

THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN POWER AND POLITICS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S A
MAN OF THE PEOPLE AND ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH

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LOIDE N MUUNDA

200712977

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SUPERVISOR: PROF J. KANGIRA

ABSTRACT

This thesis analysed *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) by Chinua Achebe from a Stiwanism perspective. The study sought to explore Achebe's 'feminist ideological turn' by analysing how women in power and politics are depicted in the two selected novels. The study also pursued an analysis of how education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in society as portrayed in the two selected novels. In addition, the study sought to analyse the motivating factors for women to take up powerful positions within the novels. This study was carried out from a qualitative approach point of view and it employed content analysis in the interpretation and analysis of the chosen novels. The study revealed that Achebe has portrayed women in power and politics in the two novels as highly educated, strong, fearless, rebellious, intelligent, political activists, conservative, respectful, having successful careers, persistent, not conceited, selfless, intimidating, business women running clothing empires, school heads of prestigious private schools, members of statutory boards, and dominating men in relationships. The study found out that Achebe used empowerment as tool to socially transform women by according them opportunities to not only question but also challenge the political systems of the corrupt governments within the two novels. The study also found out that education is a powerful tool that Achebe used to transform women's roles in the society. As such, educated women are able to make informed decisions and fight for human rights. The study also revealed various motivating factors for women to take up powerful and prestigious positions within the two novels such as the level of education, exposure, career obligation, urge to persevere and the upbringing contextual. The findings further indicate that women in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) have been socially transformed by participating in public and political affairs. The study concludes that the modern African women have new roles within the society as relative to the traditional roles of women. Just like men, women have independent rights and they can successfully take up any role within

the society not on the basis of gender prejudice. The study recommends for future studies that there might be a need to consider using Critical Discourse Analysis as a theory for analysing the depiction of women in the same novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Further studies can also be carried out using Stiwanism as a guiding theory to analyse the portrayal of women in power and politics in other literary texts.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the three most important men in my life, my husband Pehovelo Nghiishililwa, my son Nathan Nghiishililwa and my nephew Blessing Uyage. I love you!

DECLARATIONS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by providing the background of the study, statement of the problem, and the objectives of the study. The significance of the study is also highlighted as well as limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

This study analysed the portrayal of women in power and politics in Achebe's recent novels; *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). The study aimed at analysing Achebe's new depiction of women characters in the two novels, particularly looking at the positive presentation. Although the focus of this study is on the positive presentation of women characters in Achebe's recent novels, it is imperative to first provide a brief discussion on how women are generally viewed in the society and also how Achebe has depicted women characters in his earlier novels, so as to comprehend the direction of this study. To begin with, Asiyanbola (2005) states that:

Patriarchy structure has been a major feature of the traditional society. There are clearly defined sex roles, while various taboos ensure conformity with specified gender roles. Traditionally, men do not participate in domestic work including child rearing – such tasks are considered to be the exclusive domain of women (p. 2).

Adopting a similar position, Klein and Ackerman (1995) hold the view that for many centuries African women were not only neglected, exploited, degenerated, but they were excluded and treated as outsiders and inferior to men; they were not included in any political affair. Likewise, Naze (2016) states that in the post-World War II era, while majority of African countries won independence, women continued to be relegated, as men reinforced

patriarchal privileges. This means that women were not allowed to participate in serious discussions, politics, and formation of government.

In the same vein, Rajesh (2014) argues that traditionally, women are regarded as housewives, subjected to house work chores and merely good for bearing children. The fact that women are traditionally associated and limited to household chores plays a major role in how novelists present women characters. Women characters in literature have been portrayed in various ways ranging from gender stereotypes to gender inferiors (Peter, 2010). This depiction is evident in how male writers like Chinua Achebe have resorted to the use of stereotypes against women. Thus, Achebe's earlier fictions, such as *Things Fall Apart*, reflected a negative image, portraying women as powerless and rather insignificant beings in society (Rajesh, 2014).

Chinua Achebe is known as the father of African literature (Otiono, 2013), but despite this stature, he has also been criticised as anti-feminist, as his earlier novels, namely, *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease* are said to deliberately mortify women (Foster & Nwiyor, 2017). According to Rajesh (2014), women in Achebe's earlier novels only appear as peripheral and lacking political consciousness. "Chinua Achebe tends to belittle women substantially in addition to being very gendered-sarcastic" (Hassan, 2016, p. 1). For example, in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), women are relegated to an inferior position throughout the novel. Their status has been degraded. Gender divisions are a delusion of the patriarchy, and Okonkwo the protagonist believes in traditional gender divisions. Okonkwo wishes that his favourite child, Enzima, should have been a boy. Okonkwo shouts at her, "Sit like a woman" (Achebe, 1958, p. 40). When she offers to bring a chair for him he replies, "No, that is a boy's job" (Achebe, 1958, p. 41). The downgrading of women characters had been a central idea in Achebe's early novels. However, there has been a drastic change in Achebe's work of late, particularly *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), where

women characters have been transformed from weak subjections of the society to strong independent women. Achebe's views on women have changed gradually in his subsequent novels. For example, in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe describes women differently and assigns women to powerful positions within the society than he did in the early novels.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Foster and Nwiyor (2017) examines Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) as anti-colonial and anti-feminist novel, and the study stresses that the patriarchal world depicted in Achebe's earlier novels oppresses women in every sphere of its existence; thus, he has been labelled an anti-feminist. Rajesh (2014) investigates the multiple gender repression in the dark continent and focuses on women protagonists of Chinua Achebe. Rajesh (2014) study argues that women in Achebe are only seen but not heard, as the world in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), patriarchy intervenes harshly into every sphere of existence as women only appear as peripheral and lacking political conscious. Sumbul (2013) explores the Ibo Culture and the aspect of gender bias where he argues that women are relegated to an inferior position throughout the novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Additionally, Kasapovic (2015) analyses the teaching of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and critical literacy in the English classroom for a democratic Swedish society.

Similarly, Hassan's (2016) study centres on the image of women in Chinua Achebe's novels *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964). Hassan (2016) stresses that Chinua Achebe in his earlier novels, belittles, scorns, and underestimates women in his early and modern novels. Collectively, these studies indicate the negative depiction of women characters in Achebe's novels. Although these recent studies view women in Achebe's fictions as victims of subjection, subjected to powerlessness, and in most

cases, given insignificant positions, there has been a turn-around in Achebe's recent work, thereby creating a possible gap for this study.

It was through this gap that this study aimed at bringing the social transformation of women characters in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) to the fore from a Stiwanism feministic perspective. Analysing Achebe's new depiction of women in power and politics in the selected novels using Stiwanism Theory provides a distinction in the way Achebe portrays the women characters.

A strong depiction of women in *A Man of the People* (1966) is through Eunice, the lawyer, and Beatrice Okoh in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Through Beatrice, Achebe gives a positive representation of women by allowing women's voice to be heard in a male-driven society. Thus, Achebe has redefined the very language of women's identity and political participation. Nwagbara (2009) argues that Nigerian writers, such as Wole Soyinka, Ben Okri and Chinua Achebe, have shifted their representation of women in their literary texts; women are now prioritised and empowered by subverting the seeming powerlessness of women to political authority. Achebe transformed his previous notion of women, thereby seeing them as political actors and people with a voice capable of changing gender relations through participation in the business of the public sphere.

This study sought to analyse the new shift of depiction in the works of Achebe, focusing on the positive representation of the status of women in power and politics, which is contrary to the studies about Achebe's novels, mostly analysing the negative depiction of women in the novels such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964). It is worth mentioning that this study did not do a comparison of Achebe's recent novels to the previous ones in order to draw conclusions of the transformation of the depiction of women in society, but the focus was mainly on how women are now portrayed as independent, powerful, political conscious and assertive women, reflecting their position in the typical modern world.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

- Analyse how women in power and politics are portrayed in *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*,
- Investigate how education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in the society as portrayed in the two selected novels, and
- Examine the motivating factors of women to take up powerful and political positions as depicted in the two selected novels.

1.5 Significance of the study

As it appears that most studies on Achebe's portrayal of women mainly focus on the negative depiction, this study may provide a distinction in literature of the way in which Achebe has portrayed women characters in his recent novels, particularly from a positive perception. This study may also contribute to literature regarding factors that motivate women to take up powerful and political positions within the male-driven society. Furthermore, it may contribute to the field of knowledge on Stiwanism, which might become a useful relevant reference tool to students within the field of literature.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The study is limited only to the two novels, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) by Chinua Achebe. Thus the findings cannot be generalised as a representation of African literature or writers which may be underlining similar themes. In addition, the study was bound theoretically to Stiwanism Theory which informed this study. The materials used in the research are only those that were accessible to the researcher.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The study was delimited to the portrayal of women characters in power and politics as embodied in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) by Chinua Achebe due to the scope of this study. Hence, this has allowed the researcher to do an in-depth study of the selected novels.

1.8 Organisation of the study

Chapter 1 provides the introduction of the study. The objectives of the study are outlined and the significance of the study highlighted. The statement of the problem is also highlighted as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study are presented. Chapter 2 provides the reviewed literature and the gap established through reviewing literature for this study. This chapter also specifies the Stiwanism theory, which has guided this study.

Chapter 3 provides the methodology of how this study was carried out, ranging from the initial stage of critical reading to the final stage of reporting on the findings and conclusions. Chapter 4 gives an analysis, interpretation and discussion of the selected novels by Chinua Achebe; *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) as framed by Stiwanism Theory and guided by the literature review discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 states the findings, conclusions and lastly some recommendations for further studies.

1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the study, listed the objectives of the study, and highlighted the relevance of the study as well the limitations of the study. In addition, the statement of the problem was stated and specified. The chapter also laid down the organisation of the study. The next chapter provides the literature review and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide literature which is relevant to this study. It appears that there is vast amount of work done on the portrayal of women by Achebe in his early novels, particularly focusing on the negative depiction of women. However, there seems to be insufficient work on how women in power and politics have been portrayed in Chinua Achebe's novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and particularly using Stiwanism Theory, and especially focusing on positive depiction. This chapter comprises three main sections; the portrayal of women in Achebe's earlier fictions looking at women marginalisation and exploitation. Subsequently is the portrayal of women in Chinua Achebe's later novels cementing on the social transformation of women through education, empowerment, employment and politics. Finally, the chapter explains why and how the Stiwanism Theory as the theoretical framework on which the study is centred on, is the most relevant theory of this study.

2.2 Presentation of women in Achebe's earlier fictions

This section examines how Achebe portrays women in his earlier novels such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *No Longer at Ease* (1960). It was found pertinent to provide an overview of the representation of women in Achebe's earlier novels in order to enable the readers to understand the turn-around in the portrayal of women by Achebe in his recent work without necessarily making a comparison of his novels.

Africa, the second largest continent in the world was under the authorities of the West till the end of the twentieth century. In the pre-colonial African cultural scenario, women constituted the core of the workforce who engaged in farming, tending animals, nurturing children and so on (Rajesh, 2014). Women were excluded from education and always treated as peripheral to men. In the same vein, it is reported that women had little or no ‘say’ within the socio – political administration of their societies. Women were regarded as inferior to men and as such were subjected to beatings if they disobeyed men within the family. Their primary role was to tend to domestic chores coupled with manual paid work as per societal dictates, which limited their freedom. Where they were employed in paid jobs undertaking equal work with men, women received far less wages than their men counterparts (Medieval English times, History Learning Site, 2013, as cited in Masule, 2014).

In the same way, Rajesh (2014) continues to make the contention that women are thought to be the “weaker sex”; physically, mentally, and emotionally, hence they have been stereotyped as being feminine, fetching pots of water from the countryside well, entirely dancing according to the tunes of their patriarchal heads and only assigned to private spheres. In view of what has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that indeed women were in a situation of oppression, discriminated as a result of gender, treated inferior to men and not allowed to participate in serious discussions, politics, and formation of government.

Rajesh (2014) further states that most of the African societies were governed by patriarchal heads and as a result women were portrayed in fictional works as mere objects of sex. The fact that women are traditionally associated and limited to household chores plays a major role in how novelists depict women. This depiction is evident of how male writers like Chinua Achebe have resorted to the use of stereotypes against women. As argued by Stralton (as cited in Peter, 2010), female characters in fiction have been portrayed in a variety of

ways, ranging from gender stereotypes to gender inferiors. The female characters are depicted as mothers and caretakers of homes, their children and their husbands.

A considerable amount of literature is available on the negative depiction of women by Achebe in his earlier novels. For instance, Foster and Nwiyor (2017) stress that in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Achebe's maiden novel, the patriarchy world depicted in the novel oppresses women in every sphere of its existence. It is a world where the man is everything and the woman is nothing. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) reflects a negative image, portraying women as powerless and rather insignificant beings in society; hence Achebe has been labelled as antifeminist. It appears that much of the greater literature on Achebe's earlier novels is concerned with the negative depiction of women hence he has been labelled antifeminist.

