



Transcending Struggle for life, Exploitation, Patriarchal Border and Women Self Empowerment in Sefi Atta's Novel 'Everything Good Will Come'

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Abstract

In the novel of Sefi Atta's though women started struggling for their rights since the late of the nineteenth century under the so called feminist movement, till our recent time, patriarchy is still practiced and persistence practice in today's modern societies. In andocentric societies, women are subject to an array of blind treatments of men. They are domesticated, thingified, objectified and robbed their identities. Since their identity is constructed within the parameters of society, women are denied every opportunity to be equal to men. Likewise, African females attempt to follow the path of the previous feminist movements by starting to remove the restrictions and oppressions of their societies. Hence, the aim of this study is to offer a feminist reading to Sefi Atta's 'Everything Good Will Come'. It aims at underlying the different injustices of the Nigerian Patriarchy and its working on the protagonists and other females consciousness. The novels protagonist's, Enitan goes through various patterns of subjugation and marginalization. The study traces on the different facets of submission and subordination female characters endure in their journey of self becomingness commenting on the empowerment strategies and mechanism used to subvert and defy societal conventions. Subsequently, Enitan along with other female characters, grows to be the self assertive and non conformist women who no longer accepts to be confined and to be abide by the gender roles assigned to her.

Keywords- *feminism, struggle for life, exploitation, patriarchy, women self empowerment, subjugation and oppression.*



Since the very ancient time, women have been pushed to face obstacles and to accept restrictions and regulations that are set up by their cultures and tradition. Indeed they have always been given lower position and subordinated roles over all years compared to men and they had to be forced to accept this marginalized position. They carry out the roles, functions and responsibilities without demanding any estimation in return. Nigerian society is like all other patriarchal societies where women are subjugated to different challenges including sexism, gender inequality, domestic violence and social patriarchal practices. Female subordination and patriarchy have been one of the main features that are planted in the Nigerian Society.

Patriarchy is a concept that referred to men's domination. Feminists primarily explain the relation of dominance between men and women by means of the word 'patriarchy'. As such patriarchy is a term that is used by feminists to defy such a system to achieve certain goals. In fact, patriarchy has been always a barrier for women's development and empowerment. It has prevented them from making their own choices in different aspects of life. It allowed men to take all the privilege and domination outside in the society or inside home with their families.

Everything good will come is a great accomplishment for Sefi Atta. She sheds the light on many aspects that women challenge during their lifetime such as patriarchy, traditions and womenhood. There are many studies that have been conducted on the novel. In their article "Discovery, assertion and self realization in recent Nigerian migrant feminism fiction."

Ayo Kohinde and Joy Ebong Mbipom view that Atta narrates the story of her homeland from a feminist perspective. The center of Sefi Atta's novel is on "the issue of relationship, education and discovery that gives rise to assertion. They pointed out that 'Everything Good Will Come' is a fine example of a contemporary African Feminist novel that represents the ambition of women concerning their path to assertion and self realization.

In identity and the absence of the mother that Nigerian women's writings have established as a major element in the Nigerian third generation. In addition to that

Owanibi and Gaji explain that religion and identity are also important in 'Everything Good Will Come'.



Their research paper matches up the three main motifs into an analysis of the complexity of identity forming.

Different theorists have defined the concept of patriarchy in different ways. In order to explain the relationship between men and women, feminist use the concept of patriarchy. In general, the term means ‘ **Rule by the father**’. It is used a political theory to refer to specific finally organizations in which the father has the power of life and death over the family members. It may apply specifically to the husbands dominance within the family and externally. It characterizes a society which reproduces the dominance of men in every area of their lives, in education in work and in their political and social institutions.

In the theorizing patriarchy, Sylvia Walby defines the concept of patriarchy “**as a system of social structures and practices in which main dominate, oppress and exploit women.**”

This description emphasizes have necessary it is to see patriarchy as a structural phenomenon instead of one perpetuated by the exploitative individual man. Likewise farah Deeba Chaudhary and kate millet used the concept in 1970 to explain the male superiority over women. For Millet, the family is the primary institution of patriarchy. Millet recognizes the family as a significant position of oppression. The family wants its members to play the sexually distinguished the roles and hold women lower positions of oppression. the family wants its members to play the sexually distinguished roles and hold women lower positions. She states,

“**the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office and finance in short** every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police , is entirely in male hands.

Empowerment must be considered as a means to create a social environment where one can make resolutions and make choices for social change individually or collectively. This enhances innate capacity through the creation awareness, power and experience. Paulo Freirs, a Brazalian theorist who made the work of “ *pedagogy of oppressed*” shows the origions of the idea of empowerment. Freire argues that there are two powers in each society, the oppressor and the oppressed. Thus according to freir, “**the teacher has a the teacher has a duty to sensitize student about social**



inequality in society in order to build the means of emancipation”. Whitmore argues that empowerment is:

“An interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organization and institutions which affect their lives and the communities in which they live”.

Empowerment is the process by which people gain social, economic and political power to liberate themselves from social injustices. Empowerment is a situation in which the required control of the problems which affect individuals, organizations and communities is acquired. It is not easy to grasp the meaning of empowerment only as one interpretation. In relation to the particular needs of those seeking empowerment only as one interpretation. In relation to the particular needs of those seeking empowerment, the concept of empowerment must be understood.

After defining the term of empowerment is general, it is important to look at the different perspectives given by different writers of women’s empowerment. First Srilatha Batliwala through a report family planning policies revisits the idea of women empowerment from “insights gained through a stud of grassroots programmes in south Asia”. According to her “empowerment is the process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power”.

Batliwala and others feminists activists, successful empowerment strategy also includes womens direct involvement in the preparation and execution of programmes and execution of programs not necessarily with the same strength, claims that the empowerment cycle progress into a spiral, involving changes in consciousness, assessing the goals for improvement and evaluating behavior and outcomes which in turn leads to greater levels of consciousness and to better adapted and implemented and strategies . As a consequence empowerment is not a ‘top down or one ways process”. And a predetermined formula cannot be found for its success. Furthermore Batliwala directly addresses the widespread anxiety about the popular preassumption that there is a necessary link between the empowerment of the women and disempowerment of men.



Conclusion:-

As such, struggle for life, exploitation, patriarchal border and women self empowerment in Sefi Atta's novel "Everything good will come" is a very broad concept that has a long history that flourished in the late 20th century in order to fight and speak out for the different rights of women. However it extended to different branches and theories that deal with different issue of women. First of all, struggle for life, exploitation, patriarchal border and women self empowerment is a concept that has been used by all problems of women in order to describe the marginalization of women That are being submitted and ruled by male dominated societies. The concept of women empowerment that has been built upon different views and definitions with one aim that is to implant the thoughts of power, emancipation, making choices and self- reliance.

This research paper came to the conclusion that Sefi Atta sets up an image of the marginalized Female characters narrating by her own past through the voice of the protagonist as well as the other female characters past describing their different experiences in a postcolonial country. Atta's novel has mainly focused on struggle for life, exploitation, patriarchal border and women self empowerment.

Through more precise depiction, this dissertation used Sefi Attas Everything Good will Come as a specific example in order to affirm these above statements. Seffi Atta has tackled the different forms and types of marginalization and subjugation of patriarchy in her novel. She started with the family oppression inside home, rape and violence outside in public and then submission within the institution of marriage. She revealed how the protagonist achieved empowerment and realized her agency by helping and cooperating with other women to seek their way to self-empowerment as well.

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