

UNVEILING POWER DYNAMICS AND GENDER OPPRESSION IN BUCHI EMECHETA'S *THE BRIDE PRICE*

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Abstract

This study examines Buchi Emecheta's novel, The Bride Price through the lens of cultural, religious, educational, and economic hegemony. Set in post-colonial Nigeria, the novel recounts the life of Aku-nna, a young Igbo girl whose experiences speculate the pervading influence of abundant hegemonic forces on individual and societal levels. The study focuses on how cultural traditions, particularly the practice of bride price, reinforce patriarchal values and manipulate women, thereby maintaining cultural hegemony. Additionally, the study probes economic hegemony by highlighting the financial dependencies and distinction that shape gender and class relations within the narrative. Religious hegemony is also investigated through the novel's portrayal of the interplay between traditional Igbo beliefs and colonial Christian creed, revealing the complex ways in which these belief systems hits moral values and social behaviors. The role of education is also inspected, examining how colonial educational structures and serve as instruments of both authorization and control, influencing individual desires and societal expectations. Through a comprehensive analysis of these hegemonic dimensions, this study aims to uncover the sophisticated mechanisms of power and their implications in Emecheta's work. By establishing The Bride Price within the broader context of post-colonial discourse, the study contributes to an enhanced understanding of the enduring impact of hegemonic structures on post-colonial societies and the individuals within them.

Keywords: Hegemony; church friendly society; free men; culture; insecurity; beliefs; virgin; mechanisms of power.

Introduction

In the realm of postcolonial literature (Lears, 1985) Buchi Emecheta's stands as effulgent whose work oscillate with the sheer reality of Hegemony. Buchi with her work navigates the bitter realities of oppressors and oppressed ones. Buchi Emecheta was born in Nigeria in 1944 during the Second World War; then, immigrated to UK from 1962 where she started writing more than twenty books; Her notable works include, *The joys of Motherhood*, *Second Class Citizen* (1974), *In the Ditch* and *The Slave Girl* (1977). One of her famous novels, *The Bride Price* (1976) is being taken up for the study. This study embarks on an intense inspection of women subjugation in postcolonial society (Arshad et al., 2024). The researcher endeavors to dissect the layers of cultural, religious, economical, judicial and educational hegemony. Hegemony is a gesticulation that studied the impacts of hegemony on Nigerian society.

Hegemony (Lears, 1985), as defined by Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci, refers to the dominance or leadership of one social group or class over others. It involves not only political or economic control but also the ability to shape the values, beliefs, and norms of society, thereby maintaining the existing power structures (Illyas et al., 2023). Gramsci's concept

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of hegemony emphasizes the role of culture, ideology, and consent in maintaining the status quo (Lear's, 1985 p. 567-593). Bachi's novel serves as a mirror reflecting human conditions, capturing the elixir of culture and human values which lean towards the values, norms and culture of sovereignties.

The current study aims a comprehensive exploration and categorization of the hegemonic forces at play in Emecheta's narrative. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on post-colonial literature and the ongoing impact of hegemonic structures in shaping societies and individual lives to explore these various forms of hegemony within the novel, analyzing how they shape the characters' lives and societal structures (Illyas et al., 2023). Through the story of Aku-nna, a young girl navigating the traditional Igbo society, Emecheta provides a critical lens on the forces that dominate and dictate social norms and individual wishes.

By investigating these forms of hegemony, this research seeks to uncover the multifaceted ways in which power operates and is contested in *The Bride Price*. Through a detailed analysis of cultural, economic, religious, and educational influences, this paper will provide. Emecheta believes that the concept of insecurity and suppression of women is universal (Ali et al., 2021a). Her motto is, *longer the women stay still; their problems become identical despite of their nativity*.

"Language is the dress of thought, and the style is particular cut and fashion of the dress".

