

Development Communication and its Hindrances in Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*: A Re-Reading through the Lenses of Postcoloniality

Mohammed Sadat^{1*}; Isaac Horsu¹; Selorm Agbesi²; Nelson Saviour Kwashie¹

¹Department of Communication Studies, University of Professional Studies, Accra.

²Department of English, University of Media, Arts and Communication, Accra.

*Corresponding Author's Email: sadat.mohammed@upsamail.edu.gh

Abstract

This paper examines the intricate relationship between development, governance, patriotism, and postcolonial power relations. It specifically identifies "indigenous political elites who serve as intermediaries for neo-colonial interests. Development remains one of the most persistent challenges facing postcolonial Sub-Saharan Africa, despite the continent's abundant human and natural resources. Endemic political corruption continues to undermine national development agendas and frustrate aspirations for independence. This paper examines the intricate relationship between development, governance, patriotism, and postcolonial power relations as depicted in Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*. Drawing on Postcolonial Theory, the study interrogates how colonial structures of domination are reproduced through indigenous political elites who serve as intermediaries for neo-colonial interests, thereby perpetuating economic dependency, institutional fragility, and social inequality. The study concludes that *A Man of the People* remains a remarkably relevant literary intervention that not only diagnoses the structural impediments to Africa's development but also calls for a political culture grounded in integrity, responsible leadership, democratic accountability, and genuine commitment to the nation's collective welfare. By situating Achebe's novel within contemporary postcolonial discourse, this paper contributes to ongoing scholarly debates about literature as a critical site for interrogating governance, political corruption, and sustainable development in Africa.

Keywords: Postcoloniality; Development; Obstacles; Politics; Corruption.

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INTRODUCTION

The concepts of nationalism and patriotism remain central to postcolonial African political discourse. Many African literary writers have engaged with these themes across literary genres: drama, prose, and poetry. In this study, the novel *A Man of the People* by the renowned African writer Chinua Achebe raises issues of nationalism and patriotism in Africa in the post-colonial era.

Patriotism or national pride is a political ideology characterised by love, devotion, attachment to a state, solidarity with fellow citizens, and concern for the state's well-being. Simply put, patriotism is "love for one's nation". Nationalism, on the other hand, is the identification with one's country and the support for its interests at the expense of other nations. To distinguish between the two terms, Acton (1972; 163) indicated that nationalism is "our connection with the race", which, to a large extent, is merely natural or physical, while the awareness of one's duties to the nation one belongs to and dedicating oneself to the fulfilment of those duties is patriotism. Nationalism is the basic unit of humanity, in which the individual can find freedom and fulfilment, while patriotism is rather an emotional affection for one's country (Kedourie, 1985: 7374). Hume (1972) stated that the character of a nation depends exclusively on socio-political and moral factors.

Published on the eve of Nigeria's first military coup, Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) has been read principally as a prescient political satire, a novel whose closing depiction of a coup d'état seemed to anticipate the collapse of Nigeria's First Republic. This paper approaches the novel from a different, complementary angle: as a text preoccupied with the failure of communication as a vehicle for social and economic development in the postcolonial state. Development communication, as a field, asks how information, dialogue, and mediated exchange can be organized to produce participation, accountability, and improved welfare among ordinary citizens (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Achebe's narrative, focalized through the disillusioned schoolteacher Odili Samalu and set against the corrupt career of the Honourable Chief Nanga, stages precisely the conditions under which such communication breaks down.

The central argument advanced here is that *A Man of the People* dramatizes development communication's hindrances not as incidental plot details but as structural features of the postcolonial polity: an elite monopoly over the channels of public information, a political culture of patronage that converts citizens into clients rather than participants, linguistic and educational stratification that excludes the majority from deliberation, and residual colonial habits of thought that persist in supposedly independent institutions. Reading the novel through postcolonial theory allows these hindrances to be understood not merely as African political pathology but as the afterlife of colonial governance structures reproduced, and in some respects intensified, by the new national elite (Fanon, 1963). The study aimed to make the story in the text relevant to the societal change needed in most developing and underdeveloped countries.

