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**Investigating the Leadership Challenges and Problems in  
Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and  
Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus***

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**Abstract**

Leadership is one of the most contentious issues in all societies and organizations. It has fascinated people since the dawn of recorded history. It is of utmost importance in every society, state, nation and organization. It requires aptitude and men who are good. Leadership requires potentials, personality and good-oriented attitudes because the leader influences the course of events and people's behavior and approaches to issues, their morale and efforts towards higher standards. Reference to both good and bad leaders in the literature of every age gives testimony to the search for good leaders that has been a common thread running through human civilizations. In fact, an effective leader coordinates the efforts of people within the environment towards good achievements. Leadership influences the behavior of people and motivates them to achieve set goals. It is against this background that the paper sets out to investigate the leadership challenges and problems in post-independent African countries as highlighted in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Data is got from both primary and secondary sources. The theoretical framework adopted is that of Marxism. The research revealed that cruelty, intolerance, insensitivity, pride and negative acts of un-patriotism have become endemic in our society and all threaten the need for an egalitarian and functional society.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Oppression, Goals, Tyranny, Despot, Dictatorship, Society

## Introduction

Literature is a social discipline that studies the society and its behavior in the sense that through the works of literature, the correct nature of the society is portrayed. That is, the good or ills of the society are exposed with the aim of either correcting, instructing, praising or educating the society of the time. This is why literature is said to be a mirror of the society and also a prototype of the society.

It is for the reason of correcting the ills of the society that literature looks into the problems inherent in a society. These problems, which emanate are manifested in all aspects of African life ranging from the political, social and economic to the cultural and the most prominent of them all is the political problem. This has constituted recurrent themes in contemporary African novels. The ability to influence makes leaders highly sought after and valued by society. In African literary circles, the leaders are portrayed to be corrupt, greedy, tyrannical, despotic and self-centered.

It is the aim of this research, therefore, to look into the treatment of these problems of leadership in the African novels, its aim is to explore the novelists' portrayal of post-colonial African leadership as a result of the attainment of political independence by African nations bringing along with it many leadership problems which include inefficiency, corruption, squander mania, sectionalism, dictatorial tendencies, etc.

The novelists have tried to arouse the people's consciousness to the unhealthy nature of African leadership such that the aim is effecting changes in the people's perception of leadership and this will in turn usher in a revolution, a march in the right direction.

An effective leader coordinates the efforts of people within his environment or administration towards good achievement. However, the achievement of these goals and objectives largely depends on the quality of leadership provided. Therefore, leadership influences the behavior of people and motivates them to achieve the set goal. To Fredrick .E. Fielder in his book *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*:

Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards goal setting and goal achievement. That both the personality of the person occupying a leadership position and situational factors are important determiners of a leader's effectiveness. (89)

In his own opinion, Robert .J. House in *Readings in Organization Behavior and Human Performance*, says that "Leader refers to behavior which define roles and relationships,

stressed rules and regulations, scheduled performance and explained why tasks should be done” (76).

House further says that such leader involves working directly with others, listening to what subordinates says, asking for suggestions, and involvement of others in making decisions. To Peter F. Druker in his work *The Practice of Management*:

Leadership is the lifting of a man’s vision to higher sights, the raising of a man’s performance to a higher standard, the building of a man’s personality beyond its ‘ normal limitations. That nothing better prepares the ground for such leadership than a spirit of management that conforms to the day-to-day practice of the organization’s strict principles of conduct and responsibility, high standards of performance, and respect for the individual and his work. (196)

In fact, leadership is of utmost importance in every society, state, nation and organization.

J.H. Hicks in this treatise, *Administrative Leadership*, sees leadership as “the engineer of mankind upon whom rests much of the responsibility for the perpetuation and refinement of the society in which he functions” (188). Hicks says that leadership is a status of dominance and prestige acquired by stability to control, imitate or set the pattern of behavior for other people.

