
**WOMEN AND AFRICAN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETIES AS SEEN IN
CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHI'S PURPLE HIBISCUS**

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ABSTRACT

In all African societies women face several kinds of humiliation under the yoke of patriarchy: marginalization, subjugation, oppression, submission and all kinds of domestic violence. Many of them are doomed to an everlasting silence. Many female writers in their various literary works denounced, criticized and gave voices to the voiceless and uncovered the supremacy of men under which women live. Through *Purple Hibiscus* (2006) a novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on which is based my paper, the author uses a female voice to explore the horrible conditions of African women. By the same way, through the instrumentalization of a strong and educated revolutionary female character she shows how women should keep their voice high in the gathering of men and make themselves heard. The aim of this paper is to steal a critical glance at patriarchy and all its forms of domination of African women in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

Keywords: Women, Domestic violence, African feminism, Patriarchal Societies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many African women dream of peaceful and fulfilling lives, characterized by supportive marriages and family relationships. However, real-life constraints depict a frequent divergence from this ideal. African women often encounter significant challenges, including heightened risks within domestic settings. This dissonance between idealized expectations and lived experiences can prompt women to reassess their marital situations. Some may prioritize the well-being of their children, resulting in the endurance of mistreatment. Others may be constrained from leaving harmful workplace harassment, sexual abuse, and discrimination, as well as physical abuse situations due to factors such as economic dependence and limited alternative options. The character of Beatrice in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* exemplifies the complexities of navigating these circumstances for African women. That situation makes many married women question their marital life. Many of them bear the ill-treatment because of their love for their children. Others prefer to stay and accept whatever their husbands do to them because they do not have anywhere to go and because of their economic dependence vis-à-vis their husbands. Beatrice in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a poignant example of such women portrayed by the writer of the novel for having gone through those terrible conditions inflicted on her.

Countless women, whether educated or not, face gender inequality, marginalization, and sexual abuse in patriarchal societies. Some have no voice to assert themselves and are always thought weak and inactive by men. The society largely dominated by men's rules, as it is, does not favour women. In all human societies they are given mere place and value despite their sacrifices. They even lose their jobs when they happen to reject those cruel and insatiable

men's advances. When I take a quick glance at Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Devil on the Cross*, Wariinga loses her job for rejecting her boss's advances.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a poignant narration that talks about Beatrice, a married African woman's life in an extremely dangerous man's house, her husband. She lives in a total silence and passivity in her husband's house. Of course, she has the comfort most women think of. But she never has peace within her breast because everything is dictated by her tyrant husband. And that is so for every African woman. Although she has comfort in Eugene's house, his atrocities have never ceased and she has never known peace in her mind. In other cases, there are even families where the husband is not rich, but the woman never has peace. Despite the bread winning activities she does to support her husband, that latter never ceases to show his manliness on her whenever she happens to commit a single mistake that doesn't even deserve any ill-treatment. That's the dilemma in which many African women live with broken heart.

In African traditional societies, women are often considered second-class-citizens as Buchi Emecheta entitled one of her novels written in 1974. As such, they are assigned roles like childbearing, housekeeping, farming and other activities considered suitable for them. The implicit intention is to make them seem inferior to men. They are excluded from decision making and live under harsh patriarchal rules. Generally, they are marginalised, harassed, oppressed, violated and denied voice to assert themselves. Thus, many writers write fictional narratives in which they denounce this shameful image portrayed on women. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is one of those narratives in which women are voiceless and suffer in a patriarchal household in the hands of a pitiless and brainwashed catholic Christian man.

The purpose of the present research work is to make people understand the sufferings African women go through under patriarchy in all its forms and how voiceless they remain in *Purple Hibiscus* on the one hand and to show how education can play a significant role in women's struggle against African patriarchal societies on the other hand.