Post-Coloniality: Decolonialization Theory

The concept of postcoloniality is highly divisive and ambiguous. Postcoloniality means different things to different scholars, and even for the same scholar or proponent, the concept can carry alternative and sometimes contradictory connotations. Consequently, the concept is defined, conceptualised, contested, debated, studied, and arguably de-studied by various disciplines, such as English literature and comparative philology, cultural studies, history,

gender studies, Diaspora studies, area studies, politics, and other disciplines that epistemically or methodologically interface with the self-proclaimed 'core stakeholders'.

Furthermore, the debate over the meanings and connotations of postcolonialism is fought across various theories, paradigms, and schools of thought, including Marxism, Dependency Theory, nationalist historiography, the subaltern school of history, postcolonial studies in African literature, as well as postmodernism and various shades of poststructuralism, both within and across fields. The broader epistemological contestation about whether the contending categories have greater explanatory power: 'post-coloniality,' 'postcolonialism,' or possibly 'postmodernism' is linked to the preceding intricate discussions. Some commentators have questioned the meaning of the word 'post' in these different notions. If the term 'post' is taken in its literal or linear historical sense to mean 'events after,' then 'postcoloniality' or 'postcolonialism' becomes roughly synonymous with the seemingly under-appreciated concept of 'neocolonialism,' which means a new form of colonialism after the end of the original form. Does the word 'post' transformatively redefine 'coloniality' or 'colonialism,' as some commentators have suggested, to signify some ordered kind of 'discursive practices, the production of subjectivities and identities, or real historical processes'? (Zezeza 2006:19).

Postcoloniality in Africa provides a basis for delineating and deepening understanding of the nature of crises associated with the phenomenon on the continent. Postcoloniality, an offshoot of postcolonialism, is more contemporary and "Periphery-centred" in the sense that it refers to "the cultural daily reality of the former colonies." Postcoloniality is a long-standing pattern of power that emerged from colonialism and helps us understand the persistence of colonial forms of dominance after colonial administrations have ended, as produced by colonial cultures and structures within the modern/colonial capitalist world system. The term "post-colonial power" refers to a crucial structuring process in the modern/colonial world system that connects peripheral locations in the international division of labour with the global racial/ethnic hierarchy, as well as

Third World migrants' inscription in the racial/ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan global cities (Wallerstein, 1979; 1995).

The presence of colonial administrations is reduced to post-coloniality. We still live in a colonial world, as Peruvian sociologist Quijano (1993, 1998, 2000) demonstrated through his "coloniality of power" perspective. We need to break free from narrow ways of thinking about colonial relations to realise the unfinished twentieth-century dream of decolonisation.

In Africa, Kwame Nkrumah, a Ghanaian politician and pioneer of the fight for independence, not only for his nation, Ghana, but for the whole of Africa, was a key figure in the formulation of decolonisation in Africa. He did this by forming the decolonisation movement within the broader Pan-African movement. Therefore, black people in the diaspora became equally enthused about the decolonisation movement. The movement calls on African leaders to fight for independence so they can establish their own government, uphold cultural revitalisation, reclaim the land and all other resources that belong to the African people, and promote social justice and economic equality.

Prominent scholars such as Frantz Fanon, a Martinican philosopher and psychiatrist; Albert Memmi, a Tunisian Jewish writer and philosopher widely known for his studies of the complexities of colonialism and its impact; and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan writer and academic who particularly emphasises the use of African languages, have made significant contributions to the formulation of Decolonisation Theory. Decolonisation Theory

criticises the dominance of Western ideologies, including those embedded in governance, social, and economic structures imposed by former colonial masters on African independent states. This theory highlights indigenous perspectives on culture and governance in the quest to resist colonisation and/or imperialism. Ultimately, decolonisation recognises the ongoing impact of colonisation on societies, cultures, and individual citizens of independent states. The theory seeks to identify this impact and address it by revisiting our own ways of governance based on African culture and the factors that led colonised African states to fight for independence, thereby renouncing disillusionment.

