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FEMALE ANTAGONISM AGAINST MALE: A REVERSAL OF THE STEREOTYPE IN OFOMATA'S*'IHEỌJỌỌGBAAAFỌ'*

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Abstract

Aggression is a natural and common human experience that results from varying causes and manifests in different degrees. Traditionally, men are acknowledged as the main sources of aggression against women, and consequently, writers and researchers have concentrated on male aggression against women, with inadequate attention paid to female aggression against men which is no less common in contemporary times. As a result of this silence on the latter case, the present study examines the issue of female aggression against male in the family. This is with a view to identifying the causes, types, and effects of aggression perpetrated among married parties in the home. Ofomata's novel, Iheojoogbaaafo was purposively selected due to its thematic concern with domestic violence. The sociological Control Theory was used as guide in the study. The result of the textual analysis reveals that, violence was instigated by the wife Nkemdilim against her husband Ikenna as a result of feelings of inadequacy on the part of the wife. The wife, Nkemdilim used violence as a strategy to control the home, and she exploited different types of abuse, as follows: physical abuse, seen in biting, pushing, shoving; emotional abuse characterized by negative verbal expressions such as name calling and curses; psychological abuse seen in threats to the life of her husband, his friends, relations, and herself; social abuse exemplified in isolating her husband from his friends, family and social network. The cumulative effect of the abuses and violence was the collapse of the home; the husband took solace in drinking, and eventually resorted to divorce. The analysis shows that women are as capable as men to initiate violence in the home. The study posits that, irrespective of the source of abuse or violence in the family, it is not beneficial to all parties. It is recommended that if the sexes should play their natural roles in the family, acts of aggression will be considerably reduced in the domestic scene.

Keywords: Female Antagonism, Reversal, Stereotype, Ofomata, Iheojoogbaaafo.

Introduction

As a natural outcome of emotional or psychological disquiet, aggression is a natural human phenomenon. Depending on the cause(s), it is a feeling manifested in varying degrees by every human. Normally, the feeling is directed against another human being, mainly; sometimes, though, people aggress against non-human entities such as organizations, systems, structures. Sometimes, and in rare cases, aggression can be turned inwards against oneself. Generally, human beings express anger in two major ways, verbal outburst and physical outburst. This is to say that aggression is a feeling that makes people to become hostile either in word or action. Such aggressive behaviours are seen in toxic exchange of

words in traffic between road users, in boardrooms during meetings, in State or National assembly sessions among political representatives, in families between spouses and in virtually every area of life. Sometimes aggression goes beyond words and extends to actual physical conflict or combat between people as seen in fighting that results in injuries, maiming or even actual murder.

The causes of aggressive behaviour are as varied as the causes of aggression in the society; they could be encapsulated into few factors such as anxiety, fear, oppression, humiliation, injustice, frustration. A person can become aggressive when someone steps on their toes, especially without cause; when their rights are denied them; when someone tries to intimidate them; when they are wrongly accused; when they are abused by someone else; when they are not happy about a situation such as joblessness or poverty; when they become the subject of gossip in the community; when they are overly critized or condemned; when they become the subject of gossip in the community; when someone is misunderstood, misinterpreted or misquoted by another person; when someone is publicly disgraced or shamed, etc. Beyond these external pressures, aggression may stem from within the individual; such as when someone thinks they have failed; when someone believes they have made a costly mistake; when someone hates themselves; when someone suffers from some painful physical conditions such as headache, witlow, etc.

It is noteworthy that aggressive behaviour has two forms: controlled and uncontrolled aggression. Generally, aggressive behaviours are seen in the uncontrolled variety. If it is controlled or checked, it is not expressed. That is to say that, the feeling may be there, but there is no expression, or rather, the expected expression or reaction is not seen. For instance, if someone steps on the toes of another, it is expected that the victim should react accordingly to show that they are hurt; instead, the person is silent and behaves as if they are not hurt and the offender goes free. This is a rare phenomenon which does reflect real human nature. What is common, as far as aggressive behaviour is concerned, is the principle of action and reaction or cause and effect. Every cause that negatively impacts an individual is evidence in an effect; sometimes people actually overreact to a cause which is interpreted as abnormal. The fact is that, human beings have a natural tendency to react when their emotions are touched, especially in a negative way. In the family, aggressive behaviour is common, especially between husband and wife. A common case of aggression in the family is what is technically termed 'wife battery'; that is, a man always beating the wife. It is generally believed that men take advantage of their physical strength to molest their wives and put them under subjection. This is more so, in the patriarchal African society where the man is lord of the house and the woman is expected to be submissive. Stories in life and literature point to the fact that men are always the aggressors in domestic disputes. We hear more about husbands who beat their wives; husbands who molest their wives and even husbands who kill their wives. As a result of this belief, many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and international agencies have been created to fight for the rights and interest of women in the family. Many Women Right groups have sprouted to represent and fight for women who live in abusive relationships. Incidentally, the society has deliberately or inadvertently closed its eyes to the condition of men in domestic disputes. Are the men really the aggressors, or is their 'aggression' a reaction to a certain condition in the family? It is this question that this paper seeks to answer. The study specially aims at examining the factor(s) responsible for wife

battery or the aggressive tendency of men in the society, as a way of holistically identifying the source of aggression in the family.

Concept of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is used to describe unpleasant acts or behavior perpetrated in the home between spouses in a marital or non marital relationship. The idea is referred to in several ways such as intimate violence, battering, marital assault, spousal abuse, partner abuse, family violence, conjugal violence, Intimate Partner Violence etc. The term 'domestic' suggests the kind of violence by an intimate partner and by other family members, which might take place in the home or anywhere outside the home and in several forms. The violence occurs in all kinds of intimate relationships including married couples, cohabiting couple, people who are dating, couples with children in common, same-sex partners, people who were formerly in a relationship with the person abusing them, and teen dating relationships.

The United States Office of Violence Against Women views domestic violence as a "pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner", which "can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender" (Office of Violence Against Women, 2007). In the view of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2016), domestic violence is prevalent in all socioeconomic statuses, ages, sexual orientations, genders, religions, races, and nationalities.

According to Dempsey (2006) there are three distinct elements in the concept of domestic violence, as follows: violence, domesticity, and structural inequality. The idea of violence is used in its narrow view to suggest the direct physical use of force by a partner; the use of the word force implies the exertion of strength or energy on an object. The phenomenon is a pattern of abusive behaviours that may include physical, sexual, emotional, violence as well as a coercion, isolation and intimidation. It also includes threats directed at the psyche, harm to the body, destruction of property or domestic animals, as well as acts of abuse, intimidation, and use of children as a means of control.

Domesticity is the state or quality of being domestic or having a character deemed to be domestic. Two factors are identified in the description of domestic; location and relationship of parties. Location is the physical setting of the violence; that is, the private or inner sphere where the parties are shielded from external scrutiny, as well as the symbolic nature of the home as a domain of safety, comfort and protection. Relationship of parties implies that the parties involved are in a domestic relationship usually characterized by blood ties and intimacy. These are seen in parents and children, spouses, siblings, current or former intimate partners. Thus, even if the violence takes place outside the home which is a physical setting, the ties or bond between the parties makes it domestic. As a function of social structures, structural inequality means the uneven or lopsided distribution of social power, wherein some persons exert or exercise more power and control over others. Given that power is the ability to exercise control over another, the more powerful persons in the society use their power as a tool to control the less powerful or those under them in the social hierarchy. Accordingly, domestic violence is intentional or purposeful behaviour aimed at controlling a victim. It is tactfully employed to intimidate the victim into compliance with the wishes of

the abuser. Contrary to common view, it is not a product of anger or an individual's emotional condition or temperament. The objective of the abuser is to use violence or threats to life to control the home and exert power over the victim. It is used by spouses against their partners, girlfriends, dating partners or ex-spouses.