Indeed, feminism constitutes the main theory of this research work. First of all, Feminism comes from the word "Femina" that means woman. Consequently, it is important to note that feminism concerns women and their fight against men's domination. In this vein, Feminism largely is the thought and actions towards the end of the hierarchy of sexes thereby to achieve equality between men and women. In this sense, the rules of patriarchy must be banned. Feminism sees marriage and family as a context of inequality, subjugation, oppression and marginalization. Those aspects are seen in the character of Beatrice who is docile, silent, passive and submissive despite the ill-treatment she receives from her husband. So, feminism is an ideology and a practice that address the issue of women's oppression, subjugation marginalization in its own specific manner and subsequently attempts to provide a possible solution of the same. In this way, many other feminists have given their views in pointing patriarchy either as the source of the oppression or some have viewed industrial-capitalistic society as women's first opponent and enemy. Then feminist perspective in this vein helps understand and deconstruct the 'normal appearing' social order to unravel the hidden transcripts of patriarchy and women subordination. Thus, feminism is a movement that tends to liberate women from men domination. As such, women writers, in their works denounce patriarchy and the place given to women. But many scholars prefer using the term womanism instead of feminism. Ogunyemi is one of those scholars. She defines Feminism as a movement that:

"Smacks of rebelliousness, fearlessness, political awareness of sexism and an unpardonable (from the male viewpoint) drive for equality and equity between sexes. It

therefore instils fear in men though it thrills many women. The radical feminist can go as far as doing without the macho male to enjoy her liberty.” (Ogunyemi, 1988, p.61) Those aspects are seen in Ifeoma, Beatrice’s sister in-law. She is courageous and determined to challenge men while Beatrice remains silent, passive and submissive. She does not care. She is not afraid. Ogunyemi also says that “Womanism, with its myriad manifestations, is therefore a renaissance that aims to establish healthy relationship among people, despite ethnic, geographical, educational, gender, ethical, class, religious, military and political differences” (Ogunyemi, 1985, p. 123). In the same vein she describes Womanism as

“The Nigerian woman writer who is constantly aware of the negative connotation of feminist; the fear of being accused by Nigerian male writers of allying with white outsiders has turned most Nigerian women writers to womanism; a black outgrowth from Feminism” (Ogunyemi, 1985, p. 124).

This present research work is guided by a set of questions that can help me reach my goal in the work.

1. What are the main forms of oppression and subjugation that women experience in African patriarchal societies as depicted in *Purple Hibiscus*?
2. What factors contribute to the normalization of male superiority and the marginalization of women in the African societies?
3. How can education (as illustrated by characters like Ifeoma) contribute to effective in dismantling patriarchal systems and promoting gender equality globally?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of women oppression and subjugation in African patriarchal societies has been discussed over and over. In all African traditions they are given fewer space. They are domestically exploited and subjugated. They have no voice to express themselves. They act according to the will of their husbands. They accept everything that is said to them without questioning. They are not allowed to act or do anything according to their feelings or emotions. Families also play a striking role in women’s oppression and subjugation.

Many scholars, through their works, point out the terrible condition in which African women lack economic independence. In “Oppression of Women: Post-Colonial perspectives”, C. BIBIN SAM et al., argue that Beatrice is the mother figure in the novel. She represents the terrible condition of African women who lack economic independence. Thus, their life is exclusively controlled by men. Beatrice is portrayed as weak, timid and submissive wife. She feels inferior to Eugene. She is the most oppressed among the female characters.

Ibeku Ijeoma for her part, in “Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and the Issue of Feminism in African Novel” quoted by Udumukwu who asserts in his introduction to his book, *Signature of Women: Dialectics of Action in African women’s writings* that;

“There is a sharp contrast between the real woman in post-colonial Africa. Far from being the source of comfort and rest (the sweet mother as perceived in popular imagination), the “good” woman in Sub-Saharan Africa happens to be that woman who suffers the effects of oppression, and neglect; and who must maintain a silence and passivity in order to remain good. Silence and passivity are two principle features of the good woman. In the media representation of images from troubled regions of Africa, for instance, it is this “good” woman who bears the wicked children of war and disaster.” (...). (Udumukwu, 2007, P. 3).

In this vein Udumukwu tries to explain the harsh and the unjust situations in which the “good” African woman finds herself. First, she suffers the atrocities of her husband in his house.

Second, she bears the pressures and humiliations of her in-laws when she happens not to fill their expectation. Third, she bears the consequences of wars caused by men for their insatiable bellies. Then most of refugees' camps during the war are filled with women and their children. In this sense, it is the broken-hearted woman who provides the children with what the children need to survive. *In Half of Yellow Sun* for instance, Olanna plays a significant role in this period of great crisis. She and her sister Kainene take care of refugees' camp and provide the people there with what they need to survive while the men, the priests impregnate the girls. In this period of unbearable situations, women turn to become men's sexual objects. Even Ugwu, Olanna's lover's houseboy raped a barmaid when he has been conscripted. Why is it that women should suffer in the hands of men? Why is it that women should bear the drawbacks of the bad situations caused by men and their rules? Why is it that women should suffer the reverses of patriarchy and everything that goes with it?

