

Chapter One

Chapter One Introduction

1.0 Introduction

It is stated by Ladele (2009) that colonialism and its after-effects pervade the male-dominated literary tradition in Africa. Within the complexities of these realities, it may be said that African woman are doubly colonized, by Western colonialism and African patriarchy. Imprisoned then, by the authoritative phalluses which define her daily experiences and which seek to negate the authentic image of the African woman.

In literary criticism, whenever African literature is mentioned, African male writers as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa thiongo, Camara Laye and others come to mind. These writers have been known for their masterpieces and novels that express African culture. The masterpieces respectively include; *Things Fall Apart*, *Weep not Child*, *The African Child*.

However, although African female writers have written several works, they are hardly known by most readers; since they are rarely given attention by critics. Kolawole (1997) contends that most male writers in the early phase of African literature encouraged the marginalization of women. Chukukere (1995) confirms that the ideal female character created by male writers often acts within the framework

of her traditional roles as wife and mother. Fonchingong (2006) supports this notion by saying that social values are such strong that the respect and love which a woman earns is relative to her degree of adaptation to these roles; examples abound.

As writers, therefore, African women are compelled to negotiate new sites in which they can articulate more viable and acceptable self-images. Interestingly, there are some brilliant African women writers including; Bessie Head, Buchi Emecheta, Mariam Ba, and Flora Nwapa. In their works, they have expressed and addressed issues and ideas of no less importance than those of their male counterparts. For example, Mariama Ba, was a Senegalese female writer who wrote, has contributed high quality novels, including *“So Long a Letter”* (1980) in which she projects the classical statement of the female condition in Africa. Bessie Head, born in South Africa in 1937, is one of the most prominent African woman writers. She wrote several novels and short stories. Buchi Emecheta is the best known Nigerian female writer, who emerged in postcolonial Africa.

The most renowned contemporary African woman writer almost devoted her works to the idea of empowerment of women and other marginalized sections of the society, is Flora Nwapa. She is the first African woman writer to publish her fiction in English. She is regarded as a pioneer among her counterparts with the publication of her first

novel, *Efuru* in 1966. Her writings truly depict the society within the traditional and social contexts, a society that inclined to devalue women and question their feminine attributes and confine their role in life to bearing children.

Nwapa focuses on things that matter and stick to showing them realistically. Her novels are rooted in humanitarian themes that deal with issues of gender bias, marriage, motherhood, barrenness, polygamy, social injustice and sexual exploitation. Through her novels she expresses her deep concern about the agonies of women. While trying to register her disgust at male chauvinism and the oppressive patriarchal system, she keeps reminding women that the social condition of a society and its wrong nations can be gauged by the standing status of its women. She unceasingly encourages women to aim high by educating themselves, underlining her belief that education, economic independence, and self assertiveness are the important steps towards liberation since there is a strong correlation between women's education and their overall progress including their economic development.

Nwapa's selected works for this study are: *Efuru* (1966), *One is Enough* (1981), and *Women are Different* (1986). The importance of these works stem from the fact that they direct the readers to a new historicism and cultural critique. In them, Nwapa has attempted to depict a variety of African historical and social experiences. Nwapa's intention

is to raise the awareness of women by depicting the reality of their situation in a realistic manner. She has tried to reflect and raise African women's voices through her novels, hoping that following this way she might underline women's their issues, dilemma and concerns. The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to investigate, explore, and authenticate the projection of African women's issues in Flora Nwapa's novels.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

African women are believed to have experienced hardships that have affected their lives in different ways. They are oppressed, suppressed, and considered as inferior to men, and can be looked down as second-class citizens. They are less education and have no equal opportunities in work. Hence little attention is paid to their stories and novels by male writers, critics and researchers. This fact is confirmed by Ladele (2009) who believes that in African literature today, including that of Nigeria, there seems to be an identity crisis for women as one perceives a disjuncture between the typical portrayals of women especially in male authored literatures. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is stated to investigate, explore, and authenticate the projection of African women's issues in Flora Nwapa's novels.

1.2 Research Questions

African women have lived within a dominant male culture that oppresses and devalues them. There has been disjuncture between the lived experiences and the oppressive identities foisted upon women by dominant male cultures. To investigate this problem further, the research

raises some crucial questions whose answers will, hopefully, provide a valuable and brilliant insight into the issues of African women's projections in Flora Nwapa's novels. They can be summarized in the following queries:

1. In what way does Nwapa interrogate the perceived oppressive identities of African women in her novels?
2. What are the African women's issues that have been addressed by Flora Nwapa?
3. To what extent has the projection of Nwapa's women issues transform social thinking towards women?
4. How do the characters in Nwapa's novels voice their ideas and call for women's emancipation?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of this study are:

1. Explore the issues addressed by Nwapa in her novels.
2. Highlight the ways Nwapa projects and introduces her characters to raise the issues of African woman's sufferings and pains.
3. Reveal some women's issues as intended by Nwapa, and suggest possible implications.
4. Underline Nwapa's call for women's freedom and social change.

1.4 Significance of the Research

5. The significance of this research stems from the fact that it reveals the issues of the African women in different aspects of their life; their community status, work opportunities, their schooling and role as householders. In addition, the research attempts to explore the African women's issues that have been dealt with by Nwapa will, and assess the literary and intellectual standing of African literature.
6. It is believed that focusing on female characters will lead to the enlightenment of the African society as a whole. Investigating African women's past will assist to grasp the present and predict the future. It is also believed that the Projection of Postcolonial Women's Issues in Flora Nwapa's Novels will contribute to the spread knowledge about African English literature and consolidate its place worldwide.

1.5 Methodology of the Research

In this research, the descriptive qualitative method is followed. The study is limited to the analysis of Flora Nwapa's three novels: *Efura* (1966), *One is Enough* (1981) and *Women are Different* (1986). Therefore, Nwapa's novels are classified and discussed after in-depth reading.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0

This chapter attempts to explore the theoretical framework and review the related previous studies. The theoretical framework is concerned with the broad ideas and theories of African feminism that provide the basis for the study; for African women's works cannot be investigated or criticized without approaching feminism. The previous studies attempt to provide a thorough review of what has been written about Flora Nwapa's literary contribution in general, and her selected novels, the basis of this research.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The importance of women's literature is fairly recent issue. In the West, several waves of feminist criticisms have been investigated. These criticisms have contributed to the formation of theories about women's literature that may well be considered as the basis for the appreciation and understanding of that literature.

Like the rest of the women of the globe, the African countries have had their own women's movements that are concerned with various issues relating to the situation of women in the continent. Indeed, the concept of feminism in Africa has generated debates on these issues, and

many scholars of varying background have been involved in them. Several attempts have been made to expound these issues.

2.1.1 Western Feminism in African Context

The struggle to locate feminist theory within the context of African women's past, present, and future realities has forced feminists from all corners of the globe to engage in a stimulating and productive examination of the horizons of feminist practice. This locational dialogue contains analogies to the global standards and local values debate in woman rights discourse.

American feminist paradigms tend to emphasize political and socio-historical experience, while French feminism often deconstructs power hierarchies and the societal construction of gender. As stated by Jardine (1985), these American feminists theorize woman as sexual identity, while the French mediate woman as process. So framed, Western theorists are viewed with skepticism or contempt by many African diasporic scholars and are often dismissed as privileged and bourgeois. Western feminists are thought to focus on meanings at the expense of doings, and their refusal to engage in activism in favor of utopian theorizing renders these theorists superfluous to women worldwide.

African women tend to associate Western feminism with two undesirable faces: associating it with radicalism, according to which men are hated, marriage and motherhood are rejected, and lesbianism is favored; and, under the influence of Western feminism, the tendency of Africans to regard the state of African women as similar to the state of colonization and imperialism. Arndt (2000) believes that Western feminism cannot and will not look beyond Western societies, and therefore, African women will be out of the picture.

Generally, African women tend to distance themselves from the term feminism because Western feminism is much centered on sexual inequality. In fact, African women, who are also concerned with sexual inequality, claim that feminism should be associated with more than the sexual issues. Gyimah (2003) believes that African women have to modify the term to capture their own issues and concerns.

On the other hand, the Western, utopian formulation of a homogenous and unified sisterhood has been criticized because it does not take into account the socio-structural inequalities of women. Without addressing these differentials, the search for a formal theoretical standard of equality will not improve women's lives.

Critics contend that most Western conceptualizations of feminism are irrelevant in a broader context as they do not acknowledge the social,

economic, and cultural disadvantages suffered by women in non-Western societies, specifically in Africa.

Given these critiques, it is not without reason that many noted writers and gender scholars in the African subcontinent reject feminist formulations that are denominated as "western."; for some African women, it is concerned with the West. The Nigerian writer, Ifi Amadiume (1992) rejects feminism and condemns white feminists for engaging in a "victim imperialism" that exploits the experiences of black women to promote their anti-discrimination agenda, which is solely gender-based.

African feminists rebuke Western feminists for not addressing the impact of colonialism on the lives of women in Africa. One common theme articulated in the black diaspora/north-south feminist debates is that black women are victims of "triple oppression"- oppression that conflates gender, race and class.

Indeed, feminism is often viewed with skepticism if not complete rejection in Africa, even by noted gender scholars. The Africans have established a cautious relationship with feminist theoretical developments worldwide, and a chorus of black voices has emerged to offer a response to Western, primarily white, feminism. These voices are

in effect "indigenizing" feminist theories and are reorienting them to accommodate country-, culture-, and class-specific gender issues.

With regard to the cultural critique, Ifi (1992) questions the suitability of transposing Western critiques of patriarchy onto non-Western societies. This exposition rejects what many African women perceive to be the non-acceptance of African traditions by western feminists whose dialectic is stereotypically understood as being based upon the fundamental rejection of marriage and motherhood. Africans fear, not irrationally, that feminism could interfere in a disruptive and culturally insensitive manner with existing societal relationships, including those associated with maternal roles.

The cultural critique identifies motherhood as vital to all black women and as the foundational ideology of many African women. Motherhood, so often conceived by Western feminists as a means of confining women within a patriarchal-constructed hierarchy, has been a primary self-description invoked by African women. This Mother Africa ideal stands in contrast to the Western feminist view of motherhood as a condition of passivity and confinement. The identities of many white middle-class feminists are framed by their liberation from the family and domesticity, and, consequently, Western feminists frequently express

impatience with what they perceive as the collaboration of third world women in their own oppression.

African women have achieved some of their greatest moments of solidarity and political "triumphs" in their roles as mothers. Women in South Africa, for example, were catalyzed to join the anti-apartheid struggle as mothers protecting their children and their homes. South African mothers challenged the scourge of apartheid as its effects invaded too deeply into their private spheres of influence. Zillah (2004) noted that these women struggled to liberate themselves from imperialist oppression that was manifested by extreme poverty, disease, and genocide, all of which were of no concern to women in the West.

Within the global feminist community, individuals can not be identified as merely feminists. Consequently, the term "feminist" no longer provides a meaningful context unless it is preceded by a modifying adjective; such as "white heterosexual," or "black"- "lesbian". Hence the question "How do African feminists identify and place themselves when many have chosen to avoid the "feminist" label altogether?" is frequently raised.

2.1.2 African Feminisms

In African context, the term 'feminism' is used in its plural (feminisms) to imply many meanings and connotations. Therefore, it is not possible to refer to it as a single African feminism. A number of African feminism terminologies are to be provided. They include Molar's Ogundipe- Leslie's *stiwanism* (1994), Catherine Acholonu's *motherism* (1986), Obioma Nnaemeka's *negofeminism* (2003), in addition to Mary Kolawole's and Chikwenye Ogunyemi's versions of *womanism* (1985).

To avoid confusion, some African women have developed their own emancipatory strategies by introducing different terms that will suit their own concepts. Some of them have amended the definition of Western feminism to make it relevant to African women's movements by deconstructing the concept. They suggested five terms to describe African women movements and struggles: swomanism, stiwanism, motherism, nego-feminism, and African feminism.

Let us begin with the first term, "womanism", within a hierarchy of nomenclature, the most prominent is African-American Alice Walker's (1983) vision of black feminism. Walker has explained that she did not

choose the term "womanism" to narrow or criticize existing terms, but rather because she disliked being forced to add a color in order to become visible, as in *black feminist*. In contrast, she believed that "womanism gives us a word of our own." adding "Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender".

Through this perspective of 'womanism', Walker addressed many related issues; among them lesbian love, which is the point of departure for African women. The fundamental idea is that African women love having children and getting married; and hence their rejection of lesbianism.

In disagreement with Walker, Ogunyemi (1996, 133) thought that "It is necessary to reiterate that women praxis in Africa has never totally identified with all the original Walkerian concepts. An important point of departure is the African to have children...African...silence or intolerance of lesbianism".

The term was later modified by Ogunyemi (1996, 114) to mean everyday life of women in Africa: "Since feminism and African-American womanism overlook African peculiarities, there is a need to define African womanism". It is obviously that Walker has used the term to refer to for black women in America since white feminism ignored race and class, while Ogunyemi has used it for Africans with the ultimate

goal of uniting the blacks everywhere, which, in turn, encompasses issues such as 'sexism', 'imperialism', and 'racism'.

Kohrs-Amissah believes that African womanism is based on African context and it grips all the issues that African feminists addressed and beyond. In an interview with Suzan, Ogunyemi (2000, 714) says, "When I was thinking about womanism, I was thinking about those areas that are relevant to Africans but not blacks in America – issues like extreme poverty and in – law problems, older women oppressing younger women, women oppressing their co-wives, or men oppressing their wives. Religious fundamentalism is another African problem".

Another configuration of "womanism" is Clenora (1993) who is pioneering "Africana womanism" paradigm. This paradigm is a family-centered concept created for women of African descent rather than the traditional female-centered construct associated with women's movements in general. According to Hudson-Weems, black women by their historical and cultural realities are not feminists, and women are not feminists simply because they are concerned with gender issues.

Moreover, Mary E. (1997) conceived of the concept of "womanism" as an ideology that she defines as the totality of feminine self-expression, self-retrieval, and self-assertion in positive cultural ways. The

delineation of a uniquely African theory of feminism is, she asserts, consistent with the role of self-naming in African societies.

The second term introduced to account for African feminism is Stiwa(nism). It is a name that has drawn on the branch of the taxonomic lexicon. It was proposed by Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) as an alternative concept for which she coined a completely new term; the acronym stands for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa to oppose the shortcomings of Western feminism and to challenge the African patriarchy. In her opinion, this term circumvents the divisive discourse associated with the issue of feminism in Africa and allows a more focused and realistic discussion of the needs of African women today.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1994, 1) says: "... what we want in Africa is social transformation. It is not about warring with men, the reversal of role, or doing to men whatever women think that men have been doing for centuries, but it is trying to build a harmonious society. The transformation of African society is the responsibility of both men and women and it is also in their interest... The word "feminism" itself seems to be a kind of red rag to the bull of African men. ... Some who are genuinely concerned with ameliorating women's lives sometimes feel embarrassed to be described as 'feminist' unless they are particularly strong in character".

While Ogundipe-Leslie believes the term (Stiwa) will free African women from being ‘imitators of Western feminism, Kohrs-Amissah (2002) states that the term is critical to African feminism; and that there is a lack to the function of it in the African texts.

Contrary to Kohrs-Amissah, Lesile (1994) justifies the possibility of using stiwanism by clarifying a number of points that seem to be relevant to the African texts: that it needs not be in opposition to men. Women need not neglect their biological roles for African women idealize motherhood and claim it to be an important point of a strength, that has a special manifestation in Africa. Lesile believe that the total configuration of the women’s condition should be addressed; rather than being obsessed with sexual issues, certain aspects of women’s reproductive rights take priority over others. She contends that the women’s condition in Africa needs to be addressed in the context of the total production and reproduction of their society involving men and children. She adds that any women’s ideology has to be developed within the context of race and class struggles which bedevil the contemporary Africa.

The third term, theorized by Acholonu (1995), is “motherism”. It is used to promote motherhood as a source of empowerment for women. Acholonu (1995;12) is of the opinion that,

Afrocentric feminist theory must be anchored on the matrix of motherhood which is central to African metaphysics and has been the basis of the survival and unity of the black race through the ages. Whatever Africa's role may be in the global perspective, it could never be divorced from her quintessential position as the Mother Continent of humanity Africa's alternative to western feminism is MOTHERISM and Motherism denotes motherhood ...

However, some African female critics, among them Azuah (2005), believe that the term is misleading. It is contended that it is motherhood that the patriarchy has used to oppress women. Some women took a further step by refusing motherhood in order to free themselves.

This is most vocally expressed by Nwapa (1998; 95) who examines, "Are there no women in Africa today who can say: to hell with men and marriage. I do not want to have children".

Motherism cannot account for female experience and empowerment for several reasons: first, some women naturally cannot bear children; second, some women are not fortunate enough to marry at all; third, there are some women who choose not to be mothers; finally, prescribing roles of service and nurturing for the African women as motherists, will lead to the reinforcing of standard gender stereotypes which motherhood is one of them.

The fourth lexical nuance that have been posited by Nnaemeka (2003) is "nego-feminism" a feminism of negotiation-a "no ego" feminism that embodies the shared values that can be used as organizing principles in discussions about Africa.

Many African women, however, remain skeptical of feminist theory regardless of its name, and, often, they are reluctant to name themselves in any way. Definitions belong to the definers-not the defined. Indeed, many of the concepts of African feminism developed by noted female African scholars for example, womanism, Stiwanism, motherism, and nego-feminism are reported to be relatively unknown in Africa.

Although the above-mentioned terms are used to designate various interpretations of how African women are asserting themselves and thought to be forerunners in defining and formulating an indigenous African gender theory, none of their views has gained wide acceptance or popularity as an indigenous African gender theory.

While some African scholars reject feminist theory, one might argue that the response of traditional African women to socio-economic and other deprivations reflects the very essence of feminist ideals. Gender scholars strongly contend that women in traditional African societies have always thought and lived in a feminist way. Women's movements

have a long tradition in Africa, and African feminism is partly rooted in traditional African societies.

Mary E. (1997) remarks that, although many African languages have no synonym for feminism as it is defined in the West, the concept of group action by women, based on common welfare in social, cultural, economic, religious, and political matters is indigenous and familiar to a majority of these women.

Nnaemeka (1998) believes that the majority of African women are not hung up on articulating their feminism. They just do it. She believes that, it is what they do and how they do it that provide the 'framework'; which is not carried to the theater of action as a definitional tool. It is the dynamism of the theater of action with its shifting patterns that makes the feminist spirit/engagement effervescent and exciting but also intractable and difficult to name.

Faced with all kinds of crises, women in Africa have begun organizing their responses to concerns. These concerns are relevant for Africans, including extreme poverty. Women in Africa are fighting for access to land, the right to own property, control of food distribution and living wages. As well, they are endeavoring to have working conditions, improved education and healthcare, and a more active role in the political process.

With their collective responses to the above-mentioned economic, social, and political issues, ordinary community women also are quietly challenging existing conditions of gender inequality. This process is an important part of finding a uniquely African feminist voice. It involves not only the academic effort to reconcile the plurality of feminist theories but also the survival imperative to seek creative solutions to the many problems facing women, their families, their communities, and their states.