Domestic violence has different dimensions; some include coercive and abusive acts against their partners or victims. The physical types include hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects; sexual violence include sexual jokes, that make the victim uncomfortable, treating a partner as sex objects, criticizing the victim's sexually, using sexual jealousy as a tool of control, uncomfortable or unwanted touch, withholding sex as punishment, demanding sex, flaunting affairs, rape, sex after beatings, forcing the victim to witness or participate in sexual activity with others, sexually assaulting the victim in front of the children, sexual torture; emotional violence include making jokes about the victim, insults, criticizing the victim's competence, ignoring the victim's feelings, withholding affection as a form of punishment, blaming the victim for all problems, yelling at the victim, humiliating the victim in front of others, accusing the victim of being the abusive partner, threatening to take the children away from the victim, threatening physical violence, threatening suicide to punish the victim; Social abuse is employed to keep the victim away from others in the community for the purpose of gaining more control over the victim, and forms include insisting that the couple spend all time together discouraging the victim from seeing friends or family, forbidding the victim to see friends or family, monitoring the victim's mail or phone calls, checking the odometer, restricting access to the car or car keys, telling others the victim is crazy or abusive. Financial violence is an attempt to establish financial control over the victim who is financially dependent on the abuser, and the forms include making all financial decisions for the household, keeping financial secrets, monitoring the victim's spending, controlling the victim's access to cash, controlling the victim's access to checkbook or credit cards, refusing to let the victim work, forcing the victim to turn over income to the abuser (Seimeniuk, Krentz, Gish and Gill, 2010; Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Ganley, 2000).

Some of the abusive behaviors used by perpetrators of violence lead to physical injuries that harm the victim both physically and emotionally or even death, while others, such as those directed at the emotions, do not lead to physical injuries but are no less damaging to the victim. Johnson (1995, 2006) identifies four dimensions of domestic violence, based on types of violence, motives of agents, and the social and cultural context. They are Common Couple Violence, Intimate Terrorism, Violence Resistance, and Mutual Violent Control. Common Couple Violence occurs in a single argument where one or both partners physically lash out the other and is not connected to general control behaviour. Intimate Terrorism: involves emotional and psychological abuse. Intimate terrorism is less common than common couple violence but represents and element in general pattern of control by one partner over another. It has the tendency to escalate over time, but not likely to be mutual, and more likely to involve serious injury. Intimate terrorism agents include two kinds: "Generally-violent-antisocial" involving men with general psychopathic and violent tendencies and "dysphonic-borderline" involving men who are emotionally dependent on the relationship. Violence Resistance (VR): This is sometimes interpreted as 'self-defence'. It is the kind of violence carried out by victims against their abusive partners. Mutual Violent Controls is a rare type of domestic violence that occurs when both partners act in a violent manner on account of striving for control.

The Approach

The approach adopted as a guide in this study is the Control Theory. Control theory is one of the social theories of family violence. HydeNolan and Juliao (2012), explains that the theory is anchored on the idea that many domestic conflicts are outcome of an individual's quest to wield power and exercise control in a relationship. At the background of the person's disposition in this theory, is the exercise of power and control over other members of the family. Incidentally, such exercise of power is actualized through violence and threats to others. Those who exercise such power and control are the more powerful members of the family are mainly the children, and to some extent wives. Therefore, the more powerful ones try to use violence or threats to obtain compliance from the less powerful ones. In this condition, the more powerful ones are the controllers while the less powerful ones are the controlled. The controlling ones use threats and violence as a tool to compel the controlled one to abide by their set rules and prohibit them from getting involved in behaviours the controllers do not want. In some extreme cases, the controllers may want to determine how other members think and feel.

In an effort to control other family members the controllers may use many forms of intimidation, such as emotional abuse, force, economic abuse, isolation, and denial of personal blame. The victim(s) often find themselves in a helpless position and consequently yield or learn how to react and negotiate the various forms of intimidation. It is possible to challenge the abuse or the abuser, but this is often a precarious and hazardous task for the controlled or victim of abuse. Consequently, the controlled try to adjust their behaviour to suit the controller's taste and avoid abuse. All the forms of intimidation are used to check the freedom of the controlled to prevent them from behaving as they desire. Economic abuse is aimed at denying them financial power so that they will continue to depend on the controller has the tendency to absolve themselves of blame in any matter and heap it on the less powerful members as a means of keeping them under their control and maintaining power over them. It is deemed that if he admits an error his power is wittled down and he may gradually lose lose control.

One of the most powerful tools of control, according to HydeNolan and Juliao (2012), is isolating the controlled members of the family. It is regarded as the most noxious and injurious form of intimidation used by the controller. This is because, distance and disconnection from the abused person's circle of relations makes it difficult for them to escape or receive influences that can help them challenge their controller. According to this theory, Control theory attempts to explain why some family members are violent and also why other family members are not violent. It explains that, those family members who are violent and domineering do so out of desperation for power. However, other members of the family are not violent for reasons bordering on fewer of punishment, bonds and attachment to other people and institutions. As an example, the theory states that, family members or men who have strong connections to people who are important in the society and also are wary of the opinion and reaction of these important people are less likely to abuse their spouses than men who do not have these connections or attachments. In the same vein, the theory explains that, men or family members who have a high premium for family, work and community may see being arrested for spousal abused as a powerful deterrence from engaging in such behaviour.

The Methodology

Prose written in Igbo is incapable of being definitely decided or settled with respect to number, they address many themes in the society ranging from culture to politics, religion, etc. From the number of Igbo novels, *Ofomata's IheỌjọọGbaaAfọ* was purposively selected for this study. It was selected on account of the fact that it addresses the issue of family conflict. As a matter of fact, it is one of the few novels written in Igbo that focuses on that concern. The novel was chosen for this study because it provides more comprehensive, indepth and realistic account of society than other aspects of literature such as drama and poetry. The study chose a single novel because, the novel is found sufficient to extract adequate data for analysis, as well as the fact that this is not a comparative study.

The Analyses of Female Aggression against Men

In this section, the analysis will follow the various dimensions of abuse perpetrated by the agent to the victim, as follows:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse encompasses the fights involving the couples in the novel. Ikenna and his wife Nkemdịrịm often engaged each other in fights in their home for several reasons. These fights were caused by various factors and had different results as below:

> Ihe a Nkemidịrịmkwuru were Ikenna iwe nke mere na o baarayamba ka o mechieọnụ, ya. Mba a Ikenna baarayadizie ka ọ bụ mmadụ ka a wunyere n'ọkụ. O malitesiwa Ikenna na ọ maarana ọ bụ Builo ka o ga-akwunyere ma o bata n'ihina ọ bụ izu ha abụọ gbara agba. Ihe ahụ o kwuru mere ka Ikenna hapụ ihe niile o na-eme, o were sokwuru ya n'ike n'ebe ahụ o nọ n'oche; ọnụ ya na-agba ka ụkpaka wee gboo ya nti. O bekata ka ewu, o bewe ka atụrụ. Mana o ji eze were dee Ikenna ụri n'ahụ ya niile. (Chapter 6, pages 95 and 96).
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> This thing Nkemdịrịm did infuriated Ikenna which made him to ask him to keep quiet. This Ikenna's indictment of her seemed like pouring fuel on fire. She began to tell Ikenna that she knew that he will support Builo when he comes because it is the plan of both of them. What he said made Ikenna to leave what he was doing, and he confronted her where she was seated, babbling and beat her up. After crying like a goat, she will cry like a sheep. But she used her teeth to design ikenna's body.

In this episode Nkemidịrịm had publicly embarrassed Builo, Ikenna's friend, verbally abusing him and calling him unprintable names for having advised Ikenna not to marry her for reasons based on her character. Ikenna is not happy because there was no just cause for the embarrassment. As if that was not enough, Nkemidịrịm blames Ikenna and accuses him of planning with his friend to insult her. As she continued babbling and indicting Ikenna, Ikenna confronted her and beat her. The idiom *gbọọyantị* 'glean her ears' aptly suggests thorough beating. The saying o bekata ka ewu, o bewe ka atụrụ 'after crying like a goat, she begins to cry like a sheep' implies the degree of Nkemdịrịm's wailing as a consequence of the beating from her husband. In reaction, Nkemdịrịm bit Ikenna in the process. The figurative expression *mana o ji eze dee Ikenna ụrin'ahụyaniile* 'But she used her teeth to draw or design decorative lines all over Ikenna's body is a hyperbolic way of saying that she inflicted

numerous bite marks on Ikenna. It is evident here that, although Ikenna beat his wife, it was not unjustifiable; Ikenna was merely reacting to the violent initiative taken by Nkemdịrịm by confronting and embarrassing his friend and also falsely accusing him of plotting with his friend to insult her. The act of beating his wife is a means of controlling her and forcing her into submission; his wife's retaliation is a means of resisting the attempt of her husband to control her. The fight is a systematic battle over who controls the family. Both couples are trying to control, and it is safe to aver that both are abusers and both are victims of abuse.