The African "good" woman described by Udumukwu is seen in Beatrice and Kambili who suffer silently and obediently their oppression and subjugation from Eugene. Even when he happens to maltreat them, they remain silent and passive and suffer it. For, as Eugene says, "Everything I do for you, I do for your own good" (Adichie, P. 203). And so, Kambili and her mother Beatrice are silent and passive spectators of their own oppression. And as in all African tradition, a "good" woman must remain silent and passive and tolerate all kinds of humiliation and she will not have to quit her marriage no matter what happens to her. She will stay for the love of her children and Beatrice is an epitome of that kind of woman. Fwangiyi, Gloria Ada for part, in "A Reformist-Feminist Approach to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*" points out that women in Africa, to a large extent, are virtually seen as 'second class' human beings who are meant to be seen and not heard, or are a simple pair of eyes behind veil in the Islamic world. Their lives revolve solely around procreation, motherhood, merging into the man's world without protesting. Furthermore, social institutions and interactions are conditioned by patriarchal constructs that separate the man and the woman along binary opposites like powerful/powerless, owner/owned, public/domestic, voiced/voiceless. For Ibiene Evelyn Iboroma in the "Generalized Other': Good woman in African Fiction," she asserts that her "paper identifies three categories of 'good' woman. The first group consists of those who though they feel oppressed by patriarchy, remain silent in order to be 'good.' The second group consists of those whose attitude towards patriarchal oppression is ambivalent while the third group consists of those who gladly affirm the identity construction offered to them by patriarchy." She goes further by saying that "the woman feels the weight of patriarchy but avoids an open confrontation in order to remain good. In this sense, Beatrice suits exactly the first category of 'good' woman pointed by Ibiene Evelyn Iboroma in her work. She stays home. She does not do anything. She remains silent in face of everything even if her husband batters her, just because she wants to be a 'good' woman.

Men feel naturally superior to women. This is why patriarchal structures dictate their rules over women and dictate them what they should do. Rosaldo and Lamphere in *Women, Culture and Society* affirm that:

(...) "We could of course rest the case on biological determinism. There is something genetically inherent in the male of the species, so the biological determinists would argue, that makes them the naturally dominant sex; that "something" is lacking in females, and as result, women are not only naturally subordinate but in general quite satisfied with their position, since it affords protection and the opportunity to maximize maternal pleasures, which to them are the most satisfying experiences of life." (Rosaldo and Lamphere, p. 71).

So, Rosaldo and Lamphere tackle the argument about men's supremacist power over women on biological view. This is the reason why in general thinking, people argue that women are naturally inferior and men are naturally superior. And I can say that it is that superiority thought generally that makes women suffer much in the hands of men. Beatrice in *Purple Hibiscus* is not an exception.

Patriarchy as a source of women oppression and subjugation

Kivai Mboya in his thesis entitled "The Female Voice and the Future of Gender Relationships in the Nigerian Nation in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*," (p.viii) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures that institutionalise male physical, social and economic power over women or put it differently, it is the male control of culture, religion, language and knowledge which tend to devalue female experiences and knowledge. Patriarchal power structure works to benefit males by constraining female's life chances and choices.

It is clear from this definition that the society we are living in is solely ruled by men and they tend to extend their supremacy over women and silence them and women have no say. The role and activities assigned to a gender demonstrate its position in a given society. Rosaldo and Lamphere (1985) in *Women, Culture and Society* assert that all contemporary societies, regardless of kinship organization are characterized by a considerable degree of male dominance. They further argue that there is no society in which women have publicly recognized power and authority exceeding that of men. Women in this vein appear to be the ones to whom the lesser roles are given. Then under patriarchy they are devalued without pity. They appear then, to be the dominated being and men the dominant ones. Patriarchy is then a strong ideology that controls women in several societies and under which they are a silenced group and supposed to accept and follow every rule dictated by men. In this context they are weak and voiceless. Even their bodies and thoughts are controlled. Furthermore, there is no domain in which women are largely included. On the contrary they are excluded from certain important economic and political activities and their duties as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than male roles. Kolawole (1997) in this context thinks that women are products of multiple forms of subjugation: 'Patriarchy, tradition, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and gender imperialism, all combine to act against African woman's self-assertion' (25).

