

**AFRICAN LITERATURE AND
BADGOVERNANCE IN AFRICAN IN THE
21ST CENTURY:(A STUDY OF XWA AKAALA NKA
BY OBICHERE)**

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Abstract

Literature aims at educating, instructing and arousing national consciousness. The novel is an important tool for communicating ideas. Currently, the wide spread of bad governance as a global problem, has awoken the interest of African writers. People have been marginalized; no equal play platform, lack of meaningful livelihood, corruption, injustices, humiliation and unemployment in different ways. All these, have negative impact on the masses. The selected prose text was *Uwa Akaala Nka* by Obichere. This study revealed

the meaning of bad governance; causes and effects of bad governance, attitude of leaders in the 21st century. The paper adopts Marxism as a theory in analyzing the text. Bad governance is everywhere in the world especially in Africa. Therefore, it was recommended that African writers should dedicate their literary strength in solving this global problem.

Introduction

African literature has succeeded in documenting various social issue affecting the living condition of people in Africa .Bad governance is one of the issue many writers have dealt with, in many of the literary works .According to Ojaide (2017:1) “... in Africa, the writers is seen as a threat to those in power who practice tyranny, corruption, and other types of misgovernment.” The writer gaze, tend to tackle politicians who are not doing what they promised to do for the masses. Literature act as a counter discourse to corrupt and bad governance. Governance is a process of decision making and implementation. Bad governance is when the decision making is not implemented. It is when an individual that was voted to power subject the masses, that voted him to power with; injustice, corruption, insecurity and unemployment.

Countries in Africa are still languishing as where corruption thrives, misguided youth, joblessness, poorly educated, and brazen looting in the country, and all these are caused by bad leadership. Osisoma (2014:654) says “African including Nigeria needs a leader who will search out and celebrate subordinates better than

himself; a leader who will move ordinary citizen to patriotism and productive labor.” Today in the society, what one has are the leaders who have no respect for the right of others, only their own right. Their knowledge about democracy is terribly in favor of their personal and selfish interests. For them, there is hardly any talk of patriotism or love for the fatherland, only permanent personal interests. Modern African literature deals mostly with the politics and other issues in the society. The concept of African literature is important and a central component of discussion on this paper. African literature according to Abdu (2017:46) “... is the question minus answer.” According to Cuddon (2013:404) African literature “... as a broad term which usually denotes works which belong to the major genres such as epic ,drama, novel.” Onuko and Ezeuko (2012:127) say, African literature “can be viewed from different perspectives.” This means that literature may illustrate a particularly historical period such as classical period, romantic period or Victoria period. It can be oral or written. African countries and Nigeria in particular are endowed with a rich cultural heritage of literature expressed the art of story-telling. Igbo literature is among the African literature. Igbo literature is that literature written in Igbo language. Igbo people is located at the south East, south/south, south western Nigeria .According to Okoye(2012:5) “South east occupied Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia and Ebonyi states. They also found in some part of Rivers, Cross River and Delta state. Their language is Igbo language and their literature is Igbo literature. Igbo literature may be oral or written. The first Igbo literature was *Omenuko* .It was published

in 1933 by Pita Nwana. Other Igbo writers are T.U.Ubesie, U.C.Obichere, G.O.Onyekaonwu, I.U.Nwadike .All these Igbo writers both mentioned and unmentioned, often choose their themes to stop societal ills in Igbo land, Nigeria and Africa.

Marxist Theory

Marxist is a theory used in analyzing of history, society, revolution and economics. Later, it found applicable to literary theory. Marxist literary critics examine the relations between sociology and literature. According to Obi (2012:177), Marxist theory is a social criticism which shows approval (i.e. applauds) literature that depict struggles of the poor and down trodden. ‘In Marxist theory; the writers recognized that the people are the true source of literature. Writers must observe and study the people, their life, and their struggle, so as to create a variety of characters out of real life. This theory devoted to reconstruct the past on the basis of historical evidence to find out a text, as truthful and accurate representation of social reality at a given time.

Marxist theory examines literature in cultural, economic and political context in which it was written. It explores the relationship between the artist and society. Kennedy and Gioia (2007:1523) says Marxist critics “looks at the sociological status of the author to evaluate how profession of a writer in a particular milieu affected what was written.” This means that Marxist critics analyses the social content of literary works, cultural, economic and political values. It also looks at the role of audience in literature.

Marxist believed that the dominant capitalist, the middle class would eventually be challenged and over thrown by working class. In the meantime, however, middle class capitalists would exploit the working class who produce excess products and profits yet do not share in the benefits of their labor. According to Krisner and Mandel (2004:2207) "... regarded all parts of the society in which they lived both religious, legal, educational, governmental etc. as tainted by what they saw as the corrupt values of middle-class capitalists." Marxist critics tend to analyze the literary works of any historical era as products of ideology. Cuddon (2014:422) says Marxist critics "... try to find out to what extent a text is truthful and accurate representation of social reality, at any given time." Literature should be displayed as a progressive outlook on society and it should be accessible to the masses.

Causes and Effects of Bad Leadership in Africa

Most political leaders imposed themselves on people through electoral fraud and malpractice. Some of these leaders who came to power through fraud have nothing to offer to the masses. According to Mbuba(2012:354) "... leaders that ascends to power through faulty electoral process turned their back on the masses, making them beggars in their country." Bad leaders especially in Nigeria exploit the people they supposed to protect. Such leadership pattern lead the governed into kidnapping, hate speech, hunger and unemployment which is rampant in Nigeria, as well as other African countries.