> Nkemdịrịm gara n'oche ebe Ikenna nọ were na-echeụwaya, dodo yan'akwa were na-asịyana ọ ga-agwayaebe ọ hapụrụyagawa… Ka Nkemdịrịm hụrụna Ikenna achọghị ịtụpụrụ ya ọnụ, o hunyaa Ikenna n'oche ebe ahụ ọ nọ, were na-asịya ọ masịya, yaekwula okwu tutu chi efo, na ọ bụ n'anyasị ahụ ka ha abụọ ga-agụrụ ihe ha sinyere n'ọkụ… Mgbe Ikenna ji wee mara na ọ bụrụna ọ gbachiya bụ ugherenkịtị ọ naraya agba bụ oge Nkemdịrịm kwara ya aka were si ya zaa ya ihe ọ jụrụ ya. Aka ahụ ọ kwara Ikenna fọdụrụ nwantịntị ka o meruo ya ahụ. Ikenna were nwayọọ si n'ala ebe ọ dara bilie n'ihina mberede nyịrị dike. Nkemdịrịm…gara ebe ahụ Ikenna kwụ ga dodokwa ya aka n'akwa were na-asị ya na o bụ taa ka ha abụọ ga-atụ ọnụ dakpuo n'ime ya…Ikenna malitere tibe Nkemdịrịm ihe…(chapter 6, pages 110-112).

> Nkemdịrịm went to the chair where Ikenna sat in reflection, held his cloth and said he must tell her where he went and left her at home… When Nkemdịrịm notices that Ikenna does not want to talk to her, she shook him on the chair and told her, if he likes he may keep mum till day break, that is that night that two of them will harvest what they put in the fire…. When Ikenna realized that if he allowed the yawn, it will take his jaw was when Nkemdịrịm pushed him and told him to answer her question. The push nearly made Ikenna to sustain bruises. Ikenna quietly rose from the floor where he fell because suddenness is the doom of warriors.Nkemdịrịm…went to where Ikenna stood and grabbed his shirt again and told him that today both of them will burrow a pit and fall into it…Ikenna began to beat Nkemdịrịm…

In this episode, Nkemdịrịm confronts Ikenna directly outside the house as he came back with his friend, Arinze, over his whereabout and insists to know the truth about where Ikenna went. Ikenna left her and retired to the safety of their bedroom. Yet Nkemdịrịm followed him, held his shirt, shook him, and pushed him with such force that he collapsed to the floor. Then Ikenna rose and started beating her. The two expressions made by Nkemdịrịm underline her purpose for confronting her husband. In the first case,*na ọ bụ naabalị ka ha abụọ ga-agụrụihe ha sinyeren'ọkụ*'that it is that night that two of them will harvest what they put in the fire' implies that both will reap what they have sown; the imaginary thing they put in the fire is trouble and fire had cooked it to maturation. The fire is a symbol of violence. In the second case, *ọ bụ taa ka ha abụọ ga-atụọnụdakpuon'imeya* 'that it is today that two of them will dig a pit and fall into it, indicates her readiness to consciously and deliberately destroy themselves. The pit used in the expression symbolizes the grave or the final home of humans. It is noteworthy that, it is actually her wish and desire, hence the initiative taken by her. In this episode, Nkemdịrịm is the one obviously controlling while the beating by Ikenna is a mere reaction and his own way of resisting control by his wife. It is evident that, Ikenna did

not plan to beat her; he did it because she pushed him to the wall and he did not have any option. The proverb *Mgbe Ikenna ji wee mara na ọ bụrụna ọ gbachiya bụ ugherenkịtị ọ naraya agba* 'when Ikenna knew that if he allows the yawn, it will take his jaw' suggests that Ikenna found himself in a vulnerable position; he had to defend himself or he may have himself to blame thereafter. In this instance, Nkemdịrịm is the abuser and Ikenna is the victim.

> Okwu ndị ahụ Ejindu gwara Nkemdịrịm ruru ya na mmụọ nke ukwu nke mere na o malitere siwe ọnwụ ka Ikenna hapụ ya ka ọ ga bie Ejindụ aka n'ahụ… o wee were ụra karamapụ Ejindụ mkpu n'ọnụ. Ozigbo o mere nkea ka Ikenna ji iwe wee were ọsọ bịa jide ya, were malite gwawa ya na ikpe anaghị ama nwatakịrị nna ya nọ n'ogbo okwu. Ikenna eleghị anyan'azụ were tie Nkemdịrịm ihe n'abalị ahụ… Ikenna echetazighị na Nkemdịrịm dị ime, were gbooyantịn'abalị ahụ makana ebe Nkemdịrịm na-echetaghị na ọ dị ime ọmụmụ were ga tie Ejindụihen'ihuya, na ọ gaghịkwa ajụ ase were gbagheeyantị (Chapter 7, page 139).
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> The words Ejindu used to address Nkemdịrịm affected her so much to the point that she started struggling for Ikenna to leave her so that she will beat Ejindu…She then released a scream-inducing slap on Ejindu. Immediately she did this, Ikenna grabbed her in annoyance, and began to tell her that a child does not lose a case in a matter where his father is the judge. Ikenna did not look back while she beat Nkemdịrịm that night…Ikenna did not remember that Nkemdịrịm was pregnant and gleaned her ears that night, because since Nkemdịrịm did not remember that she was pregnant and beat Ejindu, that he would not mind opening her ears.

In this episode, Nkemdịrịm and Ikenna engage in a fight over the welfare of Ikenna's little brother who had come to Enugwu to stay with them. the fact is that,Nkemdịrịm had started using Ejindu as her slave;Ejindu literally does all chores in the house while Nkemdịrịm does nothing but sleep or apply makeup on her body. Despite Ikenna's warning to his wife to give the boy a beak, she refused and continued to maltreat the boy. Until one day, in the presence of ikenna, Ejindu summoned the courage to address Nkemdịrịm and said many unpleasant things about her. In reaction, Nkemdịrịm, who could not contain the insults, pulled away from Ikenna's hold and maltreat the boy. Until one day, in the presence of Ikenna, Ejindu summoned the courage to address Nkemdịrịmand said many unpleasant things about her. In reaction, Nkemdịrịm, who could not contain the insults, pulled away from Ikenna's hold and slapped Ejindu. The author's description of the slap as *urakara aka* 'a mature slap' is to show the weight which elicited a scream from Ejindu. In response, Ikenna grabs Nkemdịrịm and starts beating her, even though she was pregnant at the time. Culturally, beating Ejindu in the presence of Ikenna his elder brother is wrong. In the Igbo culture, it is an abomination to beat someone who has run to an elder brother is wrong. In the Igbo culture, it is an abomination to beat someone who has run to an elder for solace or protection. If a person is running after someone to beat them and they grab an elderly person or run into the house of another person, the person has taken sanctuary there and the pursuer stops the chase. If the pursuer continues the chase and beats the person in the presence of the elder, he has committed an abomination; it is deemed that he beat the elderly one to whom the person ran, and the elderly one reserves the right to fight the intruder. In the event that the pursuer runs

into the house and beats the person, it is also seen as an abomination, because he had desecrated the sanctuary. It is expected and required that the pursuer should stop the chase in respect to the elder or the sanctuary, as the case may be. In this light, slapping Ejindu in the presence of Ikenna is not just a calculated insult and provocation, but an affront on Ikenna; it is akin to slapping Ikenna himself. And Ikenna reacted accordingly by beating his wife. The proverb used to describe the beating naikpeanaghị ama nwatakịrịnnaya nọ n'ogbo okwu 'a child whose father is a judge does not lose the case' is used to delineate the Igbo cultural belief in respecting the face of elders whose wards are involved in a matter. That the beating was affected despite Nkemdịrịm's pregnancy shows the primacy of this belief and how dearly it is held by Ikenna. In this case, Nkemdịrịm is the abuser for slapping 'Ikenna' and abusing the custom of the land. Ikenna's beating of his wife is reactive and also a means of cleansing the desecrated land.