Dawson in her "Beyond Imperial Feminism: Buchi Emecheta's London Novels and the dress of thought, and the style in a particular Black British Women's Emancipation" confirms that *The first successful black woman novelist living in Britain after 1948*" (Ramchand, 1970)

In addition, she has also raised the voice of women in most of her books, opposing any barriers given to women in terms of oppression, slavery, racism, and colours.

Research Statement

The Bride Price by Buchi Emecheta is examined in this study from the perspectives of economic, cultural, religious, and educational hegemony. Aku-nna, a young Igbo girl whose experiences highlight the persistent effect of hegemonic forces on both a personal and societal level, is the protagonist of this story, which is set in post-colonial Nigeria. The study examines how cultural customs—in particular, the bride price—maintain patriarchal standards and repress women, therefore maintaining cultural hegemony. In depth scrutinizing of the selected text shows how these customs uphold societal norms and define gender roles. Furthermore, the study exhibits economic hegemony by demonstrating how class distinctions and financial reliance affect gender roles and interpersonal relationships in the story. An analysis of religious hegemony is provided by showing the interactions between traditional Igbo beliefs and colonial Christianity, revealing how these systems of belief shape moral values and social behaviours. The function of education is also discussed, emphasizing how colonial educational systems shaped people's expectations and aspirations while acting as tools of both dominance and empowerment. The study furthermore uncovers *The Bride Price's* intricate power dynamics and their larger relevance by thoroughly analyzing the features of post-colonialism. This study provides insights into the long-term consequences of hegemonic systems on post-colonial societies and the persons inside them by placing the novel within the framework of post-colonial discourse.

Research Gap

The study's research gap is the scant examination of the complex cultural, religious, educational, and economic hegemonic frameworks that influence societal and individual experiences in post-

colonial literature, especially *The Bride Price* by Buchi Emecheta. Although the novel's themes of colonialism and patriarchy have been studied in the past, little attention has been paid to how these hegemonic forces interact and maintain power dynamics. Furthermore, little is known about how economic and theological hegemony shaped gender and class dynamics, particularly in the context of colonial education and its dual role as an instrument of empowerment and control. In order to close these gaps, this study offers a thorough examination of these interrelated hegemonic characteristics and presents fresh perspectives on how they interact and influence post-colonial identities and social structures.

Literature Review

The researcher B.Muthulakshmi explores the novel under the theme of culture vs realities where leaving Ma Blackie has been overlooked in history, as they endeavor oppression and give it on to their daughters Aku-nna (Muthulakshmi, 2019). *The Bride Price* explores the liberation of women through education, challenging gender inequalities, and breaking free from restrictive customs and traditions. The novel highlights the struggles of Nigerian women in the Post-Colonial era, oppressed by men who exploit them under the guise of cultural norms (Naz et al., 2023). The story makes clear how cultural norms and sexual blackmailing lays impact women's dignity, which can be. The text discusses the challenges faced by women in Nigeria post-Colonization, highlighting how cultural practices restrict women's autonomy and expression of their thoughts and emotions. Aku-nna Odia, the protagonist in *The Bride Price*, is portrayed as a young girl struggling for independence and dignity despite societal expectations. After her father's death, Aku-nna's struggles badly as she dealt with the loss of her father's protection and support, leading her to question her future and role in society. The loneliness and agony of Aku-nna is seen through her words,

"Who will send me to school now? Who will feed me? Who will be a good husband to Nne?" (Emecheta, 1976, p. 13)

The narrative delves into the traditional practice of bride price. The text underscores the oppressive nature of these traditions, which confine women like Aku-nna to predefined roles and expectations, stifling their aspirations and individuality. Through self-confidence and courage. Customs in the society depicted in the novel show a stark contrast in treatment between men and women. Men with multiple wives could attain high status, while women who engaged in premarital adventures faced severe disrespect and rejection. Aku-nna, Regardless of her innocence, was mistreated and discarded by Okoboshi, highlighting the harsh treatment women faced when accused of immorality. Okoboshi humiliates Aku-nna in such words

"This is going to be an extremely busy day for you, my educated bride. Get out and find a gourd to take to the stream. The older women will ask you what happened and you will have to tell them your story yourself" (Emecheta, 1976, p. 64)

The text also touches on the changing dynamics post-independence, where formerly enslaved individuals who were educated under European colonial rule rose to positions of power and authority. This shift in power dynamics highlights the complexities of social hierarchy and the impact of historical legacies on societal structures.

