

**Women and War: Fortitude of Women in
Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun***

Lavanya K M

(17PEN007)

Thesis submitted to

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education

for Women, Coimbatore-641 043.

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master's Degree in English

April 2019

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Signature of the Supervisor


Signature of the Head of the Department

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Chapter-I

Introduction

Chapter- I

Introduction

War literature or writing chiefly focuses on the battle field experiences and the aftermath of the war. In these writings, the author captures the suffering of the characters in the war. The war writings are based on historical events. The war writings have its origin since the classical times embedded with history and mythology. The classical tragedies such as Euripides *The Trojan Woman* and Shakespeare's *Henry V* and many others focus on the war field experiences, strategies, and ethics of war. The war writing has its prominence during the seventeenth century, and it portrays the satirical element of war. During the nineteenth century, war writing has importance due to the significant wars in history such as the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleonic war and American Civil war.

World War I and World War II have more significant influence and its impact in the writings. The post-world war literature is entangled with the loss of hope, despair, and ravages of the war. The war literature not only included imaginative works such as poetry, novels, plays but also memoirs, diaries, and personal narratives. The American Civil War is noted for the end of slavery and also in terms of destruction and casualties. The novels, memoirs, and diaries reflect the struggles and outpour of effects of the American Civil War. War has been regarded as the major themes during the times of world wars and civil wars. The battle during the classical period has an insight of showing its grandeur nature, the ethics and the history for generations together.

War literature is not only a means to convey the war experience but also replicates on the form of writing war experience through literature. The war experience becomes the turning point in the life of the people as it connects the past and the present situations.

The civilians become the victims of the war, and they are the prime characters portrayed in the writings. The war writings interpolate the memory, struggles, and identities. These writings derive from shaping the narrative histories rather than the mere records of events that entail to poetry and fiction. The older war narratives have the portrayal of an elevated characteristic of hero and memorializing heroic deeds as part of history. The literary heroes in such works have military roots. The main function of war literature depends on the moral, psychological and social stands. In modern war literature, the authors tend to portray the young generation to shape the sense of national purpose.

The war is not only considered for the national purpose but also hinges on the personal challenges. The military ideals have become widespread through the writings as personal models and historical examples. These are expressed in the form of anecdotes or through institutions such as military academia. The war writing are written to testify the spirit of analysis oneself with connecting to the national identity. War literature has its significant feature of initial status and maturation of the characters which is beyond the military context. In recent times, war literature has been expressed as a heroic mode of thoughts and action.

War literature has become a way of resolving the traumatic experience of war and also to rewrite the experience of war. War writing is the illustration of writers view upon the individualistic readers for moral and social context. War writers write for the comrades, to those people of similar minds and anonymous audience to support their views on war experiences. The nostalgic experience is also attributed to war literature where sometimes it glorifies the combat and the falsification of war. War literature tends to elevate the action of heroism and makes the battle to look on an optimist ground with

moral and cultural function. The romantic nature of glorifying the hero become contrary to the act of picturing war as destructive and brutal. The individual heroism is embedded with power and virtue which unleashes the potential ordinary people and making the hero a distinguished personality.

War literature in general, points out the chances of destructive effects into creating new life, fears to courage and evil to good. Kant says about war as:

Although war is an undersigned enterprise . . . , yet it perhaps a deep-hidden and designed enterprise of supreme wisdom for preparing . . . a morally grounded system of those states. In spite of the dreadful afflictions with which it visits the human race . . . [war] is . . . a motive for developing all talents serviceable for culture to the highest possible pitch.

(qtd. in Brosman 94)

War writing from 1914 onwards recreated the scenes of brutality and gruesome effects of war. War writers critically explain through their writing about the devastations of war. War literature is inseparable from the lives of people and writers bring in the effects through their works. Wars deal with psychological, moral and social living which forms the fundamental of life of human beings. Therefore, Wars and War literature is associated with an individual's life and also communal living and behaviour. War writings are the reservoir of history, tradition, death, and rebirth of people and society.

War is regarded as a male enterprise since ancient times. This idea is deeply rooted in the minds of people that 'men' are assigned to do activities that are in the public domain and 'women' are assigned to do work in their households. The division of labour is also sex-biased. The domestic forefronts are validated for the woman as the law of

nature, and the public and social works belong to men. The myth of appointing men in war is that they have natural ferocious characteristics within themselves. Women have an affinity towards peace and order. Women have created an image that they are peace makers and does not involve in violence. History hinders the works of the women, and they are labelled to do household and family works. They are considered as worthy subjects in history. The dominated male society excludes women from history.

Women are marginalized and are confined to do the household labours. They lead a restricted life and are rarely given opportunities in the public forum. The World Wars are the significant wars which bring to light the contribution of women in wartime activities. The myth of women accustomed to the household works is completely shattered where they were involved in a wide range of activities. The wars acted as an instrument for women to change the status of women in society. The war gave women new opportunities for them to enhance their skills. The traditional roles of women in domesticated works are changed into all fronts after the war. The image created for womanhood as physically weak, leisured and sheltered is wholly transformed after the war experiences. The war time experience shows that women are courageous, physically strong, and responsible enough to face the challenges. The war shows the other side of women as patriotic and to achieve in the war. But, war is generally viewed from a male's point of view.

In the war fields, women started to support men in the role of nurses, bus drivers, and soldiers. Women have started to claim their rights in the patriarchal society. Women can participate in every activity of national defense as much as men. Women's large scale involvement in the war is however fraught in numerous problems. The idea of women

performing military services is repulsive to many people. The resistance is rooted in conventional attitude about sex roles. The argument that all government rests upon physical force and political power must, therefore, rest with the stronger sex is used by the anti-Suffragists. The Anti-Suffrage Review observed:

We still have to maintain that the full power of citizenship cannot be given to a sex which is by nature debarred from fulfilling some of the crucial duties of citizenship- enforcement of law, of treaties, and of national rights national defence, and all the rougher work of Empire. (qtd.in Biswas 41)

Many people fear that women will not be able to face the realities of the warfront. The moral consequence of allowing women to become part of the military forces and live near men is more questionable by the people. During the First World War of women are seen to be “aping” men and strong disapproval was also expressed for it. In the war effort, men and women can complement each other. The potential of women is admitted during the World War, as they can maintain the presence of living outside the domestic sphere. The crucial event in 1940s women lives has been reshaped in many ways. Women as workers enjoyed unprecedented opportunities for employment. The war-induced economic boom remains as beneficial for women who looked after their family. Women’s concerns are firmly rooted for their family and above all viewed as wives and mothers. For women, World War II afforded them their first opportunity to serve as regular members of the armed forces. The sexual division of labour assigned during the pre-war era for women is to look after the material and psychological maintenance of the family and for men, the primary responsibility of economically support their family.

During the Second World, due to the Depression, women experienced material deprivation, economic discrimination, and psychological discouragement. It makes them more challenging to improve their lives and status. The media continuously made women aware of their importance not merely as mothers, wives, and home-makers as they the nation mobilized for war required the active support of every member. Women can enlist their causes like the war as a struggle for freedom and democracy provided symbols space for them in public. The labour shortage of the war years due to Depression has encouraged women workers and also appealed by the government and employees for women to take up jobs. The need for the female labour lent a new legitimacy to the women worker and made government, employers and labour unions more willing to consider the needs of women. Finally, wartime propaganda enhanced and assigned significant responsibilities for women as citizens in the public forum.

Women can achieve permanent, regular status in the military establishment in the wars. The process by which women are integrated into the armed forces revealed the power of war to refashion the sex roles, but also demonstrated the tenacity of the conventional beliefs, as military leaders and public officials sought to meet difficulties with the last disruption of the pre-sexual order. American women participated in the Second World War activities, the public discourses on women's wartime roles established the conditions which set limits on revolutionizing the status of women. The war in some sense is interpreted as the turmoil of social order, where women have to replace men in the world outside the house only for "duration". The post-war is a period of reconstruction and the return to traditional gender relationship, the familiar and natural

order of families, men in public roles, women at home. It is seen as a period of restoration of the natural order.

In the armed forces, there are a handful of Nigerian women nurses in the medical corps. Such is the position in the First Republic, and the Biafran war is thus a most representative period of Nigerian history in which women emerged as strong survivors. Women are recruited into the civil militia and promoted to officer cadres; the militia exercised political and military power a different times and places. Women are also recruited into the intelligence and propaganda Directorates and several held responsible positions. At the warfronts, women are active in the medical corps. The Biafran government sponsored a delegation of three women in the United Kingdom and Europe on a diplomatic mission.

The civil war had a long-term and significant effect on the economic activities of women. It marked the emergence of a large number of women as food contractors. Africa has overthrown the patriarchal society after the civil war. Men are dominant and considered 'superior' because they are the bread winners of the family. Colonial influence delineated the position of women in the society. In Biafra, where food supplies are desperately short and all able-bodied liable to arbitrary conscription, women are forced to obtain foodstuffs for their families. They dominated the internal trade in unoccupied food-producing areas and even undertook 'attack trade' i.e., crossing through enemy lines into Nigerian occupied territories to purchase goods. Many contracts are given to women to provide food stuff for the soldiers by the Biafran army.

When the war ended, some women are given a wide range of occupations. They have become farmers, typists and also as traders and contactors. Women find these

occupations more lucrative and satisfying. After the war, the Federal Rehabilitation Commission provided the reconstructing of war-damaged areas and also resulted in a flood of contracts. A temporary release is provided from structured occupational roles to the African women due to the wartime activities. The war significantly altered the lives of women. The dispatch of a massive number of men in the form of soldiers, sailors, administrators, and entrepreneurs made alluring demands for the sexual services of women, and it is one among the various vices associated with war. The women also engage themselves in prostitution, and large scale prostitution was one of the severe problems of post-war era due to the sudden severance of familial ties.

Several women refused to return to the domestic roles of wife and child bearer as they are enticed by the new found sexual emancipation. Women are projected as the strongest survivors in some of the war novels. The most ambiguous terms in the novels are the dichotomy between their traditional roles, and the new possibilities are opened up for women by war. The position of women in the social order is significantly dependent on class affiliations; however, the impact of the war was not necessarily the same on all African women. Janet Bujra notes:

The condition of women in Africa has of course always been culturally diverse...[Women] cannot be thought of as a single category, even though they are important and occasionally unifying struggles in which they may be engaged. At the same time, women cannot be simply analyzed as “men”; gender is almost invariably relevant social category. The point is that gender differences find differential expressions at

different class levels gender is qualified by the places women occupy in newly emergent classes. (qtd.in Biswas 62)

The different classes of Nigerian women were diversely affected by the war. Different kinds of dilemmas are faced by educated liberals; urban women faced as opposed to the experiences of the rural tradeswomen. The degrees of experience that are marked out by some and the commonly accepted pointers are the class, education, position. The common strand of experience that delineates experiences of the women is their ability to struggle, to survive and protest against different types of domination.

The Nigerian civil war or the Nigeria- Biafra war is the result of problems of different ethnic groups and the colonial powers. There are innumerable differences among various indigenous communities that created difficulties in uniting the newly independent nation. Nigeria receives independence from British colonial rule in 1960. Later, the issue between the tribal groups creates havoc and the separation of Nigeria and Biafra. The communal disputes are the major sabotage in uniting the nation. Nigeria is a place with various cultural differences. The tribal groups are differentiated based on their language, culture and by the race. Nigeria has three prominent ethnic communities- the Hausa, the Ibo, and the Yoruba. The Hausa-Fulani dominates the highest among the population and followed by the Ibo and Yoruba. The ethnic communities are dominant in their regions and independent of their federation.

These ethnic communities spread over different parts of the country which also complicated the unification of the nation. The Hausa regions are dominated by the trade centres and administration. The aristocrats and the people with political background reside in Fulani regions. The religious differences among the north and the south are

another primary reason which leads to the tension among the tribal groups. The interference of the two major external religious influences is Christianity and Islam. The people in the northern regions accepted and adopted Islam, and in the other regions, Christianity becomes prevalent. This religious difference creates chaos in the existing cultural practices and indigenous religions. Therefore, religious contrast sowed seeds for the cultural conflict. The difference among the trade of the native tribal cultures and British trading also created tension among the native and the colonizers. The British colonizers signed various policies with the Nigerians. The British colonizer's administration is based on the assumptions of Nigerian societies. The Yoruba, the Fulani emirates, the pagan communities, the village units of Ibo and the commercial ports of the delta becomes a union under the policy of the colonizers. The large scale unification of the various ethnic groups under one policy reveals the lack of insight into the socio-cultural complexities of the country.

The other important factor is because of the problems between the colonial rule and the elite class of Africa. The British aimed to form a Europeanized Africa middle class. They planned it through missionary and government effort. The white clergymen appointed the Africans for the post of responsibility. This makes Africans create their churches. The concept of partnership among them was not in good terms. There is a continuous feud between the British rulers and African people. In the latter half of the twentieth century, Nigeria is a nation of many religions such as Muslim feudal emirates, Christianized state, pagan states, and many other small non-centralized communities. There was a deep separation between the north and the south. The colonial policy created a significant impact of isolation of the north and the south. The policy was deliberately

formed to make the isolation of north and the south in economic activities, Christian influences, and educational progress. It is observed that northern Nigeria is isolated from another part of Nigeria.

The administration also recruited workers for various services from the south or the non-Muslims northern population. This leads to the consequent separation of northern region from modern trends and the rest of Nigeria. The colonizers and their administration have their impact on the governing which becomes a conflict with the Nigerian governing systems. The lineage system of reigning in the tribal groups and the Britishers found it difficult to select the chiefs favourable for them. The Britishers bribed and bullied the lineage groups which furthermore created hatred and conflict. The policy of their indirect rule over the native administration is more alien to the tribal groups. The Ibo leaders become mere puppets in the hands of the Britishers. They are regarded as oppressors representing British rule rather than the representatives of their communities. There remained a shift in the trading patterns due to the First World War. The First World War resulted in large scale induction of the Nigerian soldiers into the armies. The Britishers can maintain their policies until the constitutions of 1922. There aroused a conflict in the British administration with the interest of the people in 1926. The decree of a poll tax of 2.5 percent levied on the male infuriated disturbances in Warri and Kwale districts of the western regions. Women feared that the tax is going to be extended to them and they caused a riot called "Aba riots." It is to show the power of social organizations and production.