> Oge Nkemdịrịm na-agwa Ikenna ihe ndịa, Ikenna baara ya mba ka o si ya n'ihu pụọ tupu mmiri erughị eru amalite maba ya. Nkemdịrịm gara ghodo ya n'akwa were sị ya ọ mara nke o ji o weta n'ihina ọ bụghị ya ka a na-achịlịrị anya elu. Ọ mara ihe ọ ga-eme o mee…Ikenna si ebe o nọ kwolite n'ike, tie…o ji maka iwe ihe a gwara ya n'ụlọ banyere ụdịrị nwaanyị ọ lụtararana iwe nke Nkemdịrịm kpasuru ya oge ọ batara were mewe Nkemdịrịm ihe uzu na-eme ogene. (Chapter 8, pages 190 and 191).
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> While Nkemdịrịm was telling Ikenna these things, Ikenna asked her to leave his presence or else a sudden rain will descend on her.Nkemdịrịm grabbed his shirt and told him to bring on whatever he had because it is not for him that people look up. If he knows what he wants to do, let him do it…Ikenna rose from where he sat with force, screamed…He capitalized on what he was told at home about the kind of wife he married, coupled with the provocation from Nkemdịrịm when he came back and dealt with Nkemdịrịm the way a blacksmith treats a going in the fire.

In another episode, Ikenna and his wife engage in a fight over her behaviour after Ikenna returned from a visit to his hometown Odunta. It happened that, when Ikenna came home, Nkemdịrịm did not bother to welcome him with a greeting; rather, she asked him for money to buy formular for her baby. Ikenna asked her if she was alright and she seized the opportunity to rain insults on Ikenna. When Ikenna asked her to leave his presence, she grabs him by the shirt and asks him to do his worst.Nkemdịrịm used two idioms to describe her action and intention; firstly *'O mara nke O ji o weta*' if he knows the one he has, let him bring' indicates she is ready for any kind of trouble from Ikenna. Secondly, '*ọ bụghịya ka a na-achịlịrị anya elu'* it is not because of him that one looks up' refers to the fact that Ikenna is not God to whom all look up. By this second expression, Nkemdịrịm is stating that she has no modicum of respect or fear for Ikenna because he is not God. In other words, she does not see herself as subordinated to Ikenna and hence did not acknowledge his authority as the head of the family. She initiates the fight purposely to show Ikenna that they are equal and in response, Ikenna beat her. The idiom used to express the beating *ihe ụzụ na-eme ogene* 'what the blacksmith does to a gong' indicates the severity of the beating from Ikenna. In this case, Nkemdịrịm is the abuser and Ikenna is the victim; the beatigng from Ikenna is a reaction to his wife's verbal and physical confrontation. Nkemdịrịm intentionally uses violence to

intimidate Ikenna and to control the home, but each time, Ikenna matches her with violence to counter her objective.

> Ikenna si ọrụ were lọta mgbe olu Nkemdịrịmna-ada n'elu n'elu. Ikenna jụrụ Nkemdịrịm ihe bụ nsogbu ya. Nkemdịrịm gwa ya ajụsịla ya n'ihina ọ bụ ya gwara anụ ọhịa bụ Nnaemeka ka o kpariwa ya. Ikenna were kpọọ Nnaemeka were jụọ ya ihe butere ya bụ esemokwu. Ka Nnaemeka na-akọrọ Ikenna ka ya bụ ọkụkọ sị wee tụpuo ọnụ erugheru, Nkemdịrịm si n'oche ebe ọ nọ waliri n'ike buru ogu wee sokwuru Nnaemeka. Ihe a Nkemdịrịm mere gbakara Ikenna isi. Ikenna were si n'ebe ọ no kulie ozigbo ga jide Nkemdịrịm, wee malite gosiba ya na anụ ọbụla gbara ọsọ ka oke, nwamba arịa ya elu (Chapter 9, pages 210 and 211).
>
> Ikenna came back from work when Nkemdịrịm's voice was all over the place. Ikenna asked Nkemdịrịm what her problem was. Nkemdịrịm told him to stop asking her because he was the one that told the animal called Nnaemeka to insult her.Ikenna called Nnaemeka and asked him what caused the trouble. As Nnemeka was narrating to Ikenna how the fowl punctured the ant hole, Nkemdịrịm rose and started fighting Nnaemeka. What Nkemdịrịm did provoked Ikenna so much. Ikenna therefore rose from where he sat and held Nkemdịrịm and started showing her that any animal that ran like a rat, the cat will overpower it.

In another episode, Ikenna and Nkemdịrịm engaged in a fight over a matter invoking Ikenna's nephew Nnaemeka. The young man who is a university graduate had come to stay with Ikenna in Enugwu for the purpose of attending various interviews for jobs. But one day, Nnaemeka discovered to his chagrin that his bag had been vandalized. He asked the housemaid Ogenna and Nkemdịrịm's younger brother Chidi, but they denied, and so he asked Nkemdịrịm if she knew who vandalized his bag.Nkemdịrịm took it as an affront and accusses Nnaemeka of accusing her of theft. When Ikenna returned, his wife was not willing to tell him what happened but while Nnaemeka was telling the story, she engages him in a fight. This is reminiscent of the case of Ejindu whom she slapped in the presence of Ikenna. Committing that offence a second time means that Nkemdịrịm has no respect for the culture of the land nor Ikenna. Both cases represent deliberate attempt to intimidate Ikenna and hijack the reign of control. Given the result of the previous case with Ejindu, she knew that fighting Nnaemeka is fighting her husband, and that Ikenna would not spare her but she did it nevertheless. That means, she was ready for a fight with her husband. The proverb used to describe the beating *anụ ọbụla gbara ọsọ ka oke, nwamba arịa ya elu* 'any animal that runs like a rat, the cat will overpower it' shows the hierarchy in the family, and the power of the custodian of the house over any intruder. In other words, the custodian of the house conquers any intruder that comes in. in this case, the cat symbolizes Ikenna while the rat stands for Nkemdịrịm. Although the Igbo reserve a revered place for mothers in the home, some women are as strangers because they do not possess the requisite qualities off a mother. In this instance, Nkemdịrịm is the abuser and Ikenna is the victim.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a tactic of control that consists of a wide variety of verbal attacks and humiliations, including repeated verbal attacks against the victim's worth as an individual.

The data on emotional abuse are verbal forms of aggression directed at a spouse aimed at lowering their self esteem. The data is presented below:

> O mechaa sị nwunye ya, "nke a ga-abụ mbụ na ikpeazụ ị ga-enye onye ọbụla chọtara m nsogbu. Mgbe ọzọ m ga-abata n'ụlọ a were nụ ụdịrị ihe di otu ahụ ọzọ, I si n'ụlọ m pụọrọ m… Nkemdịrịm wee sịya" Ị bụ onye ara. Ị maghị ihe ị na-akọ. Kama m ga-esi n'ụlọ a pụọrọ gị, kama I kwapụrụ m. Legodu ewu dị ka gị adighị ihe ọ maara. Anụ ọhịa ihere anaghị eme. M mechaa gị ihe n'ụlọ a, I si n'ike hụ ụzọ. (Chapter 6, page 97).
>
> After he told his wife, "this will be the first and last time you will disturb my guest. Next time I come home and hear such things again, you will leave this house for me… Nkemdịrịm told him "You are a mad person. You don't know what you are saying. Instead of me to leave this house for you, you will leave for me. Imagine a goat like you who know nothing. Shameless animal. When I am done with you in this house, you will start seeing from your anus.

This episode comprises the exchange of words between Ikenna and Nkemdịrịm over the way. Nkemdịrịm confronted Ikenna's friend, Builo, Ikenna warns his wife to stop disgracing his friends and she react by calling him names. In the data above, Nkemdịrịm used the following expression: *Ị bụ onye ara* 'you are a mad person', *Legodu ewu dị ka gị adighị ihe ọ maara* 'imagine a goat like you that knows nothing', *Anụ ọhịa ihere anaghị eme* 'an animal without shame'. The implication of calling Ikenna a mad person is that he is abnormal; mad people are considered abnormal because they have lost their senses or they have assumed weird senses that make them talk and behave in bizarre ways. A goat is a domestic animal that eats grass as food. In English, a goat is equated with stubbornness, but in Igbo culture, a goat is equated with stupidity based on its manners. Thus, Nkemdịrịm is suggesting that her husband is stupid and knows nothing. This is despite the fact that, Ikenna is educated, employed and earns money for the family. Most animals live in the bush while few live with humans. The idea of associating animals with shamelessness is the fact that they are capable of copulating in the open; dogs, goats and chickens are known to mate in the open but humans couch such activity in secret as a form of respect. Calling Ikenna a shameless animal implies that he is not human and capable of dancing naked in public. Technically, Nkemdịrịm is aware that these words she uses to describe Ikenna do not actually reflect his character or personality; she deliberately employs them to belittle him and reduce him in his own eyes. Incidentally, Ikenna did not react by calling his wife such abhorrent names. The remote aim of using these names is to intimidate Ikenna and consequently control him. In this case, Nkemdịrịm is the abuser while Ikenna is the victim.