Finally, the fifth term which some African women have adapted, and is currently used is 'feminism'. Its proponents regarded women's oppression and suppression world-wide as crucial as that of the African women. They used and modified the term feminism to keep in touch with the global feminism debate. They tend to broaden the term to make it relevant to African women's movement as well as to Third World women. Thus, there are many "feminisms" in the world. Feminisms in plural form is used to denote different cultures, resistances, and strategies of resistance. It is obvious whatever new names that some women may come up with, the concept remains as the same. It has been noted by Nnaemeka (1998:32) that African feminism: "...focuses on what African women are doing with/to patriarchal/cultural structures,

[while keeping in view] the ever-pervasive litany...of what patriarchy is doing to African women”.

After intensive reading in African women's stiwanism, womanism, motherism, and African feminism, it can safely be said that all stood against Western radical feminism and that all seemed to be more concerned with African women issues. Among these issues are: female literary criticism methods, the representation and misrepresentation of female in their societies and in fiction, women's access to the economic means of survival, the female roles in politics and revolution, sexuality, motherhood, house women, women as part of their communities, men's treatment of women, and the treatment of men by women.

Thus, there seem to be no differences over the above issues except for the names. Fortunately, after long struggles in African women's movements, the debate over the name of their movement finally came to an end in 2006 in Accra. All those names of their movements: stiwanism, womanism, motherism have been classified under only one name; that is African feminism.

Imam (2006) tells that there were about 100 African feminist attendants from different parts of the continent, who participated in African Feminist Forum which took place in Accra. The declaration of African feminism was documented by Imam (2006, 4): "We define and

name ourselves publicly as Feminists because we celebrate our feminist identities and politics. We recognize that the work of fighting for women's rights is deeply political, and the process of naming is political, too. Choosing to name ourselves Feminist places us in a clear ideological position. By naming ourselves as Feminists we politicize the struggle for women's rights, we question the legitimacy of the structures that keeps women subjugated, and we develop tools for transformatory analysis as African Feminists. We are African women we live here in Africa and even when we live elsewhere, our focus is on the lives of African women on the continent. Our feminist identity is not qualified with 'Ifs', 'Buts', or 'Howevers'. We are Feminists. Full stop."

To conclude, African feminism is about what African women are doing with or to patriarchal cultural structures. It is also about women fighting for access to land, the right to own property, control of food distribution, living wages and safe working conditions, improved education and healthcare. Furthermore, African feminism is about African women issues. Among these issues are: female literary criticism methods, the representation and misrepresentation of female in their societies and in fiction, women's access to the economic means of survival, the female roles in politics and revolution, sexuality,

motherhood, house women, women as part of their communities, men's treatment of women, and the treatment of men by women.

In this research, it is attempted to investigate these activities in the selected novels of Flora Nwapa. The main objective is to prove that through investigation and analysis, it will ultimately be possible to identify and underline the unique African feminist voices.

2.2. Previous Studies

This part attempts to provide a thorough review of the previous studies and relevant writings on the topic of the research. Therefore, comment on the differences and similarities between writings will be underlined at the end of this chapter.

These studies and writings share a common ground; they are all related to African women's concerns. Foremost among them is Damilola (2011) who explored the negative themes of patriarchy in Nwapa's novel *Efuru*. He followed the liberal feminism theory to show how culture, tradition, and religion played a negative role in the society. He underlined Nwapa's concern with African women's issues from a female perspective and called for reforming the image of African women in a male dominated society along with women's struggle for social emancipation of women in traditional communities.

Another writer who investigated African women's issues in Nwapa's *Efuru* is Boukari (2011). The author highlighted the violence and discriminatory cultural practices and sexual exploitation of women. An interdisciplinary method of documentation from literature, sociology, anthropology, history, and other fields of investigation were followed. The writer stressed Nwapa's depiction of *Efuru* in Igbo society. The static social condition is underlined, in a fictional account and the reality of the present African society is shown. The study is concluded by highlighting the great differences between what women want, and what they are able to accomplish.

Both Damilola (2011) and Boukari (2011) approached Nwapa's novel from the same angle. According to them, the cause of African women suffering is the patriarchal culture that has dominated African societies. Surprisingly, the writers have shown the core of African women's problems, but they have not suggested any solution.

There are some other writers who analyzed Nwapa's works from a feminist point of view, while showing its equivalence. They pointed out the ways that Nwapa followed to emancipate African women and get rid of them from the oppressions they were suffering from.

The equivalent term of feminism's equivalence is womanism. To show whether Nwapa's *Efuru* is a womanist or feminist, Sonkamble

attempted to examine Nwapa and her works by using a womanist approach in order to provide a clear distinction between the two. He concluded that *Efuru* is womanist rather than feminist. He believed that a feminist is a person who contributes to improving the status of women in a patriarchal society, while his/her beliefs and behavior are based on “a feminist attitude or relating to or advocating equal rights for women. On the other hand, a womanist is the one who contributes to the society by helping to create an identity or a woman’s who looks at the world necessarily from woman’s a perspective. Finally, he has concluded that Nwapa idolizes and represents the paramount image in women.

In agreement with Sonkamble, HajitheodorauFrancise (1999) explored the total female experience of African women and the authentic portrayal of identity of woman in African literature. Three novels, three African authors, among them Nwapa, were selected. A number of approaches and schools of thought including, the electrical approach were followed to examine the African woman’s experiences. The novels were analyzed and treated as social realist and African feminist and read from womanist perspectives.

Francise concluded by underlining the fact that female protagonist seemed to achieve transformation not by reshaping patriarchal systems, but through being creative and re-appropriating their identities within

these often antagonistic systems. In other words, the African women can gain a measure of fulfillment of a strong sense of their own individually within an imperfect context. The characters in the novels studied, produce a framework that enables them to be the women they want to be, not the women that the society would like them to be.

Like Sonkamble and HajitheodorauFrancise who approached Nwapa and her works from a womanism perspective, Mary C.H.B. (2012) examined the image of the emerging woman in the selected novels of Nwapa. The author attempted to show how Nwapa tries to promote female awareness of the new African woman versus the traditional norms. Liberal feminism was used by her as a means to collect information, under the conviction that a woman can overcome any kind of complexity in her life and be joyous and contented in her own world of peace and happiness. Nwapa displayed her ability to motivate the African women and inspire and encourage them to overcome their individualism and prove themselves as new African women.

Mears (2009) also approached Nwapa's three novels from feminist perspectives, raising one main question about the writer's choice and discovery in her novels. She stressed that Nwapa's writings were about women's lives, issues, and concerns. She concluded by stating that

Nwapa posits women's desires for change, choice, and acceptance within a society in which they wish to participate fully as human beings – not just wives and mothers.

The women in Nwapa's work are inclined to speak about the need for both collective and individual female identity within their society. Female seemed to be in search of love and respect from the community and acceptance of the choice they make. They become independent, though somewhat aggressive, and self-styled.

Other issues investigated in Nwapa's novels are motherhood and childlessness. Germain (2012) argues that one of the cases of woman's oppression is childlessness. He says that African woman is not economically, politically, or socially respected if she is childless. Analytically, he followed a cultural reading approach to stress the function of motherhood and its impact on the construction of Igbo woman's behavior. He concluded that Nwapa wants to explore her own culture through the tragedy of her heroine and calls for radical transformation of her culture. In addition, he claimed that a woman cannot claim for her femininity unless she experiences the joy of motherhood. Thus, barrenness is an issue of subjectivity and oppression for the woman. He advised that a female in such a situation should receive sympathy and encouragement.

In agreement with Germain (2012), Akujobi (2011) examined motherhood as a discourse in African woman creative writings. He followed the feminism perspective to see whether or not the institution of “motherhood” can entirely empower woman to be visible in vital areas of human endeavors. Moreover, he stressed the spiritual power of women especially mothers. After the publication of *Efuru*, Nwapa came to be considered as a model for African females writers. Akujobi concluded by appraising motherhood as both a concept and an institution.

One of the comprehensive studies on Nwapa's works and reflection of the images of women in African English fiction is Naf (2011). The study is an investigation of selected novels. The author adopted the descriptive method in his analysis of collected data and related issues.

In her characterization of female protagonists, as thought by Naf, Nwapa seems to complicate women's identity which has been delineated by male writers. The female literary tradition which Nwapa initiated is rooted in resistance and protest against the one-dimensional image of mothers, wives or rebellious women.

Naf contended that in all of her novels, Nwapa's main theme is negotiating the position of women in society and how important it is for

her to be financially independent, have a rewarding career, in addition to the questions of marriage and rearing children. Nwapa is inclined to project her female characters as complex and round, with the intention of liberating them from the forces of oppression through their personal commitment to possessing their characters with authenticity and vitality.

Not only have Nwapa's works have been approached from feminism perspectives to account for women emancipation, but also by using myth to solve women's problems. Malpotra (2013) explored Nwapa's use of myth to create an aesthetic atmosphere through which women's issues are highlighted. Malpotra believed that Nwapa combined Western and African literary modes: Western realism and African narration to explore African women's world. He adopted the liberal feminist approach, through which came to the conclusion that Nwapa is inclined to take the readers to the past, the present, the future, of a supernatural world in which it will be possible to create a kind of interaction between the living and the dead. The writer thinks through the use of myths Nwapa structures her own cultural ideals in order to provide a new model of modernity on the basis of which women's issues are discussed.

Contrary to what has been stated by Malpotra (2013) are the views of GordimerNadine (1970). He has classified a number of male and

female African writers' novels into two types: testifiers and creative. Nwapa's whose works are analyzed and compared with those of her counterparts. The choice of Nwapa is based on rating her as a creative writer, especially in view of her depiction of Efuru as a childless woman without uncovering her origins. Efuru's unknown creation is the key to the objective reality of Nwapa's way of writing through which Efuru's is obscured and can hardly be understood. Nadine has used the comparative approach to answer the questions that are raised about the character of Efuru. He concluded that Nwapa is unable to place her characters in the most suitable situation, as has been done by the other African writers; whether males or females. He considers Nwapa as a less qualified writer. In obvious disagreement with Gordimer, Nadine is inclined to label Nwapa as an unqualified or incapable writer.

Chukwukaelo (2007) investigated the language of female novelists, with reference to Nwapa's Efuru. The method he adopted is stylistic discourse analysis. It is concluded by him that Nwapa is inclined to use the simple sentence through which a kind of simplicity and clarity in her presentations of women's issues is achieved. It is contended by the writer that through the simple type of sentence, Nwapa has managed to depict the ills of her society. She has successfully managed to reconstruct African woman's images through the use of language.

Chukwukaelo went on to state that the gender issue is perpetuated and sustained through language. *Efuru* is described through the type of language that can be semantically analyzed and the positive attributes that may be discerned. Efuru makes herself the spokeswoman of the voiceless women through the use of simple and creative language which is used in such way as to check the oppressive tendencies of men who prey on women, and inferring their rights. By good use of simple sentences Nwapa has successfully managed to make her works accessible and more appealing.

Chukwukaelo is in disagreement with Nadine, and Olivia Adaobi (2011), who explored the incorporation of proverbs in Nwapa's *Efuru*, by following the analytical approach in his study. Adaobi claims that Nwapa uses integrated proverbs in her works without undertaking any kind of analysis as her counterparts have done. Thus, he shows how Nwapa used folklore, especially proverbs, in her novels, and concludes by stating that Nwapa used proverbs effectively.

In conclusion, it can safely be said that Nwapa's works have been approached from different angles, including patriarchal culture, motherhood, childlessness, feminism, womanism, myth, and style. Despite the use of different approaches in the above mentioned studies, woman remains as the focal point.

It is believed that the reviewed works have, to a great extent, helped the researcher understand women's issues in Nwapa's work. However, mere understanding cannot suffice for a deeper scholarly research on all African women's issues as depicted by Nwapa in her three selected novels.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three

Methodology of the Research

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology is explained. This will help to understand how the research has been conducted. The methodology comprises the research approach, data collection sources, bases for the selection of Nwapa's three novels, data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.1 Research Philosophy

According to Wellek (1984) there are two kinds of approach in analyzing a literary work. They are the extrinsic approach which relates the literary works to the other subjects such as psychology, society, thought, and biography; and the intrinsic approach that emphasizes the elements of literature itself, such as characters, theme, point of view, plot, and others. In this research, the extrinsic method is used to help provide a suitable basis for feminist analysis of the selected novels that under the study.

Feminism is one of the broad literary criticisms in literature. According to (Joseph, 2003, p.161) feminism is a world-wide ideology and political movement directed at existing power relations between men and women in a patriarchal society. She goes further to assert that feminism is a kind of criticism which is based on the struggle between

women's emancipation and men who hide under the disguise of male supremacy to subjugate women by a system of sex role stereotyping. There are different types of feminism which are: Radical, socialist, cultural, eco-feminism, liberal, conservative and others.

The emergence of a uniquely African formulation of feminism is one of the most energizing developments in feminist theory and discourse in recent history. As African women' confront unprecedented economic and political challenges, they are also questioning, and, in some instances, redefining individual and societal orthodoxies of gender and family roles. This thesis attempts to examine the discourse on African feminism and consider the practical utility of feminist theory in the context of Flora Nwapa's selected novels.

African feminisms, as has been noted by Nnaemeka (1998:32), "...focuses on what African women are doing with/to patriarchal/cultural structures, [while keeping in view] the ever-pervasive litany...of what patriarchy is doing to African women".. African feminism is about women fighting for access to land, the right to own property, control of food distribution, living wages and safe working conditions, improved education and healthcare. Furthermore, African feminism is about African women issues. Among these issues are: female literary criticism methods, the representation and misrepresentation of female in their

societies and in fiction, women's access to the economic means of survival, the female roles in politics and revolution, sexuality, motherhood, house women, women as part of their communities, men's treatment of women, and the treatment of men by women. Regarding these above-mentioned African women's activities, the research investigates them in the selected novels, hoping that through this process it will be possible to underline a unique African feminist voice.

3.2 Research Method Adopted

There is great difference between research methods and research methodology. Adams and et.als (2007: 25) noted that “the first thing to get absolutely clear about is that research method and research methodology are not the same thing! A research method is a way of conducting and implementing research. Research methodology is the science and philosophy behind all research. It goes into the heart of how we know what we know and allows us to understand the very strict constraints placed upon our concept of what knowledge actually is”. The same view is expressed by Kothari, C.R. (2004) who wrote that research methods may be understood as all those methods/techniques that are used for conduction of research; thus, they refer to the methods the researchers use in performing research operations.

While research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher to deal with the research problem along with the logic behind them. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods/techniques but also the methodology. Researchers not only need to know how to develop certain indices or tests, how to calculate the mean, the mode, the median or the standard deviation or chi-square, how to apply particular research techniques, but they also need to know which of these methods or techniques, are relevant and which are not, and what would they mean and indicate and why.

To sum up, there is difference between research methods and research methodology; research methodology has many dimensions and research methods do constitute a part of the research methodology. The scope of research methodology is wider than that of research methods.

A qualitative descriptive research design has been adopted to explore the socio-cultural perceptions of African women.

Sandelowski (2000: 334) stresses that “Qualitative descriptive studies have as their own goal a comprehensive summary of events in the everyday terms of those events. Researchers conducting qualitative

descriptive studies stay close to their data and to the surface of words and events. Qualitative descriptive designs typically are an eclectic but reasonable combination of sampling, and data collection, analysis, and representation techniques. Qualitative descriptive study is the method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired.”

The qualitative descriptive approach has been adopted because not much information has been documented in the area of study. This suggests that the researcher can not rely much on the work of others but has to explore the topic. This approach can best aid the researcher to do in-depth reading and gain rich information and deeper understanding of the topic of the research.

Noble (2014: 2) defined qualitative descriptive research as, "...a generic term that refers to a group of methods, and ways of collecting and analyzing data that are interpretative or explanatory in nature and focus on meaning".

How is qualitative descriptive data analyzed? Nobel (2014) says that despite the variety of qualitative analysis methods, there are common sets of principles for narrative data. It consists of reading the narrative story, immersing oneself within the data, developing a data code system, linking codes to form themes or concepts, and identifying recurring and significant themes.

It has also been pointed out in EAR handbook that qualitative descriptive data analysis (QDA) is the process of turning written data such as narrative stories, interview and field notes into findings. There are no formulas, recipes or rules for this process. What actually need are skills, knowledge, experience, insight and a willingness to keep learning and working at it. No matter what method of analysis and interpretation is used, one's aim should always be to produce good quality findings. Thus, the qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. Research in such a situation is a function of the researcher's insights and impressions.

3.3 Research Method Adopted: Base of Selection

In this research the qualitative descriptive method has been employed to serve the set objectives of it; to identify African women's issues in Flora Nwapa's fiction. It is believed that this method is suitable because the results are presented in a descriptive manner. Data has been gathered from different sources, consisting of primary and secondary references. The research is limited to the selected novels of Flora Nwapa.

The first step in this study lays down the theoretical framework. To do this, reference has been made to different sources that are related to the topic. Second, a review of previous studies in a synthesized manner has been done. Third is identification and description of the background

of the novels that are under study, which preceded an in-depth reading of them. Finally, the novels are analyzed with the main focus on African feminism.

3.4 Data Collection Sources

Data have been collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the three selected novels. The secondary sources include literary criticism references, literary forums, and the Internet.

3.5 Bases for the Selection

Flora Nwapa is best known for being the first African woman writer to publish her fiction in English. She is reckoned as a pioneer among African women writers after the publication of her first novel, *Efuru* in 1966. In addition, she wrote several other novels and short stories. In all her novels she addresses the problems encountered by women: financial independence, rewarding career, marriage, childless women, and the rearing of children by women without the help of men.

Flora Nwapa has been chosen for this study because she is considered to be the first female author who has attempted to portray African women's cultural and social conditions in fiction. She has been interviewed by many literary magazines and journals and as well has published reviews of her own works.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

In collecting data for this research, there have been several steps of data collection procedure. Taylor-Powel (2003) divided qualitative descriptive narrative data analysis into five steps. The first step is getting to know one's data; this means one reads and re-reads the text. The second step is focusing the analysis: identifying key questions that one wants to answer. The third step is categorizing information i.e., coding information by identifying themes or pattern and organizing them into coherent categories. The fourth step is identifying patterns and connections within and between categories. The fifth step is interpretation-brining it all together which means to form themes and connection to explain one's findings.

In accordance with Taylor-Powel (2003) method, the research has followed 6 steps in analyzing the selected novels. The first step is reading the novels. What researcher did first was that he quickly browsed through the three selected novels as a whole. Then he made notes about his first impression. After that he read the novels again, one by one. Finally, he read the novels carefully, line by line.

The second step is labeling relevant pieces. Depending on the research questions and objectives addressed in the first chapter, the researcher labeled relevant words, phrases, sentences, and opinions that

were repeated in several places, something that surprised the researcher, something that was explicitly stated, what was read previously in literature review, and something that reminded the researcher of a theory or a concept that has something to do with women.