Robin Luckham observes in his book, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt 1960-67*:

To put it as its most cynical, the colonial government handed over to the inheriting elite, the political class, the right to control the machinery of government in return for the protection of its economic interests. . . . The departing British kept control of large-scale private economic enterprise and the profits extracted from that place. (207)

The dominance of the expatriate companies over Nigeria's economy remains as a hindrance for the Nigerian government to control over its economic policies. The other reason for the inhibition of the growth of the economy is due to the encouragement of corruption and bribery among the local manufacturers and industries. The exploitation of Nigeria by the foreign settlers created much tension in the discovery of oils in the delta areas in the 1950s. Nigeria's wealth remains to be deprived because of the production and export of crude oil. This production of oil and its boom made Nigeria's economy to be dependent on foreign countries. The oil production and revenue played a vital role in the conflict leading to civil war.

The corruption and exploitation of the Nigerian government even happen before independence. The federal government depended on foreign support to avoid the total collapse. The problem in the army is due to the ethnic conflict religious hostile in the army. The allocation of the recruitments based on the quota system of which 50 percent to the north and 25 percent to the west and east. This system created differences and opinions about the domination of the northerners in military and political activities. After independence, three-quarters of the military officers are Ibo people. This leads to the hatred on the part of easterners. Chinua Achebe comments on the regional ethnic conflict as:

Modern Nigerian history has been marked by sporadic eruptions of anti-Igbo feeling of more or less serious import, but it was not until 1966-7 when it swept through northern Nigeria like “a flood of deadly hate” that the Igbo first questioned the concept of Nigeria which they had embraced with much greater fervour than the Yoruba or the Hausa/Fulani. (45)

The Nigerian army can identify the disruptions in the political groups due to the ethnic tensions of the country — this paved way to analyze the scamp of spoils at the higher section of the army. There are ‘Majors’ and ‘January Boys’ coups which initiated the formation of the military government under Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, an Ibo. The military coup turns out to relief from the political mishaps and flamboyant living that disfigured Nigerian life. The Majors’ coup creates a great impact on the political environment. The provisional nature of the military government is on the process of the cleansing mission. The Ibo people are appointed to the government offices, and it leads to feud. The decree on unification in 1966 leads to the resentment in the north. It turns out as a riot upon the Ibo and the easterners.

The May riot is based on the three causes which satirize the condition of the military government. The cartoon of a dead Sardauna is begging for the forgiveness to an Igbo journalist. Secondly, the hike in the food price due to the distorted economy and bad harvest. The fear of the northerners is that the southerners have a deeper influence in the administration. The fear of one tribe dominating the other and the control of the centre and the traditional way of living are the other causes. Robin Luckham rightly says on the regional conflict as

The sudden florescence of primordial animosity in 1966 occurred when tribal and regional ties became the symbolic outlet for the expressions of a whole range of tensions, both within the military organization itself and outside it in a wider political context. One major source of tensions was political, namely that the army's newly acquired political role exposed it to unaccustomed political demands and pressures; and did so under circumstances which seemed to represent a transfer of political power from the North, resulting in the urban riots in May and September-October 1966 as well as the July coup itself. (194)

After the death of Ironsi, the discipline in the army and national unity is torn between the ethnic disputes. In the barracks, the northern mutineers killed easterners. After the reconciliation, Colonel Gowon becomes the new supreme commander. Even though he becomes the supreme commander, his authority is at first tenuous. Colonel Murtala Mohammed holds an authoritarian position as the leader of the group. There are continuous attack and counter-attacks which are handled by the leaders. Gowon makes success in appointing the soldiers from the barracks of their region. Still, there are continuous massacres and dispute remains between the north and eastern region. The communal massacres and the holocaust of September 1966 question the security of the nation.

Nigeria becomes the country of disintegration and secession. The soaring oil production, the take of the military, inexperienced leaders created an impact on the newly formed independent nation. After the Eastern Consultative Assembly, the country is divided into twelve new states. The minority tribes are given importance than the

majority tribes, and it leads to war. Colonel Ojukwu declares that there are no political ties between Biafra and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The war is supported by foreign forces such as Britain, Holland and the United States. The French, Portuguese government, supported Biafra with weapons. The western power has a great interest in the oil production of Nigeria, and it sets as a background for the conflict. The Nigerian civil war makes the people of the country realize their existence. Biafra nationalism is more passionate about than the Nigerian counterpart. They are much affected by the war. Therefore, Biafran war marks its impact on the Nigerian history and lives of the people.

Biafran war has created a greater impact on Nigerian literature. Literature form is an instrument to bring out the history of the Nigerian civil war to the limelight. Writers such as Christopher Okigbo, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and others have discussed the influences and aftermaths of the war. Buchi Emecheta is also a prolific Nigerian expatriate writer, who lived in London. Her stories dwell deep in the mixed cultural perspective and from the viewpoint of West African Women. Her notable works include *In the Ditch*, *Second Class Citizen*, *The Slave Girl*, *The Bride Price*, *The Joys of Motherhood*. She is an efficient writer who explains about the woman living as an expatriate in another country. She discusses about women suffering in the premonition of gender, race, and colour. But, in contrast to her writing the novels *Destination Biafra* and *The Double Yoke*, she portrays women as saviours of the nation.

She combines the culture and tradition in her writing along with modernity. She exposes the stand of the Nigerian women and their problems. Nigerian women experience the double oppression caused by the imperialism and patriarchy. Marie states that, "Her writings introduce new themes in African literary history: the emergence of

self-conscious feminism — women’s liberation and the celebration of the black woman. She is an advocate of women’s liberation and thinks that male writers make African women their housemaids or prostitutes in their books” (191). She reveals the truth of the female experience without any sheer exaggeration. Her novels express the emotion of the individual experience blended through modernity and culture. Her female characters transcend the evils of society such as violence, poverty and false predicaments to an independent, resourceful and courageous person in the society. She is highly praised for her work and received an honorary doctorate from Farleigh Dickinson University.

Flora Nwapa is praise worthy Nigerian author often known as the forerunner of African women writers and the mother of modern African literature. She is the first Nigerian women writer to internationally publish her highly appreciated book *Efuru* in English. The book is also criticized for its writing and lame story telling. Her writings reflect the life of Igbo people and tradition from the perspective of a woman. She drew inspiration from her contemporary writers and friends such as Achebe and Okingbo. Her works have inspired a lot of younger generation writers and remarkable among them is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Nwapa love for her nation and as a patriot she helped in the reconstruction works after the war. She also worked with the refugees and orphans who are displaced after the war. She established her press in West Africa to break the traditional role of women in society and claim for equality. Her notable works include *Never Again* based on the Biafran war and *One is Enough* and *Women are Different*.

Ifeoma Okoye is another prominent contemporary writer of Buchi Emecheta. Oyekan Owomoyela in his book *The Columbia Guide to West African Literature in English Since 1945* states, “. . . The most important female novelist from Nigeria after

Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta”(142). She started her career as a writer for children, and her works include *Behind the Clouds*, *The Village Boy*, *Ayo, and His Pencil*, *Eme goes to School* and *The Fourth World*. She has also written short stories for children and has received national acclamation. Her works *Behind the Clouds* and *The Village Boy* received a prize from Nigerian National Council of Art and Culture. She also won the Commonwealth Short story Competition for the African region in 1999.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a distinguished Nigerian novelist, short story writer and also writes non-fiction. Adichie is an award-winning writer known for her works includes *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. She is regarded as the influential writer and representative of the contemporary African literature. Her novels present the issues of female problems after the colonial period and also on gender studies. In 1988, she wrote a short play named *For Love of Biafra*. She has published many short stories and won various literary awards. Her first novel *Purple Hibiscus* won Commonwealth Writers' Prize and was shortlisted for Orange Prize for Fiction. The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* received Orange Prize for Fiction in 2007 and also received Anisfield-Wolf Book Award. *Half of a Yellow Sun* has been adapted as a film in 2014 with the Screenplay written by Biyi Bandele.

Her other work *The Things Around Your Neck* is a collection of twelve short stories about the relationship of men and women. This book was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the best book from the African Region. Her other novel *Americanah* won National Book Critics Circle Award. Her recent work *Dear Ijeawele or A Feminist Manifesto* in Fifteen Suggestions is written to her friend as a letter of how to raise her daughter as a feminist. All her writings deal with the relationship between

men and women. She has also included the traditional and cultural values imbibed in her female characters. *Half of a Yellow Sun* deals deeper with the human emotions with Biafran War background. Adichie's literary contribution and her popularity in contemporary society make her outstand as a Nigerian writer across the globe. Her novel expels gender studies and Nigerian culture beyond boundaries.

Chika Nina Unigwe is a prominent and noted contemporary writer of Adichie. She is a Nigerian born Igbo author noted for her work *On Black Sisters' Street*. This work explores the slavery of women and prostitution. As a diaspora writer, her stay in Belgium made her expose on prostitution, human trafficking, and loneliness. The majority of the prostitutes are from Nigeria which instigated her to explore their stories. She has splendidly investigated on the tabooed topics on the society which she has not experienced. *On Black Sisters' Street* is all about the human plot, where the situation is different. Still, it deals with the human emotions and trauma of prostitutes. Apart from this, she has also written works such as *Tear Drops*, *A Rainbow for Dinner*, *Thinking of Angel* and others. She has received Nigeria Prize for Literature for her work *On Black Sisters' Street*.

Lola Shoneyin is an eminent writer and known for her debut novel *The Secrets Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. The novel is about the evils of polygamy, and it is a tragic tale about the four wives of Nigerian patriarch husband. The novel is written from the women's perspective of understanding the system of polygamy and patriarchy in the Nigerian Society. This work is an expression of her personal experience of multiple marriages of her grandfather. The novel has won PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Literary Award and longlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction. Lola is not only a novelist but also

a poet and prose writer. She has written her poetry in humorous, outspoken and a thrilling manner. Her works include *So All the Time I was Sitting on an Egg*, *Song of a River Bird*, *Ovalonion House*, *For the Love of Flight* and her children's book named *Mayowa and the Masquerade*. She has also started a successful venture of Ake Arts and Book Festival at Lagos.

The objectives of the dissertation are to study on the ravages of the Biafran Civil War and its impact on women in Nigerian Society. It also observes on war the contribution of women in the select novels of Buchi Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The prime objective of the study is to understand the barriers of women to involve in a rare field of work. The focus is on the women's participation in the military and their contribution to the development of the society. It also highlights on the understanding of the communal living in society. It focuses on the emancipation of women and gender biased observation in challenging situations such as war.

Chapter two attempts to examine the colonial effects on Nigeria and its effects on the position of women in the novel *Destination Biafra*. The chapter focuses on the causes of the Nigerian Civil War and corruption in politics. The chapter highlights the breaking the stereotypical notion of women and gender biased assumption of women contribution for the war. The chapter also studies on the revolutionary stand of the central character Debbie and suffering of women in war front. This chapter also analyses on the view of liberal feminists and the position of women in society.

Chapter three observes the status of women during war times in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. It also gives an overview of communal clashes of different tribal groups

and secession of Nigeria. This chapter studies the differences in the outlook of uncivilized women and as modernized women towards war and its effects. The chapter highlights the patriotic spirit of women concealed due to the patriarchal society. The concluding chapter includes the impact of war on women. It also compares and contrasts the elements of Nigerian Civil War from the victor's, Nigerians and victim's, Biafrans point of view in the novels *Destination Biafra* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* respectively.

Chapter-II

Beyond Womanhood: Emancipation of Women in *Destination Biafra*

Chapter- II

Beyond Womanhood: Emancipation of Women in *Destination Biafra*

Destination Biafra (1982) is the novel which presents the historical events of the independence of Nigeria under the British colonial rule. The novel gives the insight into the influence of the colonial power and the tension prevailed after independence. Buchi Emecheta is a well-known Nigerian woman writer. She is known for representing unique women characters in her novels. She brings out strong female characters who are the representatives of women in Nigeria. The main women characters in the novel are Debbie Ogedemgbe, Barbara Teteku, and Uzoma Madako. The other women characters include Stella Ogedemgbe, Debbie's mother; Mrs. Teteku and Mrs. Eze. The women characters portrayed in the novel belong to the elite classes and families with sound political background. The novel deals with the trivial federal government under the clutches of the British Empire. It exemplifies about the political clashes, communal clashes, and avaricious moves of the corrupt politicians.

Buchi Emecheta has portrayed female characters who belong to minor tribal group. The plot revolves around the protagonist Debbie and the internal clash among the Hausa and the Igbo group. The novel traces the distorted failing of the government officials and suffering of women and children in the coups and massacres. The novel represents the graphic picture of the holocaust of numerous people and Debbie's transformation breaking the walls of the norms of the society. The colonial influence and its interference in the Nigerian government had sown seeds for the rebellion and the separation of Nigeria. This rebellion was enforced by the Nigerian soldiers against the corrupt politicians. The corruption of the Nigerian politicians in favouring the British

rulers is the primary cause which evoked the Nigerians soldiers to turn against them. In the novel, Mallam Nguru Kano, Dr. Ozimba and Samuel Ogedemgbe are the members of Nigerian cabinet, and most of them are corrupt politicians. Samuel Ogedemgbe, Debbie's father, is the also a corrupt politician and holds the position of finance minister.

