, p.13)

The poem above shows that the poet's persona is miffed at the disconnect between the garnished campaign promises made and the disconsolate failure that accompanies such promises. From the foregoing, the poet rues the lack of integrity and failure of major political actors to live up to their words when elected to public office. For instance, the change mantra which is associated with the ruling party (APC), was to represent a positive transformation of the economy, security, and reduction of corruption in Nigeria's major sectors and public governance. Obviously, the masses have been bumped off by the "slay man" which is a metaphor for the elected delusory leaders alluded to by Adisa (2020). The pain in the poet's voice resonates in:

...we, eager parliaments
parroted your creed, coveted your rhetoric...
we kept our doors open for the guardian star,
but here we have the scars of multiple stabs,
yours now outnumber the vilest of them. (*answers through the bramble*, p.13)

From the above, one feels the pains of the poet persona, on the face of it regrets supporting, campaigning, and voting unavailing leader as a rock-ribbed follower before the election. Martins stirs the contestations of campaign propaganda in Nigeria's wobbling democracy and leadership failure by those Adeniyi (2021) describes as people whose greed is driven by "unending speculation in Nigeria's oil wealth" (p. 399). Okolie, Enyiazu and Nnamani (2021) are right in concluding that campaign propaganda enabled by the media is creatively orchestrated by politicians to promote popular sentiment that could easily wheedle the electorates to cast their votes for them.

In most cases, campaign propaganda is stirred on ethnoreligious sensitivities by the political class to achieve their economic and political aspirations. Thus, the change they seek to offer is mere rhetoric for ascendancy to power and subsequent repositioning of their cronies. This, consequently, hampers good governance, security, and socio-economic development of the country. This is what Martins quetches in stanzas two, three and four of the poem, “when you said...,”:

When you said, it was time for change,
you meant it. We see it in your foggy
seasons, full throttle,
after all, one region breathes
in the nerves of all like the foul air
all noses must breathe in.

when you said our night will be day, you left
the hurricane in the morning of your vow
from dark alleys. We pick cobwebs
in the house once loud with your noise.

When you said you belong to everybody
And you belong to nobody, you made everybody
Your kinsmen alone, the true taxonomy
Of the change saddle, the pillar of integrity
And unmitigable empire of forex
Stumping scaffold for your blood brothers...
(*answers through the bramble*, p. 13)

Undeniably, the poet is appalled by the failed promises of the nation's leader. He deploys the image of fog on "foggy seasons" which is synonymous with poor vision to express the pain of the mass's inability to see the promised change for better living. Also, the pain associated with an unstable electricity supply that has caused hardship for the Nigerian masses is decried in stanza four of the poem. This is conveyed with the image of "cobwebs" which are metaphors for inactivity or dormancy. At another layer of meaning, the cobwebs suggest the web of lies, darkness or evil which characterized the political leaders, and their strong alignment with deceit and insincerity. All this combined to scotch the rehabilitation of the energy sector and effective distribution of electricity to Nigerians.

It has become unavoidable for Martins to gloss over the perceived ethnic and religious sentiments which smell badly in the regime of President Buhari. Martins alludes to the inherent deception in Buhari's "I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody" famous speech when he (Buhari) was sworn in 2015. The speech was widely acclaimed by political analysts who believed that with that speech, equity and fairness are guaranteed to all Nigerians regardless of their faith, ethnicity and party affiliation. Painfully, Buhari's words hang on hoodwinking and chicanery. Martins poetry, therefore, exposes the dishonesty in Buhari's speech in "you made everybody your kinsmen alone". According to the poet, only Buhari's kinsmen are defined with the indefinite pronoun "everybody". The poet humorously refers to Buhari as "...the pillar of integrity" to satirize the facade of a personality sold to Nigerians as "Mr. Integrity". Martins' poetry, therefore, bemoans favoritism in Nigerian politics. The poet also deconstructs the APC "Change" mantra associated with the ruling party. Rather than signifying a new dawn of good governance, the political class becomes insensitive to diversity and inclusiveness, Olaopa (2020). A major cause of disaffection among Nigerians of diverse tribes and religions is attributed to bad governance and lopsidedness in the appointment of key political officeholders under Buhari administration. This is what the poet objurgates in the stanza below:

...you made everybody,
your kinsmen alone, the true taxonomy
of change saddle ... (p.13).

In “Naija is a badly behaved poem”. the poet echoes the pervading spirit of fear, tragedy and general insecurity that have befallen the land (Nigeria). The vagaries of a land which has been shattered come with a sombre mood in the first stanza:

We wake not by cockcrows here anymore,
bullet sounds and shrills topple nature.
reports rifle through our beings,
the tamarind bust-shrills ends till.
Beginnings for twilight are a day longer.
(*answers through the bramble*, 57)

The rage in the poet’s voice reflects the absurdity of political leaders who have failed ingloriously to proffer solutions to the splurge of insecurity across Nigeria. The poet reminisces about the barrage of mass killings and kidnappings across Nigeria by the activities of killer herdsmen, bandits, *boko-haram* insurgents, and unknown gunmen. The activities of these ill-famed groups are widely reported in both social media and traditional media outlets.

The poet indirectly reawakes the consciousness of dissonant cries across the land and the apparent impuissance of leaders on the issues at stake. The absence of peaceful co-existence due to the unprovoked destruction of lives and peoples’ means of livelihood is aptly captured in:

We wake not by cockcrows here anymore,
bullet sounds and shrills topple nature
(*answers through the bramble*, p. 57).