The third step was devoted to the research method. In this step it was decided what codes were the most important and created categories by bringing several codes together. Then the researcher went through all the codes created in step 2, read with a pen in hand and created new code, by combining two or more codes. Many of the initial in step 2 codes were now dropped. However, the codes that were thought important were kept and grouped together to create suitable categories: patriarchy, marriage, infertility, polygamy, women education, and financial independence of women,

The fourth step was labeling the categories. The researcher labeled the categories and decided which were the most relevant and how they can be connected to each other. The categories and the connections were regarded as the main results of the study; it was new knowledge about the world from the perspectives of the characters in the novels under the study.

The fifth step is hierarchy, in which the set categories were prioritize, and orderly arranged according to the degree of importance.

The six and final step was writing the results or findings. The categories were described and the connection between them underlined. In the discussion, interpretations and the results were explained.

3.7 Data analysis

After collection, the data were analyzed according to the following steps: questions were formulated and raised; answers were provided; then data analysis followed. The last step of data analysis led to conclusions and findings.

The thesis has systematically been organized by applying the following steps: stating the nature of the problem to be studied, reviewing related literature to understand how others have approached or dealt with the problem, adopting a research method, collecting data in an organized manner and analyzing them in a way suitable to the problem, and finally making conclusions, findings and recommendations.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is the bulk of the study; therefore, it contains thorough analysis and discussion of the three selected novels. The chapter is of two parts; the first provides synopses of each novel to the readers snapshot about the novels under study. Part two deals with the African women's issues that have been addressed by Nwapa.

4.1 Synopses

4.1.1 Efuru

Efuru (1966) is both the title of the novel and the name of the heroine, and it is Nwapa's first novel. Efuru is a young woman in post-colonial Nigeria. She is a beautiful and young woman who always seems to be unfortunate in her relations with men. Her sole wish is to get married and become mother and a business woman. In view of her strong character, she has become a respectable person in her village and manages to become a successful trader. Despite the fact that she is unmarried and has no children in a society where the status of women is based on marriage and children, through her will and determination, she manages to become a noted young woman and continues to lead a life on her own and win the admiration of both males and females in her village.

The novel addresses several issues that concern the African women; including marriage to unfaithful polygamous husbands, the failure to bear children, oppression by their own sex, and financial independence.

After a few years, Efuru has a child, and at the same time her husband is repeatedly absent from home. When the child become ill and dies, Adizua, the father, cannot be found for the funeral. It is said that he has married another woman. Efuru leaves Adizua's house and goes to her father. Soon after, a suitor, Eneberi, appears, and the couple married and have a blissful life. Unfortunately, Eneberi disappears in the same upsetting way and does not attend the funeral of Efuru's father. Efuru is left alone, with no children, husband or family.

Overcoming her sorrows, through her strong will, Efuru manages to become successful woman, while returning her place as respectable woman in her society. She aids the sick and poor and returns the good favors of those who were good and kind to her in her different times.

Though she continues to love both men she has married, Efuru does not forget about her own rights. All though she has born only one child, willingly she wants her second husband to a second wife in order that he can have more children. However, in the end, and for the sake of self-dignity, she leaves her husband when he abandons her, and proves that she is capable of caring for herself and lead a life on her own.

Children are central to the lives of villagers. When Efuru is unable to bear children, she is devastated. However, she shows that, unlike many women in her community, she can survive without children and still find strength in her business and her religious faith.

Efuru, realizing that she can not depend on her husband, turns to her faith in the goddess of the lake, Uhamiri, to set an example of how through her independence, she can survive and lead successful life. Efuru is successful, happy, and free from her oppressive and abusive first husband, Adizua, and from her equally disappointing second husband Gilbert. Both men symbolize Colonial power, Adizua by his abuse of her after profiting from marrying her without paying a dowry, and Gilbert, by his Christian name and ideals after having attended a Colonial school.

4.1.2 One is Enough

One is Enough (1981) is a novel which tells the story of a woman's struggle to lead a life on her own. After six years of happy marriage, though without children, Amaka discovers that her husband plans to marry another woman who has already born him two sons in secrecy. As a result, rather than staying with her unfaithful husband, leaves him to Lagos and starts a new life. To become a successful business woman in Lagos, she gets involved in an affair with a Catholic priest and bears twin children. In the end, she has to decide whether to continue living alone and stand the society's criticism, or have another

man as husband and be respectable, or be content with one husband, as the title of the novel implies.

At the beginning of the novel, Amaka is shown as a woman who is obsessed with barrenness; later on, in the middle of the novel, she is presented as self-assertive woman. Nwapa wants to analogise a woman in her desperate condition and how she can overcome all the difficulties she has been through.

In fact, the novel is an African woman's story of loss, struggle, and fulfillment. Amaka, the heroine, wishes to lead a normal life like Nigerian marriage woman and have children. But fate has driven her into a different course and against a new socio-economic and cultural background in modern Nigeria.

In the end, Amaka is married to Obiora; and she remains childless for the six years at the end of which her marriage comes to an end. She comes to learn that she is a barren women, hence her harasses by her mother in-law, which leads her to leave her husband's house and moves to Lagos.

4.1.3 Women are Different

In *Women are Different*, Nwapa attempts out to enlighten readers on the situation of Nigerian women from the 1940's to the 1970's- after the end of the Biafran war. The novel tells the moving story of a group of Nigerian women, from their schooldays together through the trials and

tribulations of their adult lives. The readers of their stories one can be informed about the universal problems that faced women everywhere: their struggle for financial independence and endeavours to have rewarding career, and the need of working women to bring up children, often without a man.

In this novel, Nwapa raises various issues that concerned African women such as: arranged marriages, infertility, child marriages, poverty, the importance of girl-child education, prostitution, spinsterhood and betrayed love. She deals with these issues through her portrayal of the lives of Dora, Rose, Agnes and Comfort. The girls' lives do not end up the way they have wished. Nonetheless, they lead successful lives, and have grown into strong-willed women at the end of the novel.

To sum up, the synopsis has provided a general overview or a summary of the three selected novels, which will be studied and analyzed in details.

4. 2 African Women's Issues in Nwapa's Three Novels

4.2.0 Introduction

There was growing awareness of the fact that African female characters were projected through the stereotyped way, and that a negative image was given by most male writers. When Nwapa, emerged as an African female writer, she was keen portray a truthful image of women. Her

commitment to female realistic portrayal underlines the vital role in uncovering the complexities of African women's problems. She endeavoured to depict those women whose husbands have abandoned and their abused by men generally, and how women reacted to all these forces.

4.2.1 Patriarchy

Sultana (2010) contends that in the modern world where women go ahead by their merit, patriarchy creates obstacles to enhancement of women's place and social standing. Patriarchy is defined as a social system in which men have all the power, also a social system in which the oldest man rules his family and passes power and possessions on his owns. Also, patriarchy is defined as a social system in which the male is head of the household, having authority over women and children. The term also refers to a system of government by males, and to the dominance of men in social or cultural systems. Thus patriarchy is conceived of in different ways. Bhasin (2006:3) says, "the word 'patriarchy' literally means the rule of the father or the '*patriarch*', and originally it was used to describe a specific type of 'male-dominated family' – the large household of the *patriarch* which included women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic servants are all under the rule of this dominant male. Now it is used more generally "to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept

subordinate in a number of ways”. Sultana (ibid) contends that patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women’s advancement and development. Despite differences in levels of domination the broad principles remain the same, i.e. men are in control. Patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres.

Mitchell (1971:24), on the other hand, uses the term “to refer to kinship systems in which men exchange women”, while Walby (1990:20) defines it as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women”. Lerner (1989:239) stresses that, “patriarchy, in its wider definition, means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that “men hold power in all the important institutions of society”. He believes that “women are deprived of access to such power”. However, this does not imply that “women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources”.

In a wider concept, Jagger and Rosenberg (1984) state that patriarchy describes the institutionalized system of male dominance. So it can be usefully defined as a set of social relations between men and women, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create independence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women.

From the above definitions, it can be said that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Hence the attempt in this section is to analyze patriarchy and women's subordination in the three selected novels.

Nwapa believes that it is necessary to understand the system, which keeps women under male domination and subordination. She tries to unravel its workings in order to achieve women's development in a systematic way.

Nwapa underlines the patriarchal concept of women in traditional African societies. She tries to explain the different ways in which women's oppressions takes place: humiliation, mistreatment, negligence, exploitations and how they are viewed as passive and unproductive members of the society. Contrarily, the writer believes that African women are as powerful and effective in their community as men.

In *Efuru*, Nwapa depicts Efuru as a victim of two failed marriages, because of the patriarchal system. Adizua, her first husband, persuades her to marry him without paying her the dowry. Though he behaves like a lover, he is actually exploiting her, and always inclined to show his manly domination even over his own mother; he silences her and prevents her from enquiring about the dowry; for he considers it as a personal matter. As a man, he has not to be blamed for any wrong doing. "*I have no*

money for the dowry yet. Efuru herself understands this. We agreed to be husband and wife and that is all that matters.”(E, 8).

It is obvious that Adizua uses Efuru merely to satisfy his desires. For when he becomes acquainted with another woman, he abandons Efuru, who can only regret her acceptance of him in the first place.

Further, Nwapa underlines the extent to which the African woman is dominated by man. She is neither allowed to participate in the social activities or have a business of her own without permission from her husband, for she is regarded as a part his property. Therefore, Efuru cannot decide by herself on matters of her trade without her husband's consent. She is reported to say to Ogra's parents: *“A woman has no say in these things.”(E, 39)*

Through men's dialogues about social occupations, Nwapa highlights men's attitude to women. When Adizua's relatives gather in Efuru's house to pay the dowry, one of the men, their spokesman, tries to please and comfort Efuru's father with good speeches of sympathy. However, he expresses refusal of Adizua's marriage in that way and stresses that woman is weak (Adizua's mother) and injustice is done to her, adding that if Adizua's father had been present, he would have prevented his son's act. He ends his speech by saying; *“Adizua's mother was there, but what can a woman do”.* (E, 23)

Moreover, Nwapa shows how woman is always viewed as inferior to man. At the gathering, Efuru is loudly cautioned and reminded that she is a woman and she should not drink as she is standing up in front of them. A man shouted and told her: "*Kneel down, kneel down, you are a woman*" (E, 24).

Efuru is a woman who has suffered from her first husband's negligence and abandonment. Nonetheless, she is seen as patient and enduring. She expresses her feelings as a neglected and useless woman, who neither attracts nor pleases her husband. She wonders why her husband has changed and become so oppressive and aggressive, and what wrong she has done to him to deserve his cruel and unkind treatment. Knowing that she has not offended him before, she asks herself how she could gain him again, wondering whether he has an affair with another woman. She can only speak to a few of her friends and intimates about her suffering, for her social relationships is quite limited. She tells Ajanupu, her friend: "*But Adizua has treated me shabbily. He has treated me the way that only slaves are treated. God in heaven will judge us.*" (E, 58)

Efuru is depicted as an obedient woman who is obliged to keep silent even when she is treated with injustice and inequality. However, Adizua's aggression and oppressive treatment of her obviously indicate that he is no longer interested in her as a wife, especially when he lies to

her about his travel to Ndoni. She realizes that her husband is not telling her the truth; hence her reply, saying: *“Really, Go well and buy things for us.”* (E, 53)

After a period of time, Efuru becomes assured that there is a new woman in his life. She is greatly hurt by the inhuman act which is his refusal to attend the funeral of their only daughter. Naturally, her father can only condemn his betrayal of Efuru by saying, *“But a man whose only child dies and could not come to bury his only child and console his wife must be a very bad man. It showed that he hates his wife.”* (E, 94)

Adizua is portrayed as a representative of the African men many of whom abandon their children and wives to live in other countries. Every woman must be shocked by Adizua’s elopement with such a bad woman. This is stressed by Nwapa through one of the characters, who says: *“She has beauty, wealth and good breeding. Why should any man treat her like that.”* (E, 75) Indeed, Adizua ignores Efuru for no good reason. He is a typical African man of the time, who would ignore his wife and abandon her and unregretfully destroys her life.

Gilbert is Efuru’s second husband who is no better than the first one. He also humiliates her by not consoling her on the death of her father. Not only that but accuses her of adultery. Efuru says to him: *“What could have happened to prevent you from coming to bury my father... I did not think that you could do this to me.”* (E, 206)

Nwapa tries to draw the reader's attention to the attitude of some wives and husbands, underlining the differences. She mentions Ogea's mother, Nwabata, and shows how she advises her husbands, Nwous to repay Efuru's money. But he ignores the advice because she is a woman and tells her that she only intends to stand against his will. He continues to waste his money on invaluable things. But later, he realizes that he is mistaken and as a result he is bankrupt and in severe poverty. He resorts to seek the help of his wife, a woman, who says to him, "*what can a woman do? You say every day. In the end, a woman does something and even then you still look down on women.*" (E, 166)

Here the author underlines women's important roles through their real participation in enhancing and helping their people and their societies. On the other hand, Nwabata is portrayed as a woman who protects the property and wealth of the family, as in the case of the thieves who attempted to rob the house while her husband was asleep. She burst in anger, and says: "*That is the man who is my husband. Woman are nothing, he is my husband, was asleep when thieves came to the house. But I am only a woman. What can a woman do?*" (E, 178) Such an act is considered as one of the responsibilities of man. But woman shoulders the responsibility and the man is not there even for help.

Nwapa rejects the idea of women's inferiority and incapability. She refutes that women are negative or passive individuals in the society, and

refuses patriarchal attitude of men and their claim that they are superior to women at all times.

Nwabata and Ajanupu are projected as women who can deal with difficult situations. For example, they are portrayed as courageous women who play the men's roles at times of need. Ajanupu tells to Efuru and Nwabata that she said to the thieves: *"You thieves who are digging at the back-yard. I am waiting for. When you finish digging, come in I will show you what a woman can do."*(E, 178)

Though Efuru is depicted a childless woman who fails to meet her community's expectations as a mother, she plays important roles that can make up for her deficiency. She is a productive individual in her society. That is to say she is presented as an endlessly helpful person to both men and women. For instance, she helps Nwous, ogea's father. He pays nothing for his treatment, Efuru has done everything and after his recovery, *"Neighbors were equally glad to Nwous looking so healthy. They greet him warmly. They also went to Efuru and thanked her for saving Nwous's life."*(E, 102)

She even gives Nwous money twice despite her knowledge that he cannot settle his debt. Another example is Nnona, the old woman who suffers from a badly wounded leg for many years. Efuru takes care of her and recovers after the operation. Efuru does her best to keep her people healthy and happy. Here are the words of gratefulness from Nnona's

family to her: *“Efuru, thank you very much ... we are very happy that you have helped our mother. You have done what only men are capable of doing and so you have done like a man. We have no words to thank you.”* (E, 132) the oppression is rooted in the social tradition and culture which prevailed and produced a patriarchal mentality. The author stresses that women’s contributions to their society is not to be confined bearing children. Women’s value and usefulness can be shown in different ways as is exemplified by Efuru.

In her novels, Nwapa has attempted to depict women reactions to the patriarchal community. She is inclined to underline the cause of education in her patriarchal society where boys have the priority over girls. For instance, Efuru’s second husband, Gilbert, who is appears to be more educated than his friend Sunday, believes that educating girls is a waste of time and money. He says: *“They get married before the end of their training and the money is wasted”* (E,191) Sunday though agreeing with Gilbert, he has his own philosophy about girl’s education, which is not far from the patriarchal mentality. He points out that it is men’s fault to prevent girls from pursuing their education. Instead of ending up in kitchens, they can be successful educated girls who will be awarded with good jobs and earn good money and help their men or husbands.

Having explained Gilbert and Sunday's attitudes towards girls' education, the author moves on to illustrate how girls' education is conceived of in patriarchal society.

Nwapa underlines the negative attitude towards girls' education. In the patriarchal society, it is thought that educated girls are influenced by Western gender ideas which make them reject their own customs and traditions. Under this influence, it is feared that educated girls will stop helping their husbands in their farms. This is illustrated in a conversation between Omirima and Amede about Omirima's daughter-in-law: "*She went to school and so she thinks she knows everything. She is so lazy... have you ever known a woman, brought up in our town who sleep until the sun is up.*" (E,193,194)

In African culture, a woman who is kept busy with household affairs, and taking care of her husbands and children; can hardly have time to resist the patriarchal ways of life. Her energy and care are exhausted to the full.

The rejection of infertility by African patriarchal society is portrayed as an ideology. Childlessness is against the man's wishes and will. This is made obvious when Gilbert accuses Efuru of adultery. He is simply influenced by his patriarchal society. Sickness of a wife is attributed to the act of committing adultery. Gilbert says to Efuru, "*Efuru, my wife, the*

gods are angry with you, because you are guilty of adultery and unless you confess you will die.”(E,25)

Nwapa argues that the patriarchal society has double standards in its judging of men and women. A man can get away with any unpleasant or unlawful act he may commit; he may not be blamed for being adulterous. He has the right to marry as many women as he likes. On the other hand, a woman cannot do what is done by a man. It is obvious that men always have the upper hand and are always regarded as superior to women.

Not only in *Efuru* but also in *One is Enough* does Nwapa deal with the issue of patriarchal mind-set. In *One is Enough*, the main character Amaka is portrayed as childless woman at the beginning of her life. She is a humiliated and despised wife because of her infertility after six years of marriage. She is abused and oppressed by her mother-in-law and her husband, Obiora. She begs her mother-in-law to forgive her and not throw her out of her house. She apologizes for something out of her control. She hears herself say to her mother-in-law, “*Mother, forgive me... it will not happen again. I should not have replied to what you said. I am sorry, Mother. Please don’t throw me away, mother.*”(O E, 1)

Nonetheless, she is shown no respect by her husband and mother-in-law. The author stresses how a woman may dominate over her own sex in a patriarchal society. For example, Obiora’s mother tells her son what to do. She is proud of having such an authority. She tells to Amaka, “*I have*

waited for six years, and cannot wait for even one day more. Didn't you see how I hushed him up Obiora when he came in to interfere?' He is a stupid son.'”(OE, 13) She considers Amaka as a lair, dishonest, barren and deceptive woman. To add to her insults, she breaks the news that her son has had two sons from another woman. In response to this shocking news, *“Amaka was utterly shocked. She began to tremble. She could no longer control her emotions. She held on to bed, so she did not faint. Obiora has two sons by another woman. And he never told me? Impossible.”(OE, 14)*

The author shows Obiora's real character; he typically stands for the patriarchal husbands. He does not give Amaka any chance to enquire or express her view about whatever that may happens, merely because she is a barren woman. He says to her in an aggressive manner, *“Yes, well, what was I to do? Remain because my wife is barren...”(OIE,1)*

She is hurt and is not considered as an individual who has a right to comment or speak out her view. She has to accept the way her husband acts whatever it is. Nevertheless, Nwapa makes her brave enough to make her voice heard, *“Should I not react, for God's sake! What do you think I am made of wood?””*

Indeed, Amaka blames herself for asking for more. She is a contended woman, who hardly complains about the little money she receives for the family daily expenses, compared to other wives. Obiora

thinks that since she is a childless, Amaka should not be given much money. But the author makes Amaka face him with this fact when she tells him, *“Go and ask other wives and they will tell you how much your colleagues in the same ministry give their wives. But I did not grumble, I never asked for more. Perhaps that was my mistake, not asking for more”*(OE, 19)

Obiora continues to obey his mother and do what she asks him to do, regardless of Amaka and the way she feels. All of a sudden, he tells her that his sons and their mother are coming soon to stay in the house. He tells her, *“I have made my decision and there is no going back. What mother told you will happen. Not today but soon.”*(OE, 19)

Obiora is shown as a man who is socialized by patriarchal thought. Thus, his view of women is very narrow and limited. Whatever a woman may do or achieve, she remains to be viewed through the patriarchal concept; that woman is created for the specific function of producing children and pleasing men. If she fails in that task she can merely be considered like a man. Therefore, she does not deserve to be served as the other productive women, for such service would mean waste of health, money and time. On the other hand, man is the only person who is referred to as symbol of power. Thus, Obiora proudly tells Amaka, *“If you are sensible, you will stay here under my protection. A woman needs protection from her husband.”*(OE, 19)

The author shows Obiora as a dominating husband, who wants to make Amaka stay with him as an object. From what he says, it seems that he is afraid that Amaka may leave and that she may be possessed by another man. He does not want to be considered as those weak husbands who run after their wives and beg them to return home. Thus, he warns her not to leave the house in protestation after the arrival of his sons and their mother. He tries to make life difficult for Amaka, and tells her, *“So watch your next step and be well advised. Out of the goodness of my heart, I am asking you to stay. But if you choose to leave your matrimonial home, here is the door.”*(OE, 20)

Apparently Abiora seems to give Amaka the right of choice. But In fact, the choices are offered in such way to serve his own interest: if she stays with him, he will ensure that she will remain within his manhood domain, and if she leaves, he will enjoy living with his new family. So, he thinks that he is the winner in both cases.