2.2.1 Patriarchy and women marginalisation

Asiyanbola (2005) states that the term patriarchy dates back before the current renaissance of the women's movement and the concept has been re-formed in the past two decades to analyse the origins and conditions of men's oppression of women. Patriarchy was used originally to describe the power of the father as the head of household; however, the term 'patriarchy' has been used in the post 1960s within feminism to refer to the systematic organisation of male supremacy and female subordination (Kamarae, 1992; Stacey, 1993; Aina, 1998, as cited in Asiyanbola, 2005). Therefore, patriarchy can be defined as a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

According to Asiyanbo (2005):

Patriarchy is composed of six structures; the patriarchal mode of production where housewives are relegated to the producing and undervalued work, whereas the husbands are the expropriating class. The second level describes patriarchal relations

in paid work which refers to the fact that traditionally women have been relegated and granted worse jobs. The level which is about the state which is patriarchal, racist and capitalist, thus it clearly has prejudice towards patriarchal interests. The fourth structure is about male violence and explains how men's violence against women is systematically endured and tolerated by the state's disavowal to intervene against it. The patriarchal relation towards sexuality constitutes the fifth structure, where the patriarchy has determined that homosexuality is and should be the only norm. The sixth level which is about how women traditionally have been exploited and exhibited via the mass media (p. 3).

Given the above arguments about patriarchy, it can therefore be argued that patriarchy is a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political, economic and any other form of institution.

According to Nyame (1999), patriarchy is a system having the rule of father in family or the head of the family is a male person. The male person is dominant in all, in family and society. Women do not have any authority to lead a family or society, according to Igbo belief in *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Igbo-culture considered that women should not interfere in social, political and economic matters. Male power appears thus as fundamental in the Igbo patriarchal society where power is usually cited as the most important factor used by men to construct their own identities as the 'engendered' representatives of humanity. That power is not only at the physical level, but also at that of society itself. At the physical one, individuals who appear to be lazy are looked upon as *agbala*, meaning a woman in the Igbo language (Rajesh, 2014). Onkonkwo's father and elder son illustrate this idea. He himself became famous after defeating Amalinze the Cat in a wrestling competition. At the level of society it is called structural power and which consists of a certain number of privileges given to the individual by the clan. This is illustrated through the character Ogbuefi Ezeudu who "had

been a great and fearless warrior in his time, and was now accorded a great respect in all the clan.” (Achebe, 1958, p. 57).

On the other hand, marginalisation is defined by Sumbul (2013) as “the social process of being relegated to the fringe of society” (p. 311). This means that marginalisation is the helplessness and ghettoisation experienced by any group, resulting from an inequality control of power structures within society, of which one of such marginalisation can be women marginalisation.

African women, especially in Nigeria are exploited and marginalised. Despite, the fact that women constitute about 56% of the total population, they are discriminated against in the political process (Plamenatz, 2010). It would appear that the marginalisation of Nigerian women is more pronounced in the democratisation processes as women hold less than 5 percentages of the important decision making positions. This limited conception of the political relevance of women is responsible for their political marginalisation (Plamenatz, 2010).

Likewise, Nwagbara (2009) discusses marginalisation of women within the postcolonial Nigerian state and argues that the major theme of postcolonial Nigerian state is the exploitation and marginalisation of women politics. The system is sustained by the logic of patriarchy, male chauvinism, gendered political mechanism, which challenges democratisation as well as undermine the expansion of the public sphere (Nwagbara, 2009). Thus, Achebe’s early novels mirror this exploitation and marginalisation of women. For example, in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), women suffer the fate of exploitation and marginalisation throughout the entire novel as they are subjected and relegated to an inferior position throughout the novel. They are regarded as mere addition to men thus degrading their status and moreover, women are treated as possessions.

Hassan (2016) argues that there is a great marginalisation of women in *Things Fall Apart* (1958). As such, women are not allowed to participate in any serious discussions about decision making of the society as their place is only to educate their children by narrating folk stories to them, upbringing their daughters, and serving as priestesses of gods (Hassan, 2016). Adopting a similar position, Kasapovic (2015) argues that women in *Things Fall Apart* only come after men and throughout the novel they are inferior to them. Moreover, Kasapovic (2015) stresses that these gender divisions could be due to a misconception of the patriarchy and this is particularly emulated through Okonkwo. Achebe believes in traditional gender divisions as Okonkwo wishes that his favourite child, Enzima, should have been a boy. In addition, authority lies with the men in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) as women do not have a say in any important matter and thus, the idea of masculinity puts women on a remote margin. They are excluded from political, economic and judicial matters of the community and are confined to the domestic sphere only (Kasapovic, 2015). The evidence of marginalisation and limitation can be seen in the scenario when Okonkwo restricts his daughter Enzima from doing 'heavy' work. As soon as she offers to bring a chair for him he replies, "no, that is a boy's job." (Achebe, 1958, p. 41). Notably, Okonkwo's restriction on his daughter Enzima shows that women are not only treated as inferior to men but they are also constantly reminded of their feminine existence and undoubtedly being confined to certain activities.

Supporting the view of women marginalisation, Sumbul (2013) argues that Achebe presents a society in which gender is so much based that even in case of gods they place a male god at the top and only after the female goddess follows in hierarchy. Achebe's sexist attitude is unashamed and without apology as he presents Unoka, Okonkwo's father, an untitled man, connoting femininity.

Collectively, the studies highlighted in this section (2.2.1 Patriarchy and women marginalisation) outline excessive ostracism of women in Achebe's earlier novels. Achebe

intentionally relegates women to certain private chores which confine them to being weak and subjective.

2.2.2 Women abuse and exploitation

Cooper and Branford (2013) draw a distinction between abuse and exploitation and view abuse as “the process of making bad or improper use, or violating or injury, or to take bad advantage of, or maltreat the person” (p. 14). What this definition implies is that abuse can be physical, emotional, or in the form of sexual mistreatment, whilst exploitation on the other hand, means using someone for merely your own profit or for selfish purposes. Exploitation includes but is not limited to labour and prostitution (Cooper & Branford, 2013). This means that exploitation is the use of the person in work or other activities for the benefit of others. It appears that women suffer the fate of abuse and exploitation as a result of lack of power and status. Women abuse and exploitation is evident in Achebe’s earlier novels.

Achebe’s women in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) are doomed as the objects of torture; they are abandoned, scolded and beaten by their husbands. Surprisingly enough, women are also expected to endure domestic violence at the hands of their husbands. One notable abuse of women in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is when Okonkwo brutally beats his second wife Ekwefi. As a result, Okonkwo’s wives silently suffer quite under his forceful and aggressive rule of the household. In a similar case, Okonkwo’s wife murmurs something about his gun and hunting. In the following incident, Okonkwo shows no respect of a woman’s life:

Unfortunately for her, he heard it and ran madly into his room for the loaded gun, ran out again and aimed at her as she clambered over the dwarf wall of the barn. He pressed the trigger and there was a loud report accompanied by the wail of his family.... (Achebe, 1958, p. 35).

As a result, her attempt to question anything is promptly reprimanded. Okonkwo is obsessed with masculinity to the extent that his family, especially his wives suffer greatly at his hand. The significance of masculinity in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is dumbfounding to the extent that much of everything considered being feminine is demeaned.

On the other hand, the place of women in *No Longer at Ease* (1960) indicates a slight development. According to Hassan (2016), in *No Longer at Ease* (1960) there is a visible change in style of Achebe's female portraiture. Obi Okonkwo the main character yields to the relentless force of traditional beliefs when choosing between his mother (representing traditionalism), who threatens to kill herself if he marries an outcast and the outcast Clara (representing the modern women) who gets an abortion and fades away from the story.

The researcher partially agrees with Hassan's (2016) argument which acknowledges the slight improvement on women characters in *No Longer at Ease* (1960). Even though through Clara the status of women is upgraded as she is an educated and independent young nurse. As usual, Achebe deliberately mocks the female existence by implying that the female entity is somehow incomplete without men in this instance. This is evident when Clara goes and aborts her unborn child when Obi refuses to marry her (Hassan, 2016). This depiction implies that Clara as a woman is incapable to raise her child on her own without the male counterpart, despite her level of education and income. It can also be argued that this depiction further indicates that women need men to complete them, thus making women weak and dependent on men.

Contrarily to Hassan's (2016) previous argument on the improvement of women characters' portrayed in *No Longer at Ease* (1960), Hassan (2016) also argues that throughout the novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960), Chinua Achebe never praises women or girls but rather insulted them numerously. For example in the following incident, Achebe portrays Clara as foolish

and lacking morals. "She has no coyness in her" (Chinua, 1960, p. 80). According to Hassan (2016), coyness is considered one of the most important characteristics of a woman and if a woman has no coyness left in her it means that woman has no shyness or scruples, therefore making her loose and immoral.

Given the above critics from different scholars about Achebe's negative portrayal of women particularly in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *No Longer at Ease* (1960), Achebe's women suffered at the peripheral of their societies; neglected, exploited, degenerated, and indeed made to feel like outsiders. They were not invited to stay when men were engaged in any discussion; they were not included in councils of war. Women in Achebe's earlier novels appear as voiceless and are supposed to endure their husbands' mistreatment and not question anything. Prominently, in his earlier novels, Achebe portrayed women as incapable and dependent on men's presence to make them complete.

2.3 Women in Chinua Achebe's later novels

Fiction work is the product of time, race and milieu. As such, we find the social permanence and turbulence of the time reflected in the writings of the period (Mostafae, 2016). This is particularly true of Achebe's fictional work which has faithfully mirrored social changes. The fiction produced by Achebe, who is considered the father of African literature and at the same time labelled as anti-feminist, exemplifies this feature. Achebe's views on women changed gradually in his subsequent novels. Achebe, in his recent novels, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) describes women differently than he did in his early novels.

Nwagbara (2009) calls for attention to the relationship between literature and social institutions. According to Nwagbara (2009), literature is essential in rearranging political process; hence there is a direct relationship between literature and social institutions. The

principal function of literature is to criticise these social institutions and eventually bring about desirable changes in the society. Within this rubric, Nigerian feminist writers including Achebe therefore see literature as a role-reversing narrative, essentially forced to deflect stereotypes, misrepresentation, and twisted knowledge about the true worth of women, particularly in politics. This means that Achebe uses his art of persuasion to transform the prejudice against women, through the only way which he knows how; his fictions.

In addition, Nwagbara (2009) argues that the significance of early feminist writers in Nigeria is an official revolution to outdo the tradition that brings about the rhetoric of female oppression and inhumanity. It appears that this attempt has paid off as it has widened the public sphere as well as deconstructed discourses in literature, politics and philosophical thought. Thus, Achebe's recent novels transformed women characters positively, portraying them as educated, strong, politically conscious and independent.

Mezu (1999) discusses about the relationship between literature and social institutions. According to Mezu (1999), Achebe, liberating Nigerian women from the peripheral role of passive victim of masculine-based cultural universe is a function of literature, hence, literary works serve as a means by which the predicaments of women can be represented and condemned thereby calling for change (as cited in Nwagbara, 2009, p. 177). This simply means that, Achebe's recent novels echo with interrogating Nigeria's predominant, patriarchal dominance of women in politics, which denies the expansion of the public sphere. In his recent novels, Achebe has redefined the very language of women identity and political participation by allowing women's voice to be heard in a male dominant society.

Furthermore, Nwagbara (2009) discusses about prominent argument that Nigerian writers, including Chinua Achebe, have shifted their representation of women in their literary texts; women are now prioritised and empowered by subverting the seeming powerlessness of

women to political authority. Achebe transformed his previous notion of women, thereby seeing them as political actors and people with a voice capable of changing gender relations through participation in the business of the public sphere.

In view of the aforementioned, one may suppose that Achebe's new feminist ideological turn gives a clear indication that he acknowledges how gender roles have revolved in the modern societies, whereas women have proven themselves worth equal to men. Lately, women have contributed to societal development globally, and they continue to hold powerful positions in the political, economic and social spheres.

2.3.1 Social transformation of women

It is necessary here to define the term transformation. According to Nazhath (2015), transformation refers to "any deviation from accepted way of life or established lives" (p. 46). On the other hand, Dominic (2011) states that "social transformation is a marked change in the form of a society" (p. 2). Both the definitions above share a mutual understanding of the word transformation which means to change. Thus given the aforesaid, it can be stated that transformation is concerned with how things have revolved, whether norms, culture, tradition, believes and so forth. In addition, Nazhath (2015) argues that the social change of women refers to the change in society at large and that society is a process. The fact that processes are unending change, it makes society bound to change.

According to Dominic (2011), 'social transformation' is a new-born concept, which refers to more than the two literal meaning of the two words. It is rather a multi-dimensional concept which is based on studies in the last century of a broad range of relevant field such as economic, literature and sociology. Therefore, it could be said that social transformation is a term which is still in its infant stages. "Social transformation implies an underlying notion of the way society and culture change in response to such factors as economic growth, war or

political upheavals” (Castles, 2001, p. 1). What is notable about Castles’ definition is that it acknowledges social transformation as a process of simply embracing economic, social and political growth. Taking social transformation literally, it appears to be rather inevitable for any society not to experience transformation of any kind.