The purposes of decolonisation are far-reaching. First, the theory seeks to reclaim autonomy, cultural values and practices, and knowledge of the traditions of the formerly colonised African states (Smith, 1999). The trauma inflicted upon the people requires healing and reconciliation. Decolonisation acknowledges and addresses these traumas (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1993). Thirdly, the theory seeks to empower marginalised individuals and communities to identify systems of oppression to promote social justice (Freire, 1970). In revitalising the cultures of the African people, decolonisation paves the way for the acknowledgement of indigenous cultures, languages, and practices. By paving this way for self-actualisation, the theory promotes cultural diversity and richness (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986).

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach is used for the study. A critical examination of how the themes of nationalism and patriotism are conveyed in the novels' plot development revealed evidence within the texts, which was interpreted in light of the ideals of nationalism and patriotism in Africa's nation-building. The novel was consequently seen to be related to the real African decolonization framework by its similarities with regard to nationalism and patriotism in neo-colonial Africa, as already mentioned. Data is sought from a textual analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Man of the People* (1966) through the lens of Decolonialisation Theory, a branch of post-coloniality.

A synopsis of Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*

Published in 1966, *A Man of the People* is narrated by Odili Samalu, a young, Western-educated schoolteacher who becomes entangled with Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga, a former teacher turned government minister renowned for his charisma and his shameless exploitation of public office for private gain. Odili's initial admiration for Nanga curdles into political opposition after Nanga seduces Odili's girlfriend and later attempts to buy Odili's silence and loyalty with money and a bride. Odili joins a fledgling opposition party, the Common People's Convention, in an attempt to unseat Nanga, but the campaign collapses amid bribery, intimidation, and thuggery, culminating in a military coup that suspends the entire electoral process (Achebe, 1966).

The novel is set in an unnamed West African country closely modelled on Achebe's native Nigeria in the years immediately preceding the 1966 coups. Achebe wrote the novel during a period of acute disillusionment with the postcolonial political class, and its satirical portrait of Nanga's opportunism, the electorate's susceptibility to patronage, and the opposition's fragility reflects Achebe's diagnosis of a national public sphere too fractured and too compromised to sustain genuine democratic deliberation (Booker, 2003). It is precisely this fractured public sphere that constitutes the terrain on which development communication, understood as dialogue oriented toward collective welfare, must operate, and fails to operate, in the novel.

Discussion of Post-Coloniality in *A Man of the People*

The theme of post-colonialism becomes noticeable in the novel. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator introduces us to Chief Nanga, the Minister of Culture, who faces allegations of corruption and abuse of political office. Over the past decades, the colonial masters were those who exploited the country's natural and human resources. But in the regime of post-colonial governance, the people themselves are found to be exploiting their own country in the same way as the white men, if not more. They come to the people to beg for their votes, usually with the message of serving them, but the opposite is the reality. Their personal financial gains are what matter to them once they get the opportunity.

Honourable Chief Nanga is reported to have engaged in financial malfeasance and abuse of office.

“... The Daily Matchet, for instance, carried a story which showed that Chief Nanga, who had himself held the portfolio of Foreign Trade until two years ago, had been guilty of the same practice and had built out his gains three blocks of seven-storey luxury flats at three hundred thousand pounds each, in the name of his wife, and that these flats were immediately leased by British Amalgamated at fourteen hundred a month each.” (P. 99).

More of Chief Nanga's corrupt activities are revealed to us through Odili, the narrator. While at Chief Nanga's house in the city, Odili's observations reveal how Chief Nanga enriched himself with state money. There is no indication whatsoever of how concerned they remain about ordinary citizens. Their comfort and benefits remain the reason for which they fight for power and wish to hold on to it till eternity.

The reality, as clearly shown in the novel, is that post-colonial leaders have virtually nothing significant to offer other than corruption, mediocrity, oppression, and violence. What is more troubling is that, despite attaining independence from the white men, the natives themselves now assume the position of the colonial masters. The political class can be meaningfully represented as the colonisers, while the ignorant and oppressed natives are the colonised. Years after independence, the people still suffer from dictatorship and abuse of power. In general, it will not be out of place to consider post-colonial African leaders to have failed their countries. Therein lie the bases for decolonialisation to recall the need for the sought-for independence to decompose disillusionment as they exist in the fictional country, reflecting the reality of most independent African countries.

