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**CONSTRAINTS OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE ARRANGERS OF MARRIAGE BY
CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHE**

SASIKALA. M

M. Phil English Literature, PSGR Krishnammal College for Women
sasisanthu16@gmail.com

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born on 15 September 1977. She is a Nigerian writer of novels, short stories, and nonfiction. Adichie studied medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria for a year. During this period, she edited *The Compass*, a magazine run by the university's Catholic medical students. Adichie published a collection of poems *Decisions* in 1997 and a play *For Love of Biafra* in 1998. Her novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), received the 2007 Orange Prize for Fiction and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award. The novel, *Americanah* (2013), was selected by *The New York Times* as one of the ten best books of 2013. Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), is a collection of 12 stories that explore the relationship between men and women; parents and children; and Africa and the United States. *The Arrangers Of Marriage* one of the short stories is taken for the study. This story is about Chinaza, a Nigerian girl who suffered from disillusioned and unhappy marriage life with Ofodile.

In *The Arrangers of Marriage*, Chinaza arrives in New York with her new husband, Ofodile. Her aunt and uncle arranged the marriage and thought it was a good thing. Ofodile is a doctor. He shows her around New York and corrects her language whenever she uses an Igbo or British English word instead of its American counterpart. He tells her that in America, his name is Dave Bell instead of his Nigerian name Ofodile. He fills out Chinaza's application for a social security card with the name Agatha Bell. Ofodile buys Chinaza an American cookbook so she can learn to cook American food. Chinaza later meets Nia, a young woman who lives in the apartment building. Chinaza thinks that Nia looks like a prostitute, but she likes listening to Nia's talk. One night, Ofodile admits that he married an American woman to get his green card and the woman is refusing to divorce him. Chinaza goes to Nia's apartment, where Nia admits that she slept with Ofodile two years ago. She encourages Chinaza to stick with Ofodile until her papers come through, and Chinaza goes back to her husband the next night.

Women have desires to live their lives, but the question is whether their desires are fulfilled or not. However the world struggles for the women empowerment, still somewhere or the other, women struggle for their basic rights. Here Chinaza imagines that her life in America would be in a beautiful house, nice furniture and kitchen in which she cooks with her Nigerian ingredients. But when she enters into the apartment she is totally dissatisfied. "He turned on the light in the living room, where a beige couch sat alone in the middle, slanted, as though dropped there by accident. The room was hot; old, musty smells hung heavy in the air" (Adichie 89).

Chinaza's aunt and uncle, thinks this marriage would be a gift to her and a good deed on their part. This shows that Chinaza's feeling does not matter to them as she learned it later. They did not even ask her whether she is fascinated to marry Ofodile. When they reached America Ofodile asks Chinaza to inform their aunt Ada, but she only knows that they did not care for her. They want to send her out as soon as possible instead of continuing her studies.

"I knew Uncle Ike and Auntie Ada would sound warm, they would ask what I had eaten, what the weather in America was like. But none of my responses would register; they would ask just to ask" (Adichie 91).

Chinaza does not know to speak American English as she is new to America. Ofodile corrects her language every time. This annoys her and she feels that she lost her uniqueness in her marriage life. When she called her aunt she did not get the phone line, so she informed that the line is engaged but Ofodile asked her to use the word busy. "'It's engaged,'" I said. I looked away so that he would not see the relief on my face. "Busy. Americans say busy, not engaged," he said" (Adichie 90). Ofodile takes her out to show the American's life style. He teaches her how to eat, what to eat, how to behave in public places and particularly how to speak. He takes her into the mall, where she asks biscuits to eat instead of buying that he scold her and instruct to use the word cookies.

In life the first identity of a person is his or her name. In some countries women have their own right to add their father's name to their names; sometimes with their own interest they add their husband's name. Here Ofodile changed his name as Dave Bell and without informing Chinaza he changed her name as Agatha Bell. He changed the African name into an American name.

"Dave?" I knew he didn't have an English name. The invitation cards to our wedding had read *Ofodile Emeka Udenwa and Chinaza Agatha Okafor*.

The last name I use here is different...

I never have, my English name is just something on my birth certificate. I've been Chinaza Okafor my whole life."When he filled out a Social Security number application for me the next day, the name he entered in bold letters was Agatha Bell. (Adichie 92)

After a few days Chinaza meets Nia. But Chinaza's aunt advised her not to be close with Nia as she thinks that she is a whore. One day Nia comes to Chinaza's apartment to introduce her as a neighbour. When Chinaza starts to talk with her, she is attracted to Nia and maintains her friendship. Nia is an independent woman with her own rules and regulations. Chinaza tells Ofodile about her friendship with Nia, but he asks her to keep distance from her. "That evening I told my new husband about Nia. His eyes were sunken in with fatigue, after so many hours at work, and he said, "Nia?" as though he did not know who I meant, before he added, "She's okay, but be careful because she can be a bad influence"(Adichie 95). Ofodile's words confuse Chinaza because she likes Nia's character.

Chinaza stays at home all day and watches it fall. When Ofodile comes home, she asks him about his work. One day he slowly confesses that, he married a woman to attain his green card, and the woman is now making trouble. Chinaza is shocked to hear that Ofodile was married, but he says it is just what people do in America. "Why did you marry me?" I asked. "I wanted a Nigerian wife and my mother said you were a good girl, quiet. She said you might even be a virgin." He smiled." (Adichie 98). He also informs her that he already told Chinaza's aunt and uncle about his first marriage. They have hidden this from Chinaza because she is not their own child and they thought that the marriage is the only solution for all the problems in a woman's life.

Nia is the only person that Chinaza can trust at this point; she is the only one who encourages Chinaza to make her own decisions. Nia tells Chinaza to wait for her papers in order, and then to leave Ofodile. "You can wait until you get your papers and then leave," Nia said. "You can apply for benefits while you get your shit together, and then you'll get a job and find a place and support yourself and start afresh" (Adichie 98). Chinaza thinks that Nia is right. The next night, she goes back to her apartment and starts a new life.

Chinaza's marriage life is more poignant and the truth about her husband's first marriage makes her feel depressed. Though she feels purposelessness in life, Nia gives the voice of author who is supporting Chinaza and helps her to realize her identity. Pain and suffering is not permanent as it depends on one's inner strength. In this short story, Chinaza realizes herself and comes out from the cage as a free bird. She finally decides to lead her life independently by divorcing her husband for his unfaithfulness. She also tries to maintain her identity as a Nigerian in America, whereas Ofodile changes his identity. This shows that one's identity is more important though they live in a foreign land. Though Chinaza struggles to attain her identity through her marriage it results the other way. She identifies herself as a Nigerian by being an independent woman.

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