The military people wanted to eradicate corruption and the intrusion of the British government in the affairs of the Nigerian government. The military people such as John Nwokolo, Chijioke Abosi, Saka Momoh fight against the politicians who enjoy a cozy lifestyle while the commoners are struggling for their livelihood. So they kill the corrupt politician, but it paves way for the ethnic conflict among people. During, the election there are many tribal conflicts and the formation of the political parties based on the tribe. The main tribal groups involved in the conflict Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, and other minor tribal communities. Religious differences are also another fact which created chaos and division between Nigeria and Biafra. There is major conflict between Muslim people of Hausa community and Christians of Igbo people.

Buchi Emecheta centers the role of women in fighting for the unification of their nation. The coups and massacres lead to the loss of lives of the number of innocent people, women, and children. Through the character of Debbie, Emecheta shows the plight of the people in the war. Emecheta stresses the ideas of the liberation of women through the characters Debbie and Ozuma Modoka. The female characters are in the position to actively participate in the war and fight for the freedom of their nation. Emecheta depicts the character of Debbie who is embodiment of courage and surpasses traditional and stereotypical roles. Emecheta has brilliantly focused on women character and depicted in a unique way in the novel. Destination Biafra novels is a matrix of

freedom and opportunity for women. She has involved in the military works and in the process of negotiation between Nigeria and the newly formed Biafra. She wants Nigeria as a unified nation rather than being a land of disputes and massacres. Emecheta has expressed through the novel that women can also be the partaker in military and warfare. The women portrayed in the novel are not just projected as victims' and subjugated being of the war, but they are independent and courageous enough to face the effects of the war and massacres.

Destination Biafra centers on the character Debbie Ogedemgbe, who has free spirit in her thoughts and life. She is concerned about the welfare of the nation and her characters outstands all the features of typical heroines in the novel. *Destination Biafra* gives the readers an insight about the Nigerian army, political and the historical facts of the civil war. The novel is about the grave situations of war and it is interplay of political seriousness, friendship, interaction and love for the nation. The novel is distinguished from the other African novels, as it elevates position of women rather focusing them only for domesticity and suffering. *Destination Biafra* is the novel which articulates the events of prewar and the crucial moments that lead to war. The novel expresses the destructive years and turbulence in the political regime of Nigeria. The novel traces the falling years of Nigeria, about the massacres and the ethnic differences that lead to the formation of Biafra.

Debbie is a shrewd and well-educated and woman. She is straightforward and enrolls herself in Nigerian army. Barbara Teteku, Debbie's friend also enrolls along with her in the army. Debbie and Barbara discusses about the disturbance happening during the disputes among the political leaders, Saka Momoh and Abosi. Debbie is not a woman

who dreams for her future in well-settled family but she visions for a peaceful nation. She strives to get in control the communal mutiny and massacres. Her concern for her nation and identity of belonging to one of the minority groups make her under the mission of reconciliation with Biafra. Debbie is the representative from Nigeria to coax the Biafran leader Abosi to put an end to the war. Debbie is associated with Alan Grey, an English man and military adviser. She appears to be interested in the Nigerian affairs but he is a knave colonizer who looks Nigeria for its oil wealth. Debbie believes in him and later toward the process of unification of Nigeria and Biafra understands the true colour of Alan Grey.

Emecheta has portrayed male characters in stark contrast to the female characters. She has pictured the male characters such as Alan Grey and Abosi as weak characters. Debbie's father is weak, as he was snared into corruption with a hope of leading a luxurious life and dies in the military coup. Alan also becomes the traitor in order to have the intervention of British government in the affairs of Nigeria. He is the cause for the peace mission that Debbie undertakes for reunion of Nigeria and Biafra. The minor male characters also take an advantage on the gender of Debbie being a woman. The Nigerian soldiers misbehave with her and others try to seduce her.

British colonization is the primary cause of the dispute among the Nigerians. The British colonizers want to have a strong hold on Nigeria, and want to impose their power over the Nigerians. They are also keen on the fact that the prime minister for independent Nigeria should be the person who favors them and to work to fulfill their demands. They want to have complete control over them. Macdonald, Sir Fergus Grey, and Alan Grey are the colonisers who plan with the others in their British empire about the formation of

new independent Nigeria. They want to appoint the leaders who are involved in bribery and corruption so that they can pay heed to their demands. They are also concerned about the idea of Nigeria having bonds and relationships with other countries.

The colonisers are the main reason for the ethnic conflict among the Nigerians. They favour the corrupt politicians. In the novel, the political campaign is done based on different tribal groups. The British governor-general Macdonald and Alan, a trained army officer, want the tribal group which supports them and it seems that the Moslem Hausa people are favourable for their plans to be executed. Africans are known for their communal living and its due to the interference of the colonisers it is no more possible. They are living among the tribes, and the difference in their ethnicity is the prime cause for the secession of Nigeria and Biafra. Alan feels that Nigeria does not require independence. The British people create confusion among the Nigerians so that they can have their influences in sorting out their problems. Alan says about the Nigerians as, "Tribe, tribe, tribe. How that word can consolidate and yet still divide . . ." (DB 8).

They are also fond of the oil wells and the resources present in Nigeria, and henceforth they impose their power on the Nigerians and in the formation of the new government. They try to own the riches of Nigeria. Emecheta states it as, ". . . The one thing he was certain of was that the profit to come out of Nigeria should go to British rather than to other countries" (DB 15). For such reasons, the British people want Nigeria under their hold. The British government has their interference throughout and even at the time of Nigerian – Biafra civil war. The British colonisers supported the Nigerian federal forces. Saka Momoh becomes the special commander of Nigeria after the extermination of the corrupt politician. It creates a dispute between the Abosi and leads

to the secession of Biafra from Nigeria. The conflict between Nigeria and Biafra paves the way for the death of innumerable people. British continued to support Nigerian federal forces by supplying them with arms and mercenaries. Elina, the wife of Dr. Eze expresses the cruelty of the British Colonisers as, “That our soldiers killed our own people for refusing to join up and fight for Biafra. . . wasn’t the oil the reason for all the mess” (DB 252-53).

The British colonisers are double-sided in nature; they support the Biafrans by giving food and other humanitarian activities through the Red Cross. This is one of their strategies to maintain good relations with the Nigerians. They understand that the Nigerians are the stronger force and they can defeat the Biafrans. Alan Grey has also betrayed Debbie and with other Nigerian officials. It is expressed as “Her mission to Abosi was known only to a few high-ranking officers and one or two of the old politicians She was to give Chijioke Abosi the opportunity to back down without losing face” (DB 120-21). Emecheta has finely distinguished the conspiracies and the intervention of the British colonisers. Even during the massacres of Igbo people and loss of lives of women and children, they supplied arms to the Nigerian army. Nigerians attacked them by formulating “Operation Mosquito” and the Biafra army, in turn, forms “invincible army” and “Ogbunigwe”- a traditional method of killing a massive number of people in Nigeria. Henceforth, British colonisers had a dominant role in manipulating the events of independence struggle and the civil war. Many innocent woman and children are affected because of these attacks and the Nigerian soldiers harass them.

The British officials want Nigeria to be dependent on the power of British Empire, as they begin to exploit their natural resources without their knowledge. The

western culture is highly dominant. British colonisers went to the extent of looting their valuables and the natives were ignorant of their natural valuables. The Britishers take in the advantage of the Nigerian politicians who have great influence on the common people. Their corrupt nature is highlighted through the conversation of Alan and Mr. Grey. He says, “. . . And the corrupt ministers are very powerful, you know. They can buy anything. . .” (DB 6). This shows the situation of the Nigerian politics under the dominance of the British colonial rule. The corrupt politicians pave way for the intervention of the military power and later secession of Nigeria and Biafra. Corruption is the root cause of all the problems and clashes in Nigeria. Emecheta brings to light the actuality and the manipulated strategies behind the war.

The political differences and corruption leads to the rebellious move against the newly formed government. The colonisers are the major reason for corruption. They corrupt the people in the high rank in the Nigerian government to control them to favour their cause. The corruption and bribery of the Nigerian officials lead the military to take over the control and kill them for the welfare of the Nigeria. Sir Fergus says to Macdonald, “My son does not subscribe to our granting independence to Nigeria. He thinks it’s too soon” (DB 6). The aim of the colonisers is that they do not want Nigeria to have an alliance with other foreign countries. Since, Nigeria is a place with full of oil, it does not want the Nigerians to understand the monetary value of their rich resources.

In this novel, the chief characters who are involved in the Nigerian politics are Samuel Ogedemgbe and his wife Stella. He is the finance minister, who smuggles and promotes the illegal sale of the foreign alcohol in their country. Stella talks about the illicit gin trade and forgery of Madam Osajofa. She says that the local gin is not good and

affects the health of the people. But, in reality, if foreign alcohol is imported they will receive ten percentage commissions from the beverage companies. They enjoy the commission and send their children to the British Universities. Samuel is the proud father who sent his daughter to Oxford and shows off his power as a wealthy politician. The wealth is obtained through the corrupt money and the commission offered to him.

Emecheta throws light and recounts this mean act as:

He Samuel Ogedemgbe was a busy man. After that his percentage should be paid to a named Swiss bank account. The whisky man from Britain, having been reminded that he was being greatly favoured, bowed himself out, but not before leaving a case of twelve large bottles of whisky with the new Minister of Finance guard. (DB 29)

Debbie realizes the truth behind the luxuries of the Nigerian politicians and how the innocent Nigerian people are being deceived by them. Therefore, she wants to protect the nation and she takes her stand against her father. She joins the army against her parent's will to support her nation. Emecheta points out the reasons for the emergence of the disputes between the native people. She has analysed the other side of Nigeria and the atrocities of the colonisers who are in power. She has depicted the chief characters with the political backgrounds which make the readers to realize the seriousness and potholes in the politics.

The other prime reason for the cause of the Nigerian Biafra is the ethnic differences among the major and the minor groups. The differences among the tribal groups are also another inevitable part that paved way for the conflict among people. The colonisers also take the advantage of dividing one nation through various tribes. During,

the independence Nigeria was a fragile state with internal disputes. This acts as a benefit for the Britishers to have a control over the Nigerians. They estimate the tribal people based on their dominance in their country. Alan and Macdonald discusses about the various tribal groups as,

It would be easy if we had only the Hausas to cope with. But there are the other tribes –the Yorubas have been dealing with us for decades. And then there are Ibos. They are ambition personified . . . there is no doubt that they are extremely intelligent. But, they are greedy as well, and their arrogance could lead them into trouble. Also, the greater portions of the oil areas are in their region . . . then there is no problem. Introduce democracy, and let the Hausa rule forever. You did say that they are not so ambitious, and they happy in the Moslem faith? (DB 7)

The dominace and support of Hausa group makes the colonisers to be on the favorable side of Hausas and Mallam Nguru Kano.

The dispute between the Hausas, Yoruba and Igbos are shown during the elections, where people are segregated to do campaign for their tribal group. The tension among the different ethnic communities begins from the time of election and fumes at the juncture of appointing the members of the federal house. The Hausa are given position as per the plan of the British colonisers. Dr.Ozimba is an Igbo leader and he has involved in the politics for number of years. These all situations lead to create disparity among the tribal groups. Even, when the military forces try to eradicate the corrupt government officials expect the Igbo leaders all other corrupt ministers are killed. This also adds fuel

to the fire and creates doubt among the people. The conflict paves way to the fight between the western Igbo and the eastern Igbo people.

The Yoruba and the Hausas fight against the Igbo people. Numerous Igbo people are killed and massacre begins due to the unfavourable conditions and feud between other members of federal house. The colonisers also have an opinion about Igbos that they are ambitious and they do not support them during the war. Debbie belongs to the minor tribal community called Itesikiri and therefore she is used to make peace with Biafran leaders. Momoh states to about Abosi to Debbie that, “. . . At any rate, we would think that you are the right person to reach himYour family and his were friends for long time. . . (DB 123). Abosi and the others are also Igbo people and they understand that how the Igbo people suffer in the hands of the Nigerian army. The Igbo people are brutally killed and young children and women become victims for the indifferences of the various tribal group leaders. There is also feud between the wives of the political leaders of different clans for wearing same outfit. The ethnic differences spread from the political leaders to the common people, who paved way for the communal clashes which also lead to the death of numerous lives. Emecheta has showcased the reality of the conflicts among different clans throughout the novel.

In this novel, Buchi Emecheta has portrayed the female character who are against the generic conventions like Debbie and Barbara Tekeku. They are courageous enough to fight the war. Emecheta expresses her knowledge on the ability of woman to be a part in the war. She also elevates the characters of woman from the preconceived notion of subjugation of women. The role of Debbie is vital in the future process of the war. She

raises herself from the conflict of her nation and also from the internment of the British rulers.

Stella and Mrs. Teteku do not want their daughters to be in the part of war. Stella is firmly against the opinion of women being part of the military. In fact, Debbie is opposing her own father Ogedemgbe who holds highest position in Nigerian government. The Nigerian army is against the corrupt politicians and as a patriot; she is willing to join the army. Stella has the typical notion of women and being a mother she wants her daughter to be a dutiful wife. She dislikes the idea of her daughter joining in the army. Debbie announces, "Father, I'm joining the army" (DB 51).

A woman joining the Nigerian army is ridiculous for people to hear. Debbie discusses with Abosi about how people made fun of her being enrolled for the military. Stella has passion for freedom of women. Still, she has her stereotypical notions of mother safeguarding her daughter and sticks to the traditional values of her culture. She is an elite woman and also involves in corruption. She wants her daughter to be safe and protected and disagrees with the idea of Debbie joining the military force. She states, "I don't know what has come over you girls. We all want freedom for women, but I doubt if we are ready for this type of freedom where young women smoke and carry guns instead of looking after husbands and nursing babies"(DB 108). Stella is a woman accustomed to the role of being protective and responsible wife. She wants to be free, but she holds her conventional tradition of women getting married and to take care for her children. They think it is the responsibility of men to take part in war and military affairs. Emecheta has intensively captured the emotions of conventional women and their typical idea of womanhood through the character of Stella.

