

**SURVIVAL SUSTAINABILITY OF IFEMELU IN THE NOVEL OF AMERICANAH**

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In the highly developed world, everyone should work for their survival in the world. For the past few decades people were moving towards westernization. To be precise, in the third world countries there is a drastic change in the cultural behaviour, personal attitude, food habits etc. Likewise, Ifemelu wants to explore herself as an independent woman to survive in the competitive world. This novel reminiscence me a quote that “Survival of the Fittest”. Ifemelu is the major character in the novel. Ifemelu a young woman migrated from Nigeria living in United States for her survival. As a young girl she starts a blog for the black people and act as a voice for the voiceless people. It shows the efficacy of Ifemelu. In America the black peoples were subjugated by the white people for many years. They have been criticized by physical appearance. They were brutally attacked by the settlers of the nation. So, she decides to leave for her own land, due to the atrocious behaviour of the native people. She reminisces and recollect her childhood life in Nigeria with her boyfriend Obinze. Ifemelu never wants to continue her life in the cruel country. As a westernized girl she moves towards her own tradition for braiding. It is a tradition followed in Nigerian’s for braiding their hair. Ifemelu a young also have the tendency of making her as a beautiful girl. She wants to make her as a beautiful girl before her childhood lover Obinze. Then she moves to her own land and unite with Obinze. The major themes identified in the novel is Identity Crisis, Racism, Economic Instability, Longingness.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture, Identity Crisis, Longingness, Economy, Westernization

## INTRODUCTION

Americanah is a story not only the two lovers united. But explication of two different world. The focus on the novel is migration, alienation, humiliation and racism. The story moves on to three continents and their culture. Then the love for the westernization by the protagonist. Ifemelu a young girl from Igbo tribe wants to led a fascinating life and she moved to America. The 20<sup>th</sup> century experience many technological developments, way of communication and their economic development. Then comparing with the developed countries, the developing country executes various survival tactics to develop them as a developed country.

Africa is a land noted for its greenery. On the darker side Africa is a country that has been consider as a land with low literary rate. Human beings rated themselves according to the race system while, people with white skin, hair type, physical appearance and social status as a Helm. Then people with black skin, uneducated were considered as a meager treat them badly as an animal. This type of ill treatment still exists in every part of the world. According to Bartky (1990)

explains that women are associated closely with their bodies than men and are disproportionately valued for how they look. They are always under constant pressure to correct their bodies to conform to the ideals of feminine appearance of the time, and above all, to gain social acceptability. Thus, when women engage in practices that give them the “ideal” feminine body, it is principally because an inferior status has been ascribed to the body (71).

Ifemelu born as a Nigerian wants to lead her life in own way. She migrates to America to make a bond with the culture followed by the westerners. Saah (2016), offers a critique on racism in American culture, pointing out ignorance, preconceived ideas about, and classification of particular group of people, especially people of colour, pressures them to

change their beliefs and attitudes to keep in line with the “owners” of the ideas. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has recently become a very popular writer with her short story collection *The Thing around Your Neck* (2009), and her novels *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007) and *Americanah* (2013). She was born in Nigeria and shows a close connection to her heritage throughout her works. Adichie is also attuned to the important role that Igbo history and language play in her life. She is a great admirer of Nigeria’s most renowned writer, Chinua Achebe. Adichie has become popular not only because of her novels or her opinion articles about the current reality of Nigeria, but also due to the popularity of her TED Talks:8 “The Danger of a Single Story” (2009) and “We Should All Be Feminists” (2013), the latter sampled by singer Beyoncé Knowles in her song “Flawless.” In her first talk, Adichie reflects on the importance of her African upbringing and the way in which the colonial past of Nigeria affected her perception of the world and literature. She dealt with many themes such as Racism, Identity Crisis, Gender Issues etc. The female character gives away their own identity to adapt themselves into the custom of the other culture. Franz Fanon says in *Black Skin White Masks*,

Every colonized people- in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adaptation of the mother country’s cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle (Fanon, 9).

This paper elaborates the cultural variation and humiliation suffered by Ifemelu and her longingness for the home town, and her lover Obinze.

## A DYNAMIC ENCOUNTER IN THE MODERN WORLD

Ifemelu enters into America a land with multi-cultural and multi-linguistic aspect, with a hope of satisfying her wishes and an independent girl to survive in the society. She faces problems of racism and economic constraints. Her step towards success have been postponed in many incidents such as opening blog for black people, but the attempt also failed. These incidents result in loss of hope, loneliness and alienation. She became aware of her identity and says that “I came from a country where race was not an issue. I did not think of myself as a black and I only became black when I came to America” (Adichie 290). Ifemelu have a good relationship with Curt. Curt helps Ifemelu in many ways to survive in the society. But, Ifemelu rejects Curt proposal because of the racial discrimination. Ifemelu opens up that “When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn’t matter when you’re alone together because it’s just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters” (Adichie 290).

A major incident that changes Ifemelu mind to leave the country. In every field there is rejection of talented person. Dike, Ifemelu’s cousin is a brilliant student at his school. He is branded as aggressive because he is black. Dike suddenly falls into depression and unable to recover from the stress. “There’s a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on the top, specifically White Anglo- Saxon Protestant, otherwise known as WSAP, and American Black is always on the bottom, and what’s in the middle depends on time and place” (Adichie 184). Ifemelu have been double marginalisation by the people. Ifemelu suffers with the identity of African woman in America. She over comes all the struggle and starts to adopt the American culture. At first, she tries to speak in American accent. Her gesture and body language are being changed as American. The hair of African are curls by birth. she straightens her hair and her dressing scenes also changed. The process of acculturation takes place, she lost her native

identity. Ifemelu wants to follow the modern tradition but not to give up her cultural belief and cultural values. So, she decides to leave for her own lovable land.

It bought with amorphous longings, shapeless desires, brief imaginary glints of other lives she could be living that over the months melded into piercing home sickness. She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian Blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home clothed in American or British degrees, to start an investment company, a musical production business, a fashion label, a magazine, a fast-food franchise. She looked at the photographs of these men and women and felt the dull of loss, as though they had praised open her hand and taken something of hers” (Adichie 6).

Like Ifemelu Adah in the novel *Second Class Citizen* by Butchi Emecheta. Adah a woman from her native place moves to England to lead a prosperous life. The first sufferings faced by Adah in her family surroundings itself. She is deprived form her education. She wants to stand by her own self. Adah husband torched her and he wants Adah to submissive to him.

“She was a girl who had arrived when everyone was expecting and predicting a boy. So, since she was such a disappointment to her parents, to her immediate family, to her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth. She was so insignificant.” (Emecheta 1)

## **CONCLUSION:**

Throughout the world everyone from the eastern side suffers from the subjugation. In the novel *Americanah* Ifemelu wants to led a free and happy life in the land of America. But she has lost her own identity and wants to act according to the modern tradition. She finally decides to the move to her own country. Chimamanda as a young writer show off the evils that happen to black people in the society through all her novels.

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