Steven L. Mashane and Mary-Ann Von Gilnow in their book *Organizational Behavior* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) defined leadership as “the process of influencing people and providing an environment for them to achieve team or organizational objective” (416). For them, effective leaders help groups of people define their goals and find ways to achieve them. They use power and persuasion to ensure that followers have the motivation and role clarity to achieve specific goals.

Therefore, the effectiveness of leadership has its roots in principles and dispositions to the leader. Good leadership is thus characterized by these principles, which are natural and divine such as love for the governed, respect for human rights, and recognition of the human brotherhood. So, since no institution or state can possibly function without a leader, leadership is very important among social animals of which man is the major component. The necessity for leadership stems from the fact that each organization or group has needs, which must be met. The theoretical framework for this study is Marxist criticism. Marxist analysis of novels falls on the relations among classes. In British and European novels of the nineteenth century, for example, class is a significant factor in the rise and fall of the

character's fortunes. *The Redford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* by Rose Murfin and Supriya M. Ray define Marxist criticism as:

A type of criticism in which literary works are viewed as products of work and whose practitioners' emphasis the role of class and ideology as they reflect, propagate and even challenge prevailing social order. Rather than viewing them as repositories for hidden meanings. Marxist critics view texts as material product of work and hence reading of production and consumption were. In short, literary works are views as products of work and hence reading of production and consumption were called economics. (102)

As Cornel Ujowundu states in his book *Literature and Literary Criticism: An African perspective*, Marxist criticism is a special brand of sociological criticism which deals with the methods of production. Its greatest proponents are Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in their theories on Dialectical Materialism. Marxism sees the need to write literature based on social struggle. It uses society in two ways: the economics class and the individualistic or antagonistic class.

### **Aspects in Leadership Problems in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah***

Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) portrays the military leaders in Africa who came as messiahs to save their countries from the nefarious activities of the politicians. But in this novel, he denounced the methods by which these leaders project themselves as the people's messiahs. The novel, therefore, employs several tactics in deceiving the masses and making them believe that they are their saviors from neo-colonial exploitation.

Achebe is exposing Africa's brand of military leadership which is wicked, brutal, barbaric and directionless. In the novel, we shall see how these military leaders employ various tactics in creating fear, suspicion and mistrust in the people, making it impossible for their opponents to challenge them. In Samuel Viscount's opinion, in the *Marques of Reading*, "theirs is a government in which everything is reduced to a formula in monochrome ..., no exercise of responsibility is required or indeed tolerated. All that is asked is conformity" (86). So, the novel reveals tyrannical dictatorships operating under the guise of revolutionary government, and expose societies under threat of disintegration from the effects of despotism, oppression, tribalism, social and political corruption.

Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, set in a backward African country called Kangan, explores the tragedy of bad leadership by exposing the cruelty, sycophancy and tyranny

inherent in military dictatorship. Earnest Emenyonu in *Okike* (30) sees the novel as portraying: “Achebe’s disenchantment with leadership in Africa, in that the novel effectively applies to any country or human location where decadence and tyranny are the rule rather than the exception” (134-144).

To Nadine Gordimer in *New York Times Book Review*, “Kangan is an imaginary country, and it is many countries, not only the Nigeria from which Achebe has been in and out of exile ... not only those countries in the southern Hemisphere it is the country of the rich men ... (who) holds the yam and the knife” (7). Dan Izevbaye sees the novel as a symbolic representation of the period between the beginning of violence in 1966 and the end of the Civil War in Nigeria. According to him, “it is the story of a people whose desperation set the wheels of a new history in motion” (21-28).

It needs to be noted that at the end of Achebe’s *A Man of the People*, when the military came to power, the president was seen as the man who will correct the anomalies of the civilian administration, but he ended up as a tormentor and betrayer of his people. His tyranny and oppression result in disenchantment, hence the novelist says: Disenchantment with them (the military) turned long ago into detached clinical interest” (2).

So, Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah*, a novel of eighteen chapters, is held together and woven around three major characters- H.E. His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Kangan, simple referred to as Sam, a Sandhurst trained colonel, who did not take part in organizing the coup, but was asked to lead by younger officers who had toppled the civilian administration. The next is Christopher Oriko, the Commissioner of Information, and the third is Ikem Osodi, the editor of the government-owned newspaper, *The National Gazette*. These three gentlemen had been good friends from their college days at Lord Lugard College, but their ideological difference led to their tragic end in the novel.

Among them, Ikem was the brightest in the class; Sam, the social paragon; while Chris stood mid-way between the two. As Chris points out. “it goes back ... to our first days at Lord Lugard College. Ikem was th brightest in the class- first position every term for six years ... Sam was the social paragon ... the all-rounder – good student, captain of the cricket team, Victor Ludorum in athletics, and in our last year, school captain” (65). Chris further says that is own position has “... always been in the middle, neither as bright as Ikem nor such a social success as Sam. But I have always been the lucky one in a way” (66).

As at the time the story unfolds, Sam is the boss, while Chris is Commissioner for information, Ikem’s boss. When the relationship turned sour, Sam replaces Chris with

Johnson Ossai, a military officer, Ikem was eliminated as Chris laments: “I have thought of all this as a game that began innocently enough and went suddenly strange poisonous” (1).

In these few chapters in the novel, says Ifi Amadiume, Achebe rips the mask off and shows us vividly the incompetence and inadequacies of these men in government. He also makes it clear that the military with all its arms, fears unarmed civilians and demonstrations. Emenyonu adds that the military has its own flaws which the author Achebe identifies as mediocrity and terrorism in government. He points out that “After the scathing political satire, *A man of the people*, *Anthills* ... is an unmasked criticism of military leadership in Africa. (that) Chinua Achebe probes with disarming sensitive the subject of army rule in Africa as elsewhere...” (138). To him, the novel was consciously designed to offer the most effective means of appreciation of human nature and experience under the rule of tyranny.

In *Anthills*, the united States and Britain influence the policies and behavior of President Sam. Hence, Achebe denounces his leadership of deception through Ikem Osodi who wear the garb of a revolutionary/socialist; and Christ Oriko who portrays himself as a “reform.” These two men are exposing their former friend, now Head of State and fledging dictator. Two years into his administration, His Excellency, the Head of State, who had already taken the title of “President” and become a General, organizes a referendum designed to legitimize his position as “President-for-Life.” But despite all clandestine moves, propaganda and the cajoling that went into the president-for-Life campaign, Abazon, one of the regions of Kangan votes “No!”

Ikem’s commitment to socialism/revolution, equality of all men, and social justice, was so strong that he broke loose with his pungent editorials in the government-owned newspaper, *The National Gazette*. He criticized and condemned the activities and actions of soldiers that the president and his men became jittery. Thus, Kangan is a police state, a torture chamber, in which people are constantly tortured and killed for anti-govenimentl

activities. For instance, a glimpse into a typical detention camp reveals a shocking scene of brutality and human degradation. The deportation imprisonment or elimination of the continent's intellectuals is a pointer to the tyranny in the administrative system. The dysfunctionality in the machinery of the societies suffocating sense of decay, chaos and seizure of progress—are reflections of the state of the nation's development under misdirected military dictatorships.

In the novel, it was Ikem' sendeavour to see that the status quo is changed that results in his death. He became a victim because he decided to speak out against the atrocious activities

of the government. His out spokenness -first earned him suspension as the editor of *The National Gazette*. He condemned the execution of armed robbers at the Bar Beach and made sure that the reader follows him in condemning the practice by such comments as: "It was a day on which ordinary sane people went berserk" (39). He also sees thy antics of the authorities as "ritual obscenities" (40), and states that what worried him was the "thousands who laughed so blatantly at their own humiliation and murder" (44). Ikem believes that the armed robbers are merely emulating the bigger robbers who openly looted our treasury, whose effrontery soiled our national soul" (42).