From the foregoing, one cannot argue that the poet alludes to the anguish of “... news of new pogrom and herdsmen orgies” (p. 57) extrapolated by the poet in the third stanza.

The eerie silence in the face of baleful disasters which confront the land and her inhabitants particularly the poor is what the poet satirizes in the poem, “silence is spirit”:

On this clan, silence is spirit:
modern supernatural, abiding in hills and valleys.
Signatures through cranky, grey mosses and
streams, blue or cluttered,
at the busy jaws of streets, in the troubled tranquillity
of “sacred” groves, this spirit struts... (*answers through the bramble*, p. 16)

The silence here is a metaphor for both oppression and insensitivity. Martins in this poem certifies his Marxist disposition by excoriating the spirit of silence by once Nigerian virile activists and social crusaders even in the face of the languorous performance of political leaders. For the poet, the salvation of the land and the masses warrants spiritual reawakening in seeking answers – good governance, social justice, security, and equitable distribution of resources even if doing so comes with multiple challenges. Therefore, the poet deserves credit for crafting the title of the collection – *answers through the bramble*. The poet is aware that no true change comes without the brambles. That is why in the last stanza, Martins writes:

Silence lives, dies, lives:
 the broad scapula of a tyrant boosts its tenure,
 fidgeting pen of the fourth estate, loam of its life,
 brassy rebels, carcinogenic traps for death, poetry
 its graveyard, most too, silt for its life.
 If you can kill silence, kill it.
 It soon dies through your first stutter
 And lives through your run of words. (*answers through the bramble*, p. 16)

Inherent in the stanza above is a poet who is aware that the continued silence of the masses and political activists are tantamount to approving uncouth political leaders' continuous subjugation of the poor. Hence, the poet calls out journalists (the fourth estate) to boldly expose the ills of society rather than being faint-hearted in their reportage as suggested in "fidgeting pen." The poet understands the danger of silence; it is the easiest way for the masses' unconsciously submit to the dictates of oppression by their torturers. This is further albeit painfully encouraged by the unflappable press.

This pain of generic silence by the populace to the overwhelming failure of their leaders in the poem, "silence is spirit", is again visited, this time with a more sulfurous sarcastic tone in the poem, "Naija is a badly behaved poem". Ordinarily, a badly behaved poem is a poem that throws its meaning off its readers. In other words, it is badly written and less appealing to its audience. Metaphorically, Martins sees naija (Nigeria) as less appealing to the average Nigerian citizen. It has become a homeland for kleptocrats as suggested in the first stanza of the poem:

Homeland, green for kleptocrats, is red in my verse-
a poem written as an epic-becoming unfitting,
oversized sheets of noisy lullaby of countryside.
(*answers through the bramble*, p. 55)

The poet above justifies why *Naija* is a badly behaved poem. One of the conventions of an epic poem is that it dwells on a personality, a hero who represents national, socio-cultural, religious, and political ideals. Unfortunately, the extraordinary deeds of the hero which you find in typical epic poetry, which appeal to the common people, are lacking in Nigerian leaders. They are therefore very “unfitting” to occupy public offices. Truly, leadership failure has been the scourge of socioeconomic growth and development in Nigeria. Martins puts it perfectly by describing greedy politicians in Nigeria as “oversized sheets” who go about with cacophonous rhetoric in the countryside. These corrupt politicians barefacedly show off their ill-gotten wealth to the suffering masses in the countryside.

Another metric of determining a badly behaved poem is the poem’s poor structure and lack of punctilious deployment of literary devices, poor placement of words in their proper order, and unsatisfactory attention to the metrical units of a poem. All these make the meaning of such a poem very bad, drifting, and directionless. Martins, therefore, indirectly in “*Naija is a badly behaved poem*”, refers to Nigeria as an aimlessly drifting country with leaders who lack the substance of great deeds to drive the seat of governance.

Similarly, the poor structuring of the country which makes power reside and rotate among the cabals, and the lopsidedness in the appointment of key government officials, at a greater disadvantage of the downtrodden validates why “*Naija is a badly behaved poem*”. One is therefore safe to conclude that the poet lends his voice in support of many Nigerians who believe that the country needs restructuring. As Babalola and Onapajo (2019) argue, the calls for restructuring aim at “a review of the existing federal arrangement to allow for more representation and equity in the system”. The authors’ position is further heightened in Obaze (2022) that clamor for restructuring is to help the Nigerian entity and its constituent parts “more efficient, productive, acceptable, functional and equitable”. Thus, Martins’ symbolic examination of a poorly structured Nigeria is a literary activist’s reawakening and repositioning of Nigeria for a better and more profitable nation. After all, one of the core values of Marxism

is equity and fairness in the distribution of common heritage; it shows in the words of Morawski (1974), “concerns about alienation.”

Martin's emotional distress and distaste over Nigeria's political and economic imbalance, another sign of Naija as a badly behaved poem, is further accentuated in the closing stanzas of the poem:

A bad poem is:

A country of tribes 1914,
lugardian convenience,
that fiefdom where silence
befriends oppression and
masses learn to live to
adjust in circles of ever-
unfolding penury. (*answers through the bramble*, p. 55)

Martins comes out perspicuously above to lucubrate and justify why he thinks “Naija is a badly behaved poem”. The poet faults the historical antecedent of Nigeria as a country built on the marriage of convenience. Alluding to the amalgamation of southern and northern Nigeria in 1914, he blames Lord Lugard, the former Governor-General who was instrumental to the fusion of both southern and northern protectorates for the imbalance in the merger. The imbalance arises from the poor structure of the Nigerian federal system. As if this was not enough, the poet sees Nigeria (Naija) as a domain controlled by feudal lords. This is an indication of oppression, enslavement, and lack of freedom. Indeed, Nigeria has become a “fiefdom” of esurient politicians and the upper class whose motive is the continuous impoverishment of Nigerians. The poet, however, repines that the masses who bear the chain of oppression choose to suffer in silence despite the weight of oppression thrown at them. This is where the poet's Marxist streak breathes. The poet expects the masses to come out of their shell rather than die in silence. For him, silence, therefore, becomes an instrument of defeat and complicity with their oppressors as they “learn to live” and “adjust in circles of ever-unfolding penury” (lines 14-15).