In another article paper the researcher Zanyar Kareem Abdul has scrutinized *The Bride Price* by Buchi Emecheta. He declared it as an important modern novel that emphasizes the voice of a female character. The novel discusses the patriarchal society where women are the initial victims and African culture, which Emecheta condemns. Men hold power in controlling families, and traditional African society upholds the practice of paying the bride price. The paper aims to

emphasize the importance of maintaining this cultural belief regardless of societal modernization (Abdul, 2019).

The concept of "double colonization" proposed by Peterson and Rutherford in 1986 is explored in the paper, linking it to the African system of marriage delineated in the novel. They both argue,

"Women are subject to representations in colonial discourses in ways which collude with patriarchal values." (Spivak, 1988)

The aim of this research paper is to create similarities between African culture and that of Iraqi Kurdistan, with a focus on the brutality faced by female characters under the control of both male figures and colonial powers. The researcher aims to raise awareness and prevent such conflicts through the analysis presented in the paper.

For his research Khikenza has chosen the hot topic surrounding the world today, the most complicated one is Gender based violence. Women and girls are subject of physically, morally and psychologically violence. Women's body is exploited and has become a weapon in battlefield. Women are wildly violated by all kinds of categories of men in society: soldiers, Statesmen, businessmen, etc. Teenagers are violated and sometimes bear undesirable pregnancies which lead either to fistula or death during the birthday (KHIKENZA, 2021). Buchi Emecheta, the author of "The Bride Price" is against the practices of girls' kidnapping and a forced marriage in African society. When her husband died, Ma Blackie and the children were forced to go back to Ibuza village because life in Lagos was too expensive and difficult to pass for a fatherless family as stated in the following passage:

This paper explored that Several weeks had passed since the funeral of Ezekiel, Ma Blackie, had returned to Lagos and found herself widow. Friends and relatives were very kind to her and children, but/ life in Lagos was too difficult and costly for a fatherless family. So Ma Blackie and her

Children had to return to their home town, Ibuza, where Okonkwo, Ezekiel elder brother, and his family lived. (Emecheta, 1976, p. 21)

This paper basically deals with the theme of gender dominance and ill treatment with girls.

A similar kind of study under the title *From Empowerment to Suppression: Examining Gender Dynamics through Material Feminist Lens in A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khalid Hosseini* explores gender-based violence and discrimination because of the social and political change in society. Mostly in Asian countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan and India females become the direct victim because of any change. Every new social or political order bring new rules and regulation for each gender and tightens or loosens (rarely) the grip over females.

Dr Peerlti Chaudhry studied the narrative of novel with the perspective to dig out stylistic devices used by Bachti to make her work spectacular (Chaudhry, 2021). This paper examines the stylistic innovations in Buchi Emecheta's novel "The Bride Price," she focused on the use of chapter headings and background information for episodes. The study reveals that Emecheta's self-account is well-organized, contrary to some scholars' views on linguistic analysis structure. The author uses this technique to build reader's expectations related to stylistic devices, emphasizing the importance of analyzing how these devices convey the message and engage readers through meaningful interpretations.

"Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics, the scientific study of language" (N.Leech, 1969)

Many stylistic devices are used in the novel as metaphor, substratum, collocation, recapitulation etc. The researcher found collation in these lines

"You ought to be at work" (Emecheta, 1976, p. 1).