In the same vein, Dominic (2011) further argues that social transformation lies at the radical end of conceptions of social change, which infers the least some of the central changes in the society. Women are part of a society which is changeful and dynamic; hence the social status of women can never be static. The possible explanation from the above arguments is that social transformation is a reflection of social changes in the society and human life; hence women are no exception to change. And as such, fiction work is not static either. As argued by Mostafae (2016), fiction work is the product of time and environment, for that reason, fiction work represents the contemporary circumstances that the society is confronted with. In consequence, the social transformation of women is to be expected in the fictional work, such as the recent work of Achebe, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

There seems to be large recent volume of published studies on social transformation of women. According to O’Niel and Domingo (2016), since the 1960s and 1970s century the women's movements and women's studies have been beginning to rise throughout the world, thus the role of women in the society has changed. In the past several decades, the status of women has been greatly improved. People’s (particularly men) concept about women also has changed dramatically. Similarly, Nazhath (2015) argues that women have undergone much transition in their role as women in many ways. Women have been key agents of social transformation and as such, there is a tremendous change in their lives. The implication posed

from the above arguments is that women play an important part in modern society. This is particularly true as women comprise a large part of the workers in businesses and factories. Women have now occupied prominent positions which were only held mainly by men in the past. This is notable with some businesses which are run entirely by women. This social transformation of women is, without a doubt, mirrored in fictional work particularly Achebe's recent work, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

In the struggle for women self-fulfilment, Finchinchong (2006) argues that Nigerian feminists have reconfigured womanhood, prioritising female individualism and empowerment; thereby subverting the seeming powerlessness of women to political authority. This transformation of women is done through literary production which engages with this reality. The diachronic transformation of Achebe's women from victims of society regulated by patriarchal cultural norms and values to independent, political, conscious and self-assertive women.

The studies reviewed above suggest that social transformation is a process and inevitable. Social transformation has occurred in every corner of the society and human life; particularly women individuals. The social status of women has changed from segregation to inclusion in public spheres. As argued earlier that fiction work is a product of time and milieu, it is without a doubt that the modern fiction mirrors the paradigm shift of women status in the society. Thus, Achebe's recent work particularly *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) exemplifies this social transformation of women in the society. The following sub-sections explain which tools can be used to bring about women transformation within the society.

2.3.2 Social transformation of women through empowerment

According to Lawal, Ayoade, and Taiwo (2016), the political, cultural and socio-economic context in which the term empowerment is represented determines its meaning, as a result its meaning varies. World Bank (2001) defines empowerment as the expansion of freedom of choice and actions and increasing one's authority and control over the resources and decisions that affect one's life. Empowerment can therefore be defined as a process of enabling or authorising an individual to think, take action and control work in an independent way. It can further be said that the word 'empowerment' literally means to enable or authorise and connotes the presence of power. When we talk of women empowerment, it comprises political, social, economic and cultural aspects wherein women are able to participate and have access and control of resources and opportunities. Hence, women empowerment implies women being in charge of their own lives, having independent rights, responsibilities and opportunities in all spheres of lives. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercising choice and fulfilling their potential as full and equal members of society.

For the sake of this study, women empowerment is the improvement of their position in power structures of the society. Empowerment appears to be the most important notion that brings about change in the womenfolk. Women are said to be empowered when they have the right and ability to make and influence decisions. Women can be economically, socially or politically empowered. As argued by Lawal et al (2016), an empowered woman possesses a sense of self-worth, has the ability to define her own choices, has access to resources and limitless opportunities she can pursue and also the ability to influence the direction of social change which fits the local or international economic and social style. It has been well established from a variety of studies (for example Lawal et al., 2016 & Nazhath, 2015) that

the role of women is of supreme interest to the economy of nations in view of their constituting about 50% of the world's population. As such, women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. In view of the aforementioned arguments, it is probable that transformed women are a nation's strength. The fact that women constitute half of the population, there ought not to be any development if women's needs and interests are not fully taken into consideration.

Furthermore, Lawal et al (2016) study found that "there is active participation of women as economic agents in Africa than anywhere else in the world with their involvement in significant contribution to agriculture, with the ownership of one third of firms, and in some countries constituting up to 70% of employees" (p. 354). Moreover, Lawal et al (2016) states that women play an important role in African economies with high presence in the business sector. Also the contribution of women entrepreneurs to income generation and poverty alleviation is significant in both developing and developed economies. In the same vein, Word Bank (2001) reports that women play significant and diverse roles from home, to work place, to society, as home maker, societal well-being and job seeker and job provider. Therefore, it is without question that the role of women in society has transformed. More women are now empowered economically, socially and politically. Women stand up for their own rights and choices and they have access to an array of opportunities. In short, the identity of modern women has been redefined that women's lives are not only being changed, but they themselves are the agents of change.

According to Shamim (2014), Achebe now strives to affirm the moral strength and intellectual integrity of African women. This is particularly shown in Achebe's political novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), which illustrates that a culture, in which women must save the country from its downfall, can be regarded as an accomplishment. *Anthills of the*

Savannah (1987) shows a shift in power and action because the social status of women characters has improved compared to the earlier novels of Achebe. For example, Achebe accorded women equal rights to men by allowing Beatrice to perform the naming ceremony for the orphaned child of Ikem and Elewa. Shamim (2014) states that naming a child was always the responsibility of the father or men, and this in turn gave men more rights than women. However, in this scenario Achebe uses Beatrice to accord women the same rights as men. Clearly, this can be argued that it is an indication of women stepping into men's shoes and that the society has finally acknowledged and accepted the new roles of women. On the other hand, it is also argued that the employment of women gained them full emancipation from the oppression, exploitation and discrimination.

2.3.3 Women empowerment through education

According to Sharma (2016), women education is the need of the hour that guarantees empowerment, improves economic position, gives income through employment prospects, and improves self-confidence. It can therefore be said that educating women brings about gender equality and women uplifting for sustainable development; hence it is a prime factor.

Similarly, Nazhath (2015) emphasises the importance of education in transforming women and stresses that education is a powerful aspect in transforming the society. Nazhath (2015) further affirms "education is the only institution which gives women equal status, equal rights and equal opportunities" (p. 47). Dominic (2011), like Nazhath, argues that education can be used as one of the most important tools to transform a society. Moreover, Dominic (2011) states that "literacy allows people, to acquire a critical consciousness, particularly those who are marginalised and discriminated in society" (p. 1). This could be particularly the case as education empowers people that are better equipped to question and critique realities and assumptions of society. In so doing, it enables people to change their situation. Thus, Dominic (2011) argues that education plays an important role in developing the personality

of a human completely not only capable of resisting war, violence, injustice and oppression, but building a society where human can live in harmony among each other. In the end, Nazhath (2015) argues that through education women are not only the beneficiaries of change but they themselves are the key agents of change.

According to Sharma (2016), education in a broad sense basically involves capturing the mind, enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence, building a sense of positive self-worth, accessing information and tools of knowledge and acquiring the ability to negotiate this unequal and unjust world from a position of strength. No society has ever liberated itself economically, politically or socially without a sound base of educated women. Many countries' experiences around the world have demonstrated that investment in educating women is the most precious investment a society can ever make. It is probable that education as a means of women empowerment can bring about a positive attitudinal change. It is observed that many modern African women have gained access to education and are in professions such as teaching, nursing, clerical work, psychology, law, engineering, law and many other significant fields. It can thus be said that African women are currently enjoying various degrees of economic independence. Women education is therefore, crucial for the socio-economic and political progress of any society.

Supporting the view of women education, Sharma (2016) further argues that education significantly increases the economic, social and political opportunities available to women. It leads to direct economic benefits in the form of higher lifetime earnings for women and in so doing the society also benefits from the higher productivity of its labour force. Apart from improving human capital and increasing economic growth, female education also reduces the fertility rate; hence less dependants. Clearly, keeping women illiterate retards economic

growth of any society. Therefore, it is without a doubt that education is important because literacy has become a tool of evaluating a person's ability to read and write. On the other hand, illiteracy has become a very negative word in society. Today literacy itself gives you status. Needless to say, being able to read and write gives you access to abundant information relative to the illiterate one. Essentially, education is important for individual development and confidence.

Together, these studies indicate that education is the most powerful tool to transform a society and particularly women that were in the past denied the opportunity to be educated. Education has not only availed opportunities for women to transform their status, but they themselves are their own representatives of their own transformation in their lives, marking their worth and stance in the public sphere.

Accordingly, Achebe has acknowledged the new status of women in society by improving their social and economic status. Through Beatrice, Achebe has presented women as educated, powerful, independent and confident in a male-driven society. Beatrice being independent, educated and confident girl who had the audacity to stand shoulder to shoulder with males in the male driven society represents the educated lot of women.

This is incidence throughout the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), where Beatrice has stood her grounds and not let anyone push her around, not even her boyfriend Chris. Upon hearing about her being invited to a private dinner by Sam, Chris indicated: "Let's keep all options open" (Achebe, 1987, p. 68). Chris was hopeful that Sam was now trying to re-establish good relations with him through Beatrice, and thus he advised Beatrice to keep all options open. He was fine with the idea of his girlfriend sleeping with his old friend for his selfish needs. Although Beatrice was expecting good outcome of this meeting; she was still

not willing to sacrifice her morality. Her response to Chris's statement makes her stand very clear over it "All options? I knew of one at least I would not keep open" (Achebe, 1987, p. 68). This clearly shows that Beatrice is a strong level headed girl who would not let anyone exploit her. Her education level makes her character more rebellious, bold and independent.

2.3.4 Women empowerment through political consciousness

Plamenatz (2010) has defined both the words consciousness and political respectively. According to Plamenatz (2010), the word consciousness refers to the state of being aware of something within oneself or of an external object, state, or fact, whereas political relates to the state, government, the body politic, public administration, policy making and so forth. Therefore, it can be said that political consciousness is simply to become aware and understand the power networks and the ability to sail across them, and therefore get things done.

Nazhath (2015) argues that while women certainly went to vote, they have remained vastly the underrepresented in all leading positions. It appears that the political consciousness of women is not recent; having possibly been first described in the 19th century by different scholars. Globally, there seems to be a growing academic interest in the level of women participation in politics. Similarly, Ferge (1997) states that the 'equality of women' was long a declared objective of politics. On the other hand, Datta (1998) defines political empowerment of women as the "acquisition of the capacity of as well as the adoption of needed strategy by women in order to exercise their powers more effectively and professionally, for their own development in particular and of the society in general" (as cited in Nazhath, 2015, p. 47).

In addition, Nazhath (2015) argues that empowering women to get enhanced participation in political and public life is about women being visible in public spheres, having a say in their

communities and enjoying equal decision-making power over policies and allocations of resources at the national and subnational levels.

It can therefore be argued that political empowerment of women appears to be necessary for a holistic national development. Transformed women are a nation's strength. The fact that women constitute half of the population in the world, there ought to be no development if women's needs and interests are not fully taken into consideration. The increased number of women in government might be indicating that formal political space is open to women, and it might also indicate a degree of acceptance of women as leaders.

Finchinchong (2006) argues that *Achebe's A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) represent his political and literary commitment to use women empowerment as a channel for the expansion of the public sphere for inclusive governance. This is evident through women characters in the two novels as they undergo transformation, and become stronger compared to women in his earlier novels. Women characters are depicted as powerful and assigned important roles in the societal and political realm. For instance, a strong characterisation in *A Man of the People* (1966) is Eunice, the lawyer. She is the fiancée of Odili's schoolmate, Max, and a co-founder of the Common People's Convention that opposes the corrupt Chief Nanga and his breed. When Max is shot by thugs of a political rival, Eunice takes significant, retaliatory action. Instead of crying and screaming which is commonly to be expected of a woman, the first thing she does is: "she opens her handbag as if to take out a handkerchief, takes out a pistol instead and fires two bullets into Chief Koko's chest" (Achebe, 1966, p. 132). In so doing, Achebe portrays women as strong, courageous and fearless. Eunice's retaliation shows that women can survive in a male driven society full of corruption and violence, by simply fighting back.

In addition, Finchinchong (2006) argues that Beatrice's stance on the political affairs of Kangan where *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) is set is crucial in understanding women empowerment through the expansion of the public sphere. The strength of her political and feminist field is lodged in her quality education, exposure, tendency and quest for political participation. Therefore, women in Beatrice's view should resist being pushed or tempted into accepting subservient or degrading or decorative roles in politics.