Still in his thesis (p. 22), Kivai Mboya uses De Beauvoir (1989) as a poignant example of women's cause fighter. Then De Beauvoir modifies the Hegelian concept of 'other' in her studies and in description of the male dominated culture. She calls then the 'other' the minority; the least favoured one that is a woman. It is this idea of 'othering' which brings about domination. Kivai goes further in saying that domination depends on construction of social and cultural differences among people since without differences there would be no basis for distinguishing those who wield power from those who are subjects. The most potent ideas are those that are naturalized to appear not to be created by humans themselves but by nature. Kivai continues that patriarchal thinking for instance, holds that men are naturally superior to women. Such ideology justifies male domination and forms the firm foundation of patriarchy. Patriarchy then, undervalues female experiences and knowledge and is a strong ideology that controls women in several societies. Women being the muted are compelled to follow and accept what men devise and formulate. The basic pillar of the patriarchal power within the African context is the silencing and suppression of women including the control of their bodies (Kivai Mboya. p. 23).

Manliness: a passport to dominance over men

African households are the milieu where women are mostly harassed and not given any voice. And thus, marriage seems to be a barrier that hinders women's freedom. In this vein, women live in mentally and psychologically restricted space. And the duties and activities that are assigned to them are, housekeeping, cooking, childbearing and child caring. They have no word to say. Everything, every decision is made for them by men. They have no right to decide anything themselves or go anywhere. For example, when Auntie Ifeoma asks Beatrice "*Nwunye m, will you not come with us?*" she replies, "You know Eugene likes me to stay around," (Adichie, 89). This shows clearly how submissive and obedient she is to Eugene's rules. And this is how women live in African households. Submission and obedience without protestation no matter what happens. This is how a "good" African woman should do in African households to be well seen by her in-laws.

The "good" African woman never raises her voice to talk to her husband even though this latter misbehaves. If she does, her in-laws will say she is not respectful. As such, families contribute to the oppression and subjugation of women. In some cases, families play a striking role in their sons' infidelity vis-à-vis their wives legally married. They would say "He is a man. *Sunnun glégbénu*. So, he can do whatever pleases him with his penis." Furthermore they would say to the woman "You are a woman. *Yonnun wxési. Yonnun adokonsi*. You have to obey what he says." Some in-laws even encourage their sons to take more wives if this latter happens to bear only girls as though girls are not children. They consider that girls cannot be heirs. In some cases, they are blamed for not bearing more boys than girls and for not bearing more children. In other cases, they are blamed for not bearing any children as though they are the God who gives children. In this context, the in-laws see her as a curse, not only for their son but for the whole family. And then they argue that she would have committed abortions in her youth or sleep with many men and that could be why she couldn't conceive. So, they urge their sons to take other wives. In this context women appear to be childbearing objects.

Beatrice in *Purple Hibiscus* lives such a life. She has only two children. She is the wife of Eugene, a wealthy businessman. Her husband's *umunna* urge him to have another wife because she doesn't have more children. She says: "Did our own *umunna* not tell Eugene to take another wife because a man of his stature cannot have just two children? If people like you had not been on my side, then..." (Adichie, p. 83).

Harmful Cultural and Social Norms and Women Domestic Violence

Women in African households, mostly uneducated ones suffer much domestic violence from their husbands. They suffer much oppression, subjugation and injustice from the family and cannot resist because they are voiceless and powerless. They are considered men's properties and less than human and sexual object. When it is domestic violence, they have always been the suffering beasts. And through the character of Beatrice in *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie explores how women are subjugated by their husbands. Her world is exclusively controlled by her husband, she is not given any chance, and she does not have any feeling of her own. Everything she feels it for her husband. Everything she feels and thinks is for her husband. Then oppression and domestic violence at the marital level appear to be some of the mountains that make African women subordinate. So, patriarchy in this perspective can be said to have always tried to control the domestic space and deny women the chance to enter into the public sphere symbolized by Eugene's family compound. Mama, a symbol of oppressed African women, suffers such internment. She has no voice and does not talk to Papa; she is a dehumanized wife and suffers in loneliness. Adichie's texts therefore seem to prod women to

identify and challenge structures of patriarchal exclusion which possibly serve to deny them vital knowledge for their emancipation. (Kivai Mboya. p. 33).