Nkemdịrịm hapụrụ Arịnze were tụgharịa ozigbo ebe di ya nọ…Ọ sị Ikenna, "Anụọhịa, onye ka ị na-abaramba? I cherena m bụ nwankịta be gị? Ịpụọla zuzuchaa were bata ka Ị bawara nwankịta be gị mba.Ihere anaghị eme gị na ọ bụ mgbe ọbụla ụmụokorobịa ibe gị a na-arafugị.

Ọ bụrụna Ị maara ihe, Ị gaghị atụpụrụ m ọnụ. M na gị mechaa ihe n'abalị a, ụbọchị ọzọ, Ị pụọ apụ, chi jiwe, I were ọsọ cheta na o nwere onye Ị hapụrụ n'ụlọ (Chapter 6, page 109).
Nkemdịrịm left Arịnze and turned abruptly to her husband…She told Ikenna "Animal, who are you harassing? Do you think I am your house dog? You have gone out and fooled around and now came back to harass your house dog. You are not ashamed that every time your fellow young men will be misleading you. If you had sense, you would not have talked to me. When we finish with ourselves this night, next time you go out, when it is nearing night you will quickly remember that you left someone at home and run back home.

This episode presents the confrontation between Nkemdịrịm and Ikenna returned from an outing with his friend, Arinze. After she had abused Arinze, Nkemdịrịm turned to her husband and addresses him with the following unpleasant words and expressions: *Anụ ọhịa* 'animal', *Ịpụọla zuzu chaa were bata* 'you have gone out, misbehaved/fooled around and and come back', *Ihere anaghị eme gị na ọ bụ mgbe ọbụla ụmụ okorobịa ibe gị a na-arafu gị* 'You don't have shame that all the time your friends mislead you', '*Ọ bụrụ na Ị maara ihe, Ị gaghị atụpụrụ m ọnụ* 'If have sense, you would not talk to me. By calling him an animal, she is reiterating that Ikenna is less than a huma being and so has no right to berate her. Going out to fool around or misbehave implies that Ikenna did not have any good reasons to venture out with his friends. The idea of being misled by his friends is just a way of saying that Ikenna is a mere child that does not know his left from his right and so at the mercy of his friends' whims and caprices; to say that, if Ikenna has sense implies that he does not have sense. Again, in this encounter, Nkemdịrịm is the abuser and Ikenna is the victim; her aim is to control her husband in the home.

> Ka Ikenna batara be ya, n'Enugwu ụbọchị ụka ahụ, ihe nwunye ya jịrị kelee ya nnọọ bụ ịgwa ya ka o nye ya ego ka ọ ga were zụtara Ike mmmiri ara ehi o ji emetara ya nri n'ihina ihe ọnụnụ o nwere agwụla. Ikenna were iwe roo ya anya jụọ ya ma isi ọ dịkwa ya mma, na ọ hụla na ihe ahụ na-enye ya nsogbu achọghị ịhapụ ya aka… Nkemdịrịm chịrị aka na abọ gbanye n'ukwu were si Ikenna "Ọ bụghị m. Ọ bụrụ na ịmaghị, a gwa m gị. Ị bụ onye ara! Ara na-awịgị Ọ dịghị ihe ị ma! Onye nzuzu ka gị mma! Ụta adịghị gị, ị hapụrụ ụmụ ohu gị ebe a wee gaa Ọdunta na-epiogharị….Ihere onwe gị ọ na-emekwa gị? (Chapter 8, pages 189 and 190).
>
> As Ikenna entered his house in Enugwu that Sunday, what his wife used to welcome him was to ask for money to buy baby milk for Ikem because she had exhausted her stock. Ikenna was annoyed and gave her a dirty look and asked her if her head was normal, and that it seemed that whatever was disturbing her had not stopped…. Nkemdịrịm stood akimbo and told Ikenna "You are the one that is not normal. You are the one afflicted by what you have in mind. It is not me. If you do not know, I will tell you. You are a mad person! Your are afflicted by madness! You know nothing! A fool is better than you! I don't blame you. You left your slaves here went to Odunta sneaking about the place…Are you not ashamed of yourself?

This episode presents the encounter between Ikenna and Nkemdịrịm upon Ikenna's return from his hometown, Odunta. Instead of Nkemdịrịm to receive her husband with a welcome,

she presents him with a request to bring money to buy baby food. In reaction Ikenna gives her a dirty look and expresses a doubt that she is not yet free from what has been disturbing her. In response Nkemdịrịm uses the following words and expressions to address her husband: *Ọ bụ gị bụ onye Anya adịghị mma. Ọ bụ gị ka ihe ahụ i bụ n'uchena-eme. Ọ bụghị m* 'You are the one who whose head is not right! You are the one experiencing what you have in mind, not me', ị bụ onyeara! Ara na-awịgị! 'You are a mad person! Madness has afflicted you!, ọ dịghịihe ị ma! 'You do not know anything', onyenzuzu ka gịmma! 'A fool is better than you', …gaa Oduntana-epiogharị '…went to Odunta sneaking about'. In this exchange, Nkemdịrịm throws Ikenna's word to his face and alleges that he is the one mentally disturbed, not her. Although, Ikenna was silent about whatever it is that is disturbing her, Nkemdịrịm made it clear that it is insanity and he is the one afflicted. By calling Ikenna a mad person and that madness has afflicted him, coupled with the exclamatory nature of the delivery implies that she is fully convinced that her husband is insane. That a fool is better than him implies that Ikenna is good for nothing; going to Odunta to sneak about means that he had no real business for travelling to Odunta, except to go from one woman's house to another having fun. Thus, she is accusing Ikenna of adultery. Aside the unpleasant words and expressions, Nkemdịrịm's body language or non-verbal expression is annoying; before she started the tirade, she had posed by placing two hands on her waist *Nkemdịrịm chịrị aka na abọ gbanye n'ukwu were sị Ikenna*. I Igbo culture, it is seen as improper for a young person to stand akimbo while addressing an elder or for a woman to stand akimbo while addressing her husband. It is an unsavoury and repugnant behavior that is tabooed. Observing and maintaining that position while addressing someone has implications for power; it is the more powerful person among the interlocutors that are permitted to hold that position. By holding that position, Nkemdịrịm is putting herself in a position of power over her husband. Going by the data, it is obvious that Nkemdịrịm is the abuser while Ikenna is the victim.

The consequences of this emotional abuse on Ikenna are alcoholism and physical deterioration. Ikenna cultivates the habit of drinking and getting drunk every night before bed time to enable him to sleep, *ọ na-emeya ka ọ na-arụfe mmanya oke kwa abalị ọbụla tupu ọ lakpuo* 'it makes him to get drunk every night before he sleeps' (Chapter 7, pages 115). He is not happy, and therefore seeks friendship and companionship with the bottle. Secondly, Ikenna deteriorated physically as a result of emotional stress; he had emaciated and is now a shadow of his former buoyant self. In the novel, it is stated that *onye ọbụla maara Ikenna mbụ hụziri ya ugbua ga-aghọta nke ọma na nsi adịghịzị n'ọhịa* 'Any person who once knew Ikenna and who sees him now will admit that faecesis no longer in the bush' (chapter 8, page 172). The idiom implies that things are no longer the same for Ikenna as he is no longer feeding well due to emotional disturbance

Psychological abuse

The psychological abuses represent the threats made by the parties during interaction. The abuser's threats of harm may be directed against the victim or other people close to the victim such as friends and relatives. The data is presented below:

> Ikenna jụrụ nwunye ya ihe na-esere ya na enyi ya nwoke. Nkemdịrịm gwara Ikenna ka ọ ghara ịkpọ ya aha ọzọ n'ihi na ọ bụghị ọ hụchaa onye na-egbu ya, ọ na-akpọ ya enyi ya. Ọ gwakwara Ikenna na ọ bụ nkịtị ka ọ gbara Builo o

> were ndụ ya laa. Na ụbọchị ọzọ Builo ga-atụ ọkpa na be ha, o were ihe kụwaa ya isi. (Chapter 6, page 95).
>
> Ikenna asked his wife what was the matter between her and his friend.Nkemdịrịm told Ikenna not to mention her name again because it is not after seeing your killer, you call him your friend. She also told Ikenna that she deliberately kept quiet and Builo went away with his life. That another day Builo will enter their house, she will use something to break his head.