The stereotypical notion towards women is dispelled through the characters of Debbie and Barbara. The representation of woman is that they are loyal and sweet mother abiding to the conventional norms and to the other extreme of voluptuous woman. These stereotypes curb the standards of women and constrain them to present the socially accepted roles of women. Jean Bethke Elshtain states the stand of women in war as, “Wartime’s Beautiful Soul is no ordinary wife or mother or secretary or nurse: she becomes a civic being; she is needed by others; she can respond simultaneously to what Jane Addams called the ‘family claim’ and the ‘social claim,’ for, she is told, without her unselfish devotion to country and family each would be lost” (qtd in.Nnaemeke 237).

Emecheta has exceptionally depicted the character of Debbie. She is a young and enthusiastic woman who is graduated from Oxford and along with her friend Barbara. Debbie is from an elite family, and she is from the minor tribal community known as Itesikiri. She is different from other woman characters and has a great love for her nation. She is indeed the meticulous woman and different from the image of traditional Nigerian woman. Debbie is a courageous woman, and she opposes the idea of the secession of Nigeria and Biafra. She understands the state of corruption in the newly independent Nigeria. Alan Grey, lover of Debbie, also has imagined her to be traditional Nigerian women. She is different from the thoughts of Alan. Alan describes Debbie as,

Slim and pretty, but arrogant. She was intelligent, nice to be with but independent. She was too English for his liking. If he was going to be native, he might as well do it properly. The way he saw it, people, like her were building themselves big identity problems (DB 36).

Debbie is a decisive and has self-regulating personality. She doesn't limit herself only in tending the accepted social roles of woman being a mother, wife and beloved. She joins the army against the will of her parents who are against her decision. She has concern for her parents, but at the same time, she has a distinctive personality. She is far from the notion being an ideal woman to get married and begetting children. Emecheta destabilizes typecasts of female protagonist in the novel. She has a great concern for her nation, and this makes her stand out among the other women of her time. Emecheta has framed such character to show that women have the capabilities to fight for the unification of their nation. She is broad minded and different from her mother Stella who laundered the nation wealth and wants to protect her sons from the revolutionary group.

Unlike her mother, Debbie's opinion towards the marital life is different, and it breaks down the conventions. Stella shrouds the traditional Nigerian roles of women and their values. She also strengthens the patriarchal domination and cannot accept the fact her daughter enrolling in the army. Debbie is in love with the English expatriate military officer, Alan Grey. Alan wishes to get married to Debbie, but as practical thinker, she realizes that a black woman cannot marry a white man belonging to the ruling class. Alan discusses with her about marriage as, "Have you ever thought of marriage, Debbie? . . . Definitely not to you! My parents would kill me, and your father's grey moustache would never stop quivering" (DB 36). She is a respectful daughter as well as a self-determined person. Her outlook towards her life and it is simply different from the old school of thoughts. Emecheta asserts it as,

She did not wish to live a version of life ---to marry a wealthy Nigerian, ride the most expensive cars in the world, and be attended by servants [. . .

.] No, she did not want her own ideas of independence in marriage had no place in that set-up. She wanted to do something more than child-breeding and rearing and being a good passive wife to a man whose ego she must boost all her days, while making sure to submerge every impulse that made her a full human. Before long she would have no image at all, she would be as colourless as her poor mother. (DB 45)

Debbie is the representation of a liberal woman and during that period of 1980s she expresses her individualistic and independent thoughts. Stella, Mrs. Teteku are typical women are attached to their familial and social stands. She breaks all the barriers of women to be defined only by marriage and procreation. She objects the idea of marriage and to lead a life that her parents want her to live. She dislikes following domesticated life of her mother. Debbie is an educated woman, and she thinks in a futuristic way which makes her look odd. Emecheta highlights the fact of the cyclic process in women's life. She avows that every woman in the society undergoes the progress of their life through birth, mingling in the society and finally marriage. The disruption in the pattern of living of marriage is looked down upon in the society. Debbie grows in British society, and that socialization has made her strong and unconventional. The patriarchal society of Nigeria is expressed by Emecheta in an article entitled "Feminism with a small f" says,

In most African societies the birth of a son enhances a woman's authority in the family. Male children are very, very important. Yet, this girl-child that was desired originally comes into her own at a very early age. From childhood, she is conditioned into thinking that being the girl she must do

all housework, she must help her mother to cook, clean, fetch water and look after her younger brothers and sisters. If she moans or shows signs of not wanting to do any of this, she will sharply reminded by her mother;
But you are a girl! Going to be woman! (qtd. in Biswas 76)

Debbie shows interest to enroll in the army, and she also realizes that her father is engaged in bribery and corruption. She is a gallant woman and takes part in the military actions. She is a genuine person and true to her consciousness. She is very staunch that her country should be united and secession should not happen. She is very affectionate towards her parents, but still, she holds loyalty and patriotism towards her country. She lives in a way, which breaks the barriers of the system that restricts women. She joins the army and adjusts the difficulties faced during her training. People wonder how woman do service in the army. Regardless of, the fact that she is opposing her father and everyone suspects her. She manages all the criticism and wants to join the army. She always discusses with her father, that how young, educated men enroll themselves in the army and serve for the unification of their nation. She is unlike any woman and faces much difficult of being the daughter of a wealthy politician. Emecheta exemplifies her position as,

She felt more and more like an outsider, and told herself that she must make a move to fashion a life for herself .Yes, she would join the army. If intelligent people and graduates were beginning to join the ranks of the Nigerian Own Queen's Regiment, she intended to be one of them. It would be much more difficult for a woman, she knew, and the daughter of

a minister at that, but she was going to fight. She was going to help the Nigerian army—not as a cook or a nurse but as a true officer! (DB 45)

Debbie is trapped by the power of the patriarchal society, ethnic, cultural, gender differences in the military. She is also criticised for her association with Alan Grey. She also faces a difficult situation after entering the army as there were no proper facilities for women in the army. A woman even in the army does only the job of nursing and educating the soldiers. She takes part in the actual training and Emecheta has depicted her character as the one who fights for her rights and faces all difficulties. Her vision for a woman is to become part of the war. Niyi Akingbe states the opinion of women in the novel as, “. . . Debbie resists the societal codification of her greener hegemonic narrative, and on the other hand, she rejects the male-dominated notion that the army is exclusive preservation of men by enlisting in the army” (43-44).

Debbie becomes the pioneer to join in the army while she converses with Abosi, he says that there are no proper facilities. There are no separate quarters for women. Emecheta insists on how women are not given any rights to participate in political and military businesses. Debbie is the mouth piece of Emecheta herself. She brings the history and the circumstances of women not being liberated. She portrays that women can withstand the difficulties as men. Debbie and Barbara stand as an example and influence other women to enroll in the army. They belong to elite family background and have been educated from Oxford. People think that they enjoy a luxurious life. But, in reality, they have left their comforts and sacrificed everything for their nation. Emecheta breaks the preconception of commoners over the wealthy women. Debbie and Barbara stand as an example as an ardent patriot of their country.

Debbie faces lots of challenges after she enters the military. She faced many complications even before she joined the Nigerian army. She successfully joins the army but the political tensions and the conflict between the military officials Abosi and Saka Momoh throw challenges on her. She is attacked in the military coup and witnesses the struggles of her parents. She is shocked by the ill-treatment of her mother by the young soldiers. Debbie is tortured by undressing her clothes and tied up to the bedpost. The Nigerian soldiers molested Debbie in front of her parents. Even Stella is mistreated in such a way. She bears the pain of the abuse and murder of her father.

In spite of the distress and insults, she faces in the military; the soldiers disregard her because she is a woman and disrespects her. The officers go against her command and say, "Whatever you do, however much you are armed, and in the command now, you are still a woman" (DB 79). She faces the domination of men in the military. Saka Momoh and Oladapo use Debbie as an instrument to gain support for their Nigerian army from British people. She stands for Nigeria and does not want the separation due to the internal conflict between the military officials. She withstands all the discrimination and faces her loss and insults courageously. She is not a weak woman and her fearless thoughts make her admit the injustices done for her. She ultimately aims that women want to be treated equally in society. She takes up these challenges; as a result, other woman can come forward to join the Nigerian army.

The other important character in the novel is Debbie's friend Barbara and she belongs to high-class society. She is also brave and has immense love towards her nation. They are the initiators for women to participate and take up training in the army. Emecheta has given prominence to Barbara, as she is a revolutionary character. She has

great concern for women to take part in the army. She does not want women to do all the familial duties but to care for their country. She is curious about the happening in the Aburi conference to settle the clash between Abosi and Saka Momoh. She says, “Do you think the Aburi conference has failed? No one’s saying anything. I rush to buy the newspapers every morning hoping to read about the outcome, but nothing” (DB 109). Debbie also talks about the position of Stella and Mrs. Teteku. They are docile and care only for the welfare of the family. Stella worries for her sons who are studying in London. She talks about liberty and the name Ogedemgbe so that she can survive in the military coups and escape the massacres. Debbie and Barbara discuss the long run domestic life of Stella. They consider about it as, “. . . I don’t think Mama ever had an opinion about anything except her wardrobe. . . . the wife of a domineering man who took it upon himself to have the last word on everything that went on around him. . . .”(DB 110). Barbara likes Debbie does not have any interest in the familial life. She also detests the comment of Mrs. Teteku’s prejudice that women from who have higher education from foreign countries behave and imitate like men. Emecheta has portrayed these characters not to ape men’s behavior; rather they stand for the rights of the women. Barbara expresses the reality of the life of women in the rich Nigerian society as, “. . . Marry one of them and start breeding and continue bleeding till menopause. . . .”(DB 122).

Debbie is used as an instrument to reconcile the conflict between the military officials. Saka Momoh underestimates Debbie that she is a woman and cannot do any high military job. He says, “Don’t meddle in things bigger than you and don’t forget, my dear, that you are a woman. That is why we are giving you this delicate mission” (DB

129). Women are used only for the purpose required by men. Debbie also undergoes such experiences and she aims in the unification of Nigeria and Biafra. Debbie undergoes both physically and psychological pain. She is raped in front of her parents. This incident mentally disturbs her and there is a trajectory change in her character. She goes beyond all her pains and strives for the goodness of her nation. She understands the fact that how the people of Biafra are strong in their opinions to be free from Nigeria and they are very patriot towards their newly formed nation. On the other hand, they use Debbie to kill the Igbo soldiers.

Emecheta portrays Debbie as a strong and sensible woman. Her sturdiness makes her overcome the violent action of sexual harassment by her own soldiers. Neither the society nor her family supports her to enroll in the army. Emecheta chooses to show the reality of the Nigerian army which is expressed through the character of Debbie. Obioma Nnaekema states, "In contrast to male writers who focus on consensual sex and raise moral questions about the promiscuity of girls during the war, women writers foreground painful and graphic depictions of sexual violence and rape as a weapon of war" (255). In the novel, Emecheta gives the vivid picture of women from the socially high class suffer in the hands of power and how they spends their life in protecting their country to maintain peace in their nation.

Debbie understands the knave plan of the British people and also Alan is also part of the imperial power of the colonisers. Alan Grey feels pity for the Biafra but he supplies arms for the Nigerian army in exchange for the oil. The women in Nigeria are double suppressed due to the imperial power and patriarchy of her society. Emecheta brings in the violence, political imbalances and ethnic conflicts in one hand and portrays

resilient women characters on other. Debbie is unlike uninspiring country side timid woman but she is diplomatic woman fighting for the union of Nigeria. Jean Block states that, “Sexual identity means . . . the earning of a sense of self that includes a recognition of gender secure enough to permit the individual to manifest human qualities that our society . . . has labeled (manly)” (qtd. in Akingbe 43). Debbie’s bravery is shown when the Alan asks her to leave Nigeria and to join him to go to Britain. She is a patriot and her social sensibility makes her to stand for her country. She says,

I see now that Abosi and his like are still colonized. They need to be decolonized. I am not like him, a black white man, I am a woman and a woman of Africa. I am a daughter of Nigeria and if she is in shame, I shall stay and mourn with her in shame. No, I am not ready yet to become the wife of an exploiter of my nation .Goodbye, Alan. I don’t mind your being my male concubine, but Africa will never again stoop to being your wife; to meet you on an equal bias, like companions yes, but never again to be your slave. (DB 259)

Emecheta rightly brings in the aspects of how women’s sufferings are different from that of men in the novel. In the war, there is no mercy shown to the common people especially women and children. Women and children are murdered in the name of ethnic differences and tribes. The Nigerian and the Biafra leaders live their luxurious life and the commoners become the victims in the war. In this novel, *Destination Biafra*, Emecheta balances the women characters as mothers with old conventional ideology and courageous daughters breaking the taboos of women by taking part in the war. Emecheta throws light on the female characters to show their involvement in the war.

Women in the novel are the primary supporters of the war. At the same time, they are also victims to brutality of the war. Emecheta exemplifies the true worth of women in the war. Debbie and Igbo families try to go to Biafra and on their way they find great challenges. Especially, the Nigerian soldiers and Biafran soldiers torment them. They hide in the darkness and for the glorification of Biafra they silently endure all the hardships. Debbie along with other women has a journey – self analyzing within herself and realizing the troubles of young children and women. Lawal Salihu argues with Debbie and criticizes her as, “Go in, go in there, I am going to show you that you are nothing but a woman, an ordinary woman” (DB 175).

Debbie travels along with the other woman in the guise of an Igbo woman. She understands the reality of life when she witnesses the audacity of country women. Her life changing moment happens while she encounters the pains as an Igbo woman. She becomes stronger in her attitude to fight against all the problems they face. She is alone and her association with the people enables her to empathize with the feelings of the people. Uzoma is another woman who is bold and unlike other women blaming for their fate. Debbie is marvelled at the sturdy nature of Uzoma. They learn the state of the country as, “. . . Our men! A few years ago it was ‘Independence, freedom for you, freedom for me.’ We were always in the background. Now that freedom has turned into freedom to kill each other and our men have left us to bury and bring up their children. . .” (DB 214) without any help from men, they are able to sustain their lives in the bushes and in the dense forests.