Beatrice, Jaja and Kambili's mother and Eugene's wife, doesn't escape domestic violence. She cannot resist because she is a woman, a wife. And a "good" woman doesn't complain even though her husband batters her. Furthermore, if her husband is wealthy, she will have to be submissive and she is economically disempowered and depends on him. So, whatever he does to her, she will have to support.

Eugene and his family use to visit Father Benedict on Sundays after mass. Then one Sunday after mass, as it is routineous to them to visit the priest after mass, Beatrice is not feeling. But she can do nothing than what her husband wants her to do even though she doesn't feel well.

Kambili describes this way:

"We always dropped in to visit Father Benedict after mass. "Let me stay in the car and wait, biko," Mama said, leaning against the Mercedes. "I feel vomit in my throat."

Papa turned to stare at her. I held my breath. It seemed a long moment, but it might have been only seconds. "Are you sure you want to stay in the car?" Papa asked.

Mama was looking down; her hands were placed on her belly, to hold the wrapper from untying itself or to keep her bread and tea breakfast down. "My body does not feel right," she mumbled. "I asked if you are sure you wanted to stay in the car, "Mama looked up. "I'll come with you. It's really not that bad."(Adichie, PP. 37, 38).

Eugene's word here is the last and the final one. She obeys her husband despite being unwell because he is the husband and she is the wife. He is the powerful and she is the powerless. He is the owner and she is the owned.

Here, it is clearly understandable that she has no voice. Even if she does, her voice will not be heard. Although she is not feeling well, she cannot refuse her husband's demand for fear of being beaten. Because he is the ruler and she is the ruled. Even the priest in question realises that Beatrice is unwell. He notices it in this way: "How are you, Beatrice?" Father Benedict asked, raising his voice so Mama could hear from the living room. "You don't look well."

Beatrice could not reveal her real feeling in front of her husband. So, she says: "I'm fine, Father. It's only my allergies because of the weather, you know, the clash of harmattan and rainy season."

Beatrice is battered until she miscarries pregnancies away. This is the extent to which a man can be cruel and women are subjugated under patriarchy. Despite the fact that she is pregnant her husband batters her. And she cannot talk because she is a "good" African woman. And a "good" African woman never raises her voice to talk to her husband even though he harms her. She has to remain silent and support it so as to please her in-laws.

Although she finally yields to her husband's desire to follow him to the priest's house though she is not feeling well, her husband batters her until she bleeds. Kambili, the narrator describes it this way:

"I heard the door open. Papa's gait on the stairs sounded heavier, more awkward, than usual. I stepped out of my room just as Jaja came out of his. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers bought in bulk at the Seme Border. He opened the dining room door. Then we heard the front door open, heard him say something to the gate man, Adamu. "There's blood on the floor," Jaja said. "I'll get the brush from the bathroom." (Adichie, P. 41).

This way, woman is treated as mere object, transportable merchandise. So, she loses the pregnancy after Eugene batters her. "There was an accident. The baby is gone," she says to her children after she returns home. She doesn't say "the baby is gone because of your father or

because your father batters me” because she is the wife and Eugene is her husband. And since she is an African “good” woman/wife she doesn’t have to complain. She has to endure whatever her husband does. She does not mind her husband battering her. Instead, she stands on his side because he does not marry another wife. She says:

“God is faithful. You know after you came and I had the miscarriages; the villagers started to whisper. The members of our “*umunna*” even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people had willing daughters, and many of them were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons and taken over our home and driven us out, like Mr Ezendu’s second wife did. But your father stayed with me, with us. “Yes,” I said.” (...). (Adichie, P. 28).

Suggested Improvement for Harmful Cultural and Social Norms and Women Domestic Violence

In African households, mostly uneducated women often suffer significant domestic violence from their husbands. They endure much oppression, subjugation, and injustice from the family and feel unable to resist because they are voiceless and powerless. They are often considered men’s properties, less than human, and merely sexual objects. When it comes to domestic violence, they are always the suffering victims.

Through the character of Beatrice in *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie explores how women are subjugated by their husbands. Her world is exclusively controlled by her husband; she is given no chance to assert herself and seems to have no feelings of her own. Everything she feels and thinks is for her husband. Oppression and domestic violence at the marital level appear to be some of the significant challenges that subordinate African women. Thus, patriarchy, in this perspective, seems to have always sought to control the domestic space and deny women the chance to enter the public sphere, symbolized by Eugene’s family compound. Mama, a symbol of oppressed African women, suffers such confinement. She has no voice, does not speak to Papa, is a dehumanized wife, and suffers in loneliness. Adichie’s texts, therefore, seem to prod women to identify and challenge structures of patriarchal exclusion, which possibly serve to deny them vital knowledge for their emancipation (Kivai Mboya, p. 33).