The author depicts Amaka as a strong and defiant woman. She stands against her husband’s patriarchal practices. She confronts him when she refuses to keep silent. She speaks out and tries to defeat him. But by the social patriarchal standards, Amak’s behavior is not accepted at all, for it is believed that *“A woman who tries to win an argument over her husband was regarded as ‘he’ woman.”*(OE, 27)

Amaka tells Obiora frankly that she is not happy with him. She complains that he has not told her about his marriage and that as his first wife she has a right to be informed. Amaka is a brave woman who to speak out about her pains and sufferings. She faces her husband and tells him, *"It beats me how you should do all behind my back, be involved with a woman, have sons, marry her without breathing a word to your wife. You have changed a good deal, my husband. I could change, you know."*(OE, 26)

Nwapa underlines the issue of inequality by showing how Obiora is disturbed and becomes nervous to hear Amaka asking for a change as he does, believing that men are permitted to look for a change and that it does not apply to women. Obiora is inclined to think that if a woman asks for a change, the way for her is to become a prostitute. He tells Amaka, *"I am a man"*, she replays: *"I am a woman"*(O E, 26)

Amaka is the spokes woman of her sex. She simply means to say a woman can express her identity as a man does. She is eligible for a change since she articulates that she is a woman who believes and trusts her own capabilities. She stresses the idea that women may be beaten whether they are mistaken or not. However, Amaka manages to convince Obiora that she is right, and he pounces towards beating her as he has done before. But this time, Amaka begins to show Obiora that she has

started to change in the right direction due to the experiences that she has been through.

Nwapa says that a woman is forbidden to be beaten twice. Thus, she makes Amaka protect herself from Obiora's act of beating her. Here is what a common woman tells Amaka how to deal with men in order to protect herself, *"But regarding the beating, be ready at all times to defend yourself. Never cry out when he is beating you, without finding something to retaliate. So I say, fight back."*(OE, 27)

Amaka revolts for herself and hates her husband as well as her people because women are oppressed in the way as a result of the patriarchal concepts of them. Therefore, she decides to start a new life in Lagos. There, she starts a fresh life in a new society which is to some extent free from the patriarchal thought and ways of thinking.

Women are Different (1986) Nwapa explores different types of women's oppression; exploitation, abuse and humiliation. that done by husbands. Humiliation is depicted as one of the most important reasons that make women seek to revenge on their husbands by intentionally being engaged in the act of adultery: Dora has an affair with Tunde. She confesses to her friend Rose, *"If Chris had been faithful, if he had not been cruel, if he had treated me well in Hamburg, I would not have had anything to do with Tunde."*(WD, 100)

The same tendency for revenging on cruel and unjust husbands is stressed by a woman with a doctorate in history. She wonders why not equalize women with men. As quoted by the author, she says, *"If husbands run around with other men's wives why not their wives do the same?"* (WD, 100) .

Nwapa contends that a man considers a woman as his property; and that she and her property are owned by him. Thus, Dora's husband, Chris, refuses to work with her because it is not accustomed in a patriarchal society that a man works under the control of his wife, as underlined by the writer: *"It was unmanly to do that. He would not do it."* (WD, 69) On the top of that, he thinks he owns Dora herself. Consequently, her property is his, since she is his wife. Therefore, he sells Dora's house without informing her, or having her consent. He decides to travel to London without her knowledge. After a period of time, Dora discovers that she is cheated and deceived by him when her lawyer inquires' *"Did she at any time sign a document? She did. What then? An intelligent lady like her should know better, the elderly lawyer admonished. Dora bowed her head and wept"* (WD, 72)

Nwapa describes how Dora is disrespected and humiliated in Germany. Chris treats her in such a strange manner that she doubts whether she has mistaken the address. But she recognizes his voice saying, *"What do you want?"* (WD, 77) She is blamed for her coming, and

the only thing she is offered by him is a taxi to take her back to the airport. He does not pay Dora any attention as she says, "*Chris, I have waited these years, the children, the war, everything...*"(WD,77). He is busily talks on the phone to arrange for her to return to Nigeria as soon as possible. Dora is greatly distressed by the welcome given to her by her cruel husband.

On the other hand, Rose is deceived by Mark who steals all her bank savings and leaves to America to study. She is not allowed to use his name. Later, she discovers that he has given wrong personal information. The author, comment is that "*Mark had jilted her*"(WD,82)

Nwapa states that men in Nigeria are very difficult with women. They mistreat their wives and exploit them if they ask for divorce. Therefore, Dora refuses to marry Tunde because she is afraid that he may dominate and control her and her business. The other possible reason is that she expects the father of her children to come back. She explains to Rose, "*For you see, our men are very touch these days. They lord it over their wives and they laugh at ideal husband who listens and respect his wife.*"(WD, 102)

Women are expected to give men more than they receive from them. Indeed, the infringe women's right and at the same time accuse them of laziness and weakness. Comfort is portrayed by the writer as a woman who thinks and analyses men's mentality. She makes use of her mental

abilities for deciding what her next step is. She seems to understand men's nature better than her counterparts: Rose, Dora and Agnes. Nwapa comments on women's efforts, especially, those are married to men older than them, by saying, "*The girls give their bodies, their youth, and their vitality to filthy sugar daddies...*" (WD, 26) Men are portrayed as selfish. They are concerned with their children more than wives. The author reveals how Agnes is disrespected by her husband. She is insulted with 'A wayward wife'. She is not welcomed as it should be. Her husband only wants to have his children. He speaks to her about the children, "*You cannot say they are not mine. They are mine. You had them in my home, under holy wedlock...*" (WD, 65)

She is greatly shocked by her husband's insults and abuse. Also, she is threatened and frightened that her children will be taken away from her soon. She blames herself for paying him a visit. This is the man for whose sake she discontinued her studies to marry him. But now she is determined to resume her post-graduate studies and depend on the certificate that will obtain.

To conclude, it can safely be said that both men and women are obsessed by the patriarchal ideology. They fall victims to an institutionalized patriarchal society in which they have been socialized; then they internalized, and reproduced the patriarchal behavior. The core issue of African women's concerns is patriarchy; and that under the

patriarchal system, the questions of marriage, infertility, polygamy, education, and financial independence of women will be logically dealt with.

4.2.2 Marriage

In African Union (2015) Reports and Toolkits, it is stated that in many African societies, child marriage and forced marriage serve to cement family, clan and tribal connections. It is displayed in the film *Difret*, at <http://www.difret.org> that in traditional Ethiopian practice, a man kidnaps, hides and rapes a girl and then, as the father of her unborn child, can claim marriage. Furthermore, Uphondo (2015) contended that in South Africa there is a practice of abducting young girls and forcing them into marriage, often with the consent of their parents. Moreover, Ohrt (2011) stated that a traditional practice in rural Ghana, Benin and Togo involves sending a young virgin girl to a shrine as atonement for a crime committed by a family member, often a man. In addition, Parikh (2012) stated that in Uganda and other African countries, parents, family and community leaders typically plan adolescents' marital relationships, leaving young people from traditional families without autonomy in this decision. Child marriage becomes a business transaction between families that regulates and commodifies girls' and women's sexuality and reproduction. Also, it is reported by Greene and et.als. (2015) that in Kenya, girls are subjected to FGM at a very early age. This is because the

more girls are educated the lower the chances of accepting to undergo the cut of FGM. Thus, contrarian members of the community devise ways of subjecting girls to FGM before they are mature and able to make informed decisions. As a result, girls are dropping out of school and opting for marriage, thinking they will be treated as adult women.

Research findings and was reported by the UK group Young Lives (2013) indicate that in many communities the practices of early or forced marriage and FGM have strong cultural roots and a clear cultural logic, which suggests that some communities may not necessarily be very amenable to reform. This logic embodies two key elements. First, the families and kin group have a strong vested interest in the productive and reproductive capacity of women, articulated through the regulation by older generations of their sexuality and sexual conduct. Second, child marriage and circumcision are seen to ensure girls' social integration and thereby their protection and their moral and social development.

In her three novels, Nwapa tries to break the rules of her societies and free her fellow women from the oppressive custom of African marriage. It is said that if one wants to make enemy, one should try to change something in the society. Therefore, breaking the customs and traditions of the society is not an easy deed, especially in a patriarchal society.

However, the message that Nwapa wants to convey is: African women's voices should be heard and their aspirations have to be achieved.

Nwapa's main characters in her three novels seem to be unhappy with their husbands. Both Efuru and Amaka are obligated to have more than one man. Hence, her stories revolve around marriage or its consequences. The characters are shown to be suffering in different ways. In her exposition of their cases Nwapa seems to suggest that each of them can behave according to the options that are available.

In *Efuru*, Efuru is deceived by her two husbands. The first husband, Adizua, tells her: "*You know I will be the last person to do anything that will hurt you, my wife.*" (*E*, 26). Soon after, he abandons her and escapes with another woman. The second husband is a strong and good-looking man called Gilbert. At first she thought that he was the right man, and would be better than her first husband. They continued to live happily for about six years. Since they had no children, they began to look for options, to avoid being looked down by the community which is influenced by the old traditions and conventions. Woman is always to be blamed for not having children. Efuru suggests that she should find a wife for Gilbert to keep her marriage and silence the gossipers.

However, Gilbert is not patient enough to wait for the result of Efuru's search. He decides to marry another woman, Nkoyeni. Gilbert's other side is revealed and his hidden personality is uncovered. He

pretends to be good to Efuru, but he is not what he appears to be. He absents himself from the house for a number of times and also learnt that he has been imprisoned. To hide his shame, he tries to make troubles to avoid being asked by his wives, especially Efuru whom he accuses of adultery. Therefore, after proving her innocence, she deserts him for good and she says farewell to him forever!

In *One is Enough*, Nwapa depicts the African women's obsession with getting married. Amaka struggles hard to get a man in a village society whose people are socialized by the constrained customs of their ancestors. Amaka experiences different kinds of love relations with her first suitor, Isaac who dies in a motor accident. The second man she marries is Abiora. When he marries another wife without telling her, Amaka decides to leave the house. She goes to Lagos to start a new life and free herself from the pressures and stresses of her situation. She plans to forget about the ideal of "*a one man woman*". (OE, 7)

In *Women are Different*, Nwapa presents three main characters who suffer under marriage conditions; Agnes, Rose, and Dora. Agnes provides an example for African woman who endures forced marriage. When she gets married, Agnes is able to run her household very well. She runs her household in the best way; indeed, she carries out all that is required of a good wife.

However, Agnes' marriage does not last for long. "*One night Agnes returned home to see her step-mother in a most compromising position with her husband.*"(WD, 59) This incident signals the end of Agnes' sad marriage.

The issue of marriage is also presented through Dora who marries Chris. She gives him everything he can wish for. She carefully looks after the children and her business in his presence or when he is absent. However, he abandons her and travels to Europe for study. There, he marries a German girl and forgets about Dora and his children for many years. "*She believed in him. She believed in Chris, and now he had betrayed her.*"(WD,73)

Rose experiences three unsuccessful love relationships. Firstly, she is ignored by her school boyfriend Earnest, who leaves to London for study but he meets an Irish girl and is forced to marry her because of her pregnancy. Consequently, his marriage prevents him from continuing his studies. He returns home to ask Rose to forgive him, promising that he will come back soon and complete their marriage procedures. "*This has taken me by surprise. It is a long time and it is not easy to say yes or no. Go back to London; let's have an open mind about your proposal. I shall be here,' said Rose.*"(WD, 96). In the end, Rose discovers that Earnest is involved in trafficking with Agnes' daughter, Zizi.

Rose is deceived once again by Mark who marries her and stays with her for a few days. Then, after taking her money, he leaves to America for university study. He promised that he would arrange for her to join him soon after settling in America. In the end, she discovered that Mark is a liar. He used her as a means to an end. He took her money.

Rose met Olu, her third boyfriend as a businessman. She spends joyful time with him, and travelled to different places in his company. Soon, he deserts her.

Nwapa is apparently dissatisfied with her community and its attitude to the question of marriage. In reaction, Nwapa underlines and stresses the fact that the society values of having children is more important than having a husband. Children are considered as woman's source of dignity, fame and protection. The author tells the story of Amaka's aunt who bore seven children within seven years and marries her husband another young girl to avoid quarrelling. She turned her attention to looking after her children, and succeeded in bringing them up well, and and marrying all her daughters to rich men. However, Amaka is the opposite of her mother and aunt's ideas. She believes in marriage more than having children without husbands.

To criticize the destructive marriage customs in her society, Nwapa employs Efuru in her first novel and Amaka in *One is Enough* to break away from those traditions. In Efuru, which is both the title and the

name of the main character of the novel, Nwapa sets the scene for African marriage drama. When Efuru marries without the dowry, her father has sent a delegation of the youth and wise men of the village to bring Efuru back. However, she refuses to come home, and her choice must be respected by her father and her society. Ironically, Nwapa reports the spokesman of the delegation who says to her: *“But your husband must fulfill the customs of our people. It is important. Or enemies will laugh at us.”* (E, 9)

Nwapa makes Efuru act against the customs and tradition of her society by getting married without obtaining her father’s consent or demanding a dowry. This is made obvious in a conversation between Adizua and his mother: *“... he told his mother that Efuru was his wife. ‘I have no money for the dowry yet. Efuru herself understands this. We have agreed to be husband and wife and that is all matters...”* (E, 8).

In *One is Enough* (1981) Nwapa also employs her main character to break the social rules. Amaka moves to different places where her story will continue to take place, after the end of her marriage to Abiora. She uses her beauty to seduce men for the sake of making contracts. Not only does she seduce men in making contract but also she makes love with various men for the same purpose. She decides not to have husbands; for she has been disappointed in marriage. She wants to lead a free life without enslavement, stress, obligations or restrictions. She

believes in having men but not husbands what the title implies; one marriage experience is enough in a woman's life.

In the face of a patriarchal society where women are oppressed in marriage, Nwapa tries to enlighten her female characters and make them react in certain ways. *Efuru* is projected in such a way as to prove that the society's customs are wrong by comparing and contrasting her to the men she marries. On the one hand, Efuru, is a beautiful girl whose father is a well-known brave man in the village who has brought fame and honor to his people. Nonetheless, she is married to a poor man who has never attained fame or received a title. Despite the social differences between Efuru's and Adizua's families, she is forced to marry him.

Another positive quality that is exemplified by Efuru is that despite Adizua's bad conducts, Efuru tries her best to make appearances and behave like a gentle woman. In fact, she has continued her search for him in different places to confirm that he is still alive. After her long waiting, Efuru decides to leave her absent husband's home. She says to herself:

"... Adizua is quite satisfied with this woman and does not want me anymore? Need I to say until he says: 'Efuru I don't want you anymore. Return to your father's house, and when you marry again I shall come to my dowry?' ancestors forbid that I should wait for a man to drive me out of this house." (E, 63).

Not only in Efuru, but also in *Women are Different*; Like Efuru who searches for her husband, Dora travels to London and Germany searching for Chris. She is faced with the shocking truth that Chris lives with a German woman. When she faces him at the doors, he pretends that he does not know her. He sends her back to Nigeria.

Through the portrayal of her female characters, Nwapa intends to inspire women to take their rights and make their independent choices without following others' blindly. Efuru is characterized to articulate Nwapa's intention by talking to her mother-in-law: "*Leave that to me. I shall settle it myself*". (E, 8) Therefore, Efuru is portrayed as a confident African woman who is prepared to speak out about African women's issues. When her uncle criticizes her for coming home late she addresses him by saying: "*I don't care whom yet to tell.*" (E, 7)

Efuru is characterized and chosen by the writer to be the strong woman of the novel. In her projection of her, she seems to imply that the importance of love is essential to the life of a married couple. However, it is always advisable for a woman to marry a man who loves her more than she loves him; this is the only guarantee for any marriage to last for long. Efuru refuses to marry Adizua and follow the practice of arranged marriage. Therefore, she refuses to demand a dowry. This does not mean that she does not believe in her people's customs; rather she tries to show them that customs may sometimes become destructive. People can do

their best to change the out-mode social customs, though this cannot be done overnight. Sometimes one has to follow these customs, and this is why Efuru agrees to be circumcised without any objection despite the great pains she may be through.

Nwapa calls for cooperation in marriage, and believe that the couples are required to exchange their views about the marriage preparations without interference by the community's members. Nwapa is not against some customs, such as dowry payment, but she refuses the way it is practised. Hence her depiction of Efuru's and Adizua's combined endeavors to collect money together by trading in yams in order to pay the dowry. *"We have to go to my father now that we have money... what day can we fix it..."* (E, 21)

One can safely be concluded that Nwapa's theme of marriage in patriarchal society: despite the widespread of oppression in against women is practiced, particularly in relation to culture, women themselves have to be empowered through information and education to protect their human rights. They be should be educated through various means to valorize themselves and to develop self- esteem. Information about the functions of the female body has to be disseminated and positive images about the reproductive role of women must be projected. The community need to be educated about the contribution of women towards the development of the community and the nation; the image of the girl child

should be valorized through education, including religious teachings; the adoption of legislations which will allow women to inherit property, including land, in order to allow them to be economically self-sufficient.

4.2.3 Infertility

Infertility is a global dilemma that most women face, mainly African women. Although infertility is the cause of women's grief, social stigma, and economic deprivation; scholars have paid little attention to its definitions. Mayo Clinic Staff (1889) wrote that infertility refers to inability to conceive after having regular unprotected sex. Furthermore, infertility can also refer to the biological inability of an individual to contribute to conception, or to a female who cannot carry a pregnancy to full term. Infertility, therefore, means women's failure to get pregnant after frequent intercourse for at least a year.