“*She looked tired, as if the hot sun had squeezed the very juice of life*” (Emecheta, 1976, p. 10)

The research paper of Rathika. E discusses the portray of African culture, marriage, and bride price in Buchi Emecheta's novel *The Bride Price*. Emecheta, a Nigerian novelist, highlights the challenges faced by African women and the position of girl child in a male-dominated society. The clash of cultures and motherhood are prominent themes in African Literature, often intertwined with myth and superstition in both oral and written traditions (Saram et al., 2023). This paper emphasizes that all these typical elements are found in the novel *The Bride Price*. The novel delves into the experiences of women in traditional Igbo society, where characters seek self-identity and a sense of belonging within their community. The narrative throws light on the struggles and sufferings of women in a society where patriarchal dominance is prevailed. The complexities of African traditions and the thirst to inquire for individuality between societal expectations is the basic motive of the novel.

Aku-nna the protagonist of the novel represents the oppression. She is the main character of the novel who faces many problems from her society. After the death of her father Aku-nna along with her brother and mother forced to live by her father's brother Okonkwo. It is even today in Nigeria, when you have lost your father you have lost your parents. Your mother is only a woman, and women are supposed to (be) boneless weak and subltaned. A family without a head, a family without shelter, a family without parents, in fact a non-existing family. Such traditions do not change very much.

Research Methodology

This study adopts the theory of Hegemony by Antonio Gramsci to present the analysis of the novel *The Bride Price*. Qualitative research (Ali et al., 2021) design is used in order to analyze the text and establish particular understanding under the selected framework mentioned. Natural environments serve as the main source of data for qualitative research, which focuses on actual events and circumstances as they arise in everyday contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The goal is to comprehend human experiences in the context of their real contexts, which include mental, emotional, cultural, and physical components. This method aims to explain people's experiences in these organic environments (Lune & Berg, 2017). Qualitative research (Ali et al., 2021a) is based on an explanatory method that offers detailed descriptions of societal reality and individual experiences. The final objective is to acquire a thorough comprehension of particular situations, where "particular" refers to actual contexts and activities (Lune & Berg, 2017). For this purpose, the researcher has auditioned cultural, political, religious and educational hegemony in the prodigious novel of Bachi Emecheta.

To identify the strike of hegemony on different aspects of the African society the novel *The Bride Price* is explored by the researcher. It is argued that this method is adequate enough because the results are introduced in a descriptive manner (Ali et al., 2023). The research is limited to the novel *The Bride Price* to dig out the perspectives and hold of colonizers on the dominated, passive Nigerian society.

A fundamental component of Antonio Gramsci's theoretical framework, the term of hegemony refers to the methods in which powerful groups in society preserve their dominance by ideological leadership as well as direct force. “The ‘normal’ exercise of hegemony is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 80). According to Gramsci, hegemony is the permission that the ruling class obtains from lower classes to make their dominance seem legitimate and natural. Institutions that spread the values and ideas that

support the supremacy of the ruling class, such as the media, the educational system, and religion, are responsible for obtaining this consent (Gramsci, 1971, p. 145).

By proposing the concept of cultural hegemony, Gramsci broadens the old Marxist understanding of power, which mostly concentrated on coercive, state-led control. He asserts that the ruling class controls the cultural and ideological landscape in addition to using economic tactics to maintain power. By means of this "cultural hegemony," the prevailing class fabricates a worldview that rationalizes their authority and renders alternatives inconceivable. The "normal" practice of hegemony, according to Gramsci, is defined by the mutually reinforcing combination of force and consent, with neither force nor consent ruling disproportionately over the other (Gramsci, 1971, p. 80).

He also distinguishes between civil society and political society in his understanding of hegemony. Institutions like the media, churches, and schools are examples of civil society, and they are vital to the spread of hegemonic ideologies. Political society, on the other hand, contains institutions of direct authority like the police, military, and government, which enforce power when consent is not forthcoming (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12).

According to Gramsci's paradigm, any kind of revolution or substantial social change necessitates the emergence of a counter-hegemony, or an alternative set of values, beliefs, and ideas that oppose the prevailing hegemony. Through the mobilization of subordinate groups to build new coalitions that could challenge the ruling class's cultural and intellectual leadership, this undermines the passive acceptance of the status quo (Gramsci, 1971, p. 239).

