

CULTURAL IDENTITY IN CHINUVA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART*

S.Selvarani,
I M.A.,English
UrumuDhanalakshmi College
Kattur, Trichy – 19.

Abstract

Chinuva Achebe is regarded as one of the outstanding figures in Nigerian literature. He belongs to the Igbo community. He wrote many fictional works. Through his writings, we come to know about African people's life style and their cultural and social status. He never fails to reveals his people's sufferings. Achebe's novels try to convey message about his mother land Africa. Post colonialism narrates the dominance of one country over the other country. Earlier they called it colonialism. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* exposes how the White people dominated over the Black people. They are simply called Blacks. Even though Nigeria is thier mother land they undergo plenty of frustration. So Achebe writes about his own culture which is ruined by the whites.

Keywords: Culture, tradition, social:

Chinuva Achebe is an inevitable literary personality in African literature. In 1979, he got Nigerian National order of Merit Award for his successful works.

Turning and Turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things Fall Apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

Things Fall quotes these lines of W.B.Yeats famous Irish poet *The Second Coming*. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* tells us the story of Igbo community in Africa. In Africa, how his own culture and tradition is fully affected by the colonial whites.

Okonkwo is the protagonist in *Things Fall Apart*. The novel brings out the central character Okonkwo, how he was longing for cultural identity for his native land and cultural heritage. Due to Okonkwo's humiliations in his birth place, he was exiled from his mother land. After a long time, he

came back to his native Umuofia he sees great changes not only in his culture but in whole of Africa. There is a tremendous change especially in Igbo community as well. Hence Okonkwo turns intolerant to these unpleasant changes.

In the middle of the novel there is a dialogue between Obierika and Okonkwo. Obierika's words describes colonialism in Africa. Achebe feels upset about colonialism end into in Africa. So he wants to register his resentment through the character of Obierika. As far as Achebe is concerned the ancient culture is greater than African culture. Also Achebe tells that other nations cannot rule over the native people. Nations ought to be democratic. African need not be colonies of other countries. Achebe says: "Does the white man understand our custom about land?" How can it be when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad" (p-9).

The Natives should sense that Things Fall Apart because of the entry of alien culture and religion Igbo society has no cultural identity symbolized by Okonkwo's death in the end. Like Okonkwo the Igbo culture is in a state of suicide and they don't have any cultural identity. Oknokwo is not significant to the Igbo society and so is their cultural past.

Works Cited

Achebe, Chiuva, *Things Fall Apart*. Oxford, Heinemann Educational publishers, 1996, Print.

Varalakshmi, p.1992-93 "*Literature & Social Change: Chiuva Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart'*

The commonwealth Review 4 : 1: 56-62. Achebe, Chiuva.