Odili's strongest desire is clearly to correct the injustice in the kind of leaders they have, beginning with Chief Nanga, the Member of Parliament for his constituency. Odili Samalu is poised to represent the voiceless and speak for them. In addition, he intends to bring more infrastructure and social development to the people. As a young graduate, he can bring unity and equality to his people. Unlike Chief Nanga, who is less educated, Odili feels he is the most competent candidate to occupy the position, which Chief Nanga is unable to take advantage of and develop his constituency.

“...I stood in one corner of that vast tumult, waiting for the arrival of the Minister. I felt the intense bitterness welling up in my mouth. Here were silly, ignorant villagers, dancing themselves lame and waiting to blow off their gunpowder in honour of one of those who had set the country sliding down the slopes of inflation. I wished for a miracle, for a voice of thunder, to hush this ridiculous festival and tell the poor, contemptible people one or two truths. But of course it would be quite useless. They were not only ignorant but cynical. Tell them that

this man had used his position to enrich himself, and they would ask you – as my father did – whether you thought a sensible man would spit out the juicy morsel that good fortune placed in his mouth...” (P.2).

In a more substantial way, the abuse of political power has an impact on injustice and unfairness in the political space. The political elites, in many ways, unjustifiably mete out various forms of political discrimination. The privileged few make it very difficult, or almost impossible, for those who are not their party faithful to benefit from the national cake. It is purely about how related or connected you are to those in power. While the country boasts of being an independent nation, not all the citizens have access to the available resources in the fictional country of the novel, which epitomises the reality of what is happening in most African independent countries.

In most African countries, however, post-colonial leaders end up resembling the colonial masters. For instance, Chief Nanga is a native of his constituency, but he fails to serve his people diligently and honestly and also abuses them. For example, Chief Nanga, using his position and ability to provide luxurious accommodation, mischievously involves Elsie, Odili's girlfriend, in a sexual act, which is seen as 'enticed-rape'. This is mentioned because during the intercourse, Elsie called Odili, his boyfriend, loudly. This is evidence of abuse of power.

Again, Chief Nanga's interest in hurriedly building the road from Anata through Urua to Giligili and back to Anata was not in the people's interests but in his own selfish interest in winning the next election. This is an indication that, no matter how improperly the road is built for the people, he cares less.

Look, T.C., we agreed that this road should be tarred. What is this dilly-dallying...? Which expert? So you want to listen to experts now? (P. 42).

From his statement above, Chief Nanga, like most politicians in African independent states, has no interest in quality roads built through thorough research to ensure they will withstand all weathers and last for the people.

More often than not, post-independence African leaders engage in corrupt practices by exploiting their countries' scarce resources and fattening their foreign bank accounts. The reality of how corrupt and greedy leaders still exist in most postcolonial countries is evident when Jean, on reaching 'a pleasant high-class area' in Bori while driving through the streets with Odili, asserts;

That row of ten houses belongs to the Minister of Construction. They are let to different embassies at three thousand a year each (p. 54).

The author reveals how greed is exhibited by those in power in many African countries.

The ways and effects of colonisation, which have prompted well-meaning Africans to decolonise political leadership, can be traced in Achebe's *A Man of the People*. The colonial masters have caused significant destruction and slowed development in their colonies. They continue to exercise indirect political control over their former colonies. They should take responsibility for the widespread disharmony and corruption among African leaders. Even in the absence of the British, African political leaders like Chief Nanga still employ the British strategy in their leadership style. He also prefers dealing with them, as his reaction on the road shows, as he says;

You know very well, T. C., that you cannot trust these our young boys. That is why I always say I prefer to deal with Europeans... (P. 42)

Furthermore, Chief Nanga prefers to use the English language, despite understanding his local or native language. He chooses to communicate in English. As the minister for culture, he does not demonstrate support for promoting and encouraging the potential of the local language to any level. Instead, he prefers to speak English in different settings to obtain fame. Even to his children, he speaks English, which prompts Mrs. Nanga to send her seven children to their hometown for them to be acquainted with their own language. In this sense, it means his children in school, community, and at home do not get the opportunity to speak their indigenous language, most probably, except with their mother.