Leaders in the 21st are referred to as the present day leaders. There is some action of these present-day leaders which was not seen in the past leaders. According to Nnatuanya (2012:337) “the leaders in Africa especially in Nigeria, in 21st century are normally using political appointment as an avenue of sharing the so called national cake to the detriment of the poor.” For instance, civil servants is talking of 250,000 naira minimum wage, which government were agitating against, later federal government agreed to pay #70,000 as minimum wage which not paid civil servants. While the allowance of political office holders run to millions of naira on monthly bases.

Furthermore, present day leaders do not see problems as challenges; rather they see problems as a means of wasting states allocation. They fund millions of dollars in advertising unaccomplished projects with the views to deceive the masses. In the past, media and it personnel were the hope of common man. They give undiluted news without fear, presently media houses were afraid of accurate news so as not to be apprehended by the police or banned from operation. Uzuegbunam (2002:384)says “... our media house organization have been made dependent by the leaders of today, making the media unable to carry their rules of being watchdog and mouth piece of the masses.”

The Synopsis of the Novel *Uwa Akaala Nka*

Uwa Akaala Nka by Obichere was published on 2015 by Pacific press, Owerri. Obichere is one of the modern writers that write his stories in order to change the social

ills in the society. Obichere tells a story of his hero Ezeugha whom the elders in his village gave ozo title. Ozo is a prestigious title in Igbo land. He later became the governor of his state Umuala. Ezeugha started his career as a civil servant; he worked for 21 years with Roman Company that was located in Lagos state. Ezeugha being very hardworking and the oldest worker in the company, was made the manager and the accountant of the company. Ezeugha as the manager and accountant have access to company's bank account. Ezeugha looted company's money and ran to his village. The owner of the company made effort to look for him but cannot trace him down to his village Umuala. During the governorship poll in Umuala, Ezeugha is one of the governorship aspirants. He promised people of good governance and people voted for him and he won, and became the governor of the state. When Ezeugha resumed as the governor of the state, people started seeing him as a liar and killer. He killed the entire contestant in the opposition party and sent some to exile. Anyone who accused him of bad governance will be abducted and killed. He closes down schools that his opposition party had meeting in. He retires many without due process. He retrenched workers, fired and replaced them with his own candidates. He stopped eight pregnant women from receiving anti-natal services from the state hospital because their husbands are in his opposition party. Ezeugha was only interested on accumulation of wealth that will last for his third generation. He is a liar, there is a lot of ambiguities in his speeches that people find it difficult to pin them down to a particular thing. In terms of being truthful in his speech, the masses regard

him as “pure liar” and so view his utterance with disbelief. At the end his four years in office, Ezeugha embezzled state money; saved them in many banks outside the country.

Instances in the Text Where Bad Governance Were X-Rayed.

A study of the synopsis revealed that the text on study was about politics and bad governance as seen in Nigeria and other African countries. Most of 21st century leaders started their political career with stolen money as seen in *Uwa Akaala Nka*

Ezeugha buuru ego niile o zutere nanke nna ya ukwu na Lagos, were zọọ ọkwa ibu Gọvano (2015:41)

Ezeugha started his political career by using the money he looted from his master in Lagos and contest governorship election

In this novel, Obichere said about the embezzlement of public fund. Embezzlement is the stealing of money meant for the benefit of the people. Most of present day leaders, after stealing as the chairman of a local government area, will use stolen fund to contest for higher political post such as; senate and house of representative. In *Uwa Akaala Nka*, Ezeugha used stolen money to contest for governorship post.

Ozo Ezeugha jiri aziza zakoo ego niile ndi ụlọọrụ ya nwere, were rie mbọ mbọ, gbalaa obodo ya, wee zọwa nnukwu okwa; govano. (2015:41)

Ozo Ezeugha embezzled money from his company and fled to his village. He started aiming for higher post; governor.

The author Obichere in his novel *Uwa Akaala Nka* said about poor moral value associated with 21st century leaders. He said that some present leaders forgot their manifestoes immediately they won the election.

Nkwa niile Ezeugha kwekoro ndi obodo ya Umuala Oge o na-achu nta vootu, o nweghi nke o mejuputara. Govano Ozọ Ezeugha kwuru na ya ga-arụ oku latrik, mmiri, pompu na ulogwu ga-abu n'efu (39).

Ezeugha during his campaign promised his people of constant electricity, pipe borne water and free medical services, but failed to keep what he promised.

Kidnapping and killing are another poor moral value associated with the 21st century leaders. Most present day leaders have group of men whom they kept as their thugs, once their government was criticized those thugs will be sent to kill those involved in the criticism, as seen in *Uwa Akaala Nka*.

Ndi mmadu bidoro dewe akwukwo mkpesa ma na-akatọ ochichi Ezeugha, Ezeugha zipuru ndi ntọri mmadu; ha tooro ha n'ulo ha, ma gbuo ha (40)

Many people started writing to the federal government against Ezeugha's governance.

Ezeugha send his thugs to them and there were killed.

Most of the 21st country leaders have their bank account abroad as seen in *Uwa Akaala Nka*.

Ezeugha buuru ego niile o butere mgbe o bu
govanọ tinye ya n'uloaku di na mba Ofesi
.Obichere(2015)

The money Ezeugha embezzled when he was
governor was saved in many banks outside the
country.

Conclusion

It is important to conclude that bad governance has denied the leaders the quality of being described as the true representative of the people. Literature is a basic weapon to fight bad governance in Nigeria and Africa. Leaders must realize that they owe the masses a lot and their words must reflect honesty and integrity. Again, leaders must know that the masses are tired of their using language to intimidate, frustrate, confuse, and make merchandise of the people they are supposed to serve.

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