Also, women are able to protect their children, instead of their struggles to get their basic necessities and risk their lives. Emecheta gives intricate details of women and

their moves in the war. Debbie initially in the novel is hesitant and doubtful in her decisions but after the encounter of massacres she turns into a responsible woman. The war has influenced the change in her characteristic traits. She is unmoved by all the effects of war and breaks her relationship with Alan when she understands his cunning nature. Emecheta gives prominent importance to women in the novel such as Debbie to show the true image of the war. In this novel, Emecheta builds in the character of women who are patriotic and has major part in nation- building and integration of Nigeria and Biafra. Women are able to adapt themselves to new situation to sustain the ravages of the war. Grace Okereke states women as symbol of courage in *Destination Biafra* as:

By creating a self-assertive, politically informed heroine like Debbie Ogedemgbe, Emecheta has successfully taken women from the periphery of Nigerian politics and made her an article of history. . . Nigerian woman and indeed, the African woman, emerges from the shadows of history to become herself a subject of history on whom depends the redemption of many lives and the restoration of peace to a nation”. (qtd in Akingbe 45)

Debbie directly involves in war and she visits London to visit to Abosi to gain support for Biafra but instead he flees from the country. Even though, she is betrayed by Abosi and the other Biafra leaders she stands for her nation. As a true patriot, she states “I see now that Abosi and his like are still colonised. They need to be colonised. I am not like him, and a woman of Africa. I am daughter of Nigeria and if she is in shame, I shall stay and mourn with her in shame” (DB 258). In spite of being from minor tribal community Debbie stands for her nation, breaking all her barriers. Her strong will to make Nigeria and Biafra together outstand her character. Emecheta through her unique

style brings in the untold voices of women who fought in different way for the welfare of their nation. Debbie's solidarity makes the readers astounding and gives a different perception not to look down upon women as feeble and voiceless instead as amazonian women.

Emecheta has given importance to highlight the role played by women during the civil war. On the other hand, she also shows how women are being treated in Nigeria after colonialist and at the time of Nigerian elections. She points out that woman are used for their votes and they are well-treated only for the sake of the vote. Emecheta expresses it as "Market women were collected in big American cars and taken in droves to the polling stations. Most of them did not know which party they voted for; all they knew was that they were given V.I.P. treatment and had a ride in the leader's car" (DB 19).

The Igbo women are victims of the military coups. They are inhumanly treated by the Nigerian soldiers. They are tormented, and their pain is expressed through the boy who encounters the rape of his sister. He is shocked about the tragic situation in his life. He tells Ugoji the pain of her sister who is sexually tortured by the Nigerian soldiers. Moreover, the pregnant woman is tormented in front of her father and mother. Women are trapped, and they suffer in the hand of the cruel Nigerian soldiers. Buchi Emecheta portrays the effects of war and the suffering of women in the hands of the dominant male soldiers. Ugoji says to her girlfriend to submit herself to the Nigerian soldiers. The fifteen-year-old boy says, ". . . my old sister was pregnant[. . .] they pounded on her, spread her wide and pushed the sharp edge of their club inside her, pounding her and the babyMy mother, they--"(DB 90).

Emecheta in the novel tells about the liberal women characters such as Debbie and Barbara. Through these characters, Emecheta shows the plight of women and their pain in the Nigerian society. The position of women before and after colonization is rendered through the conversation of Mr. Tekeku with Babs and Debbie. Women are forcefully taken by the Nigerian soldiers and treated as a mere thing and sexual objects to fulfill their desires. Emecheta in the lighter shade brings in the male domination over women. She states it as, “. . . There were stories of women being beaten and sexually assaulted by soldiers” (DB 119). In this way, Emecheta voices out the brutality of women suffering due to the ethnic differences. On the whole, Emecheta has a stand to portray liberal women as Debbi and also the other innocent Igbo who escape to save their lives but they end up being trapped in the voyeuristic and ill-treatment of male soldiers.

Emecheta has showcases the deeply rooted independent notions through the development characters of Debbie, Barbara and other significant women characters. Debbie is a strong and autonomous woman, who consciously holds her stand for her nation. She does not curtail her life within the four walls. Debbie’s association with Barbara enables her to globally connect with people that make to get patronage from other countries. Her work is not constrained to her family but for the whole of the nation. She ignores her life as a typical woman of marriage and parenthood. She chooses different path in her life and makes herself as an identity for Nigeria. She stills holds the life of mother in protecting the innocent children in the war. She is rather committed to the selfless service for the reconciliation of Nigeria and Biafra. Traditional roles assigned for woman is a barriers for the change in the development of women’s position in the society. Debbie makes it a point to unleash the hindrances and also become successful in

taking part in the mission of reunion between Nigeria and Biafra. She refuses the idea of being mere educated puppets in the hands of men.

In the novel, Emecheta also highlights on the character of Stella and Uzoma. These women are from different walks of life but they are subjugated in the society. They are not independent in their thoughts and accustomed to the familial bonding. Emecheta highlights on the domestic life of women as, “To Nigerians, in marriage the male partner was superior and the female must be subservient, obedient, quiet to the point of passivity” (DB 43). Uzoma is married to become the housekeeper. She is given money for housekeeping and she has to sell things to make her living. Debbie grabs the opportunity of being a part in the war affairs. She utilizes her chance and also breaks the barriers. She excels in choosing her path and strives for her best. Debbie records the history and brutality of war and wants to name her book as *Destination Biafra*. Barbara is also a devout soldier keen in the military and other political issues. Emecheta shows the clear picture of the status of women in the society. They are belittled in the society that women from rich family go after men. Debbie and Barbara are in intricate situation where women are not accepted in the society and ridiculed for the attire, the military uniform they wear. The opportunities for women in the war field are less, as and they are asked to remain loyal and domesticated for their families. Emecheta puts forth the nature of society and reflects the stand of women in the patriarchal society.

Emecheta also imposes her idea through the character of Debbie and Barbara. They fight for their right in the society in spite of their ethnic differences. They go beyond their conditioned limits, the outer world that is highly dominant by men. Sexual harassment is just a common fact in case of war and numbers of woman are brutally

murdered during the war. Debbie is raped twice and it is common thing when people know about it. When the soldiers finds out about Debbie being raped and wounded to death, he soldier states, “Give her hot water to wash herself. Hundreds of women have been raped--- so what? It’s war. She’s lucky to be even alive. She’ll be all right” (DB 135). The sexual abuse affects her health and she is also psychologically affected by it. Her sturdy nature is lowered and she undergoes the effects of the brutal event. She surpasses all the inconveniences and these made her strong-willed person.

The pathetic state of women in the war is even the, pregnant ladies and old women are raped. Men not only subjugate women in the domestic life but also tormenting them physically and psychologically. Through the character of Debbie, Emecheta unveils the reality of the atmosphere of war. Emecheta says it is “Women’s war” and the women suffer due to negative impact of the war. Men suffer as well in the war but they are executed immediately. Women face the great challenges of the war where all the men are killed in the war in ‘Operation Mosquito’. Women are caught in the bush and struggle to provide food for their children. Debbie encounters the ruthless behaviour of the Nigerian Soldiers on women as,

The pregnant women now began to wail as she was dragged from the main road to the side bush, pushed mercilessly with the butt of a gun; the woman was falling and getting up again, and calling to her husband Dede to help her. Debbie wondered what had happened to the child. She heard the tired, strangled voice of the woman calling out in Ibo, begging for mercy as they took her to a different part of the bush. (DB 133)

Debbie foreseeing all the difficulties and she is determined for the welfare of her nation. Emecheta pictures the character of Debbie and she stand as a role model for the women. In case of Debbie and her association with Alan grey she is underestimated by Sir Fergus. Her support and sacrifice are neglected by Saka Momoh and Abosi. They give importance to Alan and not here because she is women. The suppression begins from own community men. Her voice is unheard even though she bears all the pain for the fortification of Nigeria.

Debbie is in the position of self-analyzing the problems of war and realizes the betrayal of Abosi and Alan Grey. She turns out valorous to fight against them, who restricts her freedom and destroy her nation's integrity. Emecheta through the pain of Debbie cites the position of the country side woman. Though Debbie diligent personality, still she is cheated by them. Emecheta shows the pathetic side of the native woman. But, the support of these native women makes her extend help from the foreign nations. It is the life changing moment for Debbie to understand the true colour of people who have forsaken her. She is used as a bait and mediator to resolve the problems of Nigeria and Biafra. The character of Debbie is an instrument to showcase the liberty of women.

Debbie joins the army to show that even at the time of war and distress, women are capable enough to support for their nation. Debbie is the spokeswoman to express that women can also be the part for the unification and welfare of the nation. Debbie's character portends that woman can also be the pillars of support for the fortification of the nation. Emecheta shows how she is all alone and faces the problems between Nigeria and Biafra. The conventional notion of tribal women is broken when she associates herself with white man, Alan. This shows that the woman are privileged enough to

choose their own partner and at the same extent she breaks her relationship with him for her nation. The traditional believes doesn't hinder her ambition and stands as a paragon for the emancipation of women.

The Nigerian-Biafra war is the test for the survival and existence of life in general. On the other hand, Debbie undergoes the turmoil of her internal self of breaking the traditions of the society. Her character undergoes transformation through the experience of the war and her encounter with other female characters. Debbie is a proponent who devours the domesticated life and does not to follow the footsteps of her mother Stella accustomed to the conventional life. Emecheta brings to light the archives of woman struggling for liberty in the male chauvinistic society. Debbie is the mouthpiece of Emecheta's view on the Nigerian Civil war.

Emecheta characters are distinct, memorable and records the historical truth of the war. She explores the roles of the rural and urban women. The female character in the novel dispels the images of the Nigerian woman uprooting themselves from various social strata. Debbie's character is embodiment of extraordinary courage and she presents a new woman beyond the boundaries of the household. Emecheta brilliantly intervene the hope of new nation, birth of independence and the pains of people in the war. Debbie constantly moves for the unity of the nation against the impediment of the civic chaos. The journey of Debbie for Biafra is symbolic representation of her journey within the self. The thorough understanding of Debbie's own self is the rendered to the readers that a new woman is born out of the travails of war. *Destination Biafra* is a novel that not only represents the Biafra problems but also on the views of Nigerians. Through the

single character of Debbie, Emecheta explores the strong stand of women and in multiple layers of understanding women's contribution to the society.

Emecheta's portrayal of the character of Debbie is show the relevance and importance of women in the society. She is against all kinds of rigid patriarchal attitudes which intend to circumscribe her in socially approved roles. There is no political ambition expressed through the female characters. The ulterior motive of the women characters is that to explore their own self and war has become the path to find it. Debbie and Barbara aim at the proper functioning of the Nigerian government. Debbie and Uzoma aims to make people motivated and survive for the strengthening of the nation.

The novel identifies the self of the female characters and also about the history of Nigeria from the female perspective. The expectation of the new nation is a shattered dream for the civilians. On the other hand, the novel sculpts the need and important of woman at the crucial point. The novel is more to impart the readers about the action of women and their courage. It is as equal as the responsibility for women to protect her nation. *Destination Biafra* is the not the expedition of a young girl towards peace and unity of nation but also she is the representative of the women's expedition towards freedom and space in the society. The novel is exceptional that it sees the war through the perception of woman and its gives different dimension of the Nigerian-Biafra war.

Destination Biafra is the novel which deliberates on the reality of war and it is close to the true events happened in the war. Even though Emecheta has not witnessed the events, her clarity over the truth is undeniable. In the novel, Emecheta's thoughts of individuality of women and the unique portrayal of women characters make the novel a remarkable output of Biafra literature and stands even in the test of times.

Chapter-III

**Rise of a Nation and Travails of
Women in *Half of a Yellow Sun***

Chapter- III

Rise of a Nation and Travail of Women in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Half of a Yellow Sun (2006) is a novel based on the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-70).

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a renowned Nigerian writer who brings out the struggle of women during the Biafran war in the novel. In this novel, she focuses on the women characters, the twin sisters Olanna and Kainene. She has given importance to the women characters who are introduced at the period before the war and their life changing moments after the war. Adichie has diligently created the characters of Olanna and Kainene. The novel is set after the independence of Nigeria from colonial period but still has the domination of the white masters in the northern region of Nigeria. It creates chaos in Nigeria and leads to the birth of a new nation, Biafra. The novel has an emphasis on the ethnic differences among tribal cultures like Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba. The novel is set in various places such as Lagos, Nsukka, Abba and Umuhia. It brings the reminiscences of past history, war and the political situations of that period. The other prime characters are Odenigbo, professor in Nsukka University; Ugwu, a house-boy who lives with Odenigbo and Olanna and Richard, a British expatriate interested in Igbo Ukwu art and he falls in love with Kainene.

This novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* shows the two stark contrast of joy and grief. The story revolves around early 1960s and late 1960s. The early 1960s in Nsukka shows the enjoyment of life whereas the latter half of the 1960s exhibits the actual physical struggle, psychological trauma and questions for the existence of life. Adichie in her address on “African “Authenticity” and the Biafran Experience at Harvard University”, states that, “. . . I want to write a novel. I had no interest in writing a polemic. I was

aware that the book would in the end reflect my world view—it would be book concerned with the ordinary person, a book with unapologetic Biafran sympathies” (50).

Half of a Yellow Sun is about the story of the twin sisters Olanna and Kainene.

Olanna is a young beautiful sociology professor and her eloquence makes her more appealing. Kainene and Olanna are educated at Oxford and returns to their native. She is in love with Odenigbo, who is a mathematics professor at Nsukka University and lives together with the servant boy, Ugwu. Olanna and Odenigbo are in live-in relationship and lead a happy life. They enjoy all the luxuries in the well-developed city and Ugwu who is a village boy admires their well-furnished house. Odenigbo and Olanna with their other University professor friends in the evenings discuss about the tension between the conflict of Hausa and Igbo people. They live happily prior to the war, Odenigbo keenly observe the political events, massacres and consequent military coups. Kainene calls Odenigbo as ‘revolutionary lover’ of Olanna.