Data Analysis

The novel *The Bride Price* paints out the dominance or leadership of one group or nation over others, which is achieved through political, religious economical, or cultural means (Alnuzaili et al., 2024). The oppressor are Europeans and they came with the agenda to educate and civilized the savage, barbarians of Africa. This research deals with the theme of Hegemony, the ability to shape and control the actions and behaviors of other peoples or nations especially of Africans within a given system or context and reshaped Nigerian culture and society. Hegemony is quite visible when the civilized white missionaries effected religious, cultural, economic and social areas of African people according to their own will and rules. Subjugation and women's insecurity is quite clear in the narrative, from the very start till the end. The title of the novel shows that the women are the center of attention for men in Nigerian society just because they could marry them, had their good Bride Price and enjoy the title of Obi in their land.

Nigerian culture is represented as children are not expected to be inquisitive to their elders they are respectful and did not ask questions as at the death of her father Aku-nna defers her aunt and uncle about the funeral rites of her father. But she did not question about what happens to father, She thought that it would come to me eventually by storytelling process. But later we saw the same Aku-nna married to her lover a slave boy Chike against the laws of land and also by rebelling his father's will. Executives funeral explained all the evil people of Nigeria incorporates both their own traditional and cultural beliefs and ideas of Christian genius regarding heaven and hell for fear of offending any deities. According to the researcher, this paper pin point the prevailed hegemony in religious, cultural, educational, judicial and economical sector of Nigerian society. This research article also digs deep the passive position of women in Nigerian society.

Cultural hegemony in the novel is portrayed through the customs and traditions that govern marriage and gender roles. The practice of bride price, a central theme in the narrative, emphasized the commodification of women and the reinforcement of patriarchal values. Nigerian

people were stuck to their old rituals but these rituals are violated by their own people after the arrival of white missionary in society. White people educated them and they turned their old false beliefs down. First out stepping from law is seen by Ma Blackie when she wore new cotton dress during her nine months period of widow. According to the culture women have to wear dirty torn clothes and stayed at home but she travels a long distance along her children.

However, Ma Blackie had arrived in a new black cotton

Dress, which caused some argument among the women.

Some said that Ma Blackie could wear her new dress during

Her mourning time. Others said she must wear the old one (Emecheta, 1976, p. 26).

Free People of Ibgo strictly prohibited to marry slaves especially the Free Girl could only marry a Free Man. But we find that after getting education under white men's institutes and their church teachings, perspective of many people has changed. This transformation from native values to the values of dominion is found in the character of Aku-nna and Chike. The former was a free girl and deeply in love with Chike who was descendent of slave family. In Nigerian culture we saw men boasting false notions to save their manly hood and dignity. We found Okonkwo at different levels boasting his rank in society and dreaming to become the Obi of the land.

Don't you know that I hope to

Become a chief, an Obi? (Emecheta, 1976, p. 28)

Here the greed of Nigerian men is quite obvious they need pride price for having rich life style and to gain the titles of chief. Again we saw Okoboshi claiming that

'I slept with her, he said, 'and she was no virgin. But I cut

Off a piece of her hair, so now she belongs to me!' (Emecheta, 1976, p. 73)

Fact was that Aku-nna did not let him to touch her by playing a false game. African people have some old concepts that a girl dye during child birth who's bride price is not paid. They also have omen that black magic work well if you make a puppet of that person and touch it with needles. The person will die soon if he knows about it.

"In Ibuza, if you wanted to destroy someone, you made a

Little doll exactly like that person. Then you pushed a sharp

Needle into the doll's heart. The magic usually worked; the

Enemy died slowly and painfully" (Emecheta, 1976, p. 75)

But at the closing of novel Chike narrates that it was physical weakness and a safe birth does not rely on a bride price, dismissing the idea as nonsense. As for the effects of magic are concerned Ma Blackie concealed the story of Aku-nna's puppet from her then with having knowledge of his step father's magic why she died. Nigerian people deeply indulge in magic as we see Okonkwo asking medicine man to make another puppet of Aku-nna and put needles in heart when Ma Blackie removed previous puppet from his room. Here revenge of father for daughter comes in front. Through oppressor's education the concept of inequality between Free Men of clan and slaves is rejected and rebellion is shown by Aku-nna as she falls in love with slave boy, and both got married against the custom of land.