As argued earlier in this chapter, literature is crucial in reconfiguring political process; hence, there is a direct relationship between literature and social institutions. Without doubt, women constituting more than half of the world's population are a major key factor towards sustainable development, hence the need for women to be politically conscious, having power in decision making and policies and just be active participants in the public sphere. Thus, Achebe's fictional work is a mirror of the social turbulence and permanence that the African society is confronted with. In underpinning the above arguments, it is obvious that women have undergone much transition in their role as women in many ways. The social transformation of women in a positive manner appears to be the need of the hour, and as such, Achebe's recent novels reflect this new status of women in the society. The women characters in Achebe's recent novels undergo transformation and Achebe skilfully frames and casts on them prominent roles on the basis of their level of education and experiences. The women characters are portrayed as daring, fearless, rebellious and independent as it can be seen through Beatrice and Eunice in the two novels respectively. The two women are able to stand their grounds as they persevere in violent and corrupt male driven societies.

2.4 Women revolution

According to Neitzel (1989), the word revolution itself refers to radical, transformative change and can be used variously describing phenomena from the industrial revolution to the sexual revolution. Revolution refers to a movement, often violent, to overthrow an old regime and effect complete change in the fundamental institutions of society. Neitzel (1989) also stresses that after the French Revolution of the 18th century which deposed the monarchy and attempted to alter society from top to bottom, revolution became synonymous with the radical overcoming of the past. As far as this study is concerned, revolution is a successful attempt by a group of people to change the political system of their country by force. This means that revolution is a drastic and far reaching change in ways of thinking and behaving.

Many revolutionaries sought not to simply achieve independent nationhood, but also to transform their societies internally. In the early 20th century, many believed that becoming modern required the elimination of old hierarchies and the creation of new, more social relations (Neitzel, 1989). Taking the above argument into consideration, it resembles the typical modern women revolution as they fight to eliminate the old traditional role of women in the society and in so doing, society is transformed. A considerable example here can be that of Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Achebe portrays Beatrice as a strong woman who challenges the traditional roles of women by performing a naming ceremony for Elewa and Ikem's child; she further gives the baby girl a boy's name. Also, Beatrice's level of education and exposure prompt her interest in politics. Beatrice's friends fight against the oppressive government and her involvement in this political fiasco symbolises the women revolution. Beatrice is the representation of African modern women who are fearless; they fight to change the way in which the society views women. The diverse experiences and

understandings of revolution underline the importance of political and social revolution to modern African women as a goal to the formation of modern African society (Neitzel, 1989).

Both women revolution and social transformation of women through empowerment share a common ideology in this study. As argued earlier by Lawal et al (2016), an empowered woman possesses a sense of self-worth, has the ability to define her own choices, has access to resources and limitless opportunities she can pursue and also the ability to influence the direction of social change which fits the local or international economic and social style. Thus in order to transform the African society, particularly women's role within the society, political and social revolution is necessary and seems rather inevitable. It can therefore be argued that this seems to be particularly Achebe's way of transforming the society, using his new depiction of women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *A Man of the People* (1966). In order to transform the role of women in the society, Achebe uses women themselves as their own agents of change by involving them in revolutionary act and political activism. For example, in *A Man of the People* (1966) through Eunice, women are portrayed as fearless by being at the forefront of an opposition political party in order to overthrow the corrupt and violent ruling government.

2.5 Theoretical framework

According to Nashongo (2016), theories as concepts rising out of research can be put to test to help the broader understanding of the topic under study and where possible. In addition, they help to fill the existing gap in the same topic. For that reason, in order to analyse how women are portrayed in power and politics by Achebe in his later novels, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), the study used the Stiwanism Theory,

which is one of the feministic developments that have taken place. And as such, it seems appropriate at this juncture to first provide a brief discussion of what feminism is.

According to Hooks (2000), feminism is “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (p. viii). Moreover, Hooks (2000) argues that feminism is a complex notion that means and connotes different for people of different generations, ethnic identities, sexual orientations, social classes, nationality, and myriad identities. Thus, feminism is not a static idea but rather, it advances with us throughout our lives. It is shaped by the various lenses we use to view the world at large and, most importantly, by our experiences.

Given the above arguments, this implies that different people have created their own definitions of feminism that best suit their needs, experiences and predicaments. Going back to Hooks’ (2000) argument, although the central idea of feminism is the equality of men and women politically, economically and socially; feminists often have their own reasons and pertaining their own ideas how they can make it happen, hence the development of many branches of feminisms such as the Stiwanism Theory which guided this study.

Stiwanism is a word advocated for by Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie in 1994 (Nashongo, 2016). According to Ogundipe-Leslie (2007, p. 550), “STIWA” is a short form for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa, which describes the agenda of African women without necessarily having to replicate or define African women’s agenda on their continent in relation to other feminisms. “STIWA” allows Ogundipe-Leslie (2007) to personally discuss the needs of African women in the tradition of the spaces and strategies provided in African indigenous cultures for the social being of the African women.

Above all, Stiwanism is concerned about the contemporary social and political transformation of African women in Africa. As pointed out by Ogundipe-Leslie (2007), African women do not want to compete with men, let alone reverse gender roles. All what African women want is social transformation and to build a harmonious society where both genders have a social responsibility in transforming the livelihood of the entire African society. According to Nashongo (2016), it appears that African scholars, particularly women, find the word 'feminism' lacking the authenticity of an indigenous African tradition and hegemonic and threatening. Hence, black African women writers are advocating and formulating ideologies that synthesise an African theory to locate the peculiarity of women of the African diaspora relating their own experiences. Nashongo (2016) further argues that African female writers appear to have a desire to define themselves without being restricted of what they are thinking of being a black African woman.

The Stiwanism Theory was useful to analyse how women are portrayed in power and politics in a male driven society. The status of women characters in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) has been transformed, proving themselves equally worth and capable as men thus Achebe has accorded women their rights. As stated earlier (in this section, 2.5) that Stiwanism attempts to strike gender balance, it can be exemplified to an incident in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), whereby Achebe has given the women characters their rights by allowing Beatrice to name Elewa and Ikem's child, something which was only traditionally performed by men.

From the broader explanations about Stiwanism Theory, it can therefore be concluded that Stiwanism Theory was useful to analyse how Achebe has portrayed women in power and politics as its underlying assumptions and values seek gender justice. Stiwanism Theory also attempts to strike a balance between the sexes, with the central idea of social transformation.

Women in Achebe's recent novels have been socially transformed, depicted as political actors and involved in various significant government affiliations. The theory was, therefore, relevant because the focus of the study was on the portrayal of the social status of women in society, focusing on African women characters from an African novelist's perspective.

The main point feminists have stressed about gender inequality is that it is not an individual matter, but is deeply ingrained in the structure of societies. Gender inequality is built into the organisation of marriage and families, work and the economy, politics, religions, the arts and other cultural productions, and the very language we speak. Making women and men equal, therefore, necessitates social and not individual solutions. Today, the African woman stands out as a central subject of social review and general discourse. It is highly believed that more and more research that relates to women's lives, voices, identities and experiences is being generated. Hence, Stiwanism Theory seeks to make African women visible, as actors and agents.

2.6 Chapter summary

Chapter 2 highlighted research work of other scholars whose focus is interested on how Achebe portrays women in his earlier and later novels. By reviewing literature about Achebe's portrayal of women, the researcher was able to gain insight about Achebe's portrayal of women in his early novels and the turn-around in his new depiction of women. Furthermore, the chapter also explained the social transformation of women and the tools through which women are empowered. This chapter also explained 'Stiwanism' as the theoretical framework and its relevance to the study. The following chapter presents the research methodology used to collect and analyse data for the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is defined as the systematic way of solving research problem (Kothari, 2004). Therefore, this chapter describes the methods and procedures used to systematically collect and analyse data in order to attain the objectives of this study.

3.2 Research design

Research design is the theoretical structure within which research is conducted. This implies that research design is an advance plan of data collection and analysis. Research design is vital for research because “it facilitates the smooth sailing of the various research operations” (Kothari, 2004, p. 33).

This study is carried out from a qualitative approach point of view, which is the type of approach in which researchers do not primarily focus on the quantification or the statistical and numerical perspectives of the phenomenon being investigated, but dwell on carrying out some in depth analysis of the problem being investigated.

One of the most prominent definitions of qualitative research is that, it is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning ascribed to a social or human problem by individuals or groups, where by data analysis is inductively building from specifics to general themes and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009).

The qualitative research approach was considered the most appropriate approach for this study because it made the research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure. As such, the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper

understanding on how women are represented in power and politics in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) by Chinua Achebe. The qualitative approach formed the basis by exploring the perspectives, experiences, involvement, empowerment and feelings of women, and to emphasise the understanding of these elements.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) argue that “the term qualitative research encompasses several approaches to research that are, in some respects, quite different from one another (case study, ethnography, phenomenological study, grounded theory study and content analysis) (p. 135). Content analysis was used that ensured a smooth sailing of research operations of this study. According to Prasad (2008) content analysis dates far back for nearly a century and it was first listed in Webster’s dictionary of English language in 1961. Content analysis is a method for analysing textual content and it appears that it has received a considerable attention; hence a number of definitions of content analysis exist. For instance, Prasad (2008) has defined content analysis as “the study of the content with reference to the meanings, contexts and intentions contained in messages” (p. 3). This means that what a message encompasses is the central focus of content analysis.

Moreover, content analysis falls in the interface of observation and document analysis, thus regarded as a non-reactive method of social research (Kerlinger, 1973, as cited in Prasad, 2008). Holsti (1968) defined content analysis as any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages. Stone’s (1966) definition for content analysis on the other hand appears to be striking. According to Stone (1966) (as cited in Prasad, 2008, p. 2), content analysis “refers to any procedure for assessing the relative extent to which specified references, attitudes, or themes permeate a given message or document”. Therefore, content analysis was regarded as the most appropriate research method for this study

since the study sought to analyse how women in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) have been socially transformed through education, empowerment and political consciousness. The researcher analysed the content of the two selected novels by applying content analysis in order to analyse how women's role have been transformed.

Content analysis can be applied on materials such as letters, newspaper content, folk songs, short stories, documents, texts or any symbols (Prasad, 2008). Concerning this study, the selected novels thus qualify for content analysis. Moreover, Prasad (2008) further argues that:

content analysis has been used broadly to understand a wide range of themes such as social change, cultural symbols, changing trends in the theoretical content of disciplines, verification of authorship, changes in the mass media content, nature of news coverage of social issues or social problems such as atrocities against women, dowry harassment and social movements. (p.5)

Given the above Prasad's (2008) argument, it is clear that the content analysis method was appropriate for this study in order to understand how women in power and politics are presented, which is a social transformation aspect.

The variables of the study and the definition of the acronym, STIWA, and/or the theory Stiwanism are parallel and therefore congruent to the study. As stated previously that content analysis has been used to understand different themes such as social change, which is the key word for Stiwanism Theory and this study was centred on Stiwanism Theory as the social transformation including women of Africa. The social transformation of women was the mode of analysis. Further, by using the content analysis, the study relied on secondary data from the reviewed literature, where emerging themes informed the study. On the other hand, the two selected novels were used as the main source of primary data for this study.

3.3 Population

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), qualitative researchers draw their data from various sources such as a variety of people, objects, textual materials and/or audio visuals. As for the population of the study at hand was textual materials, particularly all seven novels written by Chinua Achebe were the population. All 7 novels written by Achebe formed part of this research's population. Although Achebe is regarded as the father of African literature, he has also been labelled as antifeminist. However, Achebe's portrayal of women has transformed from negative to positive therefore the target population of the study was all 7 novels written by Achebe.

3.4 Sample

In research, a researcher must select a sample design, which should be reliable and appropriate for a study. As such, there are different types of sample designs which are based on two factors; probability sampling and non- probability sampling. The probability sampling, which is also known as 'random sampling' or 'chance sampling' where every item of the universe has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample. On the other hand, there is non-probability sampling is also known by different names such as purposive sampling, deliberate sampling, convenience sampling and/or judgement sampling. The non-probability sampling items for the sample are deliberately selected by the researcher and his choice concerning the items of the sample remains supreme (Kothari, 2004). It is therefore against the above discussion that this study employed a purposive sampling since it was the most appropriate sampling method for this study.

The researcher used a purposive sampling approach by intentionally selecting two novels; *A Man of the People* (year) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (year) from all seven novels of Achebe. Although, it is argued by Kothari (2004) that with purposive sampling the researcher may

select a sample which will yield results favourable to his point of view, it is worth clarifying at this juncture that the two selected novels were purposively selected not on the basis of personal point of view of the researcher. Henceforth, the novels, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), were purposively selected as they have preselected relevant criteria to the study. In the two selected novels Achebe turned around his earlier way of presenting women, thereby assigning them to important roles and seeing them as politically conscious. The purposive sampling approach is relevant for the reason that the study seeks knowledge about women, power and politics in literary fiction, which the content of the two novels has provided.