Kainene takes care of her father’s oil business at Port Harcourt. Kainene is straight forward and sharp tongued person. Both, Kainene and Olanna lead a luxurious life before the war. The Biafra war turns the life of Kainene and Olanna haphazardly. Olanna and Odenigbo moves from Nsukka because of the war and fear for military coups, where, they lived a pompous life with the intellectuals around in Nsukka. Olanna’s father is a rich business man and he has provided all the comforts to his daughters. Olanna and Kainene undergo deep changes in their characteristic traits because of the war. They lose all the luxuries and Olanna moves to a small village, Umuhia. The Biafra War unites the thoughts of Kainene and Olanna to help for the refugees. Before the war and massacres, Olanna and Kainene live their life and the war binds to the society. The novel portraying

Biafra War on one hand shows the darker side of war such as the suffering of the refugees for the food, the blockade of Nigerian forces for the supply of food, ruthless killing and distortion of their lives. On the other hand, the war makes the important female characters in the novel sturdier and presents in an appealing manner which make them to fight against the social evils imposed on them. The Biafra War makes the Igbo woman to stand for their nation even though it is short lived nation. Beyond all the challenges, the characteristic feature of Kainene and Olanna are portrayed as women who take their own decisions and stand as individuals.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her novel showcases the prominent role played by the women, which remains as untold history during the war. The two main female characters, Olanna and Kainene presents the way in which, they directly experience and encounter the traumas of the war. Adichie is distinct in portraying the characters in her novel. In this novel, she centralizes the women characters as powerful and independent who aims to uplift the society. Adichie brings in the status of women from peripheral to the central and shows their courage and sacrifice. Adichie has bestowed the women character with much significance, as they become the personifications of the effects of the war itself. She also brings to light the challenges faced by women during the two military coups and the power imposed by the Nigerian forces. She describes women both as significant supporters and suppressed by the dominance of the Nigerian forces.

Adichie as a third-generation Nigerian writer vividly pictures the turmoil of war and gives the importance of the greatest historical changes in Nigeria. Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* has revamped interest in the Biafran war. As a women writer she traces the history and able to expresses the pathos of the war even after forty years. Adichie has

expressed the loss, violence, trauma and displacement in a new dimension since she is affected by the personal loss of her relatives. The first-generation writers delivered the happiness and the establishment of Nigeria through their writings. Adichie's writing highlights on the outcomes of post colonialism and the aftermath of the horrible Nigerian-Biafran conflict and the novel explores the integrity of nation, national belonging and features the labors of women in contributing to the war.

Based on the Nigeria-Biafra war Adichie has also written an early play *For Love of Biafra*. Adichie has great interest in exploring the Biafra war and she also portrays a patriotic heroine, Adaobi. She gets over her Hausa boyfriend. Adichie's play is not recognized since she has written in her young age. The character of Adaobi is reflected through the character of Olanna from *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The character of Adaobi and Olanna are parallel who strive for their nation and give up their love. Since then, Adichie gives prominent importance for women and their involvement in the Biafran war.

War in general is attributed to men and the soldiers fighting for their nation. Men are supportive of the country and they protect the nation. In earlier times, writers have not given importance to women who have sacrificed their lives in the Biafra war. The writers choose male characters in their narrative and the sacrifices of women remained unvoiced. Adichie brings to light the women's perspective in understanding the war that remains untold. As Ibekwe Ezeakolam reiterates, "the need for self-assertion as a first step to female self- reclamation. All barriers to women liberation and the self-fulfillment need to be dismantled by women themselves" (qtd. in Ikediugwu 4). Adichie portrays the emancipated women's independent thoughts through the representation of the characters, Kainene and Olanna. Kainene bravely puts her life in the grave situation to support her

people as men give their life and put the life in the forefront for the fortification of their nation.

The women characters represented in the novel are both modern and native women, who have different opinion towards their lives and the war. Olanna and Kainene are women educated from Oxford University, and they had established their lifestyle differently from the other female characters in the countryside. Olanna and Kainene are decisive in choosing their partners. Olanna's parents dislike Odengibo, but she stays firm in her decision to select Odenigbo than the sons of the wealthy businessmen. Similarly, when Kainene is criticized for having a relationship with Richard who is a British expatriate and she is confident about her relationship. This shows the broader outlook of their mind being independent rather being submissive and conditioned by the society.

Kainene stands in equal rank to men in order to provide livelihood for the civilians, whose lives are distorted by the war. Kainene plays a vital role in providing food for refugee camps. Olanna makes her stand to foresee and protect the future of the nation. Kainene also has a personal experience of encountering the brutality of war on women and children. So, she helps the women and the children, and educates children to build and nurture the future generation of Biafra. She also extorts patriotism and the dreams of a free nation. Kainene and Olanna are the representation of modern and educated women handling the effects of war. On the other hand, Adichie also accounts various native women and their perception towards war. Adichie affirms that women have contributed to the formation of Biafra and also brought to light the modernistic and conservatives ideas through the representation of women characters of two extremes.

In contrast to Olanna and Kainene, Mama is another important character in the novel to exemplify the culture and tradition of Igbo and conservative notions. The other female native characters in the novel are Amala, Mama Oji, and Mama Adanna. Mama believes in superstition and goes to *dibia*, to meet the messengers of god and native doctor in Igbo culture, to separate Olanna from Odenigbo. She cannot accept the fact that an educated woman is going to marry her son. She opines that, "What kind of wife will that be?"...These girls that go to university follow men around until their bodies are useless. Nobody knows if she can have children. Do you know? Does anyone know?"(HYS 98) and she has an aversion towards Olanna for not paying the bride price. She wants her son to marry a country girl so that she will be docile to her husband. This ultimately indicates that she is woman of conservative cultural norms of the society and the idea of modernity is something far alien to her. James's explanation of the perception of the 'Academic woman' in Africa and particularly Nigeria,

African Society, which is still 80 per cent rural, has preserved traditional attitudes towards women. Even among the educated, who, ironically, adopt modern technological gadgets and allow their children a lot of freedom, the attitude to women remains unchanged. Most educated men look for simple and unsophisticated women as wives. (qtd. in Makokha 115)

Amala is naive and she is like a puppet in the hands of Mama. She sleeps with Odenigbo with the instruction given by Mama. She is helpless to take her stand and she is just a voiceless country girl. She is a pathetic girl following the words of Mama. This shows her incapability and being uncivilized. Unlike Olanna or Kainene, she is not given

liberty to choose her partner, Olanna asserts about Amala's state as, "How much did one know of the true feelings of those who did not have a voice?"(HYS 250). Mama Adanna is such a woman who begs around for feeding her daughter. She is powerless and lacks in knowledge to treat her daughter. She is unable to identify the deficiency disease. In similar manner, Mama Oji mistakes Odengibo for a physician since he has a doctoral degree. She asks treatment for her son suffering from breathing illness.

Women from countryside are underprivileged and less educated. It is because of their situation they are unable to accept the changes especially in the Nigerian context where communal living and customs are significant for their life. Aunt Ifeka states that the Sardunna does not allow her children to get educated and it is evidently shown in the life of Arize and Anulika. They lead a hopeless life and a usual routine of a country girl. Adichie connects the contrary life of women through war background and their reaction to the circumstances of war. Adichie puts forth the underlying conspiracies of power and domination of elite people and distress of poor people longing for their basic needs. The Igbo women face injustice; it gets worse during coup and execution of Igbo people. Poor women feared for their lives and struggled to get their food and to feed their children.

On the other hand, wealthy women are not threatened by war; they are concerned about safeguarding their belongings and possessions. Mrs. Ozobia is the striking character who is obsessed with material possessions. Wealthy women are self-centered to guard their belongings, but they are not patriotic enough to serve their newly formed nation. Poor women are better, as they sacrifice their basic need and share their food with the soldiers which show their passion for their country to free their nation from the clutches of the Nigerian forces.

Rich Igbo people with their wives, flee from the country to escape death caused by the war. They are not the part of the nation when it comes to struggling. They enjoy all the luxuries and valuables in Biafra they required, but when it comes to risking one's life, they find ways to escape. Olanna's parents try to flee to London and want to patron 'Save Biafra Campaign' from London. She says, ". . . your father and I have finalized our plans. We have paid somebody who will take us to Cameroon and get us on a flight from there to London. We will use our Nigerian passports; the Cameroonians will give us no trouble. It was not easy, but it was done" (HYS 188). They are not ready to face the sufferings for their country. They have the preoccupied notion that the liberation of Biafra is only through their pains and sacrifice.

The wealthy people are no way affected by the war they still enjoy their luxury. Professor Ezeka leads a comfortable life where women do all errands to make their livelihood. Ezeka's daughter Pamela leads a comfortable life with good food and clothing whereas poor women, who strive for the nation, without food, clothing, and their children, are dying due to deficiency diseases. In contrast to this upper class scenario, the poor Igbo women are killed in masses, and they fought bravely for the birth of a new nation. Though, Olanna and Kainene are born rich, but they are the foil to the characteristics trait of their mother. They actively join with poor women in refugee camps and forget about their luxurious life.

In war, the death of women and innocent children are uncountable. Rather than the loss of lives, women have been subjected to the horrors, and it intensely affects their existence. Adichie highlights the gory sites of people heartlessly murdering and events of massacres at Kano. She depicts the extreme tension of the cruelty through the traumatic

experience of characters who encounter the killings. Mr. Obiozo shares the cruelty of war as, “Our eyes has seen plenty, *anyi afujugo anya*, I saw a whole family, a father and mother and three children, lying on the motor park. Just lying there” (HYS144). These unpleasant acts are confronted by Olanna and Kainene affects and changes their life. Olanna and Kainene lead a peaceful live before the war but their life changes when they witnessed the death of women and children in Biafra war. Radio news states about the massacre as: “a solemn voice on ENBC Radio Enugu recounted eyewitness accounts from the north. . . . A pregnant women split open in Kano” (HYS 144).

Adichie portrays the sight of the war so lively and intensely. She realistically exemplifies the unpleasant visuals of the war. Even though, she doesn't have a first-hand experience, she speaks volumes on the conditions faced by the people and loss of tender women and children. Olanna is psychologically and physically affected after the Kano incident. At Kano, countless families are killed due to the ethnic conflict. Biafra war is due to the imposition of the federal forces and their principles in ethnic groups. Hausa are a group of people who kill the Igbo people in the north. She witnesses the brutal killing of her Aunty Ifeka, her husband and her pregnant daughter Arize. The ethnic conflict among the Hausas and Igbos is another critical reason for the death of women and children. Through the character of Olanna, Adichie expresses the emotion of the woman for their dead children. Olanna's train travel experience has made her fall sick, and she becomes immobile. Wenske asserts:

Adichie draws horrible brutality of war through individuals. For instance, the Kano massacre is seen through the impact on Olanna---her paralysis, her experience on the train, her memory of her aunt and uncle. But instead

of casting the villains in the known collective that commits the atrocities (be it Hausa soldiers or corrupt statesman) evils lies in the hands of a nameless collective-the mob that commits the crimes, or even Ugwu and his comrades when they become the anonymous soldiers in the bar. (qtd. in Adedipe 23)

Olanna explains the brutality of the war and woman holding the head of their children in the calabash and the dead bodies of woman and children lying in the yard. Olanna encounters the gruesome sight of mutilated corpses thrown on the road. Olanna cries over thinking about the weird scene of her dead uncle and aunt. The animalistic quality of men is pointed in Olanna and Odengibo's heated conversation, "Am I joking? How can you sound this way after seeing what they did in Kano? Can you imagine what must have happened to Arize? They raped pregnant women before they cut them up!" (HYS 191). Kainene also witnesses the death of her servant. She is also affected by it, and this event made her serve for the civilians. The air raids and military intrusion are the primary reason for the death of numerous people. The description of the women and children losing their mothers are gruesome.

Starvation also adds to many death and loss of human resources. This sets as a major drawback for Biafra to submit to the Nigerian forces. Food is integral and the basic necessity to lead the livelihood for human beings. During the military coups and attack of vandals on the relief centers, starvation and scarcity of food devastated the lives of people. It is more disastrous than the murder of innocent people by the rebels of the Hausa community. The rebels are ruthless and slayed the Igbo people. Deficiency diseases for children and to live in unsanitary places are the greatest challenge faced by

the people added to the scarcity for food. The life of people completely changes after the coups and the intervention of the vandals. People, in general, suffered a lot due to insufficient food and the struggle to get food from the relief camps. But, women hold high responsibility to feed their children and their family.

Starvation for food is one of the reasons behind Biafra's submission to Nigerian forces. The food supply to Biafra was hindered by Nigeria and its confederate forces such as British and Russian forces. Mr. Ovoko says, "Nobody is donating much these days. These people keep coming here and asking for food, and then they start to ask for jobs. . . ." (HYS 173). Death due to starvation was considerably high than that of the massacre and murders. The lack of food is used as a weapon by the Nigerian forces to defeat the newly formed independent nation Biafra. The inadequate supply of the food and war has shown women their responsibility to find ways to provide for their families. For women to satisfy the basic need of livelihood is quite challenging than facing the enemies. The starvation is the opponent for women as it tests both physical and psychological stand of women. The death of children and spread of disease are the critical condition created by coups. Adichie has pictured the crude nature of the war and its effects through the experience and turmoil underwent by the women characters. Olanna, Kainene and other villagers face the problem of starvation of food.

The stereotypical notion towards women is that they are assigned to do the household works and keeping the welfare of the family. When men struggle in the war in protecting the nation whereas, women are meant to be the pillars of support for their family. The shortage of food in the eastern region is because of the lack of contribution and supply of food from the northern part and attacks of the vandals to stop the supply of

food. Olanna experiences the problem of getting food from the relief centers. When she goes to relief centers, she gets dried egg yolk for her sick baby. She understands the need and brawls that happens in the relief centers. Adichie states the plight of Olanna as, “Olanna stood awkwardly among the men and women and children, who all seemed to stand and waiting for a rusted iron gate to be opened so they could go in and be given food donated by the foreign strangers” (HYS 267). Even her meat was snatched by the young military soldiers on her way home. Then after the coups, Olanna is unable to get a proper meal and worries about the health of the baby. Many young children die due to protein deficiency and other infectious diseases.