Furthermore, Ikem describes the caliber of soldiers in the military institution as "...The truly strong who are very rare, and the rest who would be strong. The first group makes magnificent soldiers and remain good people hardly ever showing, let alone flaunting their strength. And the rest are there for the swank" (46). But his story satirizes those soldiers who are out to dehumanize their fellow men. He argues thus: "The real danger today is from the fat, adolescent and delinquent millionaire... and from all those virulent, misshapen freaks like Amina and Bakassa sired on Africa by Europe" (52). Thus, we have the reckless soldiers who "walk with the exaggerated swagger of a coward" (48), to whom the life of a civilian is no more than the life of a dog; and those symbolized by "the carefree, president-for-life, larger-than-life ruthless dictator in the Kangan State House who builds barricade between him and the masses; is intolerant of their wishes and indifferent to their precarious destiny" (12).

Unfortunately, Ikem's death resulted from his answer to the rumor concerning the plans of the Central Bank of Kangan to put the president's image on the nation's currency. The distortion of his answer by *The National Gazette* which says "Ex-Editor Advocates Regicide" (162) led to his arrest and subsequent death at the hands of members of "The Directorate of State Research Council (SRC)." He was accused of collaborating with foreigners and some unpatriotic citizens to destabilize the country. Such lies and false accusations are very common in military regimes in Africa, especially when they want to justify the elimination of assumed subversive elements, who they feel are threats to their continued stay in office. And in keeping with the outcome c,r such abductions, Ikem was systematically eliminated. His elimination is a clue to his close associates that such fate also awaits them. Incidentally, "by late afternoon on the next day it was obvious that the SRC had begun to look for Chris" (171). At this juncture, the reign of terror came in full swing. Everyone became a suspect, even the most innocuous of newspaper reports is treated as a treasonable offence. Chris was declared a wanted man, and was unfortunately shot dead in the North where he had run to, by a police sergeant, whom he tried to prevent from abducting a young girl.

Achebe in *Anthills* indirectly condemned the atrocities of the various military regimes that have ruled Nigeria since they first came to power in 1966. Between 1966 and the time of the novel's publication not less than seven military coups have taken place with little or no difference in the manner of rulership of the various Heads of State. Traces of their leadership attributes abound in the novel till the regime of Sani Abacha. Other military leaders in Africa are in the same class as those in the novel. Ironically, they visit their colleagues in arms or influence their governments. Chinua Achebe calls them "those virulent, misshapen freaks like Amin and Bokassa sired on Africa by Europe . . ." (52). They, are leaders whose regimes have been dictatorial, oppressive and bloody. There is an implied parallel between their regimes and those of Sam.

These military leaders in African countries do usually fan the embers of sycophancy and tribalism to enjoy continued loyalty, and to prolong their stay in offices. Because they know how strong' attached their people are to their tribal affinities and sycophancy, they, therefore manipulate these attachments to achieve their personal aims. These actions also breed divisions among the people. Hence Howard Wriggins in *The Rulers' Imperative: Strategies for Political Survival in Africa and Asia*, says:

Leaders whom we regard as charismatic . . . are often persons who succeed more than others in exploiting the situation around them. They know what their people feel most strongly about or can be made to feel strongly about. (94)

Thus, one significant feature of these military regimes is that the leaders build around themselves a formidable fortress of tribal loyalists, sycophants, praise singers and bootlickers, who constitute an indefatigable force against any opposition to them. They appoint these loyalists and upstarts to positions of authority, thereby displacing the dedicated and more qualified ones.