3.5 Procedure

The researcher purchased the two novels, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) from Book Den store in Windhoek. The researcher collected data through a critical reading and analysis of the two novels using the Stiwanism Theory, which focuses on the social transformation of women in Africa. The researcher has also critically examined the two novels, and then categorised and transferred them in terms of the emerging themes such as social transformation of women through empowerment, women empowerment through education and political consciousness in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Through critical reading and analysis, the researcher was able to see how women were socially transformed through education, empowerment and political consciousness by studying how Achebe has assigned women characters to important roles within the above mentioned themes. The researcher also made use of reviewed literature as secondary data, which informed the study, culminating in informed findings and judgments for the conclusions.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis “involves making sense out of text and image data” (Creswell (2009, p. 183). It involves preparing data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper into understanding of the data, representing the data, and making interpretation of larger meaning of data. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explicate that qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for, explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants. Concerning this study, the participants (non-human) were the two selected novels and the researcher analysed data by organising, accounting for and explaining the data collected from *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

Content analysis is the process by which “the many words of texts are classified into much fewer categories” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 475). Given the above definition, it is with no doubt that content analysis as a research method was indeed useful for this study as a qualitative study. The researcher used content analysis to categorise and classify data accordingly.

The researcher used content analysis to interpret and analyse how women in power and politics are portrayed in the two selected novels. Data collected was organised into smaller chunks by categories which ensured smooth and easier management and in the end it allowed the researcher to gain deeper understanding of how women characters are portrayed in power and politics. Themes such education, political conscious, powerful leadership positions and decision making and relationships between the social transformations of women which is the central focus of this study have emerged.

Further, the researcher focused on finding out how women have been transformed and assigned to powerful positions in a male driven society by using the Stiwaniism Theory to interpret data. Data collected is presented in narrative form, and then classified into themes.

Lastly, the researcher extracted the findings from the interpretations and analysis, and then used them for the construction of discussions and conclusions.

3.7 Research ethics

Research ethics appears to be simple yet it is the most delicate aspect that all researchers need to consider when carrying out research. According to Nekongo (2017), researchers do not have the right to force or lure participants to be part of the research process; certain ethical guidelines need to be followed. Research ethics involves principles that guide researchers on how to carry out research without causing any harm to all objects involved.

Given the above background, the researcher considered research ethics for this study at hand, therefore the data collected was solely used for the purpose of this study. This study was based on fictional works whose characters were of imaginative formation therefore the researcher treated the characters as fictional. In addition, the researcher remained objective throughout the entire research process and refrained from influencing the study with emotions or taking sides as a woman. Ethical clearance was sought and granted from the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Committee. Finally, all sources that were used in the study were acknowledged.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was employed in this study. Research design was defined as well as a brief explanation of which research design was used for the study. Enlightenment was also given as to why the population used was the best appropriate for this study as well as a justification for the selected sample. In addition, the procedure used to analyse the collected data for this research was discussed. This chapter also covered data

analysis and details concerning the content analysis coupled with Stiwanism Theory. Lastly, the chapter presented the research ethics guidelines as well as the researcher's stance concerning the research ethics for the study at hand. The next chapter, Chapter 4, provides an analysis and discussion of the selected novel.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF *A MAN OF THE PEOPLE* (1966) AND *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH* (1987)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and discussion of how women in power and politics are depicted by Achebe in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). The researcher identified themes pedestalled on specific aspects that emerged from the literature review and these themes were employed to meet this study's objectives which were to:

- Analyse how women in power and politics are portrayed in *A Man of People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*,
- Investigate how education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in the society as portrayed in the two selected novels, and
- Examine the motivating factors of women to take up powerful and political positions as depicted in the two selected novels.

Firstly, a summary of each novel is provided before the analysis of the novels. In order to investigate how women are presented in power and politics by Achebe in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), the researcher analysed the scenarios in which women are portrayed in power and politics in the two novels. Further, in order to examine the motivating factors of women to take up powerful and political positions in the two selected novels, the researcher analysed the background knowledge of the women characters as portrayed in the two novels. Lastly, the researcher further looked at how Achebe, through women empowerment, has socially transformed women characters in the two novels using education and politics.

4.2 *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) -summaries

Achebe's novel *A Man of the People* (1966) is narrated by Odili, a young teacher in an unidentified African country run by greedy and corrupt politicians. Odili's former teacher, Chief Nanga is now an elected official and the Minister of Culture of the country. Chief Nanga comes to visit his village home and he invites Odili to stay at his home in the capital city while the Chief makes arrangements to help Odili study abroad. In spite of Odili's dislike for Chief Nanga's way of doing business, Odili is somewhat charmed by the man, thus he accepts Chief Nanga's invitation, and spends time with him in the capital city. Odili learns that Chief Nanga lives in luxury as a result of corrupt practices, and knows nothing about culture, despite his position. Odili has a love relationship with Elsie, whom he brings to Chief Nanga's home with the intention of spending the night with her. However, she sleeps with Chief Nanga instead. Chief Nanga does not understand why this makes Odili angry and this prompts Odili to take revenge on Chief Nanga by seducing Edna, the young woman that the official plans to marry as his second wife.

Eventually, Odili becomes involved in a new political party that seeks to replace the current corrupt ruling party of Chief Nanga and his breed. As he becomes more and more opposed to Chief Nanga, Odili decides to run for office in an attempt to take Chief Nanga's position. He tries to show the people the present government is lying and stealing, but no one seems to care. In fact, Odili is threatened and bullied as he tries to run his campaign, and his father and his village are punished for his actions.

Odili realises he is genuinely fond of Edna, and his desire for her is no longer just a result of his wish to get revenge on Chief Nanga. Edna, however, feels obliged to marry the Chief because he has given her family money and her father is pressuring her. The political situation gets violent that Odili is beaten to death whilst his friend Max the co-founder, together with his fiancée Eunice, of the opposition political party is killed by a former

government official. Although Chief Nanga's party wins the election, the aftermath is turbulence and chaos, and ultimately the military overthrows the government.

On the other hand, the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* is a socio-political commentary set in the fictional nation of Kangan. The story begins with the readers being treated to an inside look into a presidential cabinet meeting. It is discovered that the country has had an unstable two years of existence, having coming from a chaotic political turmoil, ousting a dictator from the highest office of the land. The story revolves around three characters, Sam, Chris and Ikem. The three were childhood friends and have now come into power, fulfilling crucial responsibilities within their society. Sam is the President of the Republic of Kangan, Chris is the head of the Information Ministry while Ikem is the editor-in-chief of the National Gazette, a government-controlled newspaper. Even though this trio has common origins and deep ties, they are much different in their political preferences and personal characters. Sam is a soldier by profession and has now become obsessed with power as he wants to remain president for life, a position unheard of in their nation's history. This move requires a nationwide referendum but Abazon, one of the regions in Kangan, rejects the notion of putting Sam in power for the rest of his life. Sam's reaction to Abazon's disapproval is that he cuts them off basic amenities, leading into demonstrations. The trio's political differences drives Sam paranoid, with which coupled with Sam's dictatorship, results into political oppression and violence, and eventually is fatal for the three. In the novel we are also introduced to strong women characters, such as Elewa and Beatrice. Beatrice represents the modern educated African women, bold and independent.

Though the actions of the novel *A Man of the People* (1966) centre mostly on corruption and political oppression in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987); the novels also bring to the fore themes of women revolution, political consciousness of women and women empowerment through education and social transformation of women's role in the society.

4.3 Social transformation of women

The word transformation is synonymous to change and according to Nazhath (2015), change refers to “any deviation from accepted way of life or established lives” (p. 46). On the other hand, Dominic (2011) defines the term social transformation “as a marked change in the form of a society” (p. 2). Both the definitions above share a mutual understanding of the word transformation which means to change. Thus given the aforesaid, it can be stated that transformation is concerned with how things have revolved, whether norms, culture, tradition, believes and so forth. In addition, Nazhath (2015) argues that the social change of women refers to the change in society at large and that society is a process. The fact that processes are unending change, it makes society bound to change.

Chinua Achebe has skilfully turned and elevated the portrayal of African women, who are generation changers. Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Eunice in *A Man of the People* (1966) represent Achebe’s new women; their portraitures throughout the two novels respectively interrogate postcolonial Nigerian politics of disempowerment, marginalisation, shrivelled public sphere and gendered space that obstruct good governance. Achebe has presented the women characters as the protagonists in both novels, which draws much attention to these women characters.

Achebe has socially transformed the role of women characters in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) through Beatrice who is portrayed as a highly educated woman who holds an honours first class degree in English. Beatrice is politically involved in the political events that occurred in the novel, attending political gatherings with other politicians as they chat about finding solutions to remedy the political fiasco that is currently on-going in Kangan where the story is set.

Additionally, women's role in the society has been changed in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). This is done through Beatrice, as she is depicted performing a naming ceremony for Elewa and Ikem's child, a role which was only traditionally regarded as a man's. In the same vein, the role of women in *A Man of the People* (1966) has been transformed. Eunice, just as Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), is portrayed as politically conscious; she is one of the co-founder of an opposition political party CPC which fights the corrupt government of Chief Nanga and his breed. Eunice's portrayal is a representation of women in revolutionary act. Women are depicted as educated, intelligent, bold and politically conscious as Beatrice and Eunice stand shoulder to shoulder next to men in a male dominant society, thus Achebe has transformed the new role of women characters in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *A Man of the People* (1966).

4.3 Social transformation of women through empowerment

The term empowerment has previously been defined and expounded in the literature review chapter, which according to Lawal et al., (2016), the political, cultural and socio-economic context in which the term empowerment is presented determines its meaning, and thus empowerment's meaning varies based on the context of its use. Nonetheless, World Bank (2001) defines empowerment as the expansion of freedom of choice and actions and increasing one's authority and control over the resources and decisions that affect one's life.

Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorising individual to think, take action and control work in an independent way. It can therefore be said that the word 'empowerment' literally means to enable or authorise and it connotes the presence of power. When we talk of women empowerment, it entails political, social, economic and cultural aspects wherein women are able to participate and have access and control of resources and opportunities. Hence, it implies women being in charge of their own lives, having independent rights,

responsibilities and opportunities in all spheres of life. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice and fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society.

As previously alluded and for the purpose of this study, women empowerment is the improvement of women's position in power structures of the society. Empowerment appears to be the most important notion that brings about change in the womenfolk. Women are said to be empowered when they have the right and ability to make and influence decisions. Women can be economically, socially or politically empowered. An empowered woman, as argued by Lawal et al., (2016), possess a sense of self-worth, has the ability to define her own choices, has access to resources and limitless opportunities she can pursue and has the ability also to influence the direction of social change which fits the local or international economic and social style.

Given the above discussions about empowerment, Achebe has portrayed women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *A Man of the People* (1966) that are politically, socially and culturally empowered. For example Beatrice is portrayed as an empowered woman because she is able to make her own choices. She is depicted as conservative and dictates the pace of their love relationship with Chris. As earlier discussed, being empowered also means being able to think and take actions. It is without doubt that Achebe's women are indeed strong and empowered as they are able to make bold decisions and react to situations by taking an action. A close example can be taken from *A Man of the People* (1966). Eunice whom after her fiancé got killed, she took an action by retaliating and killing Max's murderer. Instead of crying and screaming which is normally expected of a woman, the first thing she does is that "she opens her handbag as if to take out a handkerchief, takes out a pistol instead and fires two bullets into Chief Koko's chest" (Achebe, 1966, p. 160). Eunice's act of retaliation is quite admirable. As a woman the society expects her to weep and break down because of

witnessing her fiancé being assassinated, but instead Beatrice surprises everyone by her first act of retaliation. Eunice probably thought it is her right to avenge Max's death but it might be also a way of getting rid of one of the many corrupt government officials. The women in power and politics in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) are therefore portrayed as empowered and are politically conscious. They are fearless and engage themselves in violent political affairs.

One of the objectives of this study was to analyse how women in power and politics are portrayed in *A Man of People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), and for this said analysis to be carried out, the researcher has looked at all the scenarios where women are portrayed in power structures of the society in the two novels. Henceforth, the following sub sections present the analysis and interpretations of scenarios where women are empowered in the selected novels.

4.3.1 Women empowerment through political consciousness and public spheres

As previously argued (in chapter 2) by Nazhath (2015), empowering women to get enhanced participation in political and public life is about women being visible in public spheres, having a say in their communities and enjoying equal decision-making power over policies and allocations of resources at the national and subnational levels. Achebe has therefore empowered women in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) as he has on various scenarios included women in the political and public spheres. This means that Achebe did not isolate women in his recent novels as opposed to his earlier novels. On the contrary, Achebe has included women at all the public and political gatherings that occurred in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). For this theme, women empowerment through political awareness and public sphere, the two novels are hereby analysed and presented respectively.