The six-stanza structure of the poem represents the six geo-political components of Nigeria. Also, one can lay claim that Martin's poetry exhibits activist poetics as he protests the evil machinations which retard growth and development in Nigeria. Hence, the poet rails bitterly against the silence of the suffering masses who to the poet, "learn to live; to adjust in circles" of poverty. The Nigerian masses according to the poet bow calmly to the deceptive analogies and oppressive regimes of Nigerian leaders.

4 . Conclusion

Over the years, social activism via literature manifests in several Marxist literary productions in Africa and beyond. Creative writers deploy their art to protest the distempers orchestrated by poor leadership of the political class. Literature thus becomes a tool against social malady in literate societies. Martin's, *answers through the bramble*, stands as a poet's activist response to the pernicious devaluation of the Nigerian lower-class citizens by their ineffectual leaders. The poet thus reawakens the consciousness of the masses to stand tall against all forms of social injustices which have denied them democratic values and uplift their socio-economic well-being.

About the Author

Dr. Bartholomew Chizoba Akpah (pen name, Barth Akpah) is the Chair, Department of Languages and Literature, William V. S. Tubman University, Liberia. He is the author of *Land of Tales (poetry)*, and fellow of Library of Africa and the African Diaspora West African Writers.

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A Review of Challenges as Educational Innovations in Higher Education

C. P. Shivachandra, Research Scholar, Kannada Adhyayana Peetha, Hampi

and

Chaitra Pandurang Naik, Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Karnatak

University Dharwad

E.Mail:cpshivachandra@gmail.com

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Abstract

The growth of society and the direction in which it must go are extensively determined, partly by education. Since it has been a critical factor in the accomplishment of several social achievements. Since growth and progress are the rules of the day, education has come to the fore and gained essential importance. The goal of the current article is to provide some insight into the current situation of higher education, the gross enrollment ratio, and the employability of the schools' output. Higher education institutions' main focus is to provide high-quality education and to create employability in the education sector. We manage to thrive in a world where education is the cornerstone for climbing the social, political, economic, etc. social ladder. The report also emphasizes the innovativeness being created, pursued, and used due to the shifting global educational landscape.

Keywords: Higher education, Higher Learning Institutions, Demographic Dividend, Social Capital, Curriculum

Chaitra Pandurang Naik, E.Mail:cpshivachandra@gmail.com

1. Introduction

In recent years, India's economy has been expanding at an ever-increasing pace. It has emerged as a significant force in the modern information economy worldwide. Expertise-based endeavors have been a major factor in the expansion. Such endeavors need the availability of highly educated and skilled labor; it will provide the country's extensive system of higher learning. Higher education in India has mainly been credited as a critical factor in the country's rise to prominence in the global knowledge economy. There is a concern, however, that the Indian university system is in danger. The Prime Minister's NKC describes it as a "silent crisis," while the Minister of Human Resources refers to higher education as "a sick kid." Industries consistently highlight massive talent shortages, expressing concern that economic momentum will be lost if the issues do not vanish. The problems plaguing Indian higher education seem to be never-ending. Some of the problems include a cumbersome affiliation system, an inflexible academic organization, unequal capability across topics, an erosion of educational institutions' autonomy, a low amount of public support, and a dysfunctional regulatory environment. Finally, there is a consensus that is plagued by several structural flaws and is motivated by populism. Due to a lack of reliable data, there is no informed public discussion. [1]

More than 35 years ago, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen pointed out that the "grave failures in policy-making: in the education sector require the analysis of the characteristics of the social and economic forces operating in India, & response of public policy to these forces' ". As he put it, "owing to the government's predisposition to design educational policies based on popular pressure, sometimes erroneous policies are adopted." Relative shortcomings are thought to exist in policymaking today, which is a sad reality. Instead of realism, policymakers are motivated by populism, dogma, and special interests. Aims are chosen randomly, and success is frequently elusive and, worse, only half-heartedly pursued.[2]

Some academics have regarded educational innovations as tough, technically and emotionally demanding, and complicated, although enormous resources have been invested in their creation and implementation. Therefore, it is essential to consider whether or not new education methods may influence higher education.