In *Anthills*, sycophancy and bootlicking also contributed to the oppressive tendencies of the regime. Achebe lashes out mercilessly at the educated elite, especially the university intellectuals for their sycophancy and envy of the military in power the likes of Professor Reginald Okong who wears "nothing but khaki safari suits complete with epaulettes" (p. 4). Even Chris Oriko says that his fellow ministers are "... intelligent, educated men who let this happen to them, who actually went out of their way to invite it, who even at this hour have seen and learnt nothing, the cream of our society and the hope of the black race" (2).

This lamentation by Chris, the First Witness of the president's tyranny, and Commissioner for Information, indicates that the educated elites in the cabinet dance around the despotic



president like a pack of cowards and idiots. Any of them "who shows any independence of thought, the president threatens (them) with his eyes or silence," while others like the Commissioner for Education and Home Affairs are portrayed as bootlickers and sycophants. Thus, the cabinet, with the military president who had no preparation for political leadership, is incompetent in handling the affairs of the nation.

The Second Witness, Ikem's view on the problems of Kangan are reminiscent of Achebe's opinion in *The Trouble With Nigeria*, where he attacks Nigerian leaders for their moral bankruptcy, tyranny and love for power. According to him, "One of the penalties of exalted power is loneliness. Harnessed to the trappings of protocols and blockaded by a buffer of grinning courtiers and sycophants, even a good and intelligent leader will gradually begin to forget what the real world looks like" (35). Ikem re-echoes this view about Sam, the president, saying:

The emperor may be a fool but he isn't a monster. Not yet anyhow; although he will certainly become one by the time Chris and company have done with him . . . His problem is that with so many petty interests salaaming around him all day ... he has no chance of knowing what is right. (46)

Thus, Kangan is a police state, in which the people sabotage their colleagues and have them tortured or killed for trumped up charges. Military leaders in Africa do manipulate the information media to their advantage. For instance, the protagonists of *Anthills of the Savannah* are committed to arousing the consciousness of the dormant masses, calling on them to wake up and wrench power from these-undeserving leaders. But since the machinery of information is at the disposal of the leaders, they feed the public with lies so as to promote their public image and to divert attention.

### **Aspects of Leadership Problems in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus***

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a debut novel that grapples with issues of post-independence and societal vices that characterize the Nigerian society in the 20th century. The novel evokes social consciousness which cuts across politics, family life, religion, bribery and corruption, etc.

Published in 2003, *Purple Hibiscus* is a satirical first person narrative which is more of political leadership crisis concerning a nation which has suffered and cannot practice "freedom of speech," a fundamental right. Simon De Siloa in "Family Life in Shades of Purple," says that the novelist presents a society that is, infected with moral decadence,

hypocritical tendencies of politics and religious individuals alike. Through satire the author exposes certain societal anomalies, it lays bare in its stark nakedness, the source, the consequences and remedy of the excesses prevalent in our political and religious actions.

Adichie's major motivation to write this novel, according to her in an interview with Uwaezuoke in *This day* newspapers, May 27, 2005 (48), was to express how she wished people to be more accommodating in their faith. The author says, "It is fine to be a Catholic but the old people who choose to follow the way of ancestral worship are not devils."

Through Kambili, Adichie reveals the religious fundamentalism in the Nigerian society which is portrayed in the character of Eugene (Papa) who in his leadership style in the family, is fanatically religious and demands perfection from his children in school, at home and in their various devotion. He advises Kambili when he went to drop her in school:

Why do you think I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best? You have to do something with all these privileges because God has given you much, he expects much from you. He expects perfection. I didn't have a father who sent me to the best schools. My father spent his time worshipping gods of wood and stone. (47)

Adichie thinks that religious fundamentalism in Nigeria is overt. It is so because religion in Nigeria has become self-absorbed, self-opinionated, self-indulgent and self-congratulatory.

The novelist in an interview with Uwaezuoke in *This day* newspaper May 27, 2005 (48) narrated the emergence of churches daily while corruption thrives as much as ever and God becomes the watchman standing behind you while you seek your self-interest at all costs.