The price of the food products gets increased as they are in Biafra with a new currency. Olanna says to Odenigbo, “. . . how a cup of salt cost a shilling more each week and how chickens were chopped into bits that were still too expensive and how nobody could buy them” (HYS 262). Women are struggling to give proper nourishing food for their children. The hospitals are crowded with women and dying children in their laps crying. Olanna’s neighbor, Mama Adanna does not understand that her daughter is suffering from kwashiorkor and all the village women name it as “Harold Wilson Syndrome”, which is named after the British ruler at that time. The lack of food is the reason for the weakening of young children and women does labors hard to find food for their children. Native women who are in a helpless state ask people for work so that they can give proper food for their children. They knock at the doors, and they once ask Olanna for work. She understands the pathetic state of these women and gives them *garri* and cold water even though she is not in a position to give them any work. Women sacrifice their own life to give food to their children. In Kainene’s refugee camp many

children are suffering from the malnutrition disease, and the plight is described as, “A mother was sitting on the floor with the two children lying next to her. Olanna could not tell how old they were. They were naked; the taut globes that were their bellies would not fit in a shirt anyway. Their buttocks and chests were collapsed into folds of rumpled skin” (HYS 348).

People are in a position to eat lizards, leaves and anything to fill their stomach. During his stay in Orlu, Ugwu encounters a young boy suffering from kwashiorkor and he dies in a few days. Adichie renders a clear picture regarding the seriousness of the situation through the action of Mama Adanna. She is unable to provide food for her daughter and neighbours gossiped about her saying, she has killed her dog Bingo to provide meat for her sick daughter. This ultimately shows the pathetic state of people who kill anything for their survival. Women strive hard for their survival of selling peppers and taking care of their children. They are very much traumatized by the Nigerian forces and to protect their children. Kainene stood strong to provide food for her people. She took in charge of the refugee camps. She popularized the idea of harvesting their own food rather than demanding and expecting food supply from foreign nations. Kainene protected and remained as a savior of the lives of many starving people. She risks her life by crossing the enemy lines due to high demand and scarcity of food for the refugees, but she never returns in the end. Death due to starvation has become common in the refugee camp. As Olanna encounter with a woman dying and Kainene arranging for her burial and the mother’s baby crying shows the devastation caused by the war.

Apart from the women’s struggle for the basic needs, Adichie highlights how women are used as a sexual object and who are treated as a commodity to fulfill carnal

desires of men. They are considered as playful and vulnerable sexual objects in the hands of men and they are exploited physically in the patriarchal society. The devastation of the war not only troubles them but also makes them an instrument to satisfy the physical need of men unwillingly. Women from various grounds have been objectified for the voyeuristic pleasure of men, and it is more painful for them than the struggles they face during the war.

Power is one way to hold women captive and trap them under their domination. Innocent young village girls are exploited in men's hands. Men lose their humanity and behave brutally towards women, and native young women are tormented by the beastly nature of men. Adichie realistically depicts the cruel activities of men and their ruthless nature. The commander in chief of Biafra army has raped many women and innocent girls to fulfill his desire. Olanna has been used as sexual bait to sign the contract with Chief Okonji. He tries to lure her by offering her high position in official board. He uses money and wealth to make women fall in his trap. She is used as an object for the exchange of contract. Kainene brings out the actual position of women in society and the need of women as, "The other bidders probably don't have a beautiful daughter . . . The benefit of being the ugly daughter is that nobody uses you as sex bait" (HYS 35). She also states that she and Olanna are compared to meat, which shows the demeaning status of women in society.

The Biafran forces are supposed to protect and secure women and children. The soldiers of the Biafran troops use the physical weakness of women and children to their advantage. The soldiers rape a young bartender and Ugwu also involves along with them in the cruel act. Ugwu is into the Biafran army and performs his duty well. His direction

changes and he became a part of the rape. Innocent women are the victims of men's oppression. High –Tech, a young Biafran soldier along with other soldiers sexually torture the young girl. This is depicted by Adichie as:

On the floor, the girl was still. Ugwu pulled his trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection. She was dry and tense when he entered her. He did not look at her face, or at the man pinning her down, or anything at all as he moved quickly and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release. He zipped up his trousers while some soldiers clapped. Finally, he looked at the girl. She stared back at him with a calm hate. (HYS 365)

Similarly, Ugwu's sister Anulika is also raped by five soldiers. Ugwu realizes the pain of young girl and regrets it. Women are harassed in the public, as to show the authority of the federal force on women. They are asked to spread their legs and cook for soldiers. They are subjugated under their opposite Nigerian troops and on the federal forces. Georgiads Mboya Kivai asserts that

Rape is an expression of power and authority. . . .Men desire to rape women in order to assert their authority over them. Rape can even be a symptom of inequality and the desire on the part of those who wield power to assert it on the powerless. . . . Adichie serve to communicate the plunder, misuse and destruction characteristic of the ruling class (qtd.in Zano 153).

Eberechi is given as an exchange for the posting for her brother in federal service. She is a young house girl and numerous girls like her are used as offering for the wish of

the ruling class. Adichie depicts the struggles, and it is much relatable from the woman's point of view. Father Marcel is not exceptional of imposing sexual torment over women. Adichie throws light on the vicious nature of him in the shadow of religion. He impregnates young girls in refugee camps in exchange for food. The two American journalists view women as mean and vile objects. They underestimate women and give the disrespectful opinion about them. This is evident and the premonition created of Nigerian women in the eyes of the foreigners. They say, "I hear there's a lot of free sex here. But the girls have some kind of sexually transmitted disease? The Bonny disease? . . ." (HYS 369)

In spite of all the physical and mental challenges women faces, they still are strong and responsible. Adichie represents the emotional side of them and their duty as a mother. She has described their sacrifice and loss of many mothers' lives to protect their children and for the formation of Biafra. She describes in various dimensions, the roles of mothers in the novel. In the novel, Mama is a caring mother who strives for the welfare of her son Odengibo and she does things in her own conventional ways to safeguard her son. She shows her unconditional love towards him. She is a responsible mother and even during the military coup she worries about his life rather than her own life. John Mditu says, "Not only does a woman bear life, she nurses, cherishes and gives warmth and care for life because all human life passes through her own body to become" (qtd.in Ikediugwu 9).

Olanna is an epitome of motherhood. She stands high in this aspect than the other women characters in the novel. She learns the affair between Amala and Odenigbo and she accepts the baby. Mrs. Ozobia, Olanna's mother, does not agree with her opinion of

Olanna becoming the mother of the illegitimate child. She becomes the mother of the innocent child and this shows her broad-mindedness and her sacrifice in accepting the child. She cares for the baby as her own and names her Chiamaka. She gives attention to the baby and tends her in all possible ways. She struggles and jostles in the crowd to provide food even in dire circumstances. Jennifer Rideout says, "For Olanna, motherhood creates a direct connection with the next generation and becomes, as Kandiyoti explains, "a natural extension of [her] womanly nature. . . Motherhood also invests Olanna more deeply with concern for the nation, since Baby will grow up to become a woman of Nigeria" (76). Motherhood makes her strong to fight against many trials during the coup and persecution of the Igbo people. She also cares for her unborn baby Arize, but during the massacre she dies. Many mothers put their life at stake in order to provide food and to tend to the well-being of their children.

Mothers' unconditional love for their children and to protect their children from the federal forces is well pictured in the novel. They tie them around their back to run away while selling things and getting money for food. They neglect their health and number of woman die in hunger and disease in the cramped refugee camps. They fight for food in the relief centers, to provide their children which frustrate them further. Mothers have been psychologically affected by the war as they encounter air raids and demand for food scarcity. Kainene has not begotten children, but she remains as a symbol of motherhood. Her attitude towards life changes because of her encounter with military and counter-attack coupes. She gives food for the people and strenuously works hard for providing people. She turns out to be a mother for the formation of Biafra. Men fight in

the battlefields for their liberation, but women fight for their daily and essential needs of their life.

The role of education for women shows a different dimension in analyzing the female characters of the novel. Education for women is not given importance or preference during that period. Only women from high class are given proper education. Women from villages are not aware of knowledge and its significance. Women are given little education, and they are taught to do only the household chores and other related activities. Adichie has vividly pictured the distinct female characters like Kainene and Olanna who are educated from University in London and their capability to handle various dire situations caused by the war. They can make their own decision and judgments. It adds to their standards and Ugwu always admires the eloquent English spoken by Olanna. It is the education that gave them their standards amidst the English expatriates who were very dominative in their native state. Gloria Ajami Makokha says, "Education was considered as a male's dominion. A woman, in the postcolonial Nigeria was not supposed to go to the University. The older women perceived highly schooled girls as spoilt" (114).

This is the state of women, and it is believed that highly educated women are dominative over men. Mama dislikes Olanna for living with her son Odenigbo, because she is highly educated. She hates Olanna and thinks that girls educated from University in abroad were immoral. She talks about Olanna stating, ". . . Too much schooling ruins a woman; everyone knows that. It gives a woman a big head, and she will start to insult her husband. . ." (HYS 98). Through Mama's character Adichie indicates the conservative notion of space given to a woman. Mama is the typical representation of the ethnic

cultural woman who remains ignorant of the fast-changing world. Moreover, Adichie has pictured the character of Olanna and Kainene as the woman who has reformed themselves to change the society towards the betterment. Her perspective towards life varies from her cousin Arize. Even though she is younger than Olanna, she wants to get married as other girls of her age have got married instead she has great goals to achieve in her life. Whereas, Olanna thinks about her life and doesn't want to get married off. This shows the responsibility and maturity she obtained through her education.

During the time of great crisis, Mama Adanna thinks that Adanna has got malaria and she is ignorant of the fact that her child is affected by protein deficiency, kwashiorkor. Olanna finds it, and Mama Adanna's lack of awareness is due to her lack of education. Olanna's knowledge not only helps her but also helps the future generation. She teaches the children about English and Igbo, Civics and Mathematics. Olanna says, ". . . we will teach them to speak perfect English and perfect Igbo like His Excellency, Odengibo. We will teach them pride in our great nation" (HYS 291). Kainene is supportive for her father's business, and later she actively participates in taking care of the refugee camps. With her courage and intelligence, she provides food for her people in the camps. Kainene associates people and also encourage civilians to cultivate their food and tend their needs on their own. It is because of the awareness they acquired through education made them sturdy to face the difficulties of the war. On the other hand, illiterate women had their own difficulties in the war, and their ignorance makes their situation even worse. E.C. Nwodo has quoted UNESCO as stated that, ". . . education will enable women to improve their families, health and diet, increase their productive ability, improve in their socio-cultural status as well as enable them to discharge their

responsibilities as mothers, wives and members of the society effectively (qtd.in Ogechukwu 4).

Women are the significant contributors to the sustainance and regeneration of the society after the war. Kainene along with other women plays an important role, in handling the crisis when the refugee camp was running short of food. Kainene actively introduces the idea of “Plant Our Own Food”. During the military coups, university women association had organized events to collect food for the refugees from the north. Women are not directly involved in taking part in the war field, but they strongly support men. But men solely take responsibility and credits for fighting in the war overseeing the struggles faced by women. Taiwo Bello says, “Writing the Nigerian-Biafra war”, notes “the incorporation of a full section on the roles of Biafra women during the war, [. . .] as most literature on the topic is dominated by the experience of male soldiers who fought in the war, thereby ignoring the important roles played by women” (qtd.in Adedipe 11). Women indirectly help the Biafra soldiers, by providing them with food in spite of their hunger. Madu says to Olanna about the group of women bringing food such as yams and fruits to them. Though they have no food to eat, to they give away food with the intention to support the soldiers to win the war.

The postcolonial influence has a prominent part in the war and the British expatriates look down upon native women. Susan is one such character in the novel. Richard attends parties with her to explore the Igbo tribe and culture for his book. He lives with Susan for a brief period, and at the party, he enjoys with Kainene, having a good conversation. When Susan asks about their conversation Richard understands Susan’s thoughts, “It was, he realized, simple that black women were not threatening to

her, were not equal rivals” (HYS 55). She disliked his relation with Kainene and expressed in the words, “. . . that his need to experiment with black woman” (HYS 68). The native women are not given respect by the expatriate, but in contrast Richard deeply falls in deep love with Kainene and helps her out in all her endeavors. He is proud to say that he belongs to Biafra and always feels proud to have Kainene as his wife. He speaks about Biafra to the American journalist, and he proudly says that her Biafra wife works for the refugees of the war. These men also belittle native women commenting based on their race. The redhead journalist says to Richard, “I had an English friend at college who really went for coloured girls” (HYS 369).

Women are not well treated by the men of the Nigerian society; the opposing Nigerian forces demean women, Kainene says it as, “. . . Kaduna says every Igbo women should be raped” (HYS 346). Major Udodi tells that native woman to go after white men and have pleasure with them. He says poor Igbo women want to make their livelihood and so they expose to white men. He talks about the illicit relationship between white men and Igbo women because marriage is not possible between them. He says it as, “. . . our women who follow white men are certain type a poor family and the kinds of bodies that white men like. . . .The white men poke and poke women in the dark, but they will never marry them. . . It is a new slavery, I’m telling you, a new slavery” (HYS 80).