For educational innovations to have a more significant impact, they need to be widely adopted, and "networks of educational innovation" may facilitate this process by allowing educators at the university level to collaborate and learn from one another. These connections

don't just happen, so you'll need to build them intentionally. Because of the importance of fostering professional communities among higher education instructors, many educational reform projects adopt a variety of tactics to encourage such networks, such as networking events, training, and teaching conferences.[3]

Researchers have hypothesized that educational networks may improve the quality of higher education instruction, but there is little data to back up these claims. It is suggested by some academics that the educational networks fostered and maintained by reform attempts may function in a restricted, focused, and outcome-oriented manner, stifling the spread of innovations. Others, however, have discovered that the traits of educational innovators, such as the strategic use of networks, are beneficial for introducing new ideas into higher education. Though higher education's ability to facilitate the spread of new ideas and technologies via its networked educational (innovation) initiatives has been the subject of some research, very few studies have analyzed these networks in detail. More study is required to understand the effects of faculty characteristics on network architecture in higher education.[4]

2. Higher Education's Evolution

The time-honored method of providing university education in India has been around for a long time, As a result, it has inherited a wealth of experience and wisdom that has fostered the development of its culture and its people from the dawn of Indian civilization. During the Gupta era, patronage of educational institutions like Nalanda, Takshila, Ujjain, Vikramshila, and Vallabhi was fostered. As was previously noted, each school has its area of academic expertise. In the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., this kind of University flourished. People rushed to Sarnath University to study Buddhism and to Ajanta to become experts in the field of art, architecture, and painting after the spread of Buddhism. Donations and land gifts are the primary sources of revenue for these establishments. Kings and other wealthy members of society at the time made such donations. Evidence from ancient times suggests that this system has been in place in India since at least 1000 B.C. Compared to the European tradition, the system's knowledge creation, assumptions on which knowledge was built, and fundamental conceptions of organizational learning were radically different.[5]

2.1 System of Higher Education During The British Raj

In 1857, the British Government established European-style universities in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, bringing the European system of higher education to India for the first time. The British did a lot to advance English in a higher education system, starting with the inception of the British Raj in 1858. One of the critical contributions of the government was the establishment of English-language schools and the encouragement of the use of English in academic settings.

2.2 The States and Federal Government Contribution to Develop Present Education System in India :

Increasing access to higher education has been a driving force in India's rapid economic development, as the country's emphasis is on cultivating its own talent pool. Education is a hot topic in the present time, and states and federal governments play a significant role in expanding access to and quality of higher education by funding and supporting the development of universities and colleges. The following tables provide a snapshot and history of India's tertiary education system.

Table 1: Number of Institutions in 2020–2021

No. of Institutions	Year (2020-2021)
AICTE Technical Institutions	12069
Universities	513
Distance teaching Institutions and Universities	260
Colleges	34013

Table 2: enrollment for the academic year 2020–21

Open distance learning enrollment (In Lakhs)	34.25
Admission to Universities with AICTE approval (In Lakhs)	21.5
Enrollment in colleges and institutions (In Lakhs)	179.6
Enrollment in post-secondary or post-graduate studies (In Lakhs)	15.56

Following India's independence, the country's higher education system has expanded rapidly, with several new Universities and colleges opening their doors to students. From only 20 in 1950, there are now 677 Universities in the world in 2014. There are 51 Institutions of National Importance, 45 Central Universities, 318 State Universities, 185 Private Universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, and 4 IISERs under MHRD. College enrollment has also increased dramatically, from 500 in 1950 to 37,204 as of March 31st 2013. Historically, India's population was significantly lower, and more people had the opportunity to go to college. However, a significant increase in the population has made it difficult to gain entry to universities and other institutions of higher education in India. It has been discovered that increased high cut-off percentages for admission as 80%, 85%, and even 90% have implemented by some of the most prestigious Universities and organizations in India. The ultimate responsibility lies with the nation's educators. They should become the true torchbearers in the eyes of the student body by teaching and demonstrating integrity and a commitment to carrying out their obligations. That, all by itself, may elevate the University or college campus beyond preconceived notions. The trend of instructors engaging in private tutoring has spread like a disease. It must be reduced and managed, if necessary, by legal means.[6]

3. Challenges in Higher Education

The structure of American higher education is intricate and vast. Challenges have been mounting for Higher Education institutions worldwide for the past decade. There has been a lot of attention paid to pinpointing such difficulties in recent years. Twenty challenges identified in the literature are briefly discussed here:

3.1 Alignment

It has suggested that universities and colleges should adapt to the public's evolving demands. From a pedagogical standpoint, the SemTech initiative highlighted curriculum design as one of the most pressing issues in higher education. It has been recommended that colleges be quicker to implement new study programs and courses. Higher education institutions in the twenty-first century need to adapt to a more competitive international market by providing students with a range of degree and certificate options that cater to their interests and goals. Courses, programs, and institutional structures in higher education need to be updated to accommodate students who are both more academically accomplished and more

versed in the market. Students' expectations of the courses they take and the quality of those courses have grown in tandem with their rising financial investment, and universities should reflect these changes. However, mobility can be only achieved if degrees and credits earned are recognized universally. It requires accommodating variety and originality without stifling either. Therefore, higher education institutions must revise or reorient their curricula to better equip today's students for success in a global economy. Every school has to rethink its curriculum to improve education standards. Developing new courses is one of the most pressing problems in higher education. Through curriculum alignment, no student will fall behind, and everyone will have an equal chance to succeed in this age of globalization.[7]

3.2 Students' Employment

Globally, employability is still a significant focus for universities. Educating oneself is becoming more critical for people to do well in the modern labor market. A rising number of students and recent graduates see earning a degree as essential to launching a successful career, making employability a pressing issue. And selling, education and catering to commercial demands: the new educational agenda. Gaining more education and experience may significantly improve one's prospects and income. Definitions of employability vary but generally agree on the following: a person's employability is increased when they possess the set of skills, knowledge, and personal traits that increase their odds of securing and succeeding in a specific career. Learning outcomes in a program that include opportunities for parallel personal growth, such as job experience and extracurricular activities, are increasingly important in defining employability.