In this exchange between Ikenna and Nkemdịrịm threatens to use something to break the head of Builo, Ikenna's friend *O were ihe kụwa ya isi*. Although this threat is directed to Ikenna's friend, the threat was made in his presence. Such a threat is damaging to the psyche. The aim of the abuser is to terrorize her victim in order to control them, whether she is capable of carrying out the threat or not. breaking a person's head with a weapon is a violent act capable of killing the person. Nkemdịrịm's aim in this exchange is to show herself as violent so that Ikenna would be afraid of her and possibly stop challenging her.

> Nkemdịrịm wee sị ya "…M mechaa gị ihe n'ụlọ a, I si n'ike hụ ụzọ. Bịagodụ metu m aka n'ahụ ọzọ, ka Ị mara ma Ị ga-aghọkwa onye nwụrụ anwụ ugbua…(Chapter 6, page 97).
>
> Nkemdịrịm then answered him "….After dealing with you in this house, you will start seeing from your anus. Just come and touch me again and know whether you will not be a dead man now.

In this exchange between Ikenna and Nkemdịrịm, Nkemdịrịm threatens Ikenna in two ways; the first threat is *M mechaa gị ihe n'ụlọ a, I si n'ike hụ ụzọ* 'After dealing with you, you will see through your anus'. The idiom is used by Nkemdịrịm to underline the severity of the suffering she will mete to Ikenna. In other words, she will subject him to untold punishment that can alter his biological nature. Humans see through the eyes and defecate through the anus. Whatever can lead to a reversal of this natural order must be grave indeed. The idiomatic expression may be hyperbolic, but it paints a horrid picture of the abuser and the act she intends to carry out. Incidentally, Nkemdịrịm did not say how she intended to carry out the threat; the understanding is that she is heartless and capable of evil. The second threat is *…ka Ị mara ma Ị ga-aghọkwa onye nwụrụ anwụ ugbua* 'and know whether you will not be a dead person now'. The threat is directly on the life of Ikenna; threatening his life means that Ikenna is not safe in his house, which also translates to being always vigilant.

> Ọ jụrụ Nkemdịrịm ma ọ bụ na ihe ahụ ọ gwara ya n'oge gara aga banyere Ejindụ abaghị ya ntị, ka ọ chọrọ imata ihe ya ga-eme Nkemdịrịm ji iwe si n'oche ọ nọ malite, were si ya na ọ gaghị anyụ anwụ (Chapter 7, pages 121 and 122).
>
> He asked Nkemdịrịm whether what he told her in time past did not enter he ears, or that she wanted to know what he will do. Nkemdịrịm angrily rose from her seat and told him that he will not defecate bees.

In this exchange between Ikenna and Nkemdịrịm over the issue of Ejindụ, Ikenna's younger counsel; therefore Ikenna inquires from her if she wants to dare him. In response, Nkemdịrịm tells Ikenna that ọ gaghịanyụanwụ 'he will not defecate bees'. This is an idiomatic expression used to challenge somebody to do the impossible. Normally, humans defecate faecatefaeces and not bees; the wild and poisonous nature of bees makes it our rightly impossible to be defecated by a person.Nkemdịrịm used this expression to tell Ilenna that he does not have the capacity or the will to do anything against her. That means, he is emasculated and cannot hurt her. This is in spite of the evidence to the contrary, going by the series of beatings she had prompted Ikenna to subject her. In addition, her body language helped to strengthen the challenge. Before she threw the challenge she actually rose from her seat *Nkemdịrịm ji iwe si n'oche ọ nọ malite.* The Igbo word *malite* means o rise with force. Rising in this manner shows how confrontational she is and the strength of the challenge to Ikenna. Evidently, she does not want to take a subordinate position in the family and so strives to exert pressure on Ikenna to cede authority to her.

> Ikenna kpọrọ Ejindụ were nọrọ n'ihu Nkemdịrịm gwa ya na ọ bụrụ na nwunye ya agbanwoghị n'omume ọ na-emeso ya, ọ gbaa mbọ mee ka ọ mara… o mechaa gakwuru Ikenna ebe ọ nọ, were na-asị ya dịkwa njikere igbu ya n'ihi na ọ bụrụ na o gbughị ya, ya bụ Nkemdịrịm egbuo ya…(Chapter 7, page 126).
>
> Ikenna called Ejindụ in the presence of Nkemdịrịm told him that if his wife does not change her behaviour towards him, he should endeavour to tell him…Thereafter she went to Ikenna where he was, and asked him to be ready to kill her, because if he did not kill her, she Nkemdịrịm will kill him.

In the exchange between the couple, Nkemdịrịm makes a two-pronged threat to Ikenna. On the same vexed issue concerning Ejindụ, Nkemdịrịm again confronts Ikenna and tells him to be ready to kill her, otherwise risk being killed by her. The idea behind this threat is that, she is not willing to change her attitude towards the young Ejindụ; she would prefer to die than stop abusing and maltreating the poor boy. The preference to die implies that she has no value for her life, which justifies her desire to kill take her husband's life. It is given that anyone who does not value their life cannot value the life of another. Apparently, the constant threat to the life of Ikenna is a kind of brutality to his psyche capable of making him wary of his wife.

> "Ugbua ka m chọpụtarana ọ bụ gị sị Ejindụ kpariba m. Unu abụọ na-akpa nkata out unu ga-esigbuo m…A ga m ahịọ chapurịrị ya ọnụ ahụ o ji agwa m okwu…Ọ dịghị ihe ga-eme ka m hapụ Ejindụndụ. Ọ bụrụgodu na ọbụghị taa, ọ bụrụ echi…Ebegị bụ Ikenna gbachiri nkịtị, ọkụ na-agba n'ụlọ gi, ọkụ ahụ ga-agbagbu m na gị na Ejindụ n'ụlọ. Ebe I chọrọ ọnwụ m; Ị chọghị ndụ m, Ị ga-ebu m ụzọ nwụọ. A ga m emekatagị ihe n'ụlọ a, Ị tawa chi gị ụta ihe kpatara I jịrị lụọ nwanyị…Naanị chi ga-azọ Ejindụ bụ ma o si n'ụlọ a pụọ. Mana ọ kachie ntị nọdụ na ya, a kachie m ntị bupụ ozu ya (Chapter 7, pages 136 and 137).
>
> "It is not I discovered that you are the one that told Ejinduụ to insult me. Two of you are maing plans to kill me…I will twist off that mouth with which he

> talks to me…Nothing will make me leave Ejindụ alive. Even if it is not today, it will be tomorrow…Since you Ikenna kept quiet, and fire is burning your house, that fire will burn I and you and Ejindụ to death. Since you want me to die, you don't want me to live, you will die before me. I will so deal with you that you will begin to blame your personal god why you got married. The only thing that will save Ejindu is if he leaves this house. But if he insists in staying in it, I will also insist in taking off his corpse.

The data above is replete with threats to life by Nkemdịrịm. she threatens Ejindụ in two ways; first by focusing on his oral cavity *Aga m ahịọchapurịrị ya ọnụ ahụ o ji agwa m okwu* "I wil ensure that I twist off that mouth with which he addresses me'. The idea here is that she will use her hands to remove Ejindụ's lips; that is a way of saying that she will stop him from talking as punishment for talking to her in an unpleasant manner. The second threat on Ejindụ is on his life *Ọ dịghị ihe ga-eme ka m hapụ Ejindụ ndụ* 'Nothing will make me leave Ejindu alive'. The import of her position is that no power will prevent her from killing Ejindụ. The next threat is on the life of the three of them *Ebe gị bụ Ikenna gbachiri nkịtị, ọkụ na-agba n'ụlọ gị, ọkụ ahụ ga-agbagbu m na gị na Ejindu n'ụlọ* "Since you Ikenna kept silent while fire ravages your house, that fire will burn I and you and Ejindụ to death'. The fire referred to here is the toxic state of their house, meaning that trouble will consume all three of them. The next threat is directed at Ikenna *Aga m emekata gị ihe n'ụlọ a, Ị tawa chi gị ụta ihe kpatara I jịrịlụọ nwanyị.*' I will deal with you so much that you will blame your personal god for getting married'. Although she did not highlight how she will deal with Ikenna, it is obvious that she is referring to her constant altercations with him. These are threats aimed at witling and weakening Ikenna's power as the head of the family in order to create room for her own authoritative space in the family.