According to her, religion feed people with so much nonsense in the name of God. "God loves you more than others," "God warns you to buy that new car," "This year is a year of open doors," "Your miracle is on the way," "Givers never lack," "Give and it shall be given unto you," "2007 is your year of joy," etc. To the novelist, this sort of rhetoric probably has a lot to do with the state of our country and the experience of living in a place of scarce resources but. it is self-defeating,

Adichie frowns at the society that is fanatical and rigid in their religious beliefs and practices that their vision about the world is blurred. This problem extends from Kambili's home to the society. The Nigerian society is broken into pieces because of this religious

fundamentalism. It is a country where many young girls are again unmarried because their fanatical parents prevent them from marrying non-Catholics, a nation where denomination is used as a means of getting political votes or climbing political positions, not minding the character of the politician. A country where you get a position in the office or promotion because you belong to a particular denomination. A country that is full of corruption and discrimination in the family, towns, villages, offices, market, school, church, etc. Kambili referred to his father as a fanatical believer, saying:

For twenty minutes he asked God to bless the food. Afterwards he intoned the blessed virgin in several different titles while we responded "Pray for us." His favorite title was our lady, shield of the Nigerian people. He had made it up himself. If only people would use it every day, he told us, Nigeria would not totter like a big man with spindly legs of a child. (11)

*Purple Hibiscus* is an open mockery of these fanatics whose deceptive and hypocritical philosophy deceive and mislead many people and also create problems in the society. Papa, while generous and politically active in the community, is repressive and fanatically religious at home. Kambili says: "He had prayed for conversion of Papa-Nnukwu so that he would be saved from hell. Papa spent some time describing hell as if God did not know that the flames were eternal, raging and fierce" (61).

Kambili continued, being over religious Papa insults even elderly men of his father's age who came to greet him on his return to the village because they are pagans. Kambili frowns at some of his father's behavior in the name of religion. Apart from hypocrisy and deceit in religious fundamentalism. Adichie also portrays religious discrimination even to his own father. While sending Kambili to go and visit his father, Eugene says: "I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen but God will protect you." Do not touch any food, don't drink anything, as usual come back before fifteen minutes" (60).

Papa's effort according to Kambili to convert his father prove abortive. Papa Nnukwu had told Umunna how "Papa had offered to build him a house, buy him a car and hire a driver as long as he is converted and throw away the chi in the shrine" (62). Papa's discrimination reached the extent that Papa Nnukwu has never stepped in his magnificent house. Kambili says: ". . . Because when Papa had decreed that heathens were not allowed in his compound, he had not made an exception for his father" (62). Though Eugene is a religious fanatic, he still loves the family and ensures that his children gets the best education. Kambili will always emphasize

how she loves the sip which Papa calls "love bisip." ". . . because you share the little things you love with the people you love, have a love sip" (8).

*Purple Hibiscus* is a portrait of the political situation in the country. It exposes the corruption in the government, the social injustice, intimidation, dictatorship that mark Nigerian politics. Adichie voices her anger on the current state of affairs in Nigeria but perhaps more generally in post-colonial Africa. She attacks the tradition of revolving door dictatorship over the years. She shows anger and frustration at the way African politicians are failing the people, failing especially to provide them with the barest of necessities, education, electricity, running water, health care etc. The novel offers a moving and nuanced exploration of ongoing, tension between the forces of oppression, intimidation and the irrepressible human desire to be free.

The arrest of Ade Coker, according to Kambili, was reported by his wife Yewande Coker: "They have taken him! They have taken -him! They have taken him! (37). He published a story, "How the head of state and his wife had paid people to transport heroin abroad, a story that questioned the execution of three men and who the real drug barons were" (38). It depicts a nation like Nigerian dictators who intimidate and unleash unnecessary anger on the press. Kambili says: "I imagined Ade Coker being pulled out of his car, being squashed into another car, perhaps a black station wagon filled with soldiers, their guns hanging out of the windows" (38).