Universities and colleges must do more to help their students find jobs after graduation. Higher education institutions may react by including companies in the course validation process, which will guarantee that academic standards satisfy employer criteria and will have a positive impact on both the degree subject selection process and the relevance of graduates to the labour market. Companies must provide internships and job experience for students, and colleges and institutions must be more accommodating to their wants and requirements. In the 21st century, curricula should give substantial consideration to students' employability by including vital skills in the curriculum. For the sake of their students and their reputations, HEIs would be well to take the required measures to solve this problem promptly.[8]

3.3 Expanded Participation

Higher education has seen an uptick in demand as the application of newly acquired skills in the workplace has become more critical. However, access to higher education is hampered by socioeconomic status, rising tuition costs, the replacement of loans for grants, the reduction of government support for student facilities, and so on. Insufficient numbers of students from low-income families and underrepresented groups enroll in college. According to the Federal Government Advisory Board on Student Financial Assistance: Nearly 4,00,000 capable students every year do not pursue higher education because of lack of money. Current demand exists in many nations to increase the number of students enrolled in higher education. The goal of the United Kingdom is for at least half of the young population to enrol in higher education; as stated, U.K. policymakers have prioritized expanding access to higher education by increasing financing for higher education institutions since 1997. One of the primary missions of the 1 Higher Education Spending Council for England is to increase access to and participation in higher education (HEFCE). Access to higher education is highlighted as an issue that HE institutions must address.[9]

3.4 Excellence in Education and Instruction

It is especially fitting for institutions of higher education to place a premium on maintaining quality. The only way for a higher education institution to gain international credibility is to invest in the quality of its instruction and research. If higher education institutions cannot provide assurances of good quality, they will lose prospective students. Enabling access to learning and teaching materials across institutions is one way higher education institutions may improve the quality of education. As a result, students and educators have access to a wider breadth of knowledge in their respective fields of study. When it comes to the education of its students, higher education facilities have a responsibility to guarantee the highest standards of excellence are always met. The universities all share a commitment to maintaining a high standard of education. To that end, the United States government has established FIPSE. However, with tuition making up such a significant part of a university's budget, institutions have been compelled to raise the bar on their pedagogical offerings. Since 1997, the British government has allocated more resources toward enhancing the quality of instruction in higher education. Quality of education is identified as a significant problem in higher education by several writers. HEFCE is an organization whose mission is to "guarantee that all students in higher education in the UK

have a high-quality learning experience that completely satisfies their requirements and the demands of society." [10]

3.5 Research Quality

Research capability has to be bolstered at THE institutions if they want to compete with the finest in the world. To raise this challenge, academic institutions will need to create interdisciplinary centers that bring together specialists from many fields and foster connections between academic and business groups to solidify their research capabilities. The British government is committed to preserving research quality. Thus, it has allocated more resources to the cause. In addition, this will need a heightened emphasis on cutting-edge research and a broader acknowledgment of the potential advantages of concentrating research efforts in the central region. 1 HEFCE's mission in the United Kingdom is to foster a thriving and globally competitive research industry that significantly contributes to the country's economic growth, social welfare, and knowledge base. Several authors also highlighted research quality assurance as a crucial responsibility for universities in the 21st century. [11]

3.6 Accreditation

Accreditation is the most critical aspect of quality assurance in higher education and one of the significant mechanisms of delivering responsibility for THE Institutions and programmes. The capacity of universities to draw in students, research funding agencies, and corporate sponsors is hampered. In the United States, students may only receive federal financial help from the government if the school or any type programs students are enrolled for the course has been granted accreditation by an official body. Because of this, it has gained more significance in higher education. Accreditations are listed as a critical obstacle in higher education. The results of students' education are given primary consideration in all accreditation evaluations. Accreditation is a highly reliable guarantee of high standards in education. Institutions in higher education may help professional organizations effectively accredit their institutions or programs by making relevant data available. The information needed for effective accreditation is often spread among many departments within an institution.[12]

3.7 Engage in international research and talent competition

Top students, academics, and researchers are in high demand worldwide. Education and research programs must be of high quality for institutions to remain relevant. To remain competitive with other higher education institutions and to get worldwide recognition, higher education centers must maintain a better level of research. By maximizing their research potential, higher education institutions may forge high-quality partnerships with their

counterparts in other countries higher education systems. As a result, universities and colleges are realizing that they need to work together with their peers in the field, as well as with businesses, communities, and governments throughout the world, To take advantage of the possibilities presented by globalization fully. [13]

3.8 Academic Success

Today's HE Institutions have many students from different regions and countries. HE Institutions are increasingly recognizing that to gain public support and participation and to make higher standards of the institutions; they need to become more focused on student retention. The SemTech project identified student retention as one of the HE challenges. HE Institutions need to focus on student retention with more effective student support. HE Institutions are monitoring students' overall progress, and based on their information, they can take necessary steps for the students from the very beginning. They also need to take into account from the very beginning why students take off from a program or any specific modules. They need to focus on this issue to improve retention. 2 JISC is doing this to help improve student retention and motivation in UK Higher Education. [14]

3.9 Utilizing new Technology

The communications, economics, and even the day-to-day organization of the modern world are all powered by technological advancements. The proliferation of new IT resources for higher learning is a direct result of the industry's fast evolution. As a result of technological advancements, nowadays everyone may take advantage of educational possibilities whenever and wherever they like. In addition, the reaction of tertiary education institutions to this cutting-edge technology has been surprisingly swift. Universities' capacity to adapt to new or shifting markets might be hampered by their reluctance to engage in technology-based learning. Connections to material, context, and community may result in a more meaningful learning experience for students when teachers use tools like the internet as well as its related technology. NCATE is increasing the emphasis on technology in its performance-based standards for the year 2000. This is in direct response to the growing awareness that new teachers must be able to effectively integrate technological tools into their own classrooms. There is a growing need for the adaptability and context-aware education that digital resources can deliver. Higher education institutions need to rise to the technological challenge. Two of the UK's Joint Information Systems Committees (JISCs) are

investigating, testing, and learning more about a wide range of technologies for application in higher education.[15]