4.3.1.1 *A Man of the People* (1966)

The novel begins with a much anticipated and outstanding event where the most popular Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga, the Minister of Culture, is going to address the staff and students of Anata Grammar School. As earlier alluded by Rajesh (2014), in the first two chapters that women are traditionally isolated and discriminated from taking part or being involved in any serious discussion or gathering thereof. This argument about the traditional role of women appears to be widely addressed by Achebe in *A Man of the People* (1966). This is particularly the case as Achebe begins his novel with the first political gathering where women's presence varied from uneducated village women to influential business women. "The popular 'Ego Women's Party' wore a new uniform of expensive accra cloth" (Achebe, 1966, p. 1). Although it can be argued that the presence of this 'Égo Women's Party' singing and chanting to the honourable guest speaker Mr Nanga serves as nothing but mere decoration. It can also signify the acceptance of women in a male dominant and driven society. Achebe's depiction of women on the very first page and the first gathering of many in the novel, symbolises the new role of women in the society which emancipates women from the exclusion and relegation to house hold chores only. The narrator continues: "Five or six dancing groups were performing at different points in the compound" (Achebe, 1966, p.1). However, Achebe particularly specified the "The popular 'Ego Women's Party'" (Achebe, 1966, p.1) by pointing out its name and emphasising its prevalence. The popular 'Ego Women's Party' represents the new role of women in the society. Women can now participate in important discussions and be affiliated in political affairs. The mere fact of the presence of women at a political gathering serves as the outset of women emancipation from seclusion and peripheral.

One substantial woman character that is present at the much anticipated and outstanding event is Mrs Eleanor John, an influential party woman from the coast who had come to the

minister's party. "Although no longer young seemed more than able to hold her own" (Achebe, 1966, p. 14). This quotation simply means that Mrs John despite being old she looked after herself well and sufficiently competent in her role as a political woman as noted in the following incident:

I knew her from the newspapers; she was a member of the Library Commission, one of the statutory boards within the Minister's portfolio. She was the *'merchant princess' par excellence*. Poor beginning- an orphan, I believe- no school education, plenty of good looks and an iron determination, both of which she put to good account; beginning as a street hawker, rising to a small trader, and then to a big one. At present, they said, she presided over the entire trade in imported second-hand clothing worth hundreds of thousands. (Achebe, 1966, p. 14).

Through Mrs John, Achebe paints a picture of a strong typical modern African woman who has marked her rightful place in the business world. In her we see a survivor whom despite extreme poverty, has managed to pull through and succeeded. Also through her, Achebe portrays women as strong willed, determined, independent and successful, who can rise above any situation. Mrs John being a woman character who grew up as an orphan and received no education whatsoever yet she has managed to position herself as a well-known successful business woman designates Achebe's new depiction of women in the society.

Although women are traditionally expected to be weak and subjected to household chores such as bearing babies, cooking and tending to their husbands (Rajesh, 2014). Achebe has skilfully transformed the role of women in the society by acknowledging women's full potential and their new role in the modern society. Mrs John represents the modern kind woman; strong, determined and thriving through all odds. Mrs John owns a clothing empire which imports clothes and in so doing, she has not only created job opportunities for the

fellow women but probably for men too. The characterisation of Mrs John as an influential business woman gives a clear indication that Achebe fully acknowledges the new role of women in the society as women have proven themselves worth and equal to men in all spheres of life. Today women like Mrs John have successfully taken their rightful place in the society making significant contributions to the economic growth of their countries. Therefore, Achebe's portrayal of women in powerful positions and running business empires shows that he fully acknowledges women's full potential and it implies that women with an iron determination can succeed in a male driven society and in any sphere they set their minds to, despite their circumstances. Circumstances such as poverty, being orphans, lack of education and let alone gender stereotypes cannot hinder women to fully realise their potential and occupy their rightful positions in the society.

It has been reported in Medieval English times, History Learning Site (as cited in Masule, 2014) that women had little or no 'say' within the socio political administration of their societies. Therefore, Mrs John's presence and role in the statutory boards within the Minister's portfolio can be seen as a social transformation of women and her presence simplifies the voice of the voiceless women. It further shows that women are politically conscious and they have what it takes to be part of decision making boards where their views and concerns are heard. The above depiction of women in power and politics directly responds to the first objective of this study. Through Mrs John, it can be said that women in power and politics are portrayed with a voice, strong, resistant and successful. Despite Mrs John's poor background, she managed to pull through and emerged out as a successful businesswoman. The third objective of this study is to analyse the motivating factors of women to take up powerful positions. The probable explanation of Mrs John's role in the society; her involvement in the business world and political affairs, can be on the basis of her poor background. Mrs John grew up as an orphan and had no one to lean on. Her exposure to

the world's cruelty probably moulded her into a strong and goal oriented woman that she is. She must have learnt the toughest way to survive which is to stand up for oneself and work hard.

Another woman character portrayed in power and politics in *A Man of the People* (1966) is Jean an ambassador lady who is depicted as a beautiful and bumptious woman. She and her husband are both ambassadors and they are dining with the minister of culture Mr Nanga. Although the couple had different personalities; they are both expedient in their duties. "He seemed the quiet type and I though, a little cowed by his beautiful, bumptious wife. But I had no doubt they were both in their different ways excellent ambassadors" (Achebe, 1966, p. 40). The above quote clearly indicates that Jean's personality and character is the opposite of what the society, particularly in the olden days, expects of a woman. She is prideful, goal oriented and free spirited. In other words, Jean as a woman is living her life fully, whilst being a wife and a career woman, an excellent ambassador as earlier alluded. Through Jean, Achebe presents women in politics as influential and excellent candidates in their roles. It further shows that women can be both a wife and politically conscious. Thus Achebe's new portrayal of women implies that women do not need to be relegated to house hold chores; they can be both wives and successful career women too. It goes as far as to implicate that women are not weak as traditionally perceived. On the contrary, women are indeed strong and intelligent. If given the chance, women are the key factors that contribute to the development of the world. Having said that, Achebe fully acknowledges women's new role in the society thus he has portrayed women in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) as intelligent, confident, strong and above all politically conscious as we see it through Jean the ambassador, Mrs John the influential business woman, as well as Eunice, the lawyer and political activist.

Another example of women present during political gatherings pertains to the dinner party held by Jean the ambassador. At the said dinner party, business and political people were invited including Mr Nanga the Minister of Culture although he had to cancel at the last minute. The host herself is a woman and the supposed presence of a minister, Mr Nanga, as well as other attendees like the middle aged American who was at the time writing a book about Nigeria and the ambassador makes this very gathering a political get together. Among the seven people present at the dinner party, four of them are women. In so doing, Achebe accords women a platform to share their experiences and views, as a result making the voice of women dominant at that gathering than that of men.

Women are portrayed as politically conscious and they are part and parcel of the public spheres which is critical to language. Traditionally women would be portrayed at such gatherings as nothing but mere waitress and tending to the male guests, but in this scenario Achebe portrays a whole different picture of women. The dinner party is hosted by an influential and a political woman. On top of that, more women were present than men. This political gathering serves as a platform for women to share their valuable views by participating in serious discussions such as art and diverse cultural interpretations. This without doubt conforms to the first objective of this study, which is how women are portrayed in power and politics. Within this rubric, it shows that women are depicted in politics and power as intriguing associates and equally capable as men to hold any political position as Odili himself the narrator admits to have enjoyed the discussions at that platform. “The talk, as I said was very good” (Achebe, 1966, p. 45).

Another political and public sphere where women are part and parcel of is when Mr Nanga the Minister of Culture opened the first ever book exhibition of works by local authors. Predictably, different ambassadors were invited and attended the event in numbers. “Mr Jalio, why didn’t you tell me that you are expecting ambassadors at this function? His eyes were

still ranging over the parked cars, some of them carrying diplomatic number plates and two flying flags” (Achebe, 1966, p. 56). Among the feared ambassadors by the Minister, is Jean, his and Odili’s more than an acquaintance to put it frank. At the same platform Odili was accompanied by his girlfriend Elsie the nurse. Elsie’s presence at such a prestigious event indicates that she is more than just a lover to Odili who is now through the Minister well acquainted and connected to various political representations. This is a positive representation of women from an African novelist Achebe, through an African man Odili who is the narrator, which shows that women are not only good for sexual pleasures as Odili and Elsie’s relationship would imply but they can also serve as good company. Achebe makes Elsie to accompany Odili and Chief Nanga the minister at such a prestigious event as a way of socially including women in all public spheres as opposed to being reserved in private matters. Therefore, all the above mentioned scenarios where women are portrayed in public spheres and mostly political gatherings conform to the Stiwanism Theory which guided this study and strives for social inclusion of African women. In *A Man of the People* (1966), Achebe involved women characters in political and decision making positions such as the likes of Mrs John who served in the statutory board.

One of the astounding depictions of women’s political consciousness is through the new political party which is formed by Max, Odili’s friend and his associates. Of all the members in this new forceful party, there exists only one female member, Eunice, a beautiful lawyer, engaged to Max. Although Eunice’s presence as the only lady in the Common People’s Convention party may connote various interpretations, such as favouritism on the basis of her being engaged to Max the founder of CPC. For the purpose of this study, Eunice’s presence as the only woman in the CPC provides a different and valuable connotation at this juncture. It implies that women are strong and equally capable as men if not better. Eunice is portrayed as a beautiful, intelligent and confident barrister woman. Her intelligence and posture has

intimidated men particularly Odili the narrator. Furthermore, Eunice greatly values the unemployed people's contribution and advocates for them to be part of their Common People's Convention party. "And the unemployed, of course, said the young lady with that confidence of a beautiful woman who has brains as well, which I find a little intimidating" (Achebe, 1966, p. 71). As a result, her intelligence and confidence is somehow intimidating the men members in their new found political party. Unlike Odili who is a man among other men, Eunice is not intimidated by the presence of men and the mere fact of being the only woman; on the contrary, her contributions towards the planning of their new political party are intriguing and show confidence. Eunice is presented as a political activist during the time of political instability where much violence and corruption is stirring, which despite of, Eunice maintains her courageousness throughout; she does not relinquish her activism.

In addition, Eunice is portrayed as a political activist that is fearless as she stands shoulder to shoulder in a male driven society. Her retaliation is somewhat surprising; she has proven to be dauntless. Eunice's valiant portraiture is justified on her reaction when her fiancé Max got murdered. "Then she opened her hand bag as if to take out a handkerchief, took out a pistol instead and fired two bullets into Chief Koko's chest. Only then did she fall down on Max's body and begin to weep like a woman. A very strange girl, people said" (Achebe, 1966, p. 132). As far as this study is concerned, it is not a secret that traditionally women are expected to be weak, making them physically and emotionally weaker compared to men. However, Achebe twisted the traditional belief about women by presenting Eunice as a strong, courageous and level headed woman. Eunice, before weeping as expected of her to, acted very fast in avenging her fiancé's death by ambushing his murderer Chief Koko. Eunice's reaction to this violent incident proves Achebe's new portrayal of women. Through Eunice, Achebe presents women in politics as fearless and goal-oriented. Given the educational background of Eunice and her profession as a lawyer, it is without doubt that Eunice knew

what she got herself into from the onset. Thus, her character as a woman is quite remarkable as she did not at any point relinquish from the hazardous activism that she herself has embarked on, she stood firm and fought throughout. Once again, this presentation of courageous women responds to the first objective of this study is how women in power and politics are depicted in the two novels.

The third objective of this study is concerned with the motivating factors for women to take up powerful leadership positions within the novel. Relating to Eunice in *A Man of the People* (1966), one would wonder as to why a young and successful woman would indulge into dangerous political activities such as establishing an opposition political party which challenges the corrupt and violent ruling party. Taking into consideration Eunice's level of education and her profession as a lawyer, those can be the motivating factors for her to take up a powerful and yet dangerous position of political activism and revolution. For the progress of this study, it is imperative that a brief discussion about law as a profession is provided at this juncture.

According to Zacharias (2009), lawyers help to create a setting in which democracy can flourish and in whole to improve the society. It is further argued that lawyers have a role in changing and safeguarding democratic society or democratic governmental structures. Taking the above arguments into consideration about the roles of lawyers in the society, one can argue that Eunice as a lawyer is compelled to fight for justice and she also plays an important role in promoting human rights. Beatrice is duty-bound to be part of a revolutionary act as she and her party members fight to get rid of the corrupt and oppressive government of Chief Nanga and his breed. Arguably, lawyers have skills useful for producing social changes even outside the litigation realm.

4.3.1.2 *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987)

The researcher agrees with the argument provided earlier by Nazhath (2015), that empowering women to get enhanced participation in political and public life is about women being visible in public spheres, having a say in their communities and enjoying equal decision-making power over policies and allocations of resources at the national and subnational levels. This is possibly true as Achebe portrays women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) visible during political gatherings and public spheres; hence women are empowered in this novel. A substantial example in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) is revealed through Beatrice and Elewa. Beatrice, a young lady, is highly educated and works as a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. On the other hand, Elewa is uneducated yet strong and hardworking woman who works at the market. Although these two women have different levels of education, they are both portrayed in the novel as politically conscious because of their political involvement and affiliations. Beatrice's and Elewa's involvement in different political discussions is nothing close to being just mere spectators but rather active participants giving meaningful contributions. The events in the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) revolve and are set around a post-colonial Kangan with the Head of State, His Excellency Sam, as a dictator and an oppressor.