Odili has an honest heart, ready and willing to serve his people without necessarily taking into account the financial benefits he stands to gain. Having visited Chief Nanga at his home in the city, he realises how influential and powerful the hitherto poor elementary school teacher has become. The fact remains that Chief Nanga would not have achieved all that he has without engaging in active politics. The kind of development he is supposed to bring to his constituency, in particular, and to the nation at large, is being forfeited and channelled into his parochial interests, while the needs of society are ignored. Three major interests of Chief Nanga identified in the novel through Odili's stay with him in his house are the use of power to engage in womanising, the desire to stay in power (power drunkenness), and his failure to promote the culture of his people, though he is the Minister of Culture. The instances in the novel are: he engages Elsie in sexual intercourse, though she is not his wife; he prioritises the tarring of the road for Giligili because of an impending election, disregarding the quality experts require for the communities who are going to benefit; and he has no idea of *The Song of the Black Bird*, a book that has uplifted the image of Jalio, the President of the Writers' Society, which is exposed during the Book Exhibition he is invited to chair. Meanwhile, he can add two European writers:

-Michael West and Dudley Stamp. (P. 65).

He added these names of writers to those on the script written for him with zeal, raising his head to indicate that he is so familiar with those European writers.

Another aspect of Chief Nanga that is exposed is his attire for occasions such as the Book Exhibition. This issue extends beyond Chief Nanga to other members of the community, especially those in 'high places.' Chief Nanga seems not to be confident about wearing traditional attire for programmes held in their country, especially those involving culture:

If you want me to attend any of your functions, you must wear a proper dress. Either a suit ...or if you don't like it, you can wear our national costume. That is correct protocol. (P. 62/63).

The reason this transcends to the 'high-class' is Odili's observation of a man wearing a European-made woolen material, from which he has sewn robes. Funny enough, the tin-yellow line, which is supposed to be hidden, is exposed at the edges of the robe. The man is proudly showing off the inscription, which reads:

100% Wool: Made in England. (P. 64).

The irony is that the government has set up a whole department, Our Home-Made Stuff (OHMS), to promote the patronage of home-made products, and its chief is part of the cabinet that takes decisions.

Similarly, Honorable Simon Koko, the Minister for Overseas Training, tastes the local coffee, which is advertised and sold by OHMS vans, and calls it poison: ‘They have poisoned my coffee’, Chief Koko says after tasting the local coffee. This suggests he has become accustomed to European coffee to such an extent that one can confidently say he might not have tasted the local coffee before.

Several postcolonial ideologies can be identified in the text. There are numerous instances in which the political class has wielded power for themselves. They exercise this power in an arbitrary manner and with all forms of unfairness. The selfish nature of the political class has actually led to a loss of touch with the electorate. In the context of elected politicians, it is all about finding sugar-coated words to win the hearts of the people when elections come. The people whom we elect to lead in bringing development to our communities are now the people who are hampering development. After independence, it is expected that all citizens will marshal their support for the leaders to improve the living conditions of the people by providing good governance, a flexible economic and social system, among others.

On the contrary, what we see is the direct opposite of that. As a native of his constituency, Chief Nanga is expected to understand the needs of his people and make targeted efforts to find lasting solutions. Instead, he is seen only engaging in partisan politics, squandering what is meant for the entire community. Chief Nanga is one of the many African politicians who demonstrate greed and unwillingness to create opportunities for ordinary citizens to benefit. He is on record received bribes from foreigners to award them contracts worth very large sums of money, with his percentage share. The most unfair thing is for anyone to suppress those who gave them the power to be where they are. Having been given the power, Chief Nanga is not prepared to release it to anyone else. The sweetness of power makes it very difficult for those holding it to let others have at least a taste of it. Indeed, those in power have nothing to offer the citizens but to subject them to oppression, slavery, and marginalisation at the peak.