In Africa, most women and men want to have children for various reasons, such as status identity and economic security in old age. Thus motherhood is considered the major role of women and a respected female identity. However, there are some women who experience fertility problems. Some of the cultural practices may exclude or seclude childless women; and some of the traditional rituals performed or not performed on their death may suggest that the society is 'against' childlessness. Safoa (2008) wrote that childlessness is uncommon in Africa, and married

women with no live children are likely to be those with fertility problems. Also, it is stated by Nukunya (2003) that the traditional African society is pro-natal, where the ultimate purpose of marriage is to bring forth children to perpetuate the family name.

Where have those attitudes towards infertility come from? Guntupalli & Chenchelguden (2004); Inhorn (2003); Papreen et al (2000) contend that culture shapes people's thinking, understanding, practices and attitudes towards infertility. There have been social pressures and expectations for women to procreate, and women are often blamed for infertility.

In view of the importance attached to the role of motherhood, inability to meet this expectation is expected to incur the displeasure and unfavorable attitudes of society. Women experiencing infertility problems in Africa may face social/cultural problems. For example, they may be forced out of their marital homes by in-laws, or they may not accorded proper burial when they die. Nukunya (2003) writes that children are of such importance that in the traditional society the inability to bear children is considered a great tragedy, and the woman who fails to bear children suffers humiliation and sometimes ridicule or abuse.

^ In agreement with Nukunya, Orji, Kuti, and Fasubaa (2002) believe that childless women may encounter a gamut of unfavorable treatments from their society. For instance, woman may be expelled from

the husband's house either by the husband himself or by his family. Husbands may be encouraged to take other wives. In some cases childless women have reportedly been excluded from some important activities and celebrations. Feldman-Savelsberg(1994) reports that in some African countries infertility is a ground for divorce among some tribes which causes a woman to lose eligibility for owning land from by her husband. If she is able to avoid divorce, an infertile woman receives fewer gifts from her husband and is abandoned in old age.

Inhorn (2003) highlighted that the social consequences of infertility are particularly profound for African women as compared to men. Safoa (2008) writes that regardless of the medical cause of infertility, women receive the major blame for the reproductive setback and they suffer personal grief and frustration, social stigma, and serious economic deprivations. Among the Ekiti of southwestern Nigeria, Ademola (1982) reports that infertile women are treated as outcasts and their bodies are buried on the outskirts of the town with those of demented persons.

This section attempts to explore the social and cultural perceptions African hold about women experiencing infertility problems as exemplified by Nwapa in her three selected novels.

Throughout her novels, Nwapa is inclined to stress the issue of infertility. For example, *Efuru*, is preventative of women who suffer from such situation. She wishes to meet the expectations of her husband's

family by bearing children. Ngcobo (1988) stated that *“every woman is encouraged to express her womanhood to the full. The basis of marriage is transferring of woman fertility to the husband’s family.”*

To show how an infertile woman suffers, Nwapa presents Efuru with all her worries.

“Efuru was worried in the second year of marriage. ‘My mother had had only me,’ she said one night to herself. ‘My father told me so and also that she found it difficult to become pregnant. Am I going to be like my mother? But if I am going to like her, I too will have a daughter like her. But what if that is denied me? What if that also is denied me? What will I do? Oh! What will I do?’ she wept.(E, 24).

Efuru struggles to do all that can be done to preserve her position as a woman who is valuable; she thinks of how to be pregnant. When she succeeds in being pregnant, she is shown to be the happiest person in the world; for she realizes that she has achieved her greatest ambition. She is now portrayed as a woman who occupies her a good position among her counterparts. Efuru speaks to herself: *“Is this happening to me or someone I know? Is that baby mine or somebody else’s? It really true that I have had a baby, that I am a woman after all. Perhaps I am dreaming. I shall soon wake up and discover that it is not real.” (E, 31)*

On the issue of infertility, Nwapa does not only present male's attitudes, but also the females’. She shows how women gather talking

about Efuru's childlessness; she is considered incomplete or a man. She is thought to have wasted and exploited her husband's money, energy, time and health. Therefore, it is suggested that Adizua has to marry another productive girl. *"They did not see the reason why Adizua should not marry another woman since, according to them; two men do not live together. To them Efuru was a man since she could not reproduce."*(E, 24)

Efuru's mother-in-law is also haunted by Efuru's inability to reproduce. When she is informed that Efuru is pregnant she becomes very happy; she says: *"'Efuru is pregnant? Orisha, thank you.' She raised her two hands to the sky, then knelt down and bowed her head, knocking it on the floor of the room, thanking Orisha, who is God."* (E, 27)

Not only has a woman who fails pregnancy suffer, but also her relatives. Efuru's mother-in-law is made to speak out the sufferings and pains that she has endured from her society. She can walk with head high by the honor of her daughter's-in-law pregnancy, and the community can no longer find anything to insult her and her daughter-in-law. She says: *"My enemies will no longer rejoice. God, thank you."* (E, 8)

Efuru has gained self-realization like other women to express her happiness; she continues to dance with her friends until late into night,

with the intention to tell them that she has become pregnant and equal to them all.

Nwapa continues to underline Efuru's situations, showing how she is neglected and mistreated by her husband, who comes home late, would not eat his meals as usual, and hardly talks to her. In a conversation with Ajanupu she says:

"Ajanupu, I am fed up with this. I don't know how I can go on tolerating this. God in heaven knows that since I married Adizua I have been faithful to him. Our ancestors know that since I ran away from my father's house to Adizua's that nobody, no man has seen my nakedness. But Adizua has treated me shabbily. He has treated me the way that only slaves are treated."(E, 53)

Unlike happy ending stories, Nwapa begins the story of Efuru and Gilbert (second husband) in a happy manner. They are shown as a happy couple who are in deep love. They do everything together; eating, drinking, trading, going to the stream and coming home and even swim together. They treat each other with respect.

However, the issue of not having children does not prevent them to enjoy their life. On the contrary, neighbors, mainly the gossipers, are a threat to Efuru's second marriage to Gilbert. They are not happy at all with Efuru's inability of being pregnant, and they do not like her swimming with her husband in the lake. Moreover, Efuru is blamed for

wasting her husband's energy, money and health for being a unproductive woman. To them marriage means only one thing; that a woman must provide her husband with children. Thus, Nwapa writes conveys what gossipers say:

“‘seeing them together is not the important thing,’ other said ‘the important thing is that nothing has happened since the happy marriage. We are not going to happy marriage. Marriage must be fruitful. of what use is it if it is not fruitful. Of what use is it for your husband licks your body, worships you and buys everything in the market for you and you are productive?’”(E, 137)

One of them tells Gilbert's mother that people are eating hers and her son's flesh, and asks her to do something about Efuru's infertility. Suggesting that Gilbert must see other alternatives such as remarry: “But did you hear anything? No, I have not heard anything, which is why I have come to you. It is a year since your son married. One year is enough for any woman who would have a baby to begin making one. Find out quickly and if she is barren start early to look for a black goat.”(E, 139)

However, Gilbert's mother is portrayed as an open-minded woman who understands the difference between the traditional generation of hers and the present one. She realizes the jealousy of the gossipers. Nonetheless, she puts the issue of procreativity under consideration. She

discusses the matter with Efuru in a nice way, suggesting that seeing a traditional doctor (dibia). Efuru and her husband reject the idea of visiting dibia and instead they see a proper doctor. Efuru expects this topic of her infertility will be asked one day. But her mother –in-law admires her as she is very respectful and helpful to her. She speaks to Efuru:

“My daughter, doesn’t your body tell you anything? ’She asked Efuru. Efuru knew that this question must come eventually. She, on her part afraid. She had thought of seeing the doctor who was the only person to help her, she did not want to see a dibia. Somehow she did not trust them. The only one she trusted was dead.”(E, 141)

In *One is Enough*, Nwapa depicts Amaka as a suffering barren wife in a society where death is preferred to infertility. The story opens with presentation of Amaka apologizing for something she has no hand in. *“At six in the morning, she had decided to apologize to her mother-in-law, for what she did not know” (OE, 1)*. In fact, Amaka apologies because she fails to be pregnant. Her mother-in-law and her husband, Obiora, treat her with contempt, because she cannot bear a child.

Amaka is portrayed to be in repeated confrontation with her mother-in-law; who is mistreats and humiliates her. In fact, Amaka becomes frustrated and nervous. Her situation is thus described:

“When Obiora’s mother began to talk, Amaka could not believe her ears. ‘my son’s wife, you are a lair. I am sorry for you. Now listen to me

carefully and I have enough of your nonsense for a long time. Why are you apologizing to me? I don't need any apology. You think you are clever. I am cleverer than you are and all your friends who come here eat my son's food and talk ill of him behind his back."(OE, 5)

The mother-in-law believes that Amaka is the cause of her son's bad fate. She claims her son's health does not look as good as his friends. He looks older than he really is. She tells Amaka: *"The next thing I want to tell you is that you have done nothing at all towards the advancement of my son since you married him for six years."*(OE, 15) For the same reason, she does not visit her frequently, when she does it is for the purpose of investigating whether Amaka is pregnant or not. Thus she speaks to Amaka: *"Tell me my son's wife, since you married my son, six years ago, how many times have I visited you? ... this is the sixth time I have visited you."*(OE, 13).

Because of her barrenness, Amaka can not expect to be respected by anybody. she knows that her mother-in-law refused her marrying to her son from the beginning; for she had previous knowledge about her different suitors' relationships. Again, she blames Amaka for something that she has nothing to do with at the present time.

Nwapa intends to reveal men's selfishness and their inclination to prove their manhood, regardless of the women's feeling. Obiora tells Amaka:

“You are being senseless, burst out Obiora. How many months were you feeding? You barren and senseless woman! You forget that you are childless. You would not raise your voice in this house if you were sensible. You should go about your business quietly and not offend anyone because if you do, one would be tempted to give you one or two home truths. I warrant you several times when you got pregnant during our first year of marriage, but you were careless and lost the baby, it was your fault.”(OE, 19)

Amaka’s mother always advises her daughter to follow the extramarital practices to achieve her goals. She usually tells her that it is important to have children whether inside or outside marriage. Children are more important than marriage for there can be no marriage stability or life continuity without children. Particularly in this community, children are considered the source of power, honor and pride through which manhood and motherhood are realized. Then after, Amaka has experienced the suffering of childlessness and arrives at the fact that her mother’s speech is right. She says: *“I told you, four years ago, to leave him, to go to other men and get pregnant. You are my daughter. We are not barren in our family, never.”(OE, 32)*

For the cultural bounds, Amaka is thrown away from her husband’s house while she is acting as dutiful wife. She decided to say farewell to both her husband’s house and her society where infertile woman is

considered an outcast. She goes to Lagos where she may be able to realize her dreams of having babies. She does not believe that she is infertile, and says to herself: *“The doctors are all wrong. ‘I will have babies, boys and girls.’ She saw babies in her dreams. She was given both baby boys and baby girls by unknown people. She did not reject them. She took them, cleaned them and put them in baby cots to sleep”* (OE, 4)

In Lagos, she monopolizes her beautiful look to attract important and interested men. She is driven into her mother’s teaching and having sex with different men; Alhaji, Izu and the priest, for the purpose of having favors from them. It seems that her aim is exceeded her ambition to have children. She aspires to become a business woman. She recalls her mother telling her, *“But remember, make men friends and start thinking of having children. Marriage or no marriages, have children. Your children will take care of you in your old age. You will be very lonely then if you don’t have children. As a mother, you are fulfilled.”*(OE, 11)

The author moves the scene to Lagos where Amaka is shown to lead a life with a new and open mind. Everything is welcoming; her sister, and her friend Adaobi. It seems that Lagos is a suitable place for her to achieve success, by having children and money of her own through her own efforts. She says to the priest,: *“For I believe, Father, that I must*

have children. The gynecologists have had their say, but I know that a child will come in God's own time". (OE, 53).

The priest and Amaka meet at the point of abandonment. He is betrayed by his family and adopted by other. He lacks the sense of family ties and relations. Therefore, he needs to make his own. On the other hand, Amaka is denied by both husbands and society, and she wants to prove her motherhood. So, the two share the same feeling of loneliness. They clearly understand their deep need for children and the warmth of family's unity. *"You have come. I thought of phoning but restrained myself, and you are here. Our minds were working together. "* (OE, 103)

The pregnancy of Amaka brings joy to everybody: her mother, the Priest and even her old maid. Her mother says to her, *"Amaka get up and let me see you. My daughter, my daughter, so it has happened, my enemies are confounded. Miserable poverty-stricken enemies who trifled with my daughter. Do not be afraid, I am here. Nothing will happen to you. "*(OE, 107)

Amaka is overjoyed, as well as the priest, who asks to marry him if she accepts he is prepared to resign his church duties. But she tells him that marriage is a personal issue and not a social one. Amaka is portrayed as woman who makes use of her mistakes and learns her lessons and never to repeat them. The author intends to convey her; that a woman should have a clear vision of her life and business. Amaka wants to

remain unmarried and realizes fulfillment. Hence her endeavors to lead an independent life which is free from the husband and mother-in-law's restrictions. She concludes with a feminist concept which is against woman's main ambition which is to get married and have children. Amaka wants to have children, but not necessarily through the bondage of marriage. Thus, she says enough for husbands but welcome men: *"Mother, you are always right I had listened to in my youthful days, I would have had children without a husband. Like Ayo."*(OE, 85)

In *Women are Different* (1986), Rose is portrayed as a woman of bad luck with men. She has been through different relationships but she fails. She has experienced some happy moments with her lover, the businessman, Olu and becomes pregnant but she miscarried. She envies her friends who have children, husbands and even friends for she has none. She says to her friend, Dora, *"I have always believed that it is better to marry and be divorced, than not to marry at all; it is better to have a bad husband than none at all... you have children, you have your business and you have Tunde."*(WD, 99)

To conclude, infertility plays great role for women's stability as a wife; because it is believed that a woman who cannot procreate children is useless women. Thus, Amaka attempts through her main characters to reflect other useful sides for women rather than bearing up children.

4.2.4 Polygamy

Polygamy is an acceptable form of marriage which existed long before the start of colonial rule. It is known and allowable in Islam, and widely practiced in the African continent. It is the practice of having more than one wife at the same time. It is of two types: polyandry and polygamy. The difference is that the first is the marriage of a woman to several husbands which is contrary to custom and tradition and not permitted in Islam. The second means the marriage of one man to more than one wife at the same time.

Polyandry is not to be found in African countries for the society is patriarchal and the man is the dominating figure. Therefore, a woman has no right to having more than one husband unless she is divorced or her husband is dead.

What are the reasons behind polygamy? Caldwell and Caldwell (1987) state that due to the high mortality caused by unfavorable climate, fatal diseases, and wars, the population density remained as a serious concern. The core of African culture is the values and customs that promote reproduction. The number of children is maximized by: (1) the systems of polygamy which is included to ensure no shortage of potential husbands and to maximize women's chances of pregnancy, and (2) the custom of long female postpartum sexual abstinence that is believed to help reducing the infant mortality.

Ueda (1992) wrote that the main features of African culture are (1) women's early age of first marriage, which ensures their early exposure to pregnancy, (2) men's very late age at first marriage, and (3) quick remarriage of separated, divorced, or widowed woman.

Boserup (1985) pointed out that men are motivated to have two or more wives and many children, because their wives and children serve as a form of cheap labor and as means to expand their ownership of farmland cleared from communally owned land. Furthermore, in agreement with Boserup, White and et. al (1988) explained that it is based on household economics, male centered kin groups, warfare, and environmental characteristics. They underlined the results of two different measures of polygamy, cultural rules for men's marriages and the percentage of women married polygamously. They concluded that the best predictors of polygamy are fraternal interest groups, warfare for capture of women, absence of constraints on expansion into new lands, and environmental quality and homogeneity. Therefore, according to the customs and tradition of African society, women fall victims to polygamy.

In the three novels under study, childlessness is obviously the main cause for having more than one wife; otherwise adultery is likely to be committed. In African society having children is a curial factor in sustaining family stability. Men feel with pride and honor deep in them

when they have children, for its essential to their dignity, very important fame and power. In (Okolo,32), point of view this issue is clearly expressed : "If fault lies with the wife, in instances where the couple is not only happily married but happily living together, the quickest solution to their problem is for the husband to take another wife" On the other hand, (Mbefo, 140) states that *"Polygamy was not a sign of sexual promiscuity, therefore, for there are reasons other than gratification of the flesh. African men wanted children and in a great numbers"*

Obviously, Nwapa is inclined to underline the issue of polygamy in her novels. She shows that polygamy is commonly accepted by the characters of the novels. Some women do not object to their husbands, marriage to other women for the purpose of having children. But they reject and condemn the ways that their husbands follow by having secretive relationships with other women in order to have children. The matter would be acceptable to wives if their husbands acted faithfully and openly. This is why on discovery of such secretive relations some wives desert their husbands, though some of these wives Efuru and Amaka may accept to stay in their marital homes and be content with first wife title. However, sometimes and due to abuse by their husbands, some would leave to their father's house, as the case of Efuru with her first husband and Amaka.

Efuru is depicted as a woman who has experienced two failed marriages because of her barrenness. In her first marriage, her husband, Adizua breaks her heart by eloping with another woman without her consent and he never returns. She waits for him to come back. She wishes that he had married her instead of eloping with her. She admits, *"If he wants to marry a wife I shall be only too happy."*(E, 50) She communicates with herself as a logical and conscientious woman, and says,

"What is wrong in his marrying a second wife. It is only a bad woman who wants her husband all to herself and considered as a sign of evil and bad sprits of a woman. I don't object to his marrying a second wife, but I do object to be relegated to background. I want to keep my position as the first wife, for it is my right"(E, 53). Efuru stresses that if Adizua wants to marry openly, it would be a glory to her; he will be *'the lord and master'* to have his second wife for she has no right to object or even refuse only wants to be considered as the first wife and be informed about the matter.

Nwapa is inclined to further the concept of accepting a second wife. Ajanupu tells Efuru that she accepts polygamy, for a woman who does not object the second wife is thought of as a good woman. But she is not pleased with what Adizua has done. She says to Efuru, *"So there is nothing wrong in his wanting to marry a second wife. But he must go*

about in an open and noble way."(E, 57) Along the same line, the father of Efuru asks her about the reason of her husband's elopement. He is afraid that Efuru may have rejected his decision to have a second wife. But Efuru tells him, "No, father I don't object to his marrying a second wife. I don't object it at all. Even I had Ogonim. I was thinking of marrying a wife for Adizua. But our ancestors were kind enough to bless me with a daughter and the joy of having a baby."(E, 63)

And after two years Efuru is advised by her true friend, Ajanupu, to propose for her second husband, Emberia, to have a second wife, after spending a long time with him without having children. This proposal is beneficial; that Efuru will choose for her husband the girl whom she can control and that Efuru will be considered as good wife who is not selfish or domineering, and her husband will love her more than before as he realizes that his ambition as a man to have children is not ignored by her. Therefore, she tells her husband,

"I am thinking of getting a wife for you. Surprisingly, he replies "why" Efuru says:"You know why. This is the fourth year of our marriage and I have not had an issue for you. We have lived happily these four years. And I am worried. If we get another wife, a young girl, she will have children for you and I will love the children because they are your own children."(E, 174)

Efuru tries hard to stay in her marital house. She thinks of the rumors that are going around and how her mother-in-law may be affected by them, especially those circulated by Omirima who says to Emberia's mother: "*I mean that your son should marry another girl who bear children for us. I mean that Efuru is barren and therefore cannot reproduce. Have you understood me now.*"(E, 182) Therefore, Efuru decided to talk it over with her mother-in-law and tell her that her son should have another wife. "*I want my husband to have children. I am barren.*"(E, 180)

Gilbert marries his friend's young sister, Nkoyeni. But of little experience in marital life, she causes many troubles to her husband, and threatens that she will leave her husband's house because of Emberia's long absence. Efuru here plays the role of the wise mother or co-wife. She advises her to behave in the right manner. Moreover, she treats Nkoyeni's son as her own son and keeps her husband happy. She is intent on sustaining peace and integrity for the family.