One particular scenario, when the likes of Ikem the Editor of National Gazzete, Chris the Commissioner of Information and Mad Medico the American man who is in charge of the hospital administration are criticising the government and its inability to reach out to its entire people, Beatrice as usual is part of this political gathering. This portrayal is an act of including women at political gatherings and serious discussions which is the purpose of Stiwanism Theory, which guided this study. In so doing, Achebe accords women an opportunity to air their views particularly in a very serious discussion such as the one of critiquing the government.

In the same vein, Achebe portrays Beatrice as a good companion and shares her deep insights. “Well, you fellows, all three of you, are incredibly conceited. The story of this country, as far as you are concerned, is the story of the three of you” (Achebe, 1987, p. 62). From this quote, Achebe depicts an open minded, courageous and observant woman who has the guts to call a spade a spade. Beatrice directly criticises the three friends, Chris, Ikem and Sam who is the Head of State for Kangan.

Bhat (2015) defines the term empowerment as the process of enabling or authorising an individual to think, take action and control work in an autonomous way. Given the above definition of empowerment coupled with Beatrice’s character, it clearly shows that Beatrice is empowered and critical in her thinking as she is able to detect the three men’s conceitedness. Therefore, this further shows that Achebe has portrayed women in power and politics as critical and observant.

Furthermore, in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), through Beatrice, women are also portrayed as problem solvers and rebellious. For instance on one particular incident, when Sam, the Head of State, invited Beatrice for a dinner party with other influential politicians at his presidential palace to try and find amicable solutions to remedy the current on-going political fiasco. A striking act of rebelliousness is performed by Beatrice upon finding out that the dinner is rather at Sam’s guesthouse and not at the presidential palace as she initially assumed. The following incident shows Beatrice’s rebelliousness:

My first act of rebellion which was to bring a wan smile to my face five minutes later for its sheer futility was to refuse my escort’s offer to sit in the owner’s corner of the black Mercedes standing in my driveway. As he rushed ahead of me and opened and held the door I simply said sorry, walked over the other side and let myself in. (Achebe, 1987, p. 68)

This shows that Beatrice apart from being rebellious, she is as her own boss and would not for any reason allow anyone to exploit her. Beatrice's act of rebellion speaks high of an empowered woman who is comfortable to express her discontent even it is through her actions.

Going back to the third objective of this study which is to examine the motivating factors of women to take up powerful and political positions in the two novels, Beatrice's acceptance of Sam's sudden and strange dinner invitation can be somewhat questionable. One possible question which exists in the reader's mind is why would Beatrice accept such a weird invitation especially during the time when the two friends (Sam and Chris) were not seeing eye to eye? By closely examining Beatrice's character and background knowledge of being a daring woman, there is certainly more than one answer to this question. To begin with, Beatrice is portrayed as a very strong, intelligent and independent woman. Therefore, it makes sense that she is not easily intimidated even by the strange dinner invitation by the Head of State. It could also be that Beatrice being a strong woman views this invitation as nothing but another challenge which she herself will easily handle. On the other hand, it can also be assumed that Beatrice being Chris's girlfriend somewhat compels her to accept this invitation. It is almost obvious that Sam deliberately invited Beatrice in anticipation for her to decline which could have aggravated Sam's paranoia even further. Moreover, this invitation could as well be a test to Sam as he wants to see what Chris will put his girlfriend, Beatrice up for. Therefore, Beatrice could have accepted this invitation as a way of proving herself that she is not in any way scared of the oppressive government and she therefore welcome whatever challenge is thrown her way. As for Beatrice, her acceptance of this weird dinner invitation proves her inquisitiveness to see how far the Head of State is willing to take the prevailing political instability. Another considerable answer can be for Beatrice to prove to both Sam and Chris that she is an independent woman and will not be used by either or both

of these former friends who are presently at loggerheads with each other. Finally, it can also be argued that Beatrice's level of education and exposure drives her interest and involvement in politics high.

Another characteristic of women in power and politics portrayed by Achebe in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) is being independent. Women are also portrayed as sophisticated and would not allow anyone to manipulate them and these characteristics are particularly portrayed through Beatrice. Thus, it is necessary to interpret the following quote during the time when Beatrice and Chris were discussing Beatrice's dinner invitation by Sam the Head of State. "Sam is not a fool you know. He knows things are now pretty hopeless and may see in you a last hope to extricate himself. But let's keep all options open" (Achebe, 1987, p. 68). Chris was hopeful that Sam was now trying to re-establish good relations with him through Beatrice and thus he advised Beatrice to keep all options open. He was fine with the idea of his girlfriend sleeping with his old friend for his selfish needs. Although Beatrice was optimistic about the outcome of this meeting, she was still not willing to sacrifice her morality. Her response to Chris's statement makes her stand very clear over it "All options? I knew of one at least I would not keep open" (Achebe, 1987, p. 69). This clearly shows that Beatrice is a strong level headed girl who would not let anyone exploit her. Her education level and exposure drives her impartiality, rebelliousness and independence. Therefore, as argued by Finchinchong (2006), Beatrice's stance on the political affairs of Kangan where *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) is set is crucial in understanding women empowerment through the expansion of the public sphere. The strength of her political and feminist field is lodged in her quality education, exposure, tendency and quest for political participation. Therefore, women in her view should resist being pushed or tempted into accepting subservient or degrading or decorative roles in politics.

As it turns out, the dinner invitation by the Head of State was with other political associates, quite influential men and women were present. This is one of the political gatherings where women are present and representing themselves as politically conscious. Apart from Beatrice, there were other six women present at the dinner party including Miss Cramford of the American Press. The following incident indicates that Beatrice's presence at the party is of significance:

Meanwhile His Excellency was literally reciting my CV. Lou, this is one of the most brilliant daughters of this country. Beatrice Okoh. She is a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance- the only person in the service, male or female, with a first-class honours in English. And not from a local university but from Queen Mary College, University of London. Our Beatrice beat the English to their game. We're proud of her. (Achebe, 1987, p. 70).

This implies that Beatrice's CV is found terrific by political men and Achebe purposely portrays her as a woman who is highly educated and mostly brilliant, to be the only one who holds a first class honours in English. In so doing, Achebe uplifts the social status of women. Beatrice's level of education drives her political consciousness and inquisitiveness.

It is also imperative to point out the magnitude of the presence of women at this dinner party hosted by the Head of State, particularly Beatrice's presence. This dinner is held during a difficult and fiasco political time. One would expect Sam to invite his old friends but rather the Head of State prefers Beatrice, a woman, to attend the dinner party where different influential politicians were invited to try and find amicable solutions to the prevailing problems facing Sam's government. It can therefore be said that, the presence of women at this significant political event clearly indicates that women's opinions and views are valued

and trusted. It further proves that women can think out of the box just as men if not more during critical moments such as this one.

Apart from portraying women in power and politics, Achebe also directly, addresses the issue concerning the political consciousness of women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). This is done through Beatrice who boldly challenges the notion of chauvinism particularly with Ikem. Achebe uses Beatrice to educate and create political awareness regarding the role of women in political thinking where it says:

I tell him he has no clear role for women in his political thinking. But the way I see it is that giving women today the same role which traditional society gave them of intervening only when everything else has failed is not enough, you know. (Achebe, 1987, p. 87).

Achebe has intentionally addressed the notion of women's role in political thinking as a way of creating awareness to the readers if not the whole world. Achebe has been labelled as antifeminist because of how his earlier novels have relegated women and portrayed them peripheral to men. Therefore, Achebe has addressed the issue of women seclusion in political affairs boldly as he uses by far his strongest woman character (Beatrice) in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) to challenge the tradition and male chauvinism. Beatrice is well aware that she does not need a man to complete her, which takes us back to the first objective of this study which is to analyse how women are presented in power and politics. Achebe presents women like Beatrice as intelligent, courageous, strong, rebellious, independent and above all, influential.

Through Beatrice, Achebe bluntly calls out on involving women in political participation. Ikem who from the beginning of the novel is portrayed as a male chauvinist and cavalier towards women, particularly his girlfriend Elewa, finally acknowledges the new role of

women in the society and therefore begins to view women differently. “I have come to thank you for the greatest present one human being can give another. The gift of insight. In to the world of women” (Achebe, 1987, p. 91). This means that Beatrice is an influential woman as she managed to change Ikem’s thinking regarding women’s role in political thinking. “You charged me with assigning to women the role of a fire brigade after the house has caught fire and been virtually consumed. Your charge has forced me to sit down and contemplate the nature of oppression” (Achebe, 1987, p. 92). This right here can be Achebe’s confession on how he has in his earlier novels oppressed women characters and totally excluded them from any important social issues. This means that women were only called in after men had failed. Through Ikem, Achebe shamelessly acknowledges to have downgraded women in his earlier novels, which thus far, his recent novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) have transformed. What is mostly striking in this confession is the fact that it is a woman who changes the men’s view regarding the women’s role in political and public affairs. As previously alluded, the term empowered means having the power to make your own decisions and fully exercise your rights. Achebe implies that it is only women themselves that can change the world about their new role in the society, women themselves should be their own agents of change.

In the same vein, Beatrice and Ikem’s conversation continues to be thought-provoking:

So the idea came to man to turn his spouse into the very Mother of God, to pick her up from right under his foot where she’d been since creation and carry her reverently to a nice, corner pedestal. Up there, her feet completely off the ground she will be just as irrelevant to the practical decisions of running the world as she was in her old days” (Achebe, 1987, p. 93).

What Achebe implies in the above quote is that women have always been suppressed since creation; however, there have been significant changes in the roles of women in the society. The implication of the above quote further goes as to imply that although women are now educated and respected, their views still remain somewhat irrelevant and not taken into consideration. “She will be just as irrelevant to the practical decision of running the world as she was in her bad old days” (Achebe, 1987, p. 93). This implies that although women are now educated, they are still not taken seriously as they are excluded from serious discussion or government formation. Therefore, Achebe uses his role as a writer to transform the way in which the society views women. He has done so by depicting women in power and politics and also by pulling the bull by its horns as he has directly discussed the idea of lack of women involvement in politics and public sphere. Thus, this makes the notion of women involvement in politics as his central point of his novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

Similarly, Ikem further expresses himself:

I can't tell you what the new role for women will be. I don't know. I should never have presumed to know. You have to tell us. We never asked you before. But in that case everybody had better know who is now holding up the action. (Achebe, 1987, p. 93).

This quote may imply that Achebe admits that women's role in the society cannot be pre-determined. This means that women can take up any role in society. Having said that, Achebe depicts women of different backgrounds, in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), with different roles such as lawyers, influential business women, rebellious, head of private schools, wives and career women, political activists and revolutionaries.

4.4 Women revolution

One substantial aspect addressed by Achebe both openly and indirectly in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) which is worth discussing in this study is women revolution. According to Neitzel (1989), the word revolution itself refers to radical, transformative change and can be used variously describing the phenomena from the industrial revolution to the sexual revolution. This means that revolution can occur in different aspects of life. For the purpose of this study, revolution is a successful attempt by a group of people to change the political system of their country by force. Therefore, revolution is a drastic and far reaching change in ways of thinking and behaving.

Neitzel (1989) argues that many revolutionaries sought not to simply achieve independent nationhood, but also to transform their societies internally. Hence, it can be similarly argued that the typical modern women revolution aims to transform the society by eliminating the old traditional role of women in the society. In *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe has portrayed women in revolution successfully, attempting to change the political system of the countries in which the above two mentioned novels are set. A considerable example here can be that of Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Achebe places Beatrice as a strong woman who challenges the traditional roles of women by performing a naming ceremony for Elewa and Ikem's child and she further gives the baby girl a boy's name. Beatrice's friends fight against the oppressive government and her involvement in this political fiasco symbolises the women revolution. Beatrice is the representation of African modern women who are fearless and can fight to change the way in which the society views women. The diverse experiences and understandings of revolution underline the importance of political and social revolution to modern African women as a goal to the formation of modern African society (Neitzel, 1989). Thus in order to transform

the African society and women's role within the society, political and social revolution is necessary and seems rather inevitable. Therefore, this seems to be particularly Achebe's new depiction of women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *A Man of the People* (1966). In order to transform the role of women in the society, Achebe uses women themselves as their own agents of change by involving them in revolutionary act and political activism.

In *A Man of the People* (1966) Achebe has placed women at the forefront of a revolutionary act. The CPC opposition political party found by Odili's friend Max and his girlfriend Eunice opposes the corrupt Chief Nanga and his breed. Eunice whose intelligence is found somewhat intimidating to the men in their political party and the likes of Odili embarks on a revolutionary act aiming to overthrow the ruling corrupt government. Eunice does so with fierceness despite the political violence prevailing in the country. Achebe uses a revolutionary act as a way of involving women in the political affairs and portraying women's boldness and persistence in the interests of changing the political system of the country. Eunice has remarkably illustrated the same level of strength throughout the entire novel, she did not panic or whatsoever, not even during the time when her fiancé Max is shot by thugs of a political rival. Instead of crying and screaming which is normally expected of a woman, the first thing she does is that "she opens her handbag as if to take out a handkerchief, takes out a pistol instead and fires two bullets into Chief Koko's chest" (Achebe, 1966, p. 160). Eunice's act of retaliation is quite admirable. As a woman the society expects her to start weeping or even breaking down because of witnessing her fiancé being assassinated, but instead Beatrice surprises everyone by her first act of retaliation.