> Ka Nnaemeka ji Ikenna, Nkemdịrịm beere akwa baa n'ime ụlọ ga buru akpa Nnaemeka tụpụ n'ezi were sị ya be ha pụọ…Na ọ bụrụ na Nnaemeka esighị n'ụlọ ahụ buru ngwongwo ya nye ohere, na o ga-esimmiri ọkụ were wụgbuo ya (Chapter 9, page 211).
>
> As Nnaemeka held Ikenna, Nkemdịrịm went inside the house crying and carried Nnaemeka's bags and threw out of the house and told him to leave their house…That if Nnaemeka did not carry his baggage out of the house that she will boil hot water and use it to kill him.

In this exchange, Nkemdịrịm threatens to kill Ikenna's nephew Nnaemeka during a fight with Ikenna. She vowed that if Nnaemeka fails to leave their house she will boil hot water and use it to kill him *Ọ ga-esi mmiri ọkụ were wụgbuo ya*. In this case, Nkemdịrịm issues a threat and also specifies how to carry it out. She understands that if she succeeds in killing Nnaemeka, she has indirectly hit Ikenna who is her primary target.

The consequence of this psychological abuse is fear injected in Ikenna; he is afraid of his life and afraid of his wife. As a result, he keeps away from home and prefers to stay out most of the time. The novel reveals that *N'ezie ọsọ amalitela chụwa nwoke n'ụlọ ya* 'Truly, a man has started running away from his house'.

Social abuse

Social abuse is a technique used by an abuser to isolate the victim from other people in the community. Those targeted in these types of abuse are the victim's friends and relations. The data is presented below.

> Ikenna jikwa nwayọọ jụọ nwunye ya ọzọ ihe bụ iwe ya o jiri si be ya chụpụ ezigbo enyi ya nwoke. Nkemdịrịm were sị ya na nke ahụ bụ ikpeazụ ọ ga-ajụ ya ajụjụ ahụ ọzọ, n'ihi na o doola ya anya na ọ bụ ya kwadoro Builo ka ọ bịa ebe a kparịwa ya…Na ụbọchị ọzọ ọ ga-ahụ ụkwụ Builo na be ha, ọ gwa ya na onye adighị mma na mmadụ anaghị emekọ ihe (Chapter 6, page 95).
>
> Once again, Ikenna gently asked his wife why he sent away his friend from his house.Nkemdịrịm told him that that will be the last time he will ask her that question because she is convinced that he was the one that prepared Builo to come here and insult her…That any othr day she will see Builo in their house, she will tell him that an abnormal person and normal person do not do things in common.

In this episode, Nkemdịrịm's target for expulsion is Ikenna's friend Builo; she employs the tactics of not receiving her husband's friends hospitably to discourage them from calling again. In the case of Builo's visit, her negative response about Ikenna's whereabout did not go down well with Builo, and in the attempt to call her to order, Nkemdịrịm pours on Builo. She creates a scene and starts abusing Builo and calling all manner of names. Later, on inquiry by Ikenna, she bluntly tells him that she does not want to see Builo in their house again. She used and expression earlier used by Builo to drive home her point *Na ụbọchị ọzọ ọ ga-ahụ ụkwụ Builo na be ha, ọ gwa ya na onye anya adighị mma na mmadụ anaghị emekọ ihe* 'That any other day she sees Builo's feet in their house, she will tell him that a mad person and sane person do not do things together'. In this matter, Nkemdịrịm deliberately admits to be mad in order to achieve her aim of distancing Builo from her husband. And she achieved her aim because that day was Builo's last to see Ikenna in his house at Abakpa. The other times they met were all in the office where they worke.

> Ozigbo Arịnze na Ikenna si n'ụgbọ ala ahụ ripụta, Nkemdịrịm gakwuru Arịnze wee sị ya "Nke a ga-abụ izizi na ikpeazụ ị ga-akpọrọ di m pụọ. Ọ bụ unu na-arafu ya, o jighị achọ ile m anya. Arịnze, onwe ihe I chọrọ ime, I mere ya onwe gị. Hapụ Ikenna aka n'ihina ọ lụọla nwaanyị. Mgbe ọbụla ị kpọọrọ Ikenna pụọ, ọ bata, ọ gaghịkwa ele m anya. Ọ gaghịkwa a jụ m ase n'ihina ọ dighị ihe ọ ga-eji m eme ụbọchị ahụ. Achọghịkwa m ka m were anya m hụgị ọzọ n'ime ụlọ be anyị. I nwaa anwa abata, aga m eburu ihe kụwaa gị isi. Ị rafuzịla dị m.Arịnze! Unu na ya ayịzị la. Gawanụ nke ụnụ! (Chapter 6, pages 107 and 108).
>
> Immediately Arinze and Ikenna came out from the car, Nkemdịrịm approached Arinze and told him "This will be the first and last time you will go out with my husband. It is you people that mislead him, so that he does not want to look at me. Arinze, if you want to do anything, do it for yourself. Leave Ikenna alone because he is married. Every time, you will lead Ikenna

> out, and when he comes back he will not look at me. He will not ask about my welfare because he will not do anything with me that day. I don't want to set my eyes on you in this our house again. If you dare come again, I will use something and break your head. Stop misleading my husband. Arinze! You people should stop associating with him. You people should go away!

In this episode, Nkemdịrịm expels another friend of her husband named Arinze through public embarrassment. She confronts Arinze as soon as he came back with Ikenna and accuses him of misleading her husband, and taking Ikenna's attention away from her; therefore he should stay on his own and mind his business and stop coming to their house. As in the case of Builo, Nkemdịrịm chose the perfect setting for this performance; in the public space where people will hear and see the event, and it achieved its purpose. That incident marked the end of Arinze's visit to Ikenna's house. Subsequent meetings were restricted to the work place and it was no longer as cordial as it used to be. As a result of Nkemdịrịm's behavior Ikenna suffered social dislocation.

> Nkemdịrịm ji iwe si n'oche ọ nọ malite….Ọ gwara Ikenna na ọ bụrụna ọ chọghị ka ọ na-ezi Ejindu ozi o were nwayọọ kpọlaa ya tupu ndị mmadụ anụkwa olu ha abụọ…Ọ bụrụna ọ chọghị ka Ejindụ metu ihe ọbụla aka n'ụlọ ha, na o kaara ya mma na ọ kpọlara ya (Chapter 7, page 122).
>
> Angrily, Nkemdịrịm rose from her seat…She told Ikenna that if he does'nt want her to send Ejindu on errands, he should quietly send him home so that people will nolonge hear their voice…If he doesn't want Ejindu to touch anything in the house, that it is better for him to send him home.

In this episode, Nkemdịrịm ensures that Ejindụ, Ikenna's younger brother is sent away from the house. The real purpose behind her maltreatment of Ejindu is to incure the wrath of Ikenna, in order to set the stage for the kind of violence that will culminate in the expulsion of the boy as a solution. Her plan worked perfectly. In the data above, she told Ikenna bluntly to take Ejindu back home if he did not want the boy to run errands or do chores in the house. Nkemdịrịm cunningly made it appear that the issue is just running errands and doing house chores. The fact is that, he had turned the boy into a slave; she would not feed him well yet he did practically everything in the house including clearing the dinner table which is what led to the present situation. Ikenna was in a dilemma; he did not want to take the boy back home, neither did he want him to stay and continue to slave for Nkemdịrịm. She continually sent back home by Ikenna.

> O kwechaghị izu abụọ Nnaemeka bịara be Ikenna, Nkemdịrịm malite gosiwa ya na ọnụnọ ọ nọ be ha adịghị ya mma n'obi. Ndị be anyị, ọhịa a batara na ya bute ozu nza na abọ, sị mara na ihe na-egbu nza nọ na ya. Naanị ihe bụ mkpa Nkemdịrịm bụ ka Nnaemeka si be ha pụọ (Chapter 9, page 207).
>
> It is not up to two weeks that Nnaemeka came to Ikenna's house, Nkemdịrịm started showing him that she was not comfortable with his stay in their house. Our people, a bush where two corpses of robin was found, it should be known

> that something that kills robin is that bush. The only concern of Nkemdịrịm is for Nnaemeka to leave their house.