Corruption and injustice stand tall in the post-colonial political arena, leading to discrimination. This is revealed in Max, Odili’s lawyer friend, who has lost contact because he cannot get a telephone line in his home. His reason is that,

I have been on the waiting list for a telephone for two months.... You see, I have not bribed anyone, and I don’t know any big gun ... (74).

These distractors remain the root cause of underdevelopment in most African countries. Surprisingly, most African leaders still toe the line of the British colonialists. The society, once seen as united and in harmony, has been ruined by its own political class. It is not uncommon to see a similar trajectory in most African countries today. The emergence of coups, which displace innocent victims, can be traced, to a large extent, to political leaders’ desire to hold on to power.

Furthermore, language forms an integral part of the culture of every society, regardless of its origin. Every society has a unique language it speaks. In Chinua Achebe’s *A Man of the People*, Chief Nanga has a greater appetite for the English language than for his native language. Indeed, holding political power brings fame and popularity. This is what the Honorable Chief Nanga seeks as a politician, as he uses the presence of different tribes at the Book Fair to speak the English language. Chief Nanga has the urge to speak to many people and exert influence. Similarly, he intends to use the English language as a vehicle to convince the ordinary voter. The floating voter (he cares the least) can change their mind with the slightest conviction. They

form part of the indecisive group. Until the last day, they can still make significant changes to their views.

Chief Nanga also does not mind being addressed as “Micah”, as he sees nothing wrong with it when Jane and John call him by his hidden Christian name: not even his former student knows him by that name. A young black lady dares not address Chief Nanga in that manner. As a minister for culture, he has a responsibility to uphold the values and norms of society and to make conscious efforts to promote his cultural heritage to the global community. Chief Nanga feels even more comfortable when whites demean his status and the appellation attached to it (chief), even in his own homeland.

In his own home, the dominant language is English. His children often communicate in English, which is a foreign language. Since he lives mostly in the city with his children, the mother tongue has not found a place in their communication. In essence, the problem that may arise from this is the loss of identity.

Odili, who is fortunate to have received formal education and fully understands British ways of doing things, chooses to acquaint himself with certain ideas and therefore finds it comfortable to align with Max in pushing the agenda of forming a political party. It would not have been possible for Max to convince Odili to join his party if Odili had no formal education. But it is also clear that Odili is not particularly inclined towards the tradition and culture of his people. This is the reason for the women of his community’s lack of enthusiasm for the dance. In the context of tradition and culture, one could say that Odili, having understood the vast difference between modern and traditional ways of doing things, is not much invested in the culture and tradition of his people.

The same can also be said about all the various forms of violence, intimidation, and threats against political opponents; all are clear signs of political tyranny, forming part of the kind of political leadership being administered by the natives to their own people. The ruling class is ready to sideline anyone who is inclined and will not entirely condone their fraudulent and corrupt ways of ruling.

This is the fate that befalls Mr Makinde. He seems to be a threat to Chief Nanga because of his level of education and, in practice, may know better when it comes to issues of good governance. Out of fear, Chief Nanga labels him a traitor and organises a mob to attack and destroy his house and car. Similar circumstances resulted in the murder of Max and an attack on Odili. Achebe uses these instances to paint a picture of political leaders turning on their own people either to capture or retain power. The people are simply being denied the privilege of deciding who leads them, and what we see is a clear imposition in the pursuit of political power.

Those who stood for justice and freedom for the people had to suffer. The formation of a political party by Max reveals his desire to find a way for the people to attain some level of freedom. On this conviction, Odili shares similar ideas with Max and agrees to join his party. However, Odili has no doubt that his people deserve justice, freedom and good governance, especially when they have their own people as their leaders. Despite the humiliation and violent attacks on them, Max, Odili, and their allies believe that the surest way to liberate the citizens is to remove Chief Nanga and his party from power. They, therefore, carry a strong determination to retrieve power from Chief Nanga so that they can serve the interests of their society.