Although, under

The white man's law, nobody could own a person as a slave

Now, people did not forget which families had been slaves in

The old days. But nobody had explained to Aku-nna what it

Meant to be from a 'slave' or a 'free' family " (Emecheta, 1976, p. 40)

In Ibgo culture Gong is heated at the time of fear as Okonkwo's wife beat at the kidnaped of Aku-nna. Guns are fired at wedding or celebrating trumps as Oboshoki family did after

kidnapping a girl for their son. Aku-nna and Chike both denied full human autonomy, the former because of her gender and the latter because of his caste. Ironically, the story of Aku-nna, who had felt it

“unjust that she was not allowed a say in her own life” and who cried out against the “savage custom . . . that could be so heartless and make so many people unhappy,” is made a warning to young girls against the very rebellion she had essayed.

Religious Hegemony in the novel *The Bride Price* reflects the mingling of traditional Igbo beliefs, and the enforced Christian teachings brought by colonialism. The novel portrays the tensions and syncretism between these belief systems, revealing how religious ideologies shape moral values and individual identities. Nigerian people were greatly influenced by the religion of white people as we saw Ezekiel married his woman in church, hiddenly pays monthly to church which would later helped in Nandua’s education.

Also, in his lifetime Ezekiel had paid a few shillings every week to the Church Friendly Society. This meant that after his death the Society paid for his son’s education up to the age of fifteen. So nobody, not even Okonkwo, could take Nna-nndo away from school.

‘How clever of my brother,’ thought Okonkwo, ‘to provide for his son in this way. Why didn’t I think of that (Emecheta, 1976, p. 27)

For my sons?’

Ezekiel used to visit white missionary, so her funeral was under Christian missionary regarding heaven and hell, for fear of being offending deities. Ma Blackie herself was taught at church by white men so, she make her children go to school and avoid night dancing rituals. At the end of story the protagonist Aku-nna was also married at church People use to visit their Goddess for prosperity and fertility as we find Ma Blackie at the very start of the story visited River Goddess for having more babies.

Educational Hegemony recruited by Bachi in the novel. She critically explores this aspect in the novel as her narrative critiques the colonial education system and its impact on indigenous cultures, emphasizing the transformative yet troublesome and rowdy power of education. *The Bride Price* has the central theme that how colonizer’s education assisted native peoples to break the chains of the old customs and traditions in clan. We observe the character of Aku-nna and Chike who changed their way of thinking and living after getting education by missionaries. In African values education is considered unnecessary for women as we see stepfather and brother of Aku-nna against her education. Protagonist’s brother Osenekwu was also against her love for teacher as he says,

‘If she is, I will kill her,’ (Emecheta, 1976, p. 33)

Girls who got education are seen indifferently in land. Apparently Nigerian rejected and hated white people’s institutions but have concealed bent towards new education. Ezekiel have paid to Church Friendly Society during his life so his son could get school education in church. When Okonkwo memorize his brother and discuss his step about his son’s education. He says,

Why didn’t I think of that

For my sons? (Emecheta, 1976, p. 28)

He felt sorry that why he had not done same for her son’s education. Chike slave boy become teacher after getting education by white men and earned Command of Respect by everyone in Ibuza. Both protagonist and her husband taught at church school and earned good reputative livelihood. Ma Blackie was also educated lady.