In this episode, Nnaemeka, Ikenna's nephew becomes the next in the line of Ikenna's relations to be sent away. Although Nnaemeka had come to stay for a short period in order to attend job interviews, Nkemdịrịm did not want him to stay. Simply that the young man was trying to find out who vandalized his bag and asked her she turned the matter around to say that Nnaemeka accused her of theft and so must leave. She was actually looking for a reason, whether justifiable or not, to send Nnaemeka away and she found it and capitalized on it. In the data above, she started manifesting her discomfort and disapproval of Nnaemeka's presence in just two weeks that he visited. The proverb used to couch her attitude towards *Nnaemeka ọhịa a batara na ya bute ozu nza na abọ, sị mara na ihe na-egbu nza nọ na ya* 'the bush were you enter and carry out two carcasses of robin; it should be clear that what kills robins is in that bush' is employed to suggest that it is in her character to rebuff guests who come to their house.

Put differently, she is the one who creates conditions that make guests too uncomfortable to stay. That means she is not hospitable. The theft matter was not resolved and Nnaemeka left the house for the sake of peace, and eventually, Ikenna inquired into the matter and discovered that the thief was Nkemdịrịm's young brother, Chịdị, who stayed with them.

> Nkemdịrịm mekatara nne di ya ihe, nne Ikenna mata n'ezie na anụ niile na-afụ opi mana nke nkapị na-apụ anwụrụ ọkụ. Nkemdịrịm hịọkatara ya ọnụ, o were kweta n'ezie na ihe tagburu nkịta na-ata arụ. Ikenna gawa ọrụ, mgbe Nkemdịrịm jiri sie nri bunye nne di o rie. O bunyeghịkwanụ ya, o buru ọnụ. Nke kachasi nke bụ na Nkemdịrịm anaghị ekwe ka nwaanyị ahụ metụ iko ha ji aṅụ mmiri aka….nne Ikenna mehariạ ahụ, ọ sị ya na ọ na-emetọchara ha ụlọ n'ihina ebe ahụ abụghị Ọdụnta…Na ọ ga-emekata ya ihe o were ọsọ si be ha pụọ (Chapter 9, page 220).
>
> Nkemdịrịm dealt with her mother so much, Ikenna's mother knew that although all animals blow the flute, the one blown by shrew is smoky. Nkemdịrịm so twisted her mouth that she believed that whatever bit a dog to death is a biter. When Ikenna goes to work anytime Nkemdịrịm gives her mother inlaw food she eats. If she fails to give her she starves. The orst case is that Nkemdịrịm bars the woman from touching their cup for drinking water…If Ikenna's mother does anything, she will tell her that she is messing up their house because that place is not Odunta…That she will continue to deal with her until she runs out of their house.

In this episode, Nkemdịrịm targets her mother-in-law for exclusion from the house. Ikenna's mother had come to receive treatment in a hospital in Enugwu and stayed in her son's house. But, as usual, Nkemdịrịm was not comfortable with her stay. The data above is a brief chronicle of her behavior towards her mother inlaw. She was not feeding the woman well and sometimes she starvedher, and barred her from using their cup for drinking. The proverb used to describe Nkemdịrịm's attitude towards her mother inlaw is apt; *anụ niile na-afụ opi mana nke nkapị na-apụ anwụrụ ọkụ* 'all animals blow the flute but shrew's flute bloing is smoky'.

The proverb implies that even though married women do not relate well with their mothers inlaw as a rule, Nkemdịrịm's case is extraordinary. An Idiomatic expression used to capture Nkemdịrịm's dealing with her mother-in-law *hịọkatara ya ọnụ* 'twisting her mouth' serves to describe the suffering and punishment she meted out to the woman. Additionally, she bluntly told the woman that she would continue to deal ruthlessly with her until she literally runs out of the house. As in other cases, she achieved her aim.

In sum, Nkemdịrịm's ultimate aim is to use violence and threats to drive away Ikenna's friends and relations so that she will be left alone with him. It is in the character of those who want to be in control in the domestic setting to avoid interference from others. Limiting or completing eroding Ikenna's social circle is aimed at keeping him away from external influences and restricting him to the house where she is in control. The idea is that, the less the number of people in the victim's network the more opportunity the abuser has to control him.

Discussion

In this study, based on the novel *Iheọjọọgbaaafọ,* four forms of aggression are identified: physical, emotional, psychological and social. The finding shows that, it is mainly the female spouse that aggressed against her intimate partner or husband in all the four dimensions. The physical abuse of the wife was instigated by the wife; the husband laid hands on her when he had no other options. The woman's verbal tirades provided the stimulus for her own oppression. It is arguable that verbal attacks are more injurious or noxious than physical attacks, while physical attacks and effects are mainly limited to the body, verbal attacks are mainly reflected on the mind. It is a silent killer. The psyche and emotions are routinely invaded and assaulted and the individual wears out instalmentally. While wounds on the body are easily seen and recorded, the wounds on the mind are opaque and therefore cannot be quantified. Admittedly, a woman who is physically assaulted may also suffer pains of the mind. Such suffering is assuaged by the understanding that she was the primary instigator of the conflict. Women usually feel satisfied after they have left off steam through verbal babblings, irrespective of the consequences to their body, and therefore are less vulnerable to the afflictions of the mind.; but not so the men. The men go through more and more intense emotional trauma than the female. The reason is cultural; in nearly all cultures in the world, heman is placed above the woman and therefore expects and demands respect from her. When she evinces respect, the man's ego and self esteem rises; otherwise, the man's self esteem and sense of value plunges. It is more bearable and tolerable when a man is ridiculed and insulted in the place of work, and other external settings; but when the insult is provided by the intimate partner, few men tolerate it at the risk of their life. It is worth repeating that, respect ranks highest in every man's scale of preference with respect to matrimonial relationship. The highest idea a man wants from his wife is respect and submission. This is not an accident as tales across the world's culture reasonate with the same feeling. The man wants to be lord in his house and resists any challenge from any source. In Igbo culture, the man is referred to as *dibịụlọ* 'master of the house'; as master of the house, he wants to dominate and exercise authority, though in a positive way.

The finding from this study is like a reversal of the norm; it is usually the men who abuse their wives and the women lament their plight. It is usually the women who are afraid of their husband and would sometimes run away to the security of their paternal home. In this study,

it is the man who is afraid of the wife, due to her penchance and notoriety for unwarranted violence. The reason for this is not far-fetched; western education had exposed African women to the point that they see no reason to be submissive to a man.Nkemdịrịm's exposure to Western education must have been part of the influences that distanced her from her cultural root. In contemporary times, African culture is subordinated to Western culture with the backing of Africans themselves. For example, monogamy, is the norm in Africa rather than polygamy or polygyny. In traditional African societies, married women maintained their supporting or auxiliary positions in the home; not as slaves to the man but as helpers, complementing his efforts to achieve the goals of the family. Even in polygamous homes, the husband ruled and maintained order in the home with the support of the wives. Cases of divorce were rare if not inexistent; in Igbo culture, it is usually the case that when a girl is about to get married the parents warned her never to come back, for any reason, if, for one reason or another she had reason to come back home, the parents would make attempts to resolve the matter and send her back to her husband. Parents in traditional Igbo society actually see it as shameful, if not abominable for their daughter to come back home, for it would be said that she was not well trained. In the present time, women do not have much regard for marriage and family as their forbears, hence the numerous cases of domestic in-fighting, homicide and high divorce rate in Africa.

Conclusion

The study has shown that aggression is not a prerogative of the men in the society; women also have the capacity to aggress over a man. This is especially the case when a woman wants to control the family or when a woman resists control in the family. In the present study, the wife of the protagonist tries to use intimidation, threats to life, and several acts of violence to subdue her husband, but the husband resisted until he was able to exploit traditional processes to divorce her. In the attempt to control her family, the estranged wife made use of physical abuse characterized by biting, pushing, shoving, emotional abuse characterized by negative verbal pronouncements such as name calling, psychological abuse characterized by threats to the life of her husband, husband's friends and associates, husband's relations, and her own self; social abuse characterized by isolating her husband from his friends and family and social network. Her aim is to use violence to intimidate her husband into acquiescence o her whims. Incidentally, she did not have her way as a result of her husband's determination to maintain his hold on the reigns of the family where he is the head.

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