3.10 Assessment

In Higher Education Organizations, assessment plays a crucial role. How students are tested has a significant impact on how they learn and how far they may go in their studies. Despite the importance of evaluation and feedback, many organizations providing higher education organizations continue to struggle with these tasks because of rising costs, shrinking resources, and rising student expectations. Institutions should have procedures in place for dealing with violations of assessment requirements and appealing assessment judgments. JISC in the United Kingdom has been engaged in technology-enhanced assessment for more than a decade, JISC is promoting research on technical and interoperability issues related to online testing and broader technical, pedagogical, and institutional considerations related to the efficient use of a variety of technologies that support assessment and feedback. [16]

3.11 Combating Plagiarism

Plagiarism has been a source of growing concern in the higher education system. There were few prominent instances of plagiarism in the 1990s, but the global trend toward massification in higher education has prompted fears among academics that plagiarism has become widespread. Plagiarism prevention is a top priority in the academic world. We fear that the credibility of UK higher education degrees is jeopardized if nothing has been done to address rising concerns and probable cases of plagiarism and cooperation. Plagiarism is now seen seriously enough in the UK for scholars to seek advice on handling it. JISC JISCPAS to disseminate best practices and provide advice on avoiding plagiarism in all its forms.[17]

3.12 The Next Generation of Workers

Even the most well-run school would fail if its faculty lacked the necessary expertise; without skilled instructors, students would get a subpar education and researchers would be unable to advance their fields. For universities to effectively teach the curriculum, including employability skills, they must train their conventional teaching personnel in new capacities and adopt innovative ways to educate. Higher education institutions will have to train instructors and that particular instructor specifically to work with students who have varying and often difficult learning requirements. Higher education institutions may provide various training opportunities for their employees to help them stay current in the field and grow as needed. The next generation of workers must realize that learning is a lifelong pursuit. So they

must continuously evolve to keep up with the dynamic tertiary education landscape. NCATE in the United States is stepping up its performance-based, technology-focused standards for the year 2000 to directly address the requirement for new teachers to be proficient in the use of Technology, in their own teaching. The U.S. Department of Education's new initiative "Preparing Tomorrow's Educators to Use Technology" allocates \$75 million to meet this need. Addition of this, JISC provides tools to universities and their personnel to aid in the development of faculty and administrators in UK higher education.[18]

4. CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Here, we categorize the problems currently facing higher education according to the literature published on the topic and its potential to shed light on the various causes and solutions to the problem. In table one, we show that problem (A) is related to the problem (B) and provide citations to back up our claim. We divide the difficulties into three categories, all of which have an impact on quality and productivity. The difficulties are broken down into different categories, as shown in Figure one.

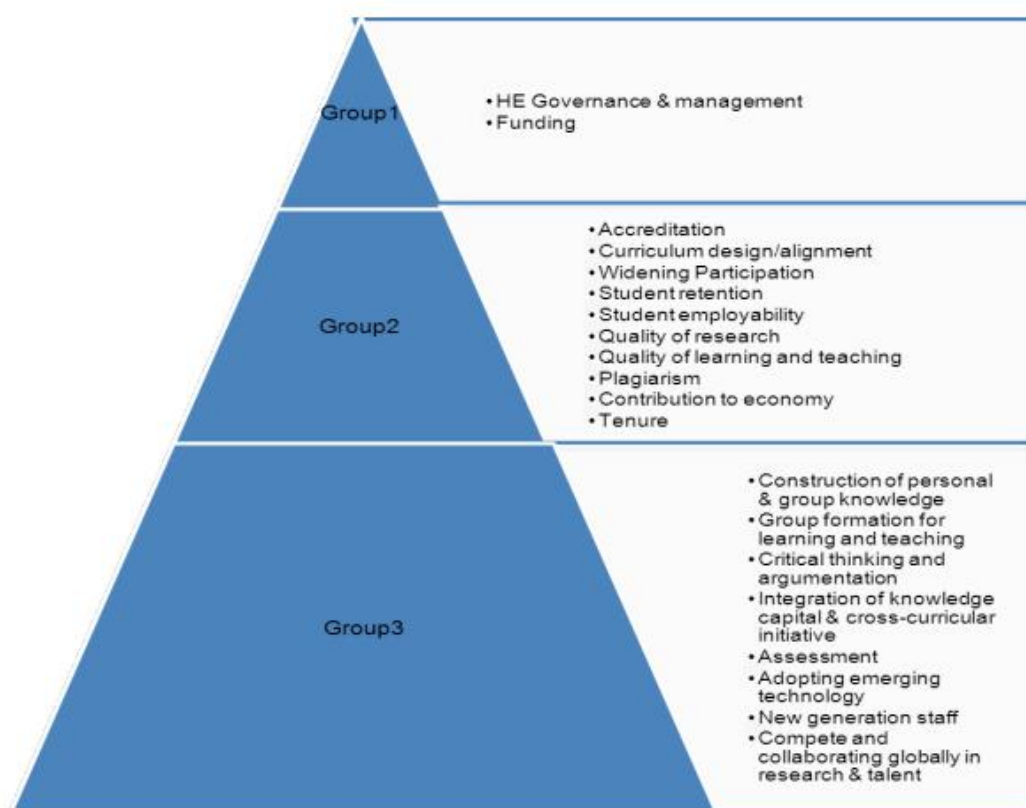


Figure 1. Classification of Difficulties in Higher Education

We organize these obstacles such as if one group issue is solved, it will have a positive effect on the quality and efficiency of the problems it affects at the higher levels. Specifically, problems in group 3 have an effect on problems in group two, and problems in group 2 have