Judicial Hegemony is another topic of under discussion text. Although Nigerian people have their own system of justice which was made to seem poor by externals ideology. We find that

when slave family's trees were cut by Okoboshi's family. White men's court held the accused's family answerable and also declared punishment for being guilty of crime. The legal system of white missionaries in Ibuza did not try to comprehend the complexities of social status and inequality of races while dealing the case. They just punish the family which is found guilty without taking into account any slave and free man's difference. As a consequence, free men were required to replant trees for the slaves and pay a significant sum of money. This ruling intensified the animosity between the Obidi and Ofulue families, as the former started to blame the latter for their misfortune, particularly holding Okonkwo's family accountable due to Akunna's connection.

He had planted trees...

his trees had been cut down. The

Shock hurt... collected enough

Money to take the Obidi family to law...

The white man's law did not..... free

Men... slaves, and pay a large

Sum of money too. (Emecheta, 1976, p. 74)

Overall, the incident involving the destruction of Ofulue's trees and the subsequent legal proceedings highlighted the tensions and rivalries within the community of Ibuza, showcasing the impact of social dynamics and misunderstandings on relationships and conflicts. Chike's father along his sons took his case to white men's court about the burning of his trees by Obokoshi and his family.

Economic hegemony is intricately linked to cultural practices, especially through the concept of bride price and the economic dependency of women on male relatives. The novel explores the disparities and power dynamic that arise from economic control, exploring how wealth and poverty influence social status and personal freedom. White men played role in the economy of Nigerian people. Life of several characters turned prosper after dealing in white men's business. Several characters are seen working and agreeing with white missionary oil company and enjoying wealthier life. Ezekiel have dealing with Oil Company. Ma Blackie after her husband did her secret business with Oil Company of white men, which helped her children to nourish her children in better way.

One thing Akunna knew for certain. Her mother no

Longer had any time for her: she was too busy with her

Business and her new husband." (Emecheta, 1976, p. 36)

Chike find job for leaving in the sam company after marriage. Chike's brother was also employer at white men's company.

Chike was training to become a manager

Of the oil company, and they had plenty of money (Emecheta, 1976, p. 75)

Although Nigerian grow cassava, yams and palm oil for their business but having little amount out of it. Slave family's economy grow when father of chike dealt with white men's business.

Subalternity of women and their passive status is the theme used by Buchi. In Nigerian culture women are only valued because they patruit children to men especially daughters. Laboring a boy also raised family's well-being but more and more girls ultimately bring wealth to father in the form of bride price. Akunna's real father Ezekiel raised her up and always planned that he would have high pride price for her daughter and family would enjoy healthy economic status. Okonkwo, brother of her father (step father) dreamt to win the title of Obi with her huge pride price. Even the name of Akunna symbolic which means 'father's wealth'. But people like Chike,

his family and Aku-nna, having white missionary education and influence think differently. Chike believes that baby girl's birth is source of happiness not because of bride price infact girl is the symbol of parent's deep mutual affection. He smilingly afraid that if they had baby girl people Will come to know about his secret love for his wife. While Aku-nna says

But then people will talk. You know what

People say about girl babies. They say girls are love babies.

Their parents make love day and night. I want our love to be Private!'

Aku-nna laughed. 'I'll ask God for a girl, then, and

Another one, and another one after that. Then everybody

Will know just how much we love each other (Emecheta, 1976, p. 77)

We even saw woman's jealousy towards woman in the character of Okonkwo's first wife for Ma Blackie as Ma Blackie was beautiful, intelligent, educated and married in church. The novel portrays the unequal power dynamics between men and women, where men often exerting control over women's lives and decisions. Aku-nna's father, Ezekiel, imposes his will on the family, including arranging Aku-nna's marriage without her consent, highlighting the lack of agency women have within patriarchal social structures. Patriarchy prevailed on the extant that family without father in Nigeria is considered insecure and nonexistence. Ma Blackie unwillingly marry her husband's brother because she and her both children need stability in society. Both names Aku-nna 'father's wealth' and Nandua 'father is shelter' also generated to emphasize on the men dominance. Ma Blackie along her two children moved to native land Ibuza after losing her husband. Okonkwo having several wives is also example of male dominance.