Beatrice, Jaja and Kambili’s mother and Eugene’s wife, does not escape domestic violence. She cannot resist because she is a woman, a wife. A “good” woman is not expected to complain, even if her husband batters her. Furthermore, if her husband is wealthy, she is expected to be submissive, being economically disempowered and dependent on him. So, whatever he does to her, she must endure it.

Eugene and his family routinely visit Father Benedict on Sundays after mass. One Sunday, after mass, Beatrice feels unwell. Yet, she can do nothing but what her husband wants, even though she doesn't feel well. Kambili describes this scene:

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“We always dropped in to visit Father Benedict after mass. “Let me stay in the car and wait, biko,” Mama said, leaning against the Mercedes. “I feel vomit in my throat.”

Papa turned to stare at her. I held my breath. It seemed a long moment, but it might have been only seconds. “Are you sure you want to stay in the car?” Papa asked.

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Beatrice is battered to the extent that she **suffers repeated miscarriages**. This illustrates the cruelty a man can inflict and how women are subjugated under patriarchy. Despite being pregnant, her husband batters her. And she cannot speak out because she is a "good" African woman. A "good" African woman never raises her voice to her husband, even if he harms her. She must remain silent and endure it to please her in-laws.

Although she finally yields to her husband's desire to follow him to the priest's house despite feeling unwell, her husband batters her until she bleeds. Kambili, the narrator, describes it this way:

"I heard the door open. Papa's gait on the stairs sounded heavier, more awkward, than usual. I stepped out of my room just as Jaja came out of his. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers bought in bulk at the Seme Border. He opened the dining room door. Then we heard the front door open, heard him say something to the gate man, Adamu. "There's blood on the floor," Jaja said. "I'll get the brush from the bathroom." (Adichie, P. 41).

In this way, the woman is treated as a **mere object, transportable merchandise**. She subsequently loses the pregnancy after Eugene batters her. "There was an accident. The baby is gone," she tells her children after she returns home. She doesn't say, "The baby is gone because of your father" or "because your father batters me," because she is the wife, and Eugene is her husband. And since she is an African "good" woman/wife, she doesn't have to complain. She has to endure whatever her husband does. She doesn't seem to mind her husband battering her. Instead, she stands by his side because he does not marry another wife. She says:

"God is faithful. You know after you came and I had the miscarriages, the villagers started to whisper. The members of our "umunna" even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people had willing daughters, and many of them were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons and taken over our home and driven us out, like Mr Ezendu's second wife did. But your father stayed with me, with us. "Yes," I said." (...). (Adichie, P. 28).

3. CONCLUSION

A married African woman's life is not easy to live. This is a life where they live all sorts of disabilities. Then they live with great stress until the end of their lives. Because in African cultures women have nothing to say. From this point, some women say a man does not marry, this is the woman who marries because they have encountered all the assaults of patriarchal domination.

Female writers like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo and many others have reproduced the harsh, humiliating and denigrating life the African married women live in

their various writings. Adichie, like others points out the harassing life of a woman (Beatrice) in *Purple Hibiscus*. And women over Africa still live in patriarchal societies which encourages their oppression, marginalisation and subjugation. Even marriage seems, after a view on patriarchy and everything that goes with it, to be a danger, a hell, a prison for women because they are supposed to comply without protesting, mostly those who are not educated. The uneducated ones are those who are extremely exploited in many ways. Because men, in this context know that they do not have the means, the weapon to fight against their own exploitation. Ifeoma in *Purple Hibiscus* is the perfect example of the educated woman who raises her head when need be. And this is her cohabitation with Beatrice that prompts her to put an end to her sufferings by killing her husband. But Beatrice is a striking example of the uneducated exploited women. She therefore represents the extremely harsh life the African uneducated married women live. Because of her lack of education, she silently bears all the atrocities her husband puts on her. This is how African women are seen as the 'good' ones. Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* criticizes men's authority and finds it necessary to endow women with education, a power through which they will gain their freedom. It is through Beatrice's interactions with Auntie Ifeoma that she makes her mind up and breaks her silent and passivity in killing her husband. This radicalism allows her to leave Eugene's domination and set her children free.

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