The government was not comfortable with the truthful publication of *The Standard*. To them, the editor Ade Coker had been giving them troubles. They murdered him with a letter bomb from the Head of State. This represents a true story of Dele Giwa, a journalist, with *News watch* magazine who was murdered because of his truthfulness during Ibrahim Babangida's regime. Adichie shows a country where honest, truthful and faithful people are eliminated to cover the evils of government. Kambili narrates what his father told them about the military. How coup always began, a vicious circle. He says:

The military men would always overthrow one another because they are power drunk . . . The politicians were corrupt and *The Standard* had written many stories about the cabinet ministers who stashed money in foreign bank accounts, money meant for paying teachers' salaries and building roads , . - what we need was renewed democracy." (25)

**Intimidation** characterized the style of the military. Aunty Ifeoma was fired from her post because of her outspoken views on the current ways of the unelected government that called themselves military. The government had suspected Aunty Ifeoma as among the lecturers that supported the riot by the students. The military men visited Aunty Ifeoma's residence for

search. According to Kambili, "They overturned all the boxes and suitcases in Auntie Ifeoma's room, but they did not rummage through the contents. They scattered, but they did not search" (226).

Corruption and insensitively made the government ignore the poor masses, even the students were not left out, the lecturers were not paid. The sole administrator of the students has not provided basic amenities for the students which has caused them to riot. The students, according to the novelist, have demonstrated thus: "Sole administrator must go. He doesn't wear pant oh! Head of state must go. He doesn't wear pant oh! Where is running water? Where is light? Where is petrol?" (226).

Corruption, greed and intimidation made the soldiers to destroy the factory of Papa, says Kambili. They made a false allegation against him all in attempt to punish him because of his publication and turning down the bribe offered him. Kambili narrates how her father felt:

... He was under so much pressure soldiers had gone to one of his factories carrying dead rats in a carton, and then closed the factory down saying the rats had been found there and could spread disease through the wafers and biscuits (204).

Adichie highlighted the incessant strikes by university staff for nonpayment of salaries by the corrupt and insensitive government. When a student visited Auntie Ifeoma, she said: Nobody knew corruption has become part of the society. It has gained roots in the system of the nation. Bribery has become an everyday occurrence the rising prices in market, the close down of media houses, the loss of jobs, etc., have become the order of the day. Kambili accounts how the driver gave the policeman money for the car not to be searched, the policeman smiled, gave a mock salute and wave them through. The narrator says:

Kevin would not have done that if Papa had been in the car. When policemen or soldiers stopped Papa, he spent so much time showing them all his car papers, letting them search his car, anything but bribe them to let him pass, he cannot be part of what we fight, he often told us. (111)

The novelist frowns at the way bribery had taken over our policemen, this day they shoot at people because of money (twenty naira). They can let go people with hard drugs because of money. They can allow armed-robbery pass all because of little money given to them. Adichie is not happy with the behavior of the Nigerian police and calls for a change.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, the effects of colonialism manifested in the character of Eugene which Aunty Ifeoma always complained. The colonial masters influenced and subjected us to speaking their own language. Kambili recounts: "He did not like us to speak Igbo in public, we had to sound civilized in public, we had to speak English" (13). Kambili was not even happy with his father (Eugene) who praised the "new British priest" for making changes in the parish. Quoting Papa she says, "Father Benedict had changed things in the parish such as insisting that the Credo and Kyrie be recited in Latin, Igbo not acceptable" (4). As the head of the family, Mr. Eugene is despotic and uncompromising.

Kambili was surprised when Amaka her cousin refused to be confirmed with an English name despite the plea from her mother "What the church is saying is that only an English name will make confirmation valid" (266). Aunty Ifeoma says, but Amaka stubbornly replies "Ekwerom" (266).