In Nigerian culture women's worth is not reliant solely. Through bride price she made her father a rich man and by bearing many girls she again make her husband strong and wealthy man, even winner of the title Obi.

Passive and insecure Life of a woman is quite clear from the character of the protagonist Aku-nna and her mother Ma Blackie. Women in the novel, such as Aku-nna and her mother, are often economically dependent on men due to patriarchal structures and limited opportunities for women to earn a living. Aku-nna's family struggles financially, and the practice of the bride price reinforces the economic commodification of women, contributing to their insecurity.

Ma Blackie is described as a tall woman with shiny black skin who always smiled. Despite her cheerful demeanor, she struggled with infertility and was unable to have another baby. Her husband Ezekiel, a small man with a small voice, married a big woman who kept growing after they wed. Despite the height difference, they were a happy couple. Ezekiel would stand on his toes to convey serious messages to his wife. At the opening of the novel we find Ezekiel and Ma Blackie arguing and quarreling about infertility of producing more children. Ezekiel often use to say

'I paid double the normal bride price for you,' he told her.

'And we were married in church. But what have you given

Me – just one son!' (Emecheta, 1976, p. 2).

To save herself from the anger of her husband and moking of other women who got pregnant when their husbands came back from war, Ma Blackie decides to travel a long distance to Ibuza village. Where she asks River Goddess for babies.

In Nigerian society a woman without husband, and children without father are considered helpless. The fears of Ma Blackie arises when she comes back from Ibuza and finds herself

widow. She decides to move back to her husband's native village and married his husband's brother Okonkwo. Protecting her orphan children in Nigerian society and also for her own security. This shows the insecure position of women in Nigerian culture. Fear of women is apparent when we saw Aku-nna at her first menstruation seeking for a man who could protect her as she turned from girl to woman. Kidnapping of protagonist at dancing night and her stay at Okoboshi's room whole night forcefully shows the humiliation and passive position of women in society.

Conclusion

The text of the novel, *The Bride Price* is successfully examined by the researcher under the hegemonic lens. The researcher focused on how the introduction of white missionaries led to changes in Ibo land's social, cultural, religious, legal, and economic spheres. In summary, this research paper defines hegemony as the process of gaining power through the propagation of an ideology, wherein authoritarian elements are required to uphold the dominance's acquired power and authority. Under the pretence of being moral and civilized, the sovereigns try to flout African customs and laws after landing in underdeveloped and backward regions. *The Bride Price* by Buchi is the book that the researcher has chosen to examine under the heading of hegemony.

The analysis makes clear how the Nigerian people have been subjected to the political, religious, cultural, economic, and individual oppression of European colonists. The novel is characterized by hegemony, which is recognized in Buchi's work as having the upper hand in all spheres of existence, including the personal, religious, cultural, and economic. The issue of hegemony and the enforcement of authority concludes this research paper's reading of the book. In a Nigerian hamlet, Buchi tells the tale of multiple families, each with a distinct mindset and background regarding their customs and beliefs. It is evident that the majority of the villagers are pleased with the changes brought about by the white missionaries. The researcher also identifies characters in the book who adhere to traditional beliefs and practices, such as Okonkwo and his son. It is evident from these characters' strict adherence to cultural norms that Okonkwo would rather lose her daughter's life than allow her to marry outside the law. The novelist portrays the rule of authoritarians in a good light, pointing out that some positive developments occurred in Nigeria following the establishment of paramountcy. People who work for supremacist oil companies become affluent. Following what they learned in church, the family of slaves gained respect and dignity in society. The characters who were present at the ceremony rebel against the custom of accepting the bride price. So, after a thorough analysis of the text, the scholar concludes that Buchi uses the novel to illustrate the effects of hegemony and the amenities that the inhabitants of the community enjoyed following the arrival of white missionaries. The researcher provides evidence from every angle that the story of *The Bride Price* has every essential component of hegemony. The acknowledged conclusion of the study is that man is always influenced by powerful forces, and these forces are constantly at work creating, destroying, or mistrusting our culture, values, and beliefs.

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