Considering all the encounters Odili had with Chief Nanga, it is clear that Odili harboured pain and bitterness towards Chief Nanga. The deprivations and absolute exploitation championed by the likes of Chief Nanga can be described as a backward or retrogressive form of leadership that the people are experiencing from their leaders. Odili does not change his view of Chief Nanga at any point. It has been both hatred and acceptance. This is because he agrees to visit Chief Nanga in the city. He does so to honour an invitation from Chief Nanga, as he is promised a scholarship to travel abroad for further studies. In sharp contrast, Odili, having assumed the role of political opponent, shows strong resistance to Chief Nanga. He declines the 250 pounds Chief Nanga offers him so that he can step down and pave the way for him to contest the election unopposed in his constituency.

The reality of postcoloniality in Achebe's *A Man of the People* is evident in the hatred directed at Josiah the trader. After the events surrounding Agoze's missing walking stick, the entire village abandons Josiah's shop. All manner of accusations and ill-utterances are levelled against him, compelling him to leave the town. This could be seen as a show of solidarity and a way of protecting the vulnerable Agoze. Almost everybody suffers some form of oppression under bad leadership. And bad leadership offers nothing but social injustice, conflicts, discrimination, and hardship for the people. Achebe attempts to use this novel to pass a message about the lost dignity of the people and what can be done to restore it. When you carefully consider the past of the people, one would realise how Achebe seeks to use Odili as a character who represents the new ideologist, compared with Chief Nanga, who still believes that the way to go is by palpable falsehood and imposition, as it used to be years back.

Another relevant theme clearly portrayed in this novel is failed leadership. Poor leadership is the major contributing factor to the troubles ordinary people endure. The failure of governments to make sound policies, deliver on their promises, and improve the living conditions of their people makes it abundantly clear that people resort to chaos and agitation. Corruption, political injustice, and insecurity, among others, are the reasons the country as a whole is unable to achieve sustained development. An instance is the nature of citizens' livelihoods, even in Bori, the capital city. At the dawn of Odili's last day in Chief Nanga's house, he sees the reality of latrines being carried from nearby households as he reads the newspaper. On the same streets, poor beggars with no homes sleep in front of stores, and lunatics with no rehabilitation homes invade the streets with dirt. These common citizens who carried the latrine from the pails of the households in the city had to go on strike, as Odili recalls after reading about the laws on the use of the pails in the newspaper, for poor pay. Meanwhile, there are more than enough rooms and water-closet facilities in Chief Nanga's (and other ministers' and political leaders') homes in the city, just as in other citizens' homes.

Achebe further portrays the failure of post-independence African leaders through characters such as Chief Nanga. The primary aim of most African leaders is simply to enrich themselves. This mentality has persisted and remains prevalent among a majority of African leaders. Leaders have consistently used state power for personal gain. They possess little competence, which makes them unwilling to engage in any form of contest of ideas. The educated and intellectuals were ignored or sidelined the moment they assumed political positions. Abuse of power and the quest to remain in power have always been major contributory factors in most of the political instability in the country.

Independent African nations have many of their leaders resorting to every possible means to either bribe their potential opponents or eliminate them by killing them in cold blood to maintain power. Chief Nanga wants to remain in power and continue to enjoy all the luxury

and comfort. Knowing very well how enlightened Odili is as a university graduate, Chief Nanga wants to play smart by sending him abroad on a scholarship. This is a deliberate plan to avoid any form of opposition from people like him. It is the same strategy Chief Koko wants to use for Max. He thought that bribing Koko would make him change his mind and step down, allowing him to contest his seat unopposed. When he failed in this regard, he ensured that Max was killed on the day of the elections.

Odili, although presented by Achebe as having a decent character, has an evil side. We are made to know so much good about Odili. It is inaccurate to assume that Odili has a saint-like character. The author makes us know the corrupt and evil side of Odili by revealing how he intends to acquire some money through a dubious way in order to assist his father. When his father was involved in the case with the tax assessment officer, Odili, although he did not have much money, helped them to get some money to assist his father.

