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**MIGRATION OF IFEMELU IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S
AMERICANAH**

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Abstract:

Migration is a physical shift of a person from one area to the other one. It may be either naturally permanent or temporary. This paper is an attempt to understand the various incidents that rise to migration from their origin place to some other areas. In this concept, many other literatures were analyzed to perceive and visualize about the migration and its issues. This paper is thoroughly analyzed and discussed Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her third novel Americanah, uses the migration as a mirror to reflect the various issues that revolves in the heart of the text which are presented to the readers. Subsequently, the continuation of migration in this novel also explores how it influenced the bond of love between the protagonist and her lover, how it affects the character and personality, how it made the divergence of cultural views and how it elevates the identity crisis. In this novel, the protagonist Ifemelu is induced for migration due to so many reasons such as for better education, better employment opportunity, or to attain new environment, so that she tries for the upgrade her standard of living. Thus, Ifemelu through her character epitomizes the migratory processes and her detachment from the mother-land Nigeria that have been expressed as rooted cosmopolitanism.

Keywords: Migration, Post-colonialism, Black and White, Diaspora, etc.

Americanah is a third novel written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, born in 1977, in Nigeria, won Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize: Fiction Category and National Book Critics Circle Award: Fiction Category. The novel is published in May 14, 2013. The novel is about a young



black woman, born in Nigeria Ifemelu, but lives in United States to attend her higher studies. This paper is an analyses the complex issues of migration of black women in America. Adichie explores the plight of immigrants in America and also tries to evacuate them from the racism, gender oppression and suppression.

Emily Rabateou, defines migration in a review to this novel, as the dreadful challenge of an immigrant. She also explicates that the novel *Americanah* is the quest of immigrant and their self-intermediate. *Americanah* is one of the rising books of immigrant literature of former generation. This paper exposes the impact of black immigrants in the United States, especially the challenges faced by the protagonist Ifemelu in various ways. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie not only transcended the migratory experience with the theory but also introduces a new aspect that also initiates a world of thoughts on return migration.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has brought a new perspective in migration theory through the black woman Ifemelu as a liberating effect by uprooting the world enfeebled ideologies and beliefs by transferring them to new world ideas. Adichie uses many themes like race, skin color, identity, love, romance, and hair politics in this novel *Americanah*. Apart from these themes, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie uses a new combinatorial complexity to explore the daily life struggle of Ifemelu in United States.

Americanah focuses the struggles of Ifemelu in the world of discrimination. Ifemelu is a student of Nsukka University, but could not continue her study in Nigeria, because of corruptions revolved in Nigerian government. In an urge to fulfill her studies, for better education, her aunt Uju encourages Ifemelu to move to America, so that she could attain her scholarship and so many prospects. At the onset life in America, Ifemelu faced the black white discrimination. In her past, Ifemelu became a very proud of her blackness, but then in America, she had an aware of her color between the whites. This fear of living is well explored in these lines: "I came from a country where race was not an issue. I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America" (Adichie, 290).

Ifemelu as a black migrant identity could not escape her blackness and she is subjected her to be the object of racism between the white people. Ifemelu, for the first time, felt as non-American, when she accustomed the black-white racism during her school career. This example clearly defines that migratory life of Ifemelu through the words of Adichie.

Rather than the color of the skin, Ifemelu is also humiliated for her facial features of Nigeria in America, such as hair, eyes, and nose. Adichie uses the feature 'hair' as a controversial sense of racism in her novel. For an instance, in order to attend her interview, Ifemelu loosened her plaited hair that was braided by her aunt Uju. Since, Ifemelu was forced to do that shows a kind of racism and discrimination. The color, style, nature and texture of Nigerian hair made white people to determine them as a inferior in America and they are denied from their right to live in America. As a result of this issue, one can understand that immigrant families should not follow their family structures and ethics and made them, especially women to assimilate with the domestic context. During this transition, women are only forced to sink into the migrated society, not the men. Thus, immigrant families found the major breakdown in their traditional order. Men of immigrant families, instead lose their traditional power in their family. But women, struggled to attain their power and potential in both public and private live through their changes in the social circumstances. Since, the lives



of immigrant women was encapsulated with the social changes, as their domestic roles are no longer become the occupational opportunities available to them. To the migrated people, especially Ifemelu and Uju, America was represented as the nation of opportunity and freedom, but was getatable to them.

At once, Ifemelu understands that there is a kind of fear among white, if they permit black, they would forced to “descend into the dark tunnel of immigration” (Adichie, 201). This is the best example that indicates the unsettled life of the author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s survival of the fittest through Ifemelu use of blogs in *Americanah*. One of her blog post deciphers strong racism in America:

...but racism is about power of a group and in America, it’s the white folks who have the power. How? Well, white folks don’t get treated like shit in upper-class African American communities and white folks don’t get denied bank loans and mortgages precisely because they are white and black juries don’t give white criminals worse sentences than black criminals for the same crime and black police officers don’t stop white folk for driving while white and black companies don’t choose not to hire somebody because their name sounds white and black teachers don’t tell white kids that they are not smart enough to be doctors . . . (Adichie, 327)

The migrants in America are mostly dominated by their color whereas it is somehow managed by the migrants of Nigeria like Aunt Uju and the protagonist Ifemelu. Aunt Uju becomes the one of the successful feminists among the patriarchal society. One, who migrates to new land of culture, should transform from their native culture that is even explicated in this novel. Aunt Uju is a true Nigerian woman but has transferred her life-style, language, and even her pronounce name was changed when she was migrated to America. Ifemelu, on her first visit in America, is shocked by her hearing her aunt name Uju as “youjoo” instead of “oo-joo” (Adichie, 9). In order to abolish the ideas of domination, Ifemelu starts own her blog, which enacted one of the strongest weapons of resistance that evacuated the stereotyping of Africans. Ifemelu, in her blogs uses mockery of White people to curtail their domination over them. She used her blogs as the mode of communication with the black migrants living in America. Thus, the migrants could a have therapeutic experience through Ifemelu’s blog posts, that motivate their minds from the racism, hair issues.

Adichie, in her novel *Americanah*, uses her protagonist to explicate the challenges faced during migration from home land to alien land. She creates the motivating space for women in Nigeria and also who migrated to the western world. Through the migration story of Ifemelu, Adichie has paved a new way to the portrayal of migration, and also sheds light on the complexities of identity, belonging and the desire to reconnect with one’s own roots. Ifemelu’s story serves as a powerful reflection on the complexities of the immigrant experience and the search for one’s true self. Thus, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has created a fact that her female characters will not end up as victims but as a victors. But those victors, especially Ifemelu show the positive impact of migration.



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