



REFLECTION OF RURAL LIFE IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF CHINUA ACHEBE

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ABSTRACT:

The present paper will highlight the village life in Nigeria ; where the Igbo people are leading their life with their traditions ,customs and rituals without bothering about the modernity or they are not money minded. They are happy in the Nine villages Umuofia, Mabaino, Ikeocha, Ikemefua, Mbanta, Aninta, Elumelu, Abame and Umuazu in 'Things Fall Apart' , most of the story takes place in the village of Umuofia.

Umuaro and Okperi are the nearby village where the struggle between the villages depicts their thoughts and beliefs. In 'Arrow Of God' , the main priest Ezeulu is considered to be the half-man and the half-god. The people in Umuaro performs all the rituals and religious activity ,people keeps lot of trust upon him. They do not cut even the crop(Yam) without the permission taken by Ezeulu from the God Ulu .

The life of people in the village reflects their lifestyle ,duties, worship, beliefs, celebrations of various ceremonies or any performance of funeral and marriage, family system and their source of income. The Igbo people stick to the laws and discipline determined by their tradition and customs. The paper reflects the variety of punishment, attachment towards their rituals , love towards their religion. It also describes some shortcomings ,variety of social practices ,the religious rituals, the magical Igbo myths, multiple of communal ceremonies and festivals ,some religious symbols, portrayal of women , the life of tribal people ,some tribal wars and tribal leadership in the village life .

Key words: - Traditions, customs, poverty, tribes, tribal people, village life, Igbo myths.

INTRODUCTION:

The selected novels of Chinua Achebe describe the rural life of Igbo people who lives in the Southeastern part of Nigeria. The language is used Igbo with the variety of dialects .The Igbo people are poor and their houses are made up of mud with thatched roofs on the bare earth floors. The houses have painted walls with carved design doors. The Igbo women plays important role in decorating their houses they rub earth to glitter the design ,kitchen was included in the house. The traditional people are not using complete clothes their clothes are covered only their private parts. It is called Toga. Children are no need to use clothes they lives without any clothes up to their adolescence .

Marriages:

The process of marriage starts with the observation of the girl at her childhood living at her house for some days ,when they like the girl they decide the bride price for the family of

bride which is allowed and legalized by the customs. The marriages are specially performed in the season of Harvest. In the community of Igbo people polygamy is allowed and bedroom is provided to each wife separately . The village people pays lot of attention and takes care of marriage and its rituals. The decision of marriage mostly rely upon the consent of would be wife. The bride is respectfully welcomed by the ladies of the bridegroom. They wash her feet at the door of the bridegrooms house then she is given perfume and ornaments and send to the head female in the family with respect. The bride is sent to the bridegrooms room ,if bride is found virgin ,the husband sends gifts to the brides parents but if the husband found that the bride is not virgin he sends her back to her home with disrespect.

Farm and Food:

The family members are dependent on the farm so the wives and children helps in farming. The

main crop is Yam which is their favorite food .The Igbo people in the village loved cassava, Garry, plantain and maize. They also enjoys various soups made from chicken , mutton, beef, and fish .The popular alcoholic drink is Palm wine. Every year they celebrate the festival before harvesting of 'Yam' called 'New Yam Festival' . 'The Week of Peace' is also one of the important festival which is observed every year at the time of plantation of crop.

Society and Culture :

The village people celebrates and practices variety of customs ,traditions and religious activity which includes music ,dance forms and visual arts. Jazz is the popular traditional music .Mask culture is there which are made of fabric or wood using variety of materials such as iron, stone, bone and vegetation. These masks are used in special religious functions or secrete festivals .

There are also some a proper system and function at the time of burial. The dead body is placed on a stool in a posture of sitting. Many a time animals are buried with them with the thought that the animals will be the food and company to the dead person in the grave.

Beliefs and Myths:

The African village people are very superstitious .They respect and pray to animals, plants, caves, sea and rivers. They worship specially a python and silk cotton tree. The village people believes in the rebirth . The women are respected ,if a male disrespect a female he takes rebirth as a female , committing suicide is consider as a blunder and their dead body is not touched and buried with respect. The people have variety of God and Goddess they worship 'Chukwu' who is believed to be the supreme God, he controls all the activities of the world. There is also a Goddess named 'Ala or Ani' who is the earth Goddess and she takes care of all the dead and alive. Whatever the sacrifices are offered they are finally received by the supreme God 'Chukwu'. The people also

believed upon the personal God named 'Chi'.The supreme God 'Chikwu' allowed 'Chi' to all people to take care of failure and success. The people before doing anything take suggestions and guidance from God ' Chi'who supervise all the activities of every individuals. There is another tribe called Yoruba who prays and worship earth Goddess 'Onile' who maintains the morality in the clan. These people seek advice from the Oracle of Hills and the Caves.

There are some people who achieved the special titles for their special capabilities and expertise. They are respected and allowed to do some special work in the community at various functions. These people respect and follows the rules and the customs of the community .The problems of the family and the village are solved by the elders, respected persons and the common people. The specific place in the market is decided where the problems are to be solved .

CONCLUSION:

Chinua Achebe has skillfully described the village life of African, Nigerian people with their all the traditions ,customs, festivals and ceremonies in his novels specially in 'Things Fall Apart'(1958)and 'Arrow of God'(1964) . Though it is very difficult rather impossible to give all details of all the traditions and customs of Nigerian people the present paper highlights some important festivals and traditions celebrated by the Igbo people living in the villages of Nigeria.

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