The second time is when Nkoyeni becomes jealous of Gilbert's son who arrives from Ndoni town. She threatens that she will go to her father's house, claiming that he is not her husband's son but someone else. She insists that the supposed son must be returned to his mother or she will depart the house. She wants to be the first woman to honor her husband's house by giving birth to a son of their own. The author tells

that, "*She argued that the boy was not Gilbert's son, and so she was not going to have a bastard child. So in the end Gilbert had no alternative but to send the child away to his mother.*"(E, 196)

All through this trouble time, Efuru is shown as an ideal wife, who argues with her husband in a polite manner, showing concern and respect for him. She discusses the matter with respectfully, despite Gilbert's abuse of her and his adultery. She treats his son kindly while continuing to be a competent advisor to the young co-wife. She treats her like a sister, sometimes as her daughter. She forgives all her husband's mistakes except one, which is his accusing her of adultery.

Efuru is an example for the African woman. She accepts the second wife for the sake of her husband's dignity and status in the society. She thinks that he has a right to have another wife to bear him children. She refuses to be a selfish woman. She takes care of her co-wife and treats her kindly. But deep at heart, she feels angry for not being informed by her two husbands that they want to have other wives. Indeed, she would not have objected to their intention.

The author approaches the issue of polygamy in *One is Enough* through the creation of her major character, Amaka, a childless woman, like Efuru who suffers the pains caused by her mother-in-law and her husband's humiliation of her. Nwapa views polygamy as a solution to childlessness; she confirms the idea by what Obiora's mother says to

herself: *"Six years later, there was no child. Obiora's mother was tired of waiting, and so she had come a final solution. Obiora must have a heir, because his brothers and sisters all had heirs."*(OE,12)

The author's intention is to determine the extent to which the absence of children leads to polygamy in the African society, stressing that African women encourage the idea of having a second wife. Therefore, she underlines the fact that Amaka understands and accepts the idea of polygamy and that her husband has a right to have another wife for the purpose of having children. This is a normal thing in her society. We are told that: *"Amaka even asked her husband to go anywhere and have a baby but he did not welcome the idea. Perhaps his mother had convinced him to look elsewhere."*(OE, 5)

Though she does not object to her husband's desire to have sons from any other woman, Amaka condemns and refuses his secretive relationship with another woman for a long time without her knowledge. She thinks it is unjust of him to deceive her and not even consider her right to be the first wife. According to the African culture, it is her right to be informed and asked to give her consent to have a co-wife. She thinks the way she is treated is unjust, and says: *"It beats me how you should do all this behind my back, be involved with a woman, have two sons by her, marry her without breathing a word to your wife."*(OE, 27)

Amaka and Efuru are in agreement that, both of them are the victims of their husbands who have treated them as really loving wives. However, they are happy that their husbands have got children. Thus the author writes: *"When Obiora told her that he had sons, she was not happy. But she is relieved. She felt peace within her. At last her husband is happy...it could be painful, this realization, but it was soothing as well, to Amaka who was loving and sweet in her own way."*(OE, 28)

Also, Nwapa describe this negative and unacceptable treatment by husbands: *"She was angry with Gilbert, not because he had an affair with another woman, but because Gilbert kept the whole thing a secret from her until the week the boy was actually coming to visit them."*(E, 196)

Amaka learns her lesson from her aunt who explains to her the concept of polygamy as a solution to many problems. For instance, she says that during seven years of marriage to a man whom she does not love, she has seven children within seven years. She needs only children because children are considered more important than husbands. *"When he began making too much fuss about this-I got a sixteen year old girl for him- yes, I married her for him. I said to her, this is our husband, take care of him, I am going to take care of my children."*(OE, 9)

Psychologically, Amaka's inability of procreation has caused her many innermost problems. She starts to speak to herself searching for solutions. She begins to think about various ways such as adoption,

marrying other attractive young girl or bringing a maid and pushes this maid to her husband to be pregnant claiming the baby is hers. But she is shown to ask herself this question, *"Why then was she wasting her time staying at Obiora's as his wife when she knew that the marriage had broken down?"*(OE, 21)

Nwapa wants to convey her important message to the reader through Amaka's voice: that Amaka's mother-in-law is mistaken to allow or to guide her son to marry in secretively. She suggests that it would be better to advise him that Amaka should be told about marrying the second wife frankly and openly since Amaka's wishes him to have children. The consequences would be better. But she seems to be a dominating woman who controls her son and directs him as she wants. Nwapa writes, *"For instance, her mother-in-law would be right if she suggested that Amaka should marry a wife for her husband now that it was confirmed that she was barren. She herself would take care of the young girl and the children when they began to arrive."*(OE, 17)

In *Women are Different*, Nwapa shows that childlessness is not the only reason for polygamy but there are other causes such as prides of been rewarded with titles. To illustrate this, she depicts the character of Chinwe who is Dora's daughter. She is a woman who refuses the decisiveness of her husband who hides the matter of having a second wife from her. She becomes angry when her husband introduces his

second wife as she is his brother's daughter. Later, Chinwe discovers that she is pregnant and her husband has made no mention about it. Through Rose, she learns that her husband is the father of the expected baby, Rose says: *"Until a friend of hers told her without mincing words that her husband was responsible for the girl's pregnancy. It hurt her badly. She had been a good wife. She was only twenty three. What did her husband want? If he wanted more children, she was prepared to him ten in less than ten years."*(WD, 113)

Thus, Chinwe does not accept having a co-wife for she believes that she is still young and not barren. Financially, she has her own ideas. She is an independent woman who can run her own business. She is in a position of power which enables her to refuse her husband's obligations, for she is capable of looking after her own self, without the help of any one. Therefore, she can decide for herself. She is a self-confident woman. She cannot see any logical reason for her husband to have another wife.

Rose signals the emergence of the new generation. She prefers to be divorced to having to share her husband with a co-wife. Thus Nwapa describes the new situation: *"Her generation was doing better than her mother's own. Her generation was telling the men, that there are different ways of living one's fully and fruitfully. They are saying that women have options...Marriage is not THE only way."*(WD, 118-9)

To conclude, it can be said that Nwapa has depicted characters in her three novels as wives who suffer the injustice, mistreatment, ignorance, disrespects and betrayal of their husbands because of polygamy. They accept the idea of having co-wives, but they claim to be informed beforehand so that they may give consent and be prepared emotionally for receiving a co-wife. They believe that it is their right to occupy their position as first wives.

4.2.5 Education

In African society, man was believed to be the main obstacle to women's education and enlightenment. His traditional oppressive attitude had a negative impact on women. Fortunately, some of these women strongly resisted the domination of men and restriction on women's education. This means that they were viewed as mere sexual partners who are only to procreate children and look after them, in addition to carrying out household tasks. Hence, the women's challenge to these impositions by men and their endeavour to change their life style and become effective individuals in their society through education. They realized that women had a role to play which is not less than that of men's.

Nwapa is concerned about the question of women's education in her three novels. She is naturally inclined to reveal women's abilities and their aspiration to be educated and acquire knowledge and become active

participants in their society and its advancement. In her novels, she exposes two types of educations: informal and formal education.

Through the voice of Ajanupu, the author tries to depict traditional informal education and the adverse impact of the absence of women's formal education. Ajanupu is portrayed as representative of the traditional educational practices in her society. She is portrayed as a woman who provides assistance for Efuru in her daily life. Her role is quite important. She is seen as a strong-willed person who is determined to become a successful business woman. She is wise and knowledgeable and acquainted with traditional medical treatment. She is always sent for in urgent situations. She is viewed as Efuru's teacher. As well, she can understand the traditional mentality of men and women. By experience, she knows how to behave and deal with each of them at times of problems. Hence, her important and crucial role in enhancing Efuru's progress and protection in such a traditional society. She is the first person to discover that Efuru is pregnant because of her experience, and when she speaks to her sister she finds her a passive and weak and ignorant person. She tells her in bursting manner, *"You are just a woman for nothing. You can't see, you can't even hear smell- your daughter-in-law is pregnant."*(Efuru.P:27).

In addition, she is very helpful to Efuru during her pregnancy. She warns her sister that ignorance will kill her one day, and asks her to take

care of Efuru, reminding her that a pregnant woman is not allowed to eat as normal women. Therefore, she advises Efuru what to eat and what to avoid. She warns her sister, Ossai and tells her: "*Ossai, ignorance will kill you one day. Why do you allow your daughter-in-law to Ogbono soup.*" (Efuru, P:28).

Ajanupu is depicted as a doctor in many critical and difficult circumstances such as Efuru's swollen legs during her pregnancy. She makes use of traditional medicine by mixing trees' plants, and gives Efuru the suitable treatment. She is beside Efuru during her delivery, and nurses her.

Nwapa believes that there is no better way than to empower a girl with education. Thus, in *Women are Different* she makes Dora, who is one of the main characters, focuses her attention on her children's education. Therefore, she spends much of her incomes on their education, for she is well aware of the value of education to women. In spite of her wealth, she considers Agnes as her ideal example in the field of education. She dreams that her children will be educated like her. Dora Dora's says:

"She must give her children a good education. They would not be like her. They must go to universities like Agnes. Yes, like Agnes. She heard about Agnes' success through Rose. Agnes had had her children and had gone to university. Agnes was her own mistress-now. Agnes

could do what she liked, and there was no one on the earth going to stop her."(WD.P:73).

In the same way, the author employs one of the widows in *One is Enough*, to underline the importance of studying more than one foreign language. This will help her to give her children good education and be well prepared to lead a happy and meaningful life. She says to another woman: *"All my children will be brought up here. They will speak Yoruba and Hausa and other languages of Nigeria. The country is changing at a terrific rate, and one would be lost if one did not speak at least two of the main languages, 'said another woman. They agreed with her."*(OE,p:49).

The reader meets with a different character, rather opposite to the above-mentioned women's strategies. It is the priest's father who regrets his work as a Christian missionary in his old age. He wishes to be married and have his own real son. However, he confesses that he is mistaken to socialize the adopted son in the proper and right track through education. He does not think that the world will be changed dramatically and be out of the church's control. He says to his adopted son as he is dying: *"I should have given you a different kind of education if I had given a thought to it at the time. You would have belonged more to your people, now you are neither here or there. You have your own conscience; you should work out your own salvation."*(OE.P:74).

Nwapa believes that girls should be given equal educational opportunities, and that boys should not be preferred to girls in education. Moreover, she believes that bias against woman is based on gender roles which are internalized by traditional customs, and those girls are always required to carry out the housework, take care of their younger's brothers and sisters and work on the farms. Consequently, they will be tied by these responsibilities and their time so limited to the extent that studying will be very difficult and hard for them. This will lead them to leave the school.

However, in *Women are Different* Nwapa has created the character of Agnes as a woman who is quite different from her counterparts. She is forced to give up her study and marry an ignorant man. During the marriage ceremony, Nwapa reveals the different concepts of education in a traditional society by portraying a group of women discussing Agnes' education. This group of women have different views. Some support Agnes for having a school certificate and others oppose the idea, viewing Agnes' study as a waste of time and money since it ends in marriage. The value of the certificate is ignored. Mama Nkem, who is one of the attendants of the ceremony says, " *All that money spend on her to get education is now gone down the drain because of Agnes' stubbornness*"(WD,P:52). In other words, the woman means that her daughters' time should be invested in marriage rather than in education.

She adds, *"So why bother with bak if you are eventually going to be married."*(WD,P:53).

Also, the same concept is depicted in her novel *Efuru*, but through men voices. She shows how girls are excluded from formal education, explaining that the males view girls' education as a waste of time and money. This notion is held even by Gilbert, one of the elite. This is shown in a conversation with his friend, Sunday, while talking about Sunday's little sister's education. Gilbert says, *"It is a good thing you are sending her to school. But it is a waste sending them to school you know"*(*Efuru*,P:191).

On the other hand, one of the other women who was present supports the idea of Agnes's education strongly for she recognizes the value of the certificate. She explains to Mama Nkem if she had Agnes' piece of paper, she would have something to depend on and have a better position which will make her free and enable her to lead an independent life instead of being led by her patriarchal husband. She says, *"If you can't make it, go. Then I think – where I go with seven children?"*(WD,P:53).

She must have tasted the bitterness of being an illiterate person, so she will not prevent her children from the light of education.

Nwapa draws her characters' attention to promoting gender equality and empowering woman through education, for education is the only

means for an effective response to woman's progresses and development. She tries to free them from male domination through economic empowerment and education. Thus, it is the educated woman who can fight for her rights and protect herself from husbands' or man's injustices and subjections. She advises the widows and marginalized women to bring up their children in the cities, like Lagos, in order to receive education of better quality than in rural areas and villages. These children should learn more than one language to be able to cope with the challenges of modern times.

The author depicts Agnes as an ambitious woman, whose marriage does not hinder her persistence of education. She resumes studying secretly. Nwapa tell us how: "*She registered with Wolsey Hall for the Advanced General Certificate of Education examination.*"(WD,P:57). She is seen as a strategic woman, who is able to make an adequate plan and make the best use of her time. She looks after her family, without complaining of hard work. She arranges her housework properly; preparing her husband's and children's meals.

Agnes' sole wish is to be educated. Therefore, she makes every sacrifice and struggles to give her husband the best she can offer him. She is keen to finish her study as soon as possible.

Nwapa depicts Agnes as a successful student and a wife. she has four children within four years. Her husband is happy and pleased with

having all these children in a short time from Agnes. On the other hand, Agnes gives a proof to the other women that having house responsibilities such as children and husbands' duties should not prevent a woman from pursuing her education. She passes her intermediate bachelor degree. Then, she informs her husband that she has been studying from home and she would like to attend evening classes. At this point, her husband's negative attitude towards education is shown. He forbids Agnes from attending evening classes and tell her that he prefers studying from home. Agnes as a determined woman insists on fulfilling her wish. She is supported by her father who defends her by confronting her husband with what he says: *"She has had four children for you. She wants to read and improve herself... Has she asked you to pay for the evening lessons? You should count yourself lucky and blessed to have a wife like my daughter ."*(WD.P,58). She carries on her studies and obtains the GCE certificate, and joins the *"University College-Ibadan"*(WD.P:60). She discovers the difference between attending university as a regular or internal student and a distance learning or external student.

Agnes is portrayed as an ambitious woman whose example deserves to be followed by other women. The author wonders:*"How many women of her age at the time thought of having university education? Many of her classmates were content with nursing and*

teaching."(WD,:62). She obtains a university degree that distinguishes her and helps to free her from the shakles and oppression of men. Through education, Agnes has become empowered and an independent woman. She gets a job with an international company and earns good money. She gets acquainted with different important people within the country. At last, she manages to help her daughter, zizi and get her out of a London prison despite the fact that she lives in Nigeria, an achievement that could not be made had she not been an educated and enlightened person.

Nwapa emphasizes through her characters in the three novels that societies' progress cannot be achieved without women's education. She has made them occupy respectable positions as educated women. They manage to overcome the view that they are merely second class citizens in their societies. They are capable of playing active roles in the family as well as the society. Some have occupied senior government posts and others have established their own private businesses or become social workers.

The author raises the issue of education in her three novels. She introduces two types of education. In her novels *Efuru* and *One is Enough*, she presents informal traditional education and in *Women are Different*, she deals with formal education. She strongly believes that education can pave the way for equal treatment of women. Therefore,

She focuses on the empowerment of women with education because that will be reflected in their good and pleasant manners at their workplace as employees and at home as wives and mothers. She depicts her heroines in rural social life where access to education is governed by patriarchal norms. She makes these women challenge the males' oppressive ideas that women's education is a waste of time and money. Indeed, women have proven the opposite. They appear to be more successful than men. To serve her purpose, the author presents Agnes in *Women are Different*; she is depicted as a woman of great tenacity who continues her education in spite of her subjugation to marriage. She peruses her study by distance learning. She is determined to strike a balance between her family commitment and her duties as a wife.

Nwapa sends an obvious message to African women; that it is not impossible to overcome barriers to their education.

In the same way, Nwapa portrays Rose as an educated woman who has a sustainable job due to her high qualification. She is consistently improving in her life. Thus, education plays a pivotal role by providing equal opportunities on the social and economic levels. This will definitely lead to establishing a solid foundation for women's welfare. Obviously, Nwapa views education as paramount for empowering women and raising their capabilities. Therefore, she encourages her female characters to be educated women, believing that

education is the only means through which women can achieve confidence and become self-dependent.

Nwapa considers women's education as her great concern in her novels. She calls for the education of women so that they may occupy better social positions and play effective roles in their countries. Thus, she wants both men and women to receive proper education so that they can contribute to the advancement and progress of their countries, and share the responsibilities of enhancing their society. Therefore, Gilbert is depicted in such a way as to show his negative attitude towards women's education. Thus, he speaks to Sunday: "Well, I mean really that boys should be given the preference if it comes to that. If you have a little brother for instance and there is just enough money for the training of one, you would train Nkoyeni and leave the boy." (Efuru, 191). This is because Gilbert believes that "Sometimes these girls disappoint one, you know." (Efuru, 191). Sunday's response to Gilbert is more disappointing and exploiting to girls' education. He says, "It does not always end in the kitchen, when the girl is allowed to finish, she can teach and thus bring money in that way." (Efuru, 192).

Both men expect that girls' education will end in marriage. On the contrary, Nwapa wants to correct such misunderstanding of girls' education. Hence, she insists that the benefits of it begin with marriage.

For the educated wives handle and organize their households in the best possible manner.

The writer is much concerned with African women's education. She believes that education is the only means through which a woman can be empowered. Therefore, she stresses its importance and encourages her women characters to be educated, because the educated woman can participate in the various aspects of life. In fact, she shows how women can really become nation builders, through being educated, and hence help in bringing up of a better generation which is free from many bad habits, tradition and social ills.

4.2.6 Financial Independent Woman

In view of her deep concern about African women's issues, Nwapa is inclined to empower her heroines with various skills that might help them to lead a life independency without much reliance on husbands. This is why in her novels she frequently shows the attempt by different women to become financially independent. Most of her female characters are portrayed to be successful business women whose achievement can exceed the expectations of their communities.