an impact on issues, If any of the problems in group three improves its quality or efficiency, the issues that are influenced or interrelated with or by this challenge will also improve automatically. Based on the data in the Table, we can see that evaluation has a significant impact on several different types of issues, including accreditation, the quality of teaching and learning, student retention, and plagiarism; as a result of it, we place assessment in the second group and all the challenges influenced by assessment in the first. [19]

We have thus placed evaluation in the third category, with accreditation, quality of instruction, student retention, and instances of plagiarism making up the second. To the same standard by which we categorize all other difficulties. Funding for Group 1 is affected by problems including student retention, research quality, accreditation, and broadening participation, which are all part of Group two. When we discover a bidirectional relationship between two difficulties, we place them in the same category. Since they are interrelated, we placed curricular alignment and student employability in the same cluster. Due to the importance of these issues, we placed financing and HE management and oversight in their own category, Group one. These are the two biggest obstacles we've run against, and fixing them is essential for addressing the others, so we didn't try to downgrade them.[21-22]

5. The Goi has Introduced Innovations

India's government has taken the necessary steps to lower the prohibitive cost of higher education by creating more state-run universities and other institutions of higher education.

5.1 Establishment of New Central Universities

As of January 15, 2009, 16 new Central Universities were formed in States (except for Goa) that did not previously have one; in Jammu and Kashmir, there are two Central Universities, one in the Kashmir Division and another in the Jammu Division. In addition to Jammu and Kashmir, the unrecognized states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Tamil Nadu have each created a Central University. Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya in Chhattisgarh, Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya in Madhya Pradesh, and Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University in Uttarakhand are the three State Universities that have turned into Central Universities.

5.2 Indira Gandhi National Tribal University

An Act of Parliament created IGNTU, located in Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh. It started its academic operations in the academic year 2008–2009. The university offers undergraduate and graduate programmes in a series of subject areas. The University is a teaching &

affiliating institution that facilitates and as well as supports opportunities for higher learning and research facilities for the nation's tribal population.

6. Construction of 374 Degree-Granting Institutions in Educationally Underdeveloped Areas

If a region has a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) lower than the national average, the Ministry of Education will establish a Model Degree College there. A total of 374 districts fit this description, according to the findings of a recent study. The state government is expected to submit proposals for the creation of such universities. The Universities that are included in the Government's plan to increase higher education's availability, participation, and reach is this program.

7. A Plan to Incentivize State Governments to Foster the Growth of Post-secondary Educational Institutions

Currently, a plan is proposed to incentivize states to create new universities and expand current ones. Establishing new higher education institutions/expanding existing higher education institutions will be supported by the federal government at a ratio of 1:2 (1:1 for Special Category States) under this new Scheme. Universities, Colleges, and Engineering Institutions, as well as the establishment of new universities, are among the concrete goals of the XI Plan and XII Plan.

8. Helping Public Colleges and Universities in Hidden States

While State University affiliated colleges fall under UGC's purview, they are not eligible for funding because they lack the necessary infrastructure and faculty. For universities and colleges that serve underserved areas to qualify for UGC funding, the Ministry plans to provide them with additional resources. The XIst Plan is designed to increase the financing of institutions that have been approved to receive UGC Act Section 12B grants.

9. Strengthening Science-Based University Research and Higher Education

With the quantity and quality of scientific research in India declining, a committee chaired by Prof. M.M. Sharma was appointed to lead the charge in reviving university-based basic science. Efforts have begun to improve university-level scientific education or research in response to the Task Force's recommendations. The primary goal of the plan is to provide financial assistance to the university and college faculty members so that they may carry out research projects in their respective fields. The UGC has been working to advance education and investigation in cutting-edge fields such as the humanities, social sciences, languages,

poetry, pure sciences, engineering and or technology, medicine, medical agriculture science, etc. Permanent/Regular/retired faculty members of the universities and institutions that have been recognised under section 2(f) and certified suitable to receive funds under 12 B of the UGC Act 1956, are the only ones who are entitled to apply for grants under this act.

10. Policy Measures

Throughout the years, the government of India has implemented several policy measures that have helped to create an ideal ecology for higher education. [23]

10.1 National Knowledge Commission (NKC)

Since the 21st century has been dubbed the "knowledge century" on a global scale, every country is now engaged in fierce rivalry in the realms of education and innovation. with a heightened emphasis on quality, infrastructure, and information. As India's official think tank, it is tasked with formulating strategies to improve the country's higher education system and give the country a leg up in the knowledge- and service-intensive global economy. India's former prime minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, signed this into law on June 13th, 2005. The purpose of the commission is to get advice on the policy that the prime minister has launched which is about education and research policy, as well as changes that would position India to become a major competitive force in the global knowledge economy. The panel was tasked with analyzing the need for changes in the areas of education, research facilities, and intellectual property law, and making recommendations to the Government of India. For the sake of a more open and efficient government that makes use of modern technology.