Adichie allows her character depth by showing other consequences of enforced "innocence" and at times Kambili's naivety spills into self-righteousness. When the girls at school call her a backyard snob, they are only half-wrong because she always focuses her mind on what to do to please her father which her mates misunderstood as feeling too big:

Chinwe just want you to talk to her first, Ezinne whispered, "you know she started calling you backyard snob because you don't talk to anybody. She said just because your father owns a newspaper and all those factories does not mean you have to feel too big because her father is rich too." "I don't feel too big" . . . may be after school you should stop running off like that and walk with us to the gate. Why do you always run?" "I just like running," I said.... (51)

Although Kambili's piety is learnt from her father, it is her responsibility to change, she must control her own sexuality and accept autonomy in an environment that sees these as problematic. As much as Kambili is stifled by her father, she also relies on his rules to order her life. This prevents her from confronting her own changing body and the responsibility of forming a voice of her own, as her cousins do. This stifling and fear drenched environment shaped Kambili and made her so shy she can barely speak, so timid she does not know the sound of her own laughter.

Emily Whit church in an Internet review stated that *Purple Hibiscus* was narrated in a way that Eugene cannot see that his own household is a microcosm of the regime he opposes, caught between accepting wholesale the values and religion of the whiteman and-justifying his own sense of national pride. He cannot embrace his ancestry, of which his traditionalist father is a

constant reminder, because those were pagan times. Yet, laboring to be more like the white people is unsettling for a man who still sees his place at the head of his tribe.

Whitchurch continued that it would be all too easy for the novel to polarise two views. Africans against their oppressors, father Eugene against Father Amadi, Catholic strictures from the west against traditional tribal codes. Adichie's reflects in her novel, the love and conflict of a family whose patriarch is staunchly Catholic. Values were forged in the adversity of a nation tottering between tyranny and freedom, colonialism and self-worth, order and chaos.

But the narrator was careful to show the grey areas, most powerfully the character of Eugene. He is not just a brutal disciplinarian, he can also be a loving father, Kambili and her brother cherish the "love sips" he allows them from his teacup. At the same, time, Mama's best china is smashed in one of his furies which brought a distinction between religious fanaticism and religious faith, because his action cannot be attributed to Catholicism rather to his myopic interpretation of the Bible. Throwing his missal in such a sacrilegious way matters because his action has many consequences which he could not realize. He can be called a religious zealot scalding his children's feet with boiling water to show them what happens when they walk in sin. Yet he also believes in a "renewed democracy" for Nigeria and opposes the corruption of the military government, using his paper *The Standard* as mouthpiece for dissent. Auntie Ifeoma herself admits: "It is the only paper that tells the truth" (136).

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, the researchers tried to highlight the novelists' efforts to expose the problems of leadership in Africa. Thus, the novelists view which concern the moral sterility, inefficiency, exploitation, deception, sectionalism, oppression, dictatorial tendencies, etc. which characterize the leadership of post-independence African states, with special reference to military leadership.

The novelists seem to advocate for an egalitarian/communal relationship between the leaders and the led whether at the family, town, state or federal level. They endorse a government in which the leaders render selfless and patriotic services for the common good of all.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, the novelist portrays and condemns some of the problems in the leadership dispositions of individuals both at the family and state level. The novel exposes and condemns cruelty and insensitivity at the family level and also casts a skeptical look on the

ability of the new national leaders to manage and maintain the political and economic progress of their states.

In *Anthills of She Savannah*, Achebe shows that dictatorship militates against peace and development in a given country. The novelists also condemn tyranny and oppression, sycophancy and the misinformation of the masses. The two novels therefore, presented devastating pictures of life of terror, brutal torture of subordinates, cruelty, backwardness in dictatorial states and their attendant consequences.

Ultimately, the novelists have clear awareness of the need for an overhauling of African leadership patterns, hence concerted efforts should be made to solve Africa's problems of leadership.

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