Nwapa shows Efuru as a strong woman who stands against the practice of obliging a woman to join her husband in farm work. Efuru refuses to work on the farm like other women. Instead, she prefers to work as a trader as told by the author.

“She refused to go to the farm. She is trading instead. She said: ‘she was not cut out for farm work’.”(Efuru,12).

Efuru’s confidence in trading is shown, and she seems to be more inclined to involve herself in what she can master and knows best. In other words, she does the kind of work that she is interested in. She is well aware of her own abilities. Nwapa stresses that Efuru is an independent woman who is capable of working and earning a living on her own. Therefore, she is depicted as a practical woman who can establish a business and run it by herself. She tells her mother-in-law that she should resume her trading. Therefore, she is anxious to complete the period of feasting after her circumcision (bath). She works hard to make her business succeed and be able to pay of the dowry to her father.

Efuru is capable of applying new methods of trading in goods. She shows herself as a modern trader who is different from her counterparts; men and women. She is intelligent enough to know the market commodities that are on demand, and she is quick to meet such demand and satisfy the customers’ need. She introduces crayfish as a new item in the market and made good profit.

On the other hand, Adizua is described as a lazy, weak and thoughtless husband who is totally dependent on his wife. Efuru

knows how to run and manage her business, and in due course of time, she shifts from crayfish to another commodity.

At the beginning of his marriage life, Adizua is so passionately in love with Efuru that he goes to the farm late and returns home early. This draws his colleagues' attention who start to laugh at his laziness and envy him for having such a beautiful wife. Later, he is portrayed as a weak person who makes excuses for not going to the farm. Shortly, he joins his wife in her trading business.

Efuru, in contrast, has become a successful business woman that she establishes a company and manages it by herself. Whereas, he is a failure as a farmer, Adizua has to apply for a job in her company:

“His fellow-farmers laughed at him and said unkind words behind his back. He didn't make any profit at all.”(Efuru.P:20).

Thus the writer has successfully underlined the fact that women can run business all on their own. This is exemplified by Efuru, the strong and practical woman. Instead of joining farm work with her husband, she establishes her own trading business, and it is he, her man, who seeks her help and joins her company.

Adizua's foolishness and inability to carry out any work is made obvious after the delivery of their baby and his wife's need for assistance. Also, he is proven to be a failure. He cannot run the business in the market during his wife's absence. Consequently, the business starts to

lose, which fact makes Adizua asks his wife to manage the business by herself as the baby is old enough to be left with a nurse. Thus he admittedly says to Efuru:

“Efuru, I think is time you should face your trade. Your baby is old enough to be left with a nurse. At this time, your baby can eat some mashed yam well prepares with palm oil. You have to think over this, my dear wife.”(Efuru,P:36).

Efuru realizes that her husband is not the sort of man to rely on, neither at home nor in financial matters. She is forced to look for a maid to take care of her baby, despite the fact that it is her responsibility as a mother to take care of it. According to traditions and customs, the mother is to be blamed for her babies’ illness or death and not the husband. She is aware of the cruelty and carelessness of maids, but she knows she has no choice. In spite of this hard financial situation, she says:

“I shall get a good one. I want to help my husband. We have been losing much money.”(Efuru,P:37).

Ogea, The little girl, whose parents are in financial trouble is prepared to nurse the baby girl and look after it in order to help her parents in their financial difficulty. Nwapa seems to imply that women, including young girls, are always there to work on the farms or do any kind of work, whether they are married or not, to help their family like Ogea.

The author has created Efuru, a female character shown her as an able person to demonstrate how helpful she is to her husband and useful to the society. She has attained success in her trade and realizes financial independence. Hence, she well is admired by her people. Indeed, she is represented as an ideal example for other women who should follow into her footsteps. She is depicted as a woman who is capable of carrying out her duties and job quite successfully. During the day, she works in the market as a trader, at home, she is mother and wife who cooks her husband's food and looks after their baby. She never complains of being tired or annoyed by these duties. She is patient and wise enough to know what is required of her in order to sustain her family.

On the other hand, Ogea's mother, who is a descendant of a rich family, blindly follows her husband and works on the farm. Like her mates, she started a small business that seems to be promising. But after marriage, and joining her husband's farm work, she ends in bankruptcy. The author implies that had she continued in her trading, she could have helped her husband and saved her little daughter from being hired by Efuru as a maid. She seems to have made scarifies because of her love for her husband. Here is how her situation is described by the author:

"She was able to endure it because of the tremendous love she had for her husband and her children." (Efuru, 37).

Efuru's second marriage is meant to demonstrate another type of relationship with men, specifically, with Emeberi, her school mate. After marrying him, Efuru comes to realize how stubborn and inflexible her husband is. Despite his being an educated man, he shows no respect for her. He is not enough informed to know that trading does not require one type of skill, but many, and the most important is flexibility. He lacks experience and is dominated by the traditional mentality of the society, believing that he is always right and a woman has no right to object to what her husband says or decides nor to show any sign of weakness in the field of work. He harshly says to her:

“Lazy woman. You prefer to stay at home and do nothing” (Efuru, 140).

On the other hand, the writer shows Efuru's flexibility and sensibility in observing the market strategies. She can always restrain herself at times of disputes and differences. She is portrayed as a strong woman who can achieve her goals by overlooking her husband's inclination to how everything under her control. She pays no attention to what women may say about her. Through dialogues and persuasion, she manages to win most of them, including her husband.

Women are Different portrays the struggles for self-fulfillment and self-realization through the presentation of characters; Dora, Agnes, Comfort and Rose. Each one is given ample room to perform specific

roles in different settings. The author's intention is to underline the stresses and sufferings under which working women live, especially married women. As well, their progresses towards financial independancy are shown.

Dora is as an open minded woman, who comes to believe that working as a nurse is not satisfying at all. For as a profession, it does not meet her expectations as an ambitious educated woman, but she is capable of making better achievements, as explained by the author:

“she felt she was not going be promoted to a nursing sister even if she worked for six years.”(WD,67)

She argues the matter of resigning her job with her husband and tells him about her plan to establish her own business (a bakery). She thinks that it is a small starts but later it will be successful and rewarding. Soon, her business flourishes and orders for her cakes and doughnuts are increasingly demanded. The writer narrates:

“People started placing orders for the cakes and doughnuts.”(WD,68).

Dora is portrayed as a practical working woman. Immediately, she begins her business in doors; at her house. At first, little success is made, she believes that the business is going to flourish and prosper. After a short while, she moves outside the house , sets up a bakery in strategic place which has led to increasing the amount of baked bread. The large

area is covered by her product. Therefore, she buys a van for the purpose of distributing it to the customers in different parts of the village. Dora's product is of good quality, hence the attraction of more customers and good profit is made.

Dora works hard during the day, looking after her children and managing the business as well. She needs someone to help her, and thinks of her husband, Chris, whom she asks him to join her and resign his job with the government. Indeed, Dora has been guided by her teacher's saying:

"What you earn in a month I earn in a day, working hard of course, but as our teachers told us in school, hard work never kills anybody."(WD,69).

Chris is portrayed as a selfish and arrogant husband. He is a corrupted employee who takes bribes, and has strained relationships with those who work with him in the field. He is so arrogant that he tells his colleagues that his wife is educated and theirs are illiterate, without showing any kind of respect for them. He is considered a dependent husband who needs support from his wife who earns more money from her private business. He is envied for having such a good wife like Dora. He would say,

“How do you compare your illiterate wife with mine! Mine went to school, yours did not. Mine speaks English, yours don’t. So where lies the comparison? His colleagues laugh” (WD,69).

Chris is like any African man. He reverses the patriarchal concepts of his society, and refuses to work at the same place with his wife. He is afraid of being laughed at by his colleagues and relatives for, *“It is not manly to do this. He would not do it. He is the bread winner and his wife is going to feed him.”(WD,68)*

Eventually, he is transferred to another town where he becomes associated with new people and is no longer able to take bribes. In view of his new situation, he accepts to be Dora’s partner. Later, Dora realizes the reason of his joining her in business; it is not to help her but his plans to satisfy his greed for money. He is shown to steel Dora’s efforts. He sells her well constructed house and travels to London to study law. He succeeds in achieving his evil aim through his unfaithfulness that has led him to exploit of his wife’s blind trust. Dora who is shocked by his deed, start to wander:

“Why did Chris behave in the way he did? Why he did not tell her that he sold the house?...why sell the one you have in order to study abroad? .”(WD,73).

Dora comes to discover Chris' deception and irresponsibility. Though he seems to be escaping from prison because of taking bribes, in fact he is abandoning his wife and the children. Dora says:

"Three years Chris- you took the decision all alone? You did not ask my opinion? And the children? Am I to bring them all by myself? She wept." (WD, 73).

Dora is such a strong woman that she hardly cares about what has been done to her by her husband. She turns her back to him and focuses on her business and her children. She is concerned about bringing them up and giving them good education in order to make them equipped to lead a better life and contribute to the progress of their society and country. She wishes that her children would grow up to be like her friend Agnes, who obtained a university degree:

"She has a duty, and that duty was the children. No matter what happened, she must give her children a good education. They would not be like her. They must go to the university like Agnes." (WD, 73).

Nwapa's intention is to warn women against the exploitation of husbands. They should not depend entirely on them or trust them and stay at home as idle creatures. They should learn their lessons from what happened to Dora.

Nigeria faced a critical political situation and the war was looming over. Many political changes were anticipated in the wake of the

departure of the white man and his colonial rule. However, Dora expects what may happen and is prepared for the consequences. Here, the writer underlines the importance of education and shows how an educated person like Dora can exploit the war condition and boom her business. She is aware of the serious consequences of the war. She moves her trade from IkotEkpene to Aba where she buys a house and a building that she may use as a store. She establishes a new bakery in Okpora where there is shortage of flour and manages to make good relationships with the people,

Dora's strategy is successful. Her business prospers, and she is able to send food provisions to the front lines, including green plantation and dry bread. Also, she provides housing for the government and supplies for the Refugees' Eating Houses. She has worked hard and wisely during the war, managed to make a lot of money, buy back her house. Thus, Nwapa describes Dora's success:

"She began to look out for those in need who could part with the deeds of their property which were in 'enemy' hands, she was able to make two deeds of this nature, one in Port Harcourt and the other in Aba."(WD,74).

The author stresses that through hard and well planned work, a woman can achieve financial independency and contribute to the economical progress of the csociety. Dora has become a rich woman who

is able to bring up her children and help her community. She has proven to the world that a woman can be self-independent.

Chinwe, Dora's daughter, chooses to join her mother profession instead of continuing her academic studies. Undoubtly, she has been influenced by her mother's pains experiences that have led to great successes.

The writer's intention is to signal the emergence of the new generation who must be different in their outlook to the life. Dora's great success as a business woman, though she has had no university education have induced her daughter to follow into her footsteps.

"She told her mother that she was more interested in doing business with her." (WD, 76).

Chinwe is an active business girl like her mother, and begins to make much money. Later on, she chooses to marry a business man. She is able to prove to her husband and his relatives that she is an independent woman. She is capable of leading a life of her own without depending on her husband's support. Nwapa is inclined to tell other women that Chinwe has learnt a good lesson from her mother's determination and hard work. Therefore, she can avoid oppression, exploitation and betrayal of the future husband. She can lead a respectable, dignified and independent life. Through the character of Chinwe the author once more

stresses the emergence of the new generation which is completely different from the previous generation. She says:

“They have a choice, a choice to set a business of their own, a choice to marry and have children, a choice to marry and divorce their husbands. Marriage is not the only way.”(WD,119).

This generation has its own way of thinking and ways of life. For example, Zizi (Agnes’s daughter) strongly believes that time means business. She is depicted to have different relationships with various men. She conceives of marriage as a means of making money. For instance, she accepts to marry Theo in a business deal; Zizi shall have to give a flat in London in case he abandons her. Theo is free of home responsibilities and she should not bother him.

“If Elizabeth could leave him alone, not bother him in any way after marriage, the London flat which his parents would give him, would be her own.”(WD,129).

Agnes’s daughter, Zizi gets involved in illegal business. It is revealed in a newspaper that she has been caught by the police for her involvement in trafficking. The way she behaves is different from that of her other sisters. She tells her mother that she has to work because time for her means business. She does not listen to her mother’s advice, and leaves a message to her mother to tell her that she is leaving the house for a while. Her message, she says that:

“She is a business woman and time means a good deal to her...she visited her in Mercedes Benz. She had bought, and she bought champagne to toast the car.”(WD,122).

Zizi is representative of the new generation which is the product of colonial practices. She believes in ultimate freedom for girl and thinks that she has a right to plan and establish her future life depending on what she wishes for and not on what others wish her or want her to do.

Through Dora’s character, the author conveys her message; that is woman should not think of men’s financial status. This is made obvious in a conversation between Dora and Rose in which they talk about Dora’s friend, Tunde and his financial state. Dora rejects the idea of depending on men’s money, she pays no attention to whether a man is rich or poor and says to Rose:

“But Rose you know me too well. I have always worked and earned my money. I don’t mind whether I am given or not...you are right, I should find out.”(WD,105).

Dora no longer wants other people to look after her business. She has learnt her lesson from what her husband did to her. Despite her need for a holiday for change, rest and recreation, she has no trust in any person to run her business. Thus she tells her friend Rose,

“Of course I must go ‘said Dora,’ but you see, in the private sector you hardly have times for anything other than your business. You trust no

one to handle it when you are away. I love to travel as you know, but...”(WD,107)

On the other hand, Agnes is portrayed as an educated woman who is a university graduate. She is hard working, and throws her herself into her job as if the job was her father.

Unfortunately, Being well-qualified in the field of her work that makes her boss who is the Assistant Chief Inspector of Education ignores her efforts, for he knows Agnes reports are written better than his and incase these reports are seen by higher authorities in the ministry that will threaten his position. Indeed, it seems that her boss does not have the ability to understand and discuss what Agnes has written in these reports. This is revealed by the author:

“The Assistance Chief Inspector of Education who, sad to say, had not much confidence in people like Agnes, her education notwithstanding. As a result, Agnes’s reports were ignored and her efforts not appreciated. But she persisted in putting into practice what she learnt at ACMGS.”(WD,63).

Indeed, the boss came to occupy this position not because of his qualification in the field of education but because he had served during the colonial period under white men. Nwapa underlines the fact that the post colonial government had created problems that hindered the development of Nigeria. She portrays two types of employees. The

unqualified who are always inclined to resist the ideas of the well qualified employees. Thus, people like Agnes would always uncover the reality of those weak and unqualified employees. Despite the abuse of her boss, Agnes is portrayed as a strong woman whose character cannot be weakened. Indeed, she becomes all the more determined to work harder than before.

Before the end of her university first year, Agnes is transferred to Lagos, to work with Adults Education Department because she had lived in Lagos and knew her way well, not because she was interest in adult education.

We are told that there are no set standards or bases on which distribution and qualifications of teachers are considered. The absence of plans and strategies in the education field and the preserves of unqualified cadres drive people like Agnes into disappointment and frustration. Consequently, Agnes gets bored, especially after realizing that the teaching profession is not satisfying to ambitious people like her. She resigns her job in the Ministry of Education and joined the private sector to work with Levis Production and Research Bureau. She manages to buy a beautiful house of her own. Her children came to live with her in Lagos. It is through education and hard work that she has managed to make such achievements. The author tells Agnes' story to stress the struggle and suffering of women can lead to positive changes in their life as is the case

of Agnes whose achievements are the result of the privileges she enjoyed because of her being an educated woman.

Rose, on the other hand, is portrayed as a woman whose only concern is work through which she can promote her life. Her acquaintance with different men has failed to bring her any benefit, but remains to be determined and not to look back. However, she is depicted as an educated woman who takes work very seriously. She is active and always seems ready to do what is required of her on time. This is conveyed in her conversation with Ernest, her school mate lover, when she says:

“We have a seminar this week, and I have not prepared the papers yet. I am organizing it. And I hate to be found wanting.” (WD,96).

As a result of her good performance, she is appointed as woman Education Officer in Queen’s College. But, she is bored by teaching, for she realized that it is not a promising job. She makes up her mind to look for another job. In 1959, she joined a firm of Public Relations. Where she thought would fit best. She was promoted to the rank of a high executive in the Ministry. Soon, she was sent abroad for training. She came home with new ideas and was well-prepared to take up a higher government post. Rose was to seize opportunity of promotion to even higher position in

the wake Nigerian independence. Rose was a lucky woman to be honored with occupying office and a secretary in Ikoyi city.

Comfort is a contented woman. She worked as a nurse for a short period of time, during which she attended training in Aba and is sent for higher qualification Midwifery. After that she had to leave her job because of her husband who would not allow her to become a teacher or travel abroad. She became a full-time house wife, looking care of her husband and children.

Comfort at the end of the novel is just a married woman; who leads a peaceful and stable life. She lives with her children and husband who is a doctor. Her family life is free of problems unlike those faced by Rose, Dora and Agnes. She is a wise woman who knows how to organize her family life with ease and comfort, and lead a happy life. She is not presented as a financially independent woman or completely dependent woman. But she seems happy with her family. Unlike her counterparts, she knows exactly what she needs for a happy life. She is successful in achieving her goals. When Rose asked about her ambition, Comfort replied,

“Get a job, work two or three years, hook for a man, get him to the altar. Have three or four children for him, and if he does not make it, leave him.” (WD,30).

The author is inclined to urge women to understand their real needs and decide how to fulfill them in order to realize a happy life. Comfort is an example of woman who has her own ambitions and the means for achieving them. Despite her failure in her relationships with men, she does not give up. She learns many lessons from her several attempts. She had boy friend at the same time and does not care if she is discovered by them all at once. She thinks one needs to do so in order to understand men better before getting married to one of them. Therefore, she has trained in dealing with men before being married to her husband. This is why she is portrayed among her friends Dora, Agnes and Rose, as the only one who leads a peaceful family life.

In *One is Enough*, Amaka, the protagonist, is a woman who struggles for self-realization and self –fulfillment through hard-work. She is a teacher and a trader at the same time, but her main focus is on trading.

She leaves to Lagos where she can have more time to run her business, especially so because she will be a way from her husband and the traditional obligations of her community. Lagos seems to be a welcoming place. There are her friend Adobi, her sister Ayo and other persons who work in the related offices in Lagos. As well, there is a wide world for her to establish relationships with men and make use of their influence and contacts to boost her business. To a great extent, Amaka

seems to follow her mother's teaching; make children and never mind who the father is. Through this she can have children, secure her name, be satisfied as a woman and wins more contracts and deals for her business. Her beautiful and attractive figure is most suited for achieving her goals.

She gets help from her sister, Ayo, the mistress of a Nigerian business man and a member of Madam Cash Club, where notable business women regularly meet in her house. Most of them are widows or women who have abandoned their husbands. All of them are contractors who are experts in doing business. It goes without saying that they are financially independent women. One of them is Onyei, a woman of great determination who prefers staying in Lagos to returning to her home Land. She becomes one of the notable business women in Nigeria. Thus she is described:

“So Madam Onyei went on making money. The joy of having grows by having. So she went on doing bigger deals. And, at one time, it was even said that she had organized the exportation of hemp to Europe.”(ON,49).