10.2 RUSA (Rashtriya Uchchatar Sikhsha Abhiyan)

India's education system has flourished. All thanks to progressive policies. The education sector has benefited dramatically from initiatives like the 2001-launched Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan and the 2009-launched Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, both of which aim to increase enrollment in and completion of secondary school. The UGC, as the governing authority for Indian universities, ensures that the country's higher education system is always evolving and improving. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is responsible for allocating funds for research and development inside universities, and its allocations are sufficient for colleges of centrally financed institutions in India under the policy under Section 12B and Section 2(f) of the UGC Act. There are 574 universities and 35,539 colleges in India in the year 31st of March 2012, according to statistics, with 214 of those universities being beyond the purview of Sections 12B & 2(f) of the UGC Act. The government in this country

runs a considerable number of institutions, Still, it spends relatively little on higher education overall, making it difficult to bring about needed changes and stifling opportunities for creativity and progress. Consequently, the NDC recommended, as a part of the 12th five-year plan, a distinct strategy for state/Union Territories to improve colleges and universities.

11. The Framework of a Network for Educational Innovation

Despite its potential to provide light on the sources of power behind the dissemination of knowledge, centralization in educational networks has been chiefly ignored (de Lima, 2010). A network's social hierarchy was inferred from examining its degree of centralization. Some professors in higher education may benefit much from the insights of their colleagues on the topic of educational innovations. Still, they may not reciprocate the same level of openness in their knowledge sharing.[24]

Most academic departments have clubs or organizations in which teachers participate. According to the literature, campus networks have become increasingly hierarchical due to the widespread adoption of corporate management principles in public institutions. In addition, a hierarchical structure in a social network might be brought about by differences in organizational functions. Instructors at universities may be recently appointed or hired as tenured professors, or even wholly independent professionals with no ties to the institution. Due to the varying responsibilities of each member of the organization, a hierarchical structure may develop. This structure is probably already present in campus networks. It may also characterize emerging networks between instructors in higher education, such as networks formed and supported by educational reform programs seeking to improve teaching quality via educational innovations. Consequently, we suggest that:

H1: At first glance, the structure of educational innovation networks seems to be hierarchical. The results of educational reforms obstruct when schools are centralized. Similarly, instructors in higher education who participated in an instructional development program said that the presence of hierarchy was a significant barrier to collaboration.

Pointed out that (network) interventions may have a beneficial effect on the structure of social networks. Conferences for educators, workshops for groups, seminars for professionals, and other similar activities are supported by either government funding or university efforts. With the higher education system, teachers can benefit from network interventions in several ways, including the chance to make connections with colleagues from different departments or institutional roles. During a curriculum improvement project, the positive impact of interventions can be seen empirically. However, rather than being a

discrete, one-time programme, these sorts of interventions are often continuous activities. Consequently, we will assume that:

H2: As a result of network interventions, the hierarchical structure of educational innovation networks spawned and supported by reform programs tends to flatten over time.

12. The Factors that Shape Networks for Educational Innovation

Researchers have shown that the structure of a person's social network isn't the only factor that matters when it comes to the spread of innovation. Since originality and invention occur within the organizational setting where a person plunges there is a strong correlation between these factors.

The organizational climate is a reflection of this setting since it represents the workers' consensus on how they work. Some academics describe "psychological climate" as an employee's own unique experience of the workplace, which allows "organizational climate" the personal characteristic of the workforce. Scholars have advised, "a facet-specific climate approach where climate has a focus and is related to something of interest" to provide meaningful findings and contribute to organizational theory, where "climate" may refer to various factors of the working environment. Using this method, you may determine which factors inside your company's culture are responsible for producing the results.[25]

The orientation towards innovation in teaching, or the creative teaching environment, is relevant as a feature of the organizational climate in the context of educational advances in higher education. This latter phrase represents the consensus among faculty in higher education about their working circumstances, which may encourage and discourage new approaches to instruction. Definition of Innovative Teaching Climate is one side to characterize innovative teaching climate as a personal trait of the professors in higher education who have the responsibility of interpreting it within their university departments. Researchers have shown that universities' penchant for innovation is a crucial factor in the spread of new methods of teaching and learning. As was said before, very little is known about how different teacher traits affect the organization of academic networks in higher education. Research in this field may provide light on the relationship between a conducive environment for pedagogical innovation and the development of networks for sharing best practices in education.[26]

13. Conclusion

As the government considers globalizing higher education for change and standards in the educational system, the current environment would be challenging for India's higher education system. The effectiveness with which Indian colleges and institutions address the sector's global concerns would be called into severe doubt by this. Few believe that expanding educational options worldwide is. It will result in high-quality instruction and research. Students are allowed to understand present and upcoming issues in depth. Even though we are generating graduates at a rapid pace these days, many of them are still unemployed. To adjust this mentality and transform it, we must take appropriate steps to boost employability. So it's time to adapt to change and modify to provide high-quality education. We know that higher education today is at a crossroads and must turn around to serve as a beacon of hope for students throughout the country.

About the Authors:

Name: C. P. SHivachandra

Designation: Research Scholar

University: Kannada Adhyayana Peetha Hampi, Karnataka.

Department: Kannada

My Research Topic : Oral Study of Mukri Community from Uttara Kannada District.

cpshivachandra@gmail.com

Name: Chaitra Pandurang Naik

Designation: Research Scholar

University: Karnatak University Dharwad

Department: English

Research Topic: Dalit Consciousness and Gender Disparity in Meena Kandasamy's Fiction: A Study.

Po: Karki Tq: Honnavar

Dist: Uttara Kannada

State: Karnataka

Pin Code: 581341

naikc155@gmail.com

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