Through the novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* Adichie has pointed out the position of women in various grave situations. The novel illuminates the hidden past of the Nigerian women and their voiceless opinions. War creates chaos and disintegrates the lives of the people. The trauma of war is furthermore imposed on women. As Pentinnen writes:

I had been taught...that in war it is the women who always suffer more . . . violated, raped, tortured and humiliated... Women were depicted in wars like the living dead, forever traumatized and violated, vulnerable and weak, wandering around almost aimlessly in refugee camps, with no hope, no dreams and no capacity for making decisions or recreating their lives after atrocities or in exploitative conditions. (qtd.in Welland)

They are no more domesticated women who are only subjected to the household duties. Women are patriotic enough to support their nation, the republic of Biafra. Kainene and Olannta are representatives to serve their people in their hard times. Adichie has vividly portrayed the women characters in more agreeable manner that they are selfless supporters of their society. The prime women characters are not exaggerated as a superficial woman. Jane Bryce in her essay, "Half and Half Children": Third-Generation Women Writers and the New Nigerian Novel rightly states ". . . reconfiguration of national realities in which the feminine is neither essentialized and mythologized nor marginalized, but unapologetically central to the realist representation of a recognizable social world" (49). Adichie has taken a trajectory change in portraying the effects of war from a common woman's perspective. Adichie emphasis on the women characters before and after the war shows the actual part of women in the society.

The women characters undergo internal and external pressure of the patriarchal society. The novel shows the future of the women and the responsibilities of women beyond the household boundaries. Adichie's futuristic thought about Nigerian women as educated and maintaining their standards across the world. She elevates the status of her women characters as educated and broad minded. She also includes few characters who

are socially modernized on part to the western society. She does not want her characters to be so-called “authentically African” (Adichie 48).

Half of a Yellow Sun reflects on the inner self of women and through the train of events, points out the optimistic side of women and the mistreatment for them in the society. Kainene and Olanna are the Nigerian woman, who stand for their identities and sacrifice their lives for the sake of the nation. Adichie has presented women of different social classes and from different minor communities. It is the love for their nation and their passion to carry the patriotic spirit to the future generations they strive hard. Through their resilient nature they triumph over the hardships victoriously. Adichie through her novel emphasizes, that women are able participants to defend their nation when they are aware of the national values. The novel displays the human complexities and standards of poor women and their valuable contribution for Biafra.

Adichie’s *Half of a yellow Sun* breaks the typical notion of people towards women in the society. The women characters express their turmoil during the war and in turn act as an aid to showcase the stability of women. In spite of, the external troubles and dilemmas, women are able to be part in the constructive process of their society. The ability of women in managing their familial responsibilities is acceptable in the patriarchal society. Whereas, women’s contributions for the society in tight corners such as war are not recognized in the society. Therefore, the novel asserts that women’s part in the society is to be accepted without any gender-biased opinions. Adichie through her blend of artistic enterprise and nationalistic spirit has brought to light the reality and erodes the preconceived notions about women’s contribution to the welfare of the nation.

Chapter-IV

Conclusion

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War literature is one of the canons of literature that extends an equal paradigm for male and female without gender stratification. Wars have created a chance for women to be in the part of the public forum. Wars required additional labour support and women are given the opportunity to help in the war fields. Many were also in a critical position to work for the livelihood of the family as the men go to war field. Wars give them space and make them understand their position in society. Men are usually dominative and subjugate women in society. Even in the social order, men rank the higher position, as they are given importance both in society and at home. Wars transcend this position and pave the way that women are also part of society. War makes women come out of their dominions and grants them an opportunity to contribute to society and its welfare. War is all about the destruction of lives, but on the other hand, it is the pathfinder for women to uphold their stand in society. War promoted the status of women as they no more serve only for the welfare of the families but also their country.

Women take part in the war, with the minor role of serving as nurses to tend the wounds of the soldiers. They have become saviours and protectors of the dying soldiers. On the other hand, women are also expected to meet the ends of their families, when men are in the army to serve their country. This paves the way for women to socialise and also work for their family. This made them the breadwinners of the family and tends to the welfare of the family. The departure of men to the warfare made women capable enough to labours and be financial support for her family.

War is the undeniable truth of the horrors of the past and puts forth the exertion of the male dominance over females. The World Wars and the civil wars break the notion that war is not only as a male enterprise but also the proponent for women to be active in serving the nation. Women are neglected in the war field activities due to their weak physical strength. But, their strength is exposed by the stern effort of their unity and also conducting revolts. The condemnation towards their physical strength is surpassed by the challenges and the way they tackled their problems. The conception of women as a caretaker of the family is replaced as they are the builders of the future of their nation. The other facet of women is expressed through the war narratives to the outer world, is they are courageous enough to face the horrors of wars.

The pain behind the labours of women in the war is overlooked because of the male chauvinistic society. It is because the women are portrayed as subjects of male's domination and they restrict their boundaries within the family. This way of depicting women's nature as tender and voiceless make the people, deny the fact that they are courageous and not to appreciate or encourage their involvement in the war. People are not in a position to accept the values of women and their contribution to their nation. On contrast, women found variant opportunities of employment which encouraged them to break the barriers of the social order. Wars show the other dimension of women and enable people to understand their ability. They can stand firm in spite of the oppositions, against their participation in the war. The aftermath of war and the war effects renders great challenges for women, to rearrange the social order and to break the stereotypical notions. War showcases the two extremes of the suffering of people, especially of women on the one hand and it also paves the way for them to break the conventional role of

women and improve economically, and on the other hand, they fall as easy victim for the cruelties of war.

The Biafran war is the most remarkable event in the history of Nigeria. The Civil war created a great impact on the socio-political order specifically in Western Nigeria. The writers focused on the expression of great heroism, betrayals and the sacrifice of people. Masculinity and heroic deeds are the prime emphases in the novel based on the Biafra war. After a course of time, war narratives do not restrict its realm with the male centred orientation. It extended the paradigm with the unbiased gender stipulation where women also took an active part in the war narration. The changing role of women is because of the need for women's participation in the war. The effect of war changed the lives of women from their secluded lifestyle of society to representatives of courage and patriotism for their nation in public. It is women's patronage for their people is highly appreciated, but the Nigerian literature does not recognise the role of the women played in building the society. Women's part in the war is not simple, as they have undergone the ravages of the war more men.

Women are in a position to maintain the livelihood of the entire family. Earlier, they are responsible for the domestic works of the household, but the war switches the role of women to support their family economically. The war has changed the lives of the people, and they are into the newfound responsibilities for their family and their society. The position of women from dutiful wives and mothers is raised to the soldiers and nurses in the war field and army camps. Flora Nwapa's *Never Again* portrays the wartime evolution of Nigerian Society. Nwapa discusses on the distinctive role of Biafran women and their sustenance in facing men and society.

The Nigerian-civil war challenges women more as it is destructive and makes women, more vulnerable and at the same time gave new opportunities to work. This drew women to explore the outer world and not to bind to the walls of their home. The most arduous labour for women during wartime is to provide food for the family and women are in a dire position to get food. One of the reasons for the fall of Biafra is that they may of them died of starvation and the insufficient supply of food.

The civil war took them through the various traumatic experience of life, which turns out as a chance for women to prove their capabilities beyond the fixed estimation and the norms of women on society. It is difficult for men in society to accept the fact that women are given opportunities as medical assistance and higher officials in the army—as it altered the social order of assigning work based on gender. The system of patriarchy comes into existence after colonisation. As there was no social stigma for assigning work based on gender before the colonisation period. The private and the public spaces of women were inseparable, and it demarked the line between them.

There are no rules for the division of work based on gender and the system of patriarchy. But it developed due to the intervention of the colonisers and imposition of their system of living on the native people. In spite of much opposition to women in a male-dominated society, they participated with men in various riots and freedom struggles. The need for the presence of women is much required after the Nigerian civil war. But, the hard labours of women are overlooked in the past and not exposed to the outer world. The Nigerian literary works based on the Biafran war focused only on the male narratives. The images of women in fiction are the reflection of the women in society, and henceforth the literature also did not give importance to women in society.

The crucial roles played by the women are not given any prominence or place in literary works. They portrayed women only as victims in the hands of the native men and colonisers. The writers did not highlight the history of women's contribution and their selfless sacrifice for the war.

The Biafran works of the women writers channelised their work adhering to the stereotypes of women in the roles of docile mothers who are suppressed in the hands of their husbands and colonisers. Women in Africa are portrayed as weaklings, and their life entirely depends on the livelihood of their men. In a certain extent, they are pictured as women who are affected because of racial discrimination. The Biafran literature views the war narrative in a counter angle as they showcased the reality of women sacrificing their lives for their nation. There are only a few writings in analysing the participation of women in the Biafran war. The women are always in the periphery in the early Nigerian writings. Buchi Emecheta also states in Foreword of the book *Destination Biafra* as “. . . it is different from my other books, the subject is, as they say, “masculine”, but I feel a great sense of achievement in completing it” (DB viii). This shows that the war field and the experience are familiarised through the work of men. But, on the contrary, Emecheta and Adichie have explored the haunting experience of Biafra through the understanding of the female characters. The feminine perspective gives a different outlook towards the Nigerian civil war.

In the novel *Destination Biafra*, Emecheta focuses on the principal character Debbie and the situation which makes her to stand independent and to foresee the future of women in the society. The novel encompasses the conspiracies among the British rulers and the Nigerian government. The novel traces the incidents of the post-

independence election and disruption among the political leaders. It also focuses on the military coups and the counter attacks. The novel has an interlude of the civil war troubles along with the ethnic differences that instigated the war. Debbie strives for the unification of Nigeria and Biafra throughout the novel. The novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* centres on the characters Olanna and Kainene and their life-changing moments that happen after the war. The novel intermingles with joyous moments and the extreme sufferings of innocent people. The novel primarily gives prominence to the stand of women, and their role played in the war. The novel throws light on the characteristic changes and perseverance of Olanna and Kainene.

Emecheta dedicates her work to the demised relatives in the war. She states in *Destination Biafra* as, “I dedicate this work to the memory of many relatives and friends in the war” (Emecheta vii). She remembers the loss of the people in the war, and she expressed it with a realistic approach in the novel. She was a student in London, and the incidents of massacres are well rendered in the novel. Even though she has not encountered the cruelty, she explicitly expresses the plight of the people and the intense emotion of women characters throughout the novel. Debbie, the protagonist of the novel, is a close resemblance of Emecheta. Debbie grows up in London and returns to her native land. Even though, she is influenced by the attitude of the English people her innate love for Nigeria is incomparable. Similarly, Emecheta stayed in London, and this did not affect the presentation of the novel which thrives the nativity and adoration for her nation.

Adichie is a third generation flourishing Nigerian writer; the experience of Biafra is obtained through the painful memories of her father and mother. She has lost the great

grandparents in the Biafran war. The Biafran stories have a profound impact on her, and henceforth it is reflected in writing the melodramatic play *For the Love of Biafra* and short stories based on the devastations of war. The difference among the Emecheta and Adichie is that Emecheta in *Destination Biafra* portrays the war from a non-Igbo woman perspective and gives importance to other minor tribal communities. Whereas, Adichie in *Half of Yellow Sun* gives importance to the Igbo community. These novels unveil the problems from the perspective of Nigerians and Biafrans. The Nigerians are considered as the victors, but they have lost numerous lives. Biafra is a feeble nation which is victimised in the war. But still, it is rich in the spirit of freedom in Nigeria.

Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* is an exceptional novel among all her other works during her times. She has connected the political movements of Nigeria with a feministic outlook. Women characters portrayed in the works were feeble, docile and they are dishonoured in the society. During Emecheta's time, the female characters in the novels are subservient to their husbands, exploited and victimised by the white masters in the society. Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* outstrips the preconceived notion about the role of woman in the patriarchal society. The novel accelerates the readers about the political tension and attempts to present in the feministic perspective. The novel deals with the conspiracies and the problems of war which is shouldered upon the female protagonist Debbie. The narrative of this novel is closely associated with true incidents. The novel is a symbolic representation of the follies of political exploitation expressed by a woman's angle. The novel ultimately balances its purpose of recording the brutality of the Biafran war, and it also focuses on the evolution of independent woman. The hope for the

formation of Biafra in this novel runs parallel to the establishment of the valiant woman in the society.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie shows the dual nature of life filled with happiness and misery. She expresses the revulsions of Biafra and the dismay in the life of people after the war. The female characters are emotionally connected throughout the novel. Women in this novel stand as a backbone to the society at the time of crisis. The novel is embedded with more of the fictional element than of the true incidents of the war. Adichie as a third generation writer has not developed the novel as mere detailing of the war. The novel deals with the play of the internal turmoil of the characters. The novel is about the expectation of the characters for the formation of Biafra. In *Destination Biafra*, the novel recreates the historical incidents, and the focus is on the leading female character.

In *Destination Biafra*, the narrative expresses on the political conspiracies, love and betrayal that revolves around the female protagonist Debbie. On the other hand, the multiple narratives of *Half of a Yellow Sun* deal with physical and psychological trauma due to the ravages of war. Emecheta shows the other side of the Biafran war tracing the causes of war and its impact on the woman. As well as, Adichie portrays woman patriots and saviours of the society. In both these novels, woman characters play an eminent role in displaying their abilities to postulate higher and equivalent order of living. Women through these novels transcend from marginalised to the central figures. *Destination Biafra* remarks that the Biafran war has created a great impact and the female characters in the novel are resilient than being victims of suppression. *Half of a Yellow Sun* displays

that the war has become the forum for a woman to exhibit their stand in society. These novels present women as the fighting forces of wars.

The study attempts to comprehend the barriers faced by the women through the novels *Destination Biafra* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The obstacles for women are because of family and social conditions. The rejection of women in the military and their contribution is neglected in the society. The gender-biased notion and the conventionally accepted norms of war as the male affairs are wrecked down. The study attempts to express woman and war as women are the gallant powers for the fortification of the society. It gives an insight into the failings of women contribution because of the stereotypical outlook towards women. It is observed from the presentation of the women characters in the novel that war as a pathfinder for the emancipation of women through these novels. The study has also focused on the problems and aftermath effects of colonial powers which is the cause for the war. The study has traced the power of women at the crucial times, who are concealed champions of war through the evaluation of the novels *Destination Biafra* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Henceforth, War narratives befit for women to redefine their status in society.

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