It can still be argued that the conduct of post-colonial political actors has led to the challenges that befell the citizens. Through their inaction and lack of concern, their leaders took them for granted, since they did not show any interest in condemning their leaders' bad deeds. This can obviously be seen through the lenses of ignorance and hypocrisy to their peak. Although there were people who opposed the corrupt practices of these leaders, a larger majority didn't care about condemning them. On the part of Odili and Max, it can be seen that their opposition is only to pursue their own ideology. But one thing worth noting is that every ideology has an element of interest almost all the time.

As always, almost all political aspirants say one thing when seeking power and do the exact opposite once they are in power. This is why we cannot trust the role that Max and Odili, who are opposed to corruption, will play in eliminating this bad practice in the country. It can be argued further, however, that the mere elimination of the whites from Africa has not solved the problems of the continent; hence, the presence of the white man is not the reason for

Africa's problems. The problems of Africa can easily be traced to the doorstep of the citizens and leaders.

The novel is a strategic tool employed by Achebe to reflect a post-colonial society that suffers the difficulties purported to have originated from British rule. With Nigeria in the spotlight, there is no doubt about how real the situation was over four decades of independence. This cannot be blamed on colonial masters but is perfectly at the doorstep of natives who assume the position of lawmakers, governors, and ministers of state. In most post-colonial societies, one will, for obvious reasons, find a few intellectuals and the semi-educated coming into conflict. In the novel, Odili and Max can be said to represent the intellectual class, while the likes of Chief Nanga and the rest represent corruption and injustice.

The past days of Europeans having absolute control in most African countries through the system of colonisation deterred the social, political, and infrastructural upliftment of the African people. After the days of the colonial masters, it is expected that Africans would choose just, competent, and responsible leaders. However, this has not been the case, as Achebe demonstrates. Africans continue to elect self-centred, corrupt, and irresponsible leaders who offer them nothing but oppression, slavery, and exploitation. While in Max's house, Odili, the narrator, summarises the nature of political leaders, using Chief Nanga as a case study, in the following words:

Because the man was a minister bloated by the flatulence of ill-gotten wealth, living in a large mansion built with public money, riding in a Cadillac, and watched over by a one-eyed hired thug (P. 75).

The use of the ‘one-eyed man’ is symbolic in the sense that those who support, hail, and continue to vote for them do not have a second eye to see the wrongs of these political leaders. Those who support and safeguard these politicians are different from Max’s father (who, one can say, has the second eye or is double-eyed), who sees the bad things that the politicians are doing and thereby becomes disillusioned, but still thinks that

...we should never have asked the white man to go. (P. 81).

While Odili, Max, and their allies press on with forming a new government that will decolonise the people, especially political leaders, to create a reformed political governance that takes care of all and is devoid of post-colonial/imperialist influence.

Most African countries have their cultures and traditions distorted by the misleading practices of the West. Surprisingly, some African scholars have failed to defend their societies’ traditions and have instead championed these European practices. In the end, African countries continue to depend on European countries economically for grants and aid. This overreliance on foreign assistance, coupled with widespread corruption, accounts for the underdevelopment of African countries. Again, the government did not consider it necessary to involve the general population in the governance of the country.

CONCLUSION

Achebe is intentionally preaching to Africans in general and Nigerians in particular to reconsider their choice of leaders and to show greater concern for the governance process of their country.

In conclusion, the elements of post-coloniality in Chinua Achebe’s *A Man of the People* focus on the form of leadership shown by various post-colonial politicians. They use the mandate given to them by the electorate to impoverish them instead of using it to alleviate poverty and create development opportunities.

The text helps us understand how the natives have assumed the position of the British colonial masters, now colonising their own people. The key factors that affect the people include education, governance, culture, and economic empowerment.

The text shows how political power in the hands of the natives makes it distasteful for ordinary citizens to champion the cause of independence. Citizens neither see nor benefit from their fair share of the national cake.

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