The author underlines the importance of taking information from experts in the field of business which will make women successful traders since these experiences are related to businesses and the way it can best be run, the corrupted socio-economic situation in Lagos will be underlined. Amaka, on the other hand, will be motivated and encouraged by these

speeches through which she can enhance her position as a new business woman, and win more contracts from the government officials. Therefore, the speeches of these business women can be considered a key door for Amaka to the world of business. She receives advice from her friend Adaobi who describes the nature of successful business in Lagos by saying:

““You know Lagos. No man can do anything for a woman, without asking her for her precious possession-herself. I must confess to you, I have slept with Alhaji””(OIE,68).

The author intends to say that women, in most cases, are forced to submit their bodies to men for different reasons, and the main cause that made Amaka to have sex with many men is that she wants to prove that she is capable of securing a promising future for herself. This is revealed by the author, in Amaka’s speech with the priest:

“She has not come to Lagos to be a whore. She has come to look for her identity, to start all over again. Nobody was going to miss up her life anymore.”(WD,45).

Through her depiction of the character Amaka, the author shows the wide spread of corruption in Nigeria in the early postcolonial era. Even the priest with whom she has sex with awards her contract papers that are worth a large sum of money. Such contract papers, as she comes to

discover, are issued as a fraud procedure to get the equivalent payment of the contract.

Adaobi, Amaka's school friend, is attracted and tempted by Amaka's rapid success. She discovers that Amaka who has arrived in Lagos quit recently, is in better position than her and her husband. She starts to consider establishing her own business like Amaka But her husband refuses the idea and tells her that Amaka is illegally involving with men. Adaobi react by saying to him:

"You implied it and will answer you. If they give children, she will sleep with all of them one after the other. She will not even care who the father is, once she is pregnant... even a bagger from the street."(WD,60).

In addition, she reminds him of the undeniable fact and tells him:

"This house is not our own. The government owns it. One day the government could fire you and we would have nowhere to live. We have no house at home either."(ON,46).

Soon, Adaobi joins Amaka in her business as a partner, but in secrecy. When she has saved two sounds and naira, she is able to buy a house land in Ikeji town. Through her financial success, she manages to change her husband's opinion of Amaka and he begins to admire her endeavors. This change of attitude is made obvious by his warm welcome of Amaka when she visits them with her new car.

Here is shown Adaobi's ability to change her husband's negative impression and attitude towards Amaka whom he receives as a successful business woman.

Amaka is viewed as a really successful rich woman. She has a house, a car, money, and membership of Madams Cash Club. She is now considered to be better than other women who have started business at the same time. Her sister addresses the gathering of business women by saying to Amaka,

"There are women like you who were here during the war and did contract work, but are still living in one room, a rented room, in Yaba and Ebuta Metta and even Ajegunle." (OIE, 79)

Amaka has proven herself a financially independent woman who leads a life of her own, free and uncontrolled by a husband.

But Amaka's ultimate wish is to have a man, 'she wanted a man', any man and lead on an independent life. She is shown as a powerful woman who has made her own choice and is prepared to take the responsibility for her actions, regardless of whether they are accepted or rejected by others. She has gained her freedom from man through her realization of financial independency.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five

Summary, Findings, Discussion, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

5.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of five sections. Section one is summary of the study. Section two draws results or findings of the study. Section three is concerned with discussion. Section four cites recommendations. Section five is devoted to suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary

Chapter one sets the background of the research where research problem, research question, research objectives, significance of the research, research methodology, and research outlines are stated. Furthermore, the researcher provided the selected Nwapa's works for the study which are: *Efuru* (1966), *One is Enough* (1981), and *Women are Different* (1986).

The investigator has explained why those novels were selected. In these three novels, Nwapa has attempted to express variety of African historical and social experiences. Here, she intends to create awareness in women by appealing to them realistically, thoughtfully, and emotionally through her writings. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis was stated to investigate, explore, and authenticate the projection of African women's issues in Flora Nwapa's novels.

In chapter two the researcher explored theoretical framework and review previous studies. The theoretical framework was concerned with the broad ideas and theories of African feminism that provide the basis for the study. The previous attempted to provide a thorough review of

what has been written about Flora Nwapa's literary contribution in general, and her selected novels in this research, in particular.

With regard to theoretical framework, the researcher came out with the idea that African feminism is about what African women are doing with or to patriarchal cultural structures. It is also about women fighting for access to land, the right to own property, control of food distribution, living wages and safe working conditions, improved education and healthcare. Furthermore, African feminism is about African women issues. Among these issues are: female literary criticism methods, the representation and misrepresentation of female in their societies and in fiction, women's access to the economic means of survival, the female roles in politics and revolution, sexuality, motherhood, house women, women as part of their communities, men's treatment of women, and the treatment of men by women.

In this research, it has been attempted to investigate the above-mentioned agenda in the selected novels of Flora Nwapa. The main objective was that through investigation and analysis, it would ultimately be possible to identify and underline the unique African feminist voices.

In previous studies section, the researcher attempted to provide a thorough review of the previous studies and relevant writings on the topic of the research. The comments on the differences and similarities between the previous studies and this research were underlined. The reviewed works have, to a great extent, helped in understanding of women's issues in Nwapa's work. However, mere understanding cannot suffice for a deeper scholarly research on all African women's issues as depicted by Nwapa in her three selected novels.

In chapter three, the research method and methodology was explained. This helped in understanding how the thesis has been

conducted. The method consists of research approach, data collection sources, bases for selection, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter four was the bulk of the study; therefore, it was thoroughly explained. The chapter consists of two parts: part one is synopsis of Nwapa's three selected novels; it gives readers snapshot about the selected novels under the study. Part two deals with African women's issues addressed by Nwapa. To be in accordance with the objectives of the study provided in chapter one, the researcher tried to analyze the selected novels to explore issues addressed by Nwapa and how she encouraged African women to deal with them and find suitable solutions that hopefully lead to social change. The issues that addressed by Nwapa are: patriarchy, marriage, infertility, polygamy, education, financially independent women.

Patriarchy: Patriarchy is the male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways: marriage, infertility, polygamy, education, and working women. Therefore, according to Nwapa, patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women's advancement and development. It is the male domination in both public and private spheres. It is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. She has recommends a number of ways for African women in dealing with such an issue through her main characters in the selected novels.

Infertility: In Africa, both women and men want to have children because of status identity and economic security in old age. Thus motherhood is considered a major role of women and a respected female identity. In view of the importance attached to the role of motherhood, the inability to meet this expectation could be expected to incur the displeasure and unfavorable attitudes of society. Some of the cultural

practices may exclude or seclude childless women: being expelled from the husband's house either by the husband himself or by his family; and some of the traditional rituals performed or not performed at their death. What's more, regardless of the medical cause of infertility, women receive the major blame for the reproductive setback and they suffer personal grief and frustration, social stigma, ostracism and serious economic deprivations.

Polygamy: Due to the high mortality caused by unfavorable climate, deadly diseases, and wars, population density remained serious concern. The core of African culture in polygamy is the values and customs that promote reproduction. Men are motivated to have two or more wives and many children, because their wives and children serve as a form of cheap labor and as means to expand their ownership of farmland cleared from communally owned land.

Female Education: According to literature review and the novels under the study, in African society, the man was the main barrier that stood in the way of women's education and enlightenment. His traditional patriarchal attitude had a negative impact on women. This means that they were viewed as mere sexual partners for procreating children and looking after them, in addition household chores. Hence, the women's challenge to these impositions by men and their endeavour to change their life style and become effective individuals in their society through education. Women had a role to play which is not less than that of men's. Education would bring about paradigm shift in their lives. Therefore, Nwapa encourages her women characters towards education, showing them as real nation builders and their education can help in bringing up a better generation which is free from many bad habits, tradition and social ills.

Financial independence: Nwapa attempts to empower her heroines with various skills that might help them to lead life independency without much reliance on husbands. This is why in her novels she is inclined to depict different women's attempt to lead a financially independent life. In *Efuru*, *One is Enough*, and *Women are Different*, female characters are shown successful business women whose achievement can exceed the expectations of their communities.

In *Efuru*, Efuru is portrayed as a strong woman who stands against the practice of obliging a woman to accompany her husband to his work place. She refuses to work on the farm like other women. Instead, she prefers to work as a trader. In *One is Enough*, Amaka has proven herself as financial independent woman who leads a life of her own, freely and without a husband. She is shown as a powerful woman who has made her own choice and is prepared to take the responsibility of her actions, regardless of whether they are accepted or rejected by others. She has gained her freedom from man through her realization of financial independence.

5.2 Findings

The study has come up with the following findings:

1. Nwapa's writings are strongly supportive of feminists' concepts which call for African women's self-realization and self-dependency through women's financial independence.
2. The core issue of African women's issues is patriarchy; for under patriarchy the other issues such as marriage, infertility, polygamy, education, and financially independent women fall.
3. A woman's function in life is not only to bear children. If she cannot, she may be useful in other spheres of life. A woman's value should not be measured by or limited to procreation.
4. Not only should woman be accused of infertility but man as well.
5. Education is the ultimate solution to women's empowerment.
6. In African society, polygamy is accepted by woman but it is practiced in an abusive and disturbing manner to the first wife who feels humiliated and ignored by her husband.

5.3 Discussion

In attempting to reach a more conclusive standpoint regarding the projection of postcolonial African woman's issues in the selected novels of Flora Nwapa, this section reviews briefly, a number of important woman related that have been issues

investigated. Therefore, research problem, question, and objectives are considered in this section.

As she is regarded the first African woman writer to publish her novels in English, Nwapa has won an unparalleled reputation for her artistic excellence as a novelist. The principal concern voiced in her novels is feminism. What makes her feministic writings appealing is that most of her characters in the selected novels look like people in real life. Hence the description of novels is to be realistic. Her feministic perspective is projected through her unconventional and self-assertive heroines. They are all independent, industrious, and positive in thinking, especially Efuru in *Efuru* and Amaka in *One is Enough*. She devoted her writing to the portrayal of the important role played women in their societies. Hence her contribution is to the introduction of a female literary tradition, she has given a genuine and reliable identity to African woman in African literature.

Nwapa depicts her heroines as women who are prone to challenge their communities, circumstances and their husbands' impositions and oppression. As a result, they have managed to free themselves from the patriarchal ties of men as exemplified by marriage and procreation, Nwapa portrays the main characters; Efuru, and Amaka, as women who suffer from infertility. They both have no objection to the practice of having co-wives (polygamy).

Their behavior is up to the expectations of their patriarchal tradition and customs. They are moral women who are not involved in secretive relationships with men or under fared marriage. Therefore, they condemn and reject the ways that their husbands have followed in having more than one wife.

In her selected novels, Nwapa paid much attention to African women concerns. She has managed to present various types of African women's issues that affect their life as individuals in a patriarchal society. She reveals the pressures imposed on women by their communities, specifically, traditional and patriarchal norms.

Nwapa has dealt positively with the social aspect of her people's life. Her writing can be rated among the most valuable contributions to the welfare of her society. It is no wonder that she won the admiration of her readers and people and she is considered a prominent writer who has attracted world-wide attention. The source of her reputation as a major, and compelling voice in addressing African women's issues stem from her out spoken protest against the victimization of women in her society. What makes her literary contributions unique is her strong commitment to the representation of African women's lives.

Through these selected novels, she shows how in African culture, women have been subjected to oppression, rejection,

segregation, and unfair victimization. She shows how women are impacted on by economic deprivation, illiteracy, and social discrimination. She directly and forcefully attacks the sexist ideology, female despondency, and gender inequality, and expresses her disgust at male chauvinism in her selected novels. Through her major female characters, she succeeds in showing that the African woman is an individual in her own rights, besides her role as a wife and mother. This is best exemplified by Amaka in *One is Enough*, and Efuru in *Efuru* who are the spokeswomen with their stress on their rights.

In fact, the three novels are heroine oriented, for though they face difficulties and problems in their lives, they finally, emerge heroine who succeed in asserting themselves and financial independence. By proving their competence they are regarded to be the examples individualized African women.

In her first novel, Nwapa projects the image of a truly heroic female protagonist, who rebels against the established traditional norms, heralding the dawn of female emancipation. Efuru, the writer's first heroic female character, is a daring and defiant, self-reliant and self-assertive woman. In addition to her intelligence and competence, she demonstrates integrity of character. Despite her

long sufferings, she remains determined and unbroken and that signal the emergence of the new awakened African woman.

Efuru comes from a distinguished Igbo family. She is admired for her extraordinary talents, pleasing manners, and good-will. Nonetheless, she suffers inwardly because of her barrenness though her story seems to be tragic it is not a tragedy. The author portrays her triumph in the end. Her creator has shown her as a worshipper of Uhamiri, the lake Goddess, who grants her devotees all the comforts, riches, and successes. Hence the narrative can be reckoned as the tragedy and triumph of African woman.

In One is enough Nwapa's recreates the image of the African woman, by manifesting womanist consciousness in the unraveling of the protagonist. Amaka is presented as a strong and individualized woman who successfully overcomes all the burdens of the patriarchal society. The heroine is daring enough to step beyond the institution of marriage when she realizes that it is a barrier to her self-actualization. Through her character, the author disproves the erroneous belief that a woman is nothing without a husband.

Amaka is educated, industrious, and independent woman. She has always longed to get married. Once she becomes wife to Obiora she finds herself driven into the dilemma of exploitation, deception,

sexual domination, and barrenness. Her miserable situation make her pay back the bride price and frees herself from the marital bondage. In Lagos, she is able to lead an independent life. Her involvement in the 'attack-trade' brings her wealth and success. Subsequently, she becomes the mother of twin sons but refuses to marry their father because she strongly believes that she can achieve happiness and fulfillment by being a single woman and mother. By rejecting the offer of marriage, she become the icon of African woman who has proven to the world that a woman can successfully live outside the institution of marriage.

Nwapa is inclined to draw the reader's attention to an important fact that the mistreatment of wives and their abuse my lead to the worst consequences such as negative attitude marriage experience. She intends to convey her message; that is women should depend on themselves by being involved in the process of education through which women's empowerments can be achieved on a wider scale.

The three selected novels seem correspond to the three stages of pre-colonialism, colonial rule and post colonialism. In each stage she addresses certain women's issues. For example, in the first, she expounds patriarchal thought which dominated and inhibited women's ambitions and how they were denied from promotion to the social, economic and political level to a great extent, this period

is represented in *Efuru* which reflects most of the imposition of traditional practices on African women. Efuru, the heroine attempts to break through the deep-rooted customs. Efuru's father is a slave trader, which fact is indicative of the inhuman practices during the pre-colonial stage.

In addition, the author underlines the societies' need for health care and education, as is depicted in *One is Enough*. Amaka is representative of the educated woman. She is a teacher, and is able to change her life for the better and provide a good example for other women to follow. The author makes Amaka's movement from one job position to another implies women's capability of leading their own life and deciding which course to take because they are educated.

The same theme is evident in *Women are Different where* it is also shown how education can be beneficial. Through their education, Agnes, Rosa, Dora and Comfort have managed to achieve a brighter future. The author describes how colonial education in its early beginnings focused on missionaries' ideologies in order to gain women over Christian teachings, stressing forgiveness and tolerance rather political issues to which the Nigerians people were more attracted.

In her selected novels, the writer lays more emphasis on the importance of women's education. Nwapa successfully presents her four main characters and the hard and tough life that they encounter. She shows how her characters manage to overcome the challenges by the help of their self confidence and determination. Through success they achieve self-realization and accomplish individualism.

Furthermore, Nwapa underlines the social and political problems faced by these women as educated persons who live in a society that is governed by its traditions and customs more than by any other belief or institution.

Unfortunately, they are seen as failure in their relationships with their husbands as a result of the difference between what they have been taught at school and what is inherited and practiced in their patriarchal community. That is shown in *Women are Different*, especially by the main character, Rose who remains unmarried and barren up to the end of her life.

Through her selected three novels, Nwapa has opened a brand, an intellectual and unique contribution that highlights untouchable spheres of women's issues. She focuses on revealing African women's issues through her persuasive conversational style. She depicts women's psychological pain as they are; at their marital homes and workplaces and their need to express these sufferings.

She provides an outlet for them in a social realm which is dominated by man. She makes them resist their silences and speak out and claim for their rights. At times, she makes them superior to man in action such as Efuru, Amaka, Dora, Agnes and Comfort.

One of the issues that Nwapa raises is that of women's work and independency. She stresses that every woman should depend on herself through hard work instead of staying idle at home waiting for the charity of husbands. For this purpose, she makes many of her characters achieve financial independence as educated women who can manage to lead a happy and successful life regardless of whether their husbands are around or absent. Efuru, Agnes and Dora are the good examples.

Nwapa is a supporter of idea of women's empowerment. She shows the negative attitude of African culture to African women's issues. Hence, this led to women's oppression, humiliation and exploitation. She always endeavors to stress their sufferings and pains as wives to whom injustice is done by their husbands. She offers solutions that might help them. She raises the issue of inequality between the two sexes and condemns discriminations. She strongly expresses her belief that only women can free themselves from men's enslavement as is the example of Agnes,

who thinks that a woman cannot survive without the presence of a man but she can do without a husband.

5.4 Conclusion

Various forms of traditional beliefs are upheld by the African society as social ethics through which women can be controlled, this is exemplified by marriage, infertility, polygamy, female education, and financially independent woman. Under the patriarchal system, women are subjected to different forms of oppressions and suppressions. In most African societies, discrimination begins with gender bias at birth with ceremonies which attach lesser value to girls. It is observed in Nwapa's novels that the average life of African woman is lesser than that of male peers. She assumes household work as early as three years old; she is allowed less play time than her brother; mutilated as of 7 days up to the age of marriage; married earlier; widowed: a threat as a social stigma; and rape, battering, polygamy, threatening her life.

Nevertheless, fortunately Nwapa's writings shed light on how women have to manage to establish themselves as individuals. Though it may appear to be an uneasy task for them to make it to the top, considering the entrenched biases and prejudices in their societies, she has worked out her best to enter every sphere of human activity and bring out a social transformation. In her works, she endeavors to relate her demand that gender bias, meaningless traditions, and harassments all sorts are to be fully eliminated from the society. Through her well-crafted stories, she manages to underline the 'Awakening' of the heroines of her

novels who have become a source of inspiration to women, who can achieve their individualism, and establish themselves as new African women.

Nwapa's writing must have been influenced by feminist politics in view of the woman-centered bent of her fiction. Beside of occupying an important place in feminist discourse, her works have also garnered attention because of its literary merits.

5.5 Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that females' writings be introduced to the students as well as common readers so that the women's effective roles at their homes as mothers and outside in various sectors of life such as workers, employees...etc. can be acknowledged. Women's education should be focused on.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research

In the process of writing this research, several African women issues came across, therefore, they are worthy of investigation and study. They can be researchable.

The followings are topics that are suggested for further researches:

1. The role of the debia (traditional healers) in African societies.
2. The effect of gossipers and illiteracy as reflected in African Literature.
3. The impact of supernatural power in African Literature.
4. Patriarchal and maternal concepts in African Literature.
5. Flora Nwapa's writing style.

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