In addition, in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), through Ikem, Achebe directly discusses the notion about revolution. "Revolution maybe necessary for taking a society out of an intractable stench of quagmire" (Achebe, 1987, p. 94). Making sense of this quotation,

Achebe implies that in order for the society to fully get rid of women oppression there is a need for a revolution. Once again, this means that revolution is necessary and inevitable.

Nonetheless, there have been already several revolutionary acts particularly in the fight of gender balance between men and women such as the one that led to the birth of Stiwanism Theory which guided this study. Paying close attention to the way Achebe has depicted women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *A Man of the People* (1987), it coincides with the Stiwanism Theory. Stiwanism is concerned about the contemporary social and political transformation of African women in Africa. Similarly, Achebe has also involved women in political thinking not only as spectators but as part of the driving force of the revolutionary acts. For example, Eunice in *A Man of the People* (1966) boldly fights the corrupt and injustice government of Chief Nanga and his breed. Likewise, in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Beatrice found herself caught up in the middle of the political violence as the likes of Ikem and Chris fight the oppressing government of Kangan. During the time of political violence and ambushes, Beatrice remained level headed and conscious until the very end of it.

Interestingly, in the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe defines society as “an extension of the individual. The most we can hope to do with a problematic individual psyche is to reform it” (Achebe, 1987, p. 94). The possible implication here is that a society is as good or bad as its individuals, and it is the individuals that make up a society. Therefore, women’s roles in the selected novels have been transformed because they are part and parcel of the society. It can thus be further argued that Achebe made a feminist paradigm shift by assigning women to important positions within the society. Women themselves need to be their own agents of change by taking up their rightful positions in the society. This portraiture may lead to the entire global society acknowledging the new role of women, hence having an impact in the political system. Therefore, Achebe’s new portrayal of women in power and

politics in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) can be viewed as a way of attempting to transform the society.

Through Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), women in power have represented themselves well, as she manages to transform the mind-sets of chauvinistic men such as the likes of Ikem as he began to view women differently and acknowledging women's role in political thinking. The following quotation confirms the aforesaid argument. "I have come to thank you for the greatest present one human being can give another. The gift of insight. Into the world of women" (Achebe, 1987, p. 91). Ikem acknowledges the fact that his view regarding women has changed, he now sees women as politically conscious and capable of carrying out any task.

To further expound to the first objective of this study, which is how women in power and politics are portrayed in the two selected novels; women in power and politics are depicted as rational, matured and sensible. At the previously mentioned dinner party, Beatrice has realised that the political instability that is on-going appears to be rather serious as the situation only seems to be deteriorating. Beatrice in her effort as a matured and sensible woman tries to talk sense into Chris to make peace with Ikem his long-life friend as things do not look good for them. "What I heard and saw last night frightened me. Ikem was being tried there in absentia and convicted. You have to save him, Chris" (Achebe, 1987, p. 112). The three old friends, Sam who is now the Head of State, Ikem the Editor of National Gazzete and Chris, Beatrice's boyfriend, the Commissioner of Information are about to go at loggerheads with each other and Beatrice's intervention can be a mere act of homicide prevention. "Well, you fellows, all three of you, are incredibly conceited. The story of this country, as far as you are concerned is the story of the three of you" (Achebe, 1987, p. 62). Beatrice is therefore very observant as she has skilfully studied the three men and analysed that they are all self-conceited and very much alike that it would be impossible for either one of them to accept

being ruled by the other. This portrayal also gives women an opportunity to take part in serious discussions such as state reconciliation, which is the central point of Stiwanism Theory, the social inclusion of women in Africa. Adding to the above argument, “Ikem, I think Chris is right. You’ve got to lie low for this next couple of weeks, so we plan our next move properly” (Achebe, 1987, p. 142). This quote is stated by Beatrice, a woman who was present at a political gathering where they have gathered to find solutions to the present socio-political oppression. At the time, Ikem just got fired, meanwhile Chris tries to resign but his resignation was turned down by the Head of State. In this case it is a woman, Beatrice, who is caught up between the three men as they fight for power among other things.

Eunice’s character in *A Man of the People* (1966), is to a certain extent similar to that of Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). When Ikem is brutally killed by the security officers of the corrupt oppressive government, Elewa, Ikem’s girlfriend becomes devastated and Beatrice decides to look after her for few days. It is necessary to have a look at the following quote: “The only thing we fit do now is to be strong so that when the fight come we fit fight am proper” (Achebe, 1987, p. 167). These are words of advice from Beatrice to Elewa who is in a bewilderment and panic mood after just hearing the news of Ikem’s death. This insight proves that Beatrice is not naive and knows very well that the worse is still to come, that Ikem’s death is just a tip of the ice. It is therefore clear that Achebe portrays women as not being naive but conscious about what is going on. Beatrice’s insight here cautions Elewa that it was not the right time to cry but rather to be cautious, vigilant and prepare for the next attack. Beatrice’s political experience and exposure positions her to be realistic and vigilant about the political violence that has just erupted. Achebe therefore depicts women caught up in the middle of a political violence which results into the brutal murder of Ikem, for he was a political commentator. Beatrice found herself taking care of the devastated Elewa and Chris who is now a fugitive as he is wanted by the corrupt government

for allegations of instigating the demonstrations by the Bazon farmers with Ikem. The above incidents indicate that it is a difficult time for everyone, Elewa, Chris and Beatrice. However, Beatrice on the other hand remained strong, cautious and level headed for the sake of everyone. It can thus be argued that Achebe has positioned Beatrice in a predicament situation. Beatrice, despite the on-going violence has to go on with her normal routines of going to work and doing shopping in order to avoid any suspicion as the search for Chris was on-going.

Rebelliousness is also one of the strong characteristics portrayed by women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Achebe has depicted women in politics as rebellious through the character Beatrice who is portrayed as a strong and rebellious woman. During the time when Chris was in hiding, Beatrice refused to say farewell to him just casually. She decided to say her goodbyes to Chris properly despite how dangerous this proved to be. From the onset Beatrice decided to put up a fight and not abandon Chris during this hazardous time. This already shows her rebelliousness as she did not even fear for her own life. “And so she rebelled with a desperate resolve grounded on a powerful premonition that Chris and she had tonight come a crossroads beyond which a new day would break. I shall stay here till morning, she pronounced” (Achebe, 1987, p. 188).

In the same vein, Beatrice’s boldness and rebelliousness is commendable. As previously discussed (in chapter 2), Beatrice decided to hold a naming ceremony in her flat for Elewa and late Ikem’s baby girl. This act of a woman holding a naming ceremony goes beyond the act of rebelliousness because of the tradition which does not allow a woman to name a child. Therefore, Beatrice’s act of rebelliousness and courageousness represents women empowerment and social transformation of women’s role in the society. Achebe uses a woman like Beatrice who is fearless and intelligent to name the baby which opposes the tradition. This practice has broken the long practised traditional relegation and discrimination

against women. In so doing, Achebe paves a new way for women to take up any role in the society and accord them an opportunity to challenge the bias tradition. The following incident demonstrates the above arguments about Beatrice challenging the tradition:

She goes ahead and names Elewa and Ikem's daughter AMAECHINA (May the path never close), Ama for short. In our traditional society, the father named the child. But the man who should have done it is absent. I think our tradition is faulty there. It is really safest to ask the mother what her child is or means or should be called (Achebe, 1987, p. 213).

It is observed that the audience that is present during the naming ceremony tried to criticise the name by saying it is a boy's name thus it does not fit Elewa's child as it is a girl. However, Beatrice clearly explained that it did not matter whether the child is a girl; the name fits well for either. Once again, Beatrice shows her boldness which in a way symbolises women emancipation and empowerment. It also further paves new roles for the modern African women in the society.

The mere fact that Achebe uses a woman to perform the naming ceremony of Elewa's child and on top of that, she gives the girl a boy's name, it speaks volume about Achebe's new role of women in the society. He uses the aforementioned practices to clearly stance his projection regarding the new role of women in the society. This clearly insinuates that women can take up any role they wish to without any restriction. Taking the above arguments and interpretations into consideration, it can thus be argued that Achebe has uplifted the status of women in the society by socially including them in social and political activities which were traditionally known to be carried out by men only.

4.5 Women empowerment through education in *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*

Education as a means of empowerment for women can bring about a positive attitudinal change within the society. Women empowerment is the pivotal part in any society, state or country. It is therefore, crucial for the socio-economics and political progress of any society to empower its women through education (Bhat, 2015). Similarly, it has also been highly argued that education is the greatest equaliser; it is therefore not surprising when Achebe uses education as an aiding tool in the social transformation of women in the society. A close examination can be drawn from the educated women characters depicted in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Achebe has empowered women characters by presenting them as educated, independent and working class who are without doubt contributing to the economic growth of their countries.

In *A Man of the People* (1966), Achebe has portrayed Eunice as an educated woman who is a lawyer by profession. Apart from that, Eunice is also engaged to Max and a co-founder of the Common People's Convention that opposes the corrupt Chief Nanga and his breed. Therefore, through Beatrice, Achebe has portrayed women as educated; knowing their rights and goal-oriented. Eunice's education makes her confident in a realm of political violence and mostly the only woman among men as members of the opposition political party. Eunice is not conceited by her high education; on the contrary her level of education makes her rational and reasonable. This is because, Eunice highly values the unemployed people's contribution and advocates for them to be part of their Common People's Convention party. "And the unemployed, of course, said the young lady with that confidence of a beautiful woman who has brains as well, which I find a little intimidating" (Achebe, 1966, p. 71). As a result, her intelligence and confidence is somehow intimidating the male members in their new found political party.

The given above example speaks volume to the second objective of this study which is how education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in the society. It is clear that Achebe has transformed the role of women in the society by giving them a platform to contribute to the development of the country. Achebe has put Eunice in a powerful and hazardous political position. Eunice is the only woman among men running the new Common People's Convention party that opposes the corrupt Chief Nanga and his breed. This in itself is very dangerous as Chief Nanga's government is corrupt and violent. Not overlooking the fact that Eunice is the only woman among men. Therefore, through Eunice Achebe depicts women in power and politics as educated, courageous, fearless, confidence, beautiful and intelligent. Eunice represents the modern educated women who are strong as opposed to the traditional notion about women who are expected to be weak and inferior to men. In so doing, Achebe yet again has socially transformed women's role in the society, there by seeing them as political actors, strong, independent, courageous, and confidence as they stand shoulder to shoulder next to men in male driven society.

The role of Stiwanism which is the guiding theory of this study above all, is concerned about the contemporary social and political transformation of African women in Africa. As pointed out by Ogundipe-Leslie (2007), African women do not want to compete with men, let alone reverse gender roles. All what African women want is social transformation and to build a harmonious society where both genders have a social responsibility in transforming the livelihood of the entire African society. Achebe therefore, intentionally includes Eunice in the Common People Convention party which opposes the corrupt government. As such, Achebe transforms the social responsibility of women by allowing Eunice's political position help to build a harmonious society. In so doing, Achebe is according equal rights to both genders particularly women who have been relegated to household chores and were not involved in any serious discussion or government formation. Eunice's presence in the CPC represents the

voice of all women, educated and uneducated, as she strongly advocates for the unemployed party members. Eunice represents all women in the fight of overthrowing the corrupt government and transforming the livelihood of the entire society. Achebe therefore has used education as a tool that helps to transform women's role in the society. Education helps women to be in a position to reason better and see things much clearly.

In *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe has also portrayed Beatrice as an educated woman who is quite respectful and has moral principles. Beatrice holds an honours degree in English from London University. "That girl, there sitting meekly called Beatrice took a walloping honours degree in English from London University. She is better at it than either of us" (Achebe, 1987, p. 58). Through Beatrice, Achebe portrays women as highly educated and esteemed in the society. Achebe has purposely presented Beatrice as a woman who is highly educated and mostly brilliant to be the only one who holds a first class honours in English.

Beatrice Okoh is a Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance- the only person in the service, male or female, with a first-class honours in English. And not from a local university but from Queen Mary College, University of London. Our Beatrice beat the English to their game. We're proud of her (Achebe, 1987, p. 70).

Beatrice's CV is found terrific and impressive by many political men including the Head of State. In so doing, Achebe uplifts the social status of women. Beatrice's level of education makes her politically conscious and inquisitive. Therefore, Beatrice's stance on the political affairs of Kangan where *Anthills of the Savannah* is set is crucial in understanding women empowerment through the expansion of the public sphere. The strength of her political and feminist field is lodged in her quality education, exposure, tendency and quest for political participation. Therefore, women in her view should resist being pushed or tempted into accepting subservient or degrading or decorative roles in politics or relationships (Finchinchong, 2006).

In addition to Finchinchong's (2006) argument about Beatrice's feminist field, Beatrice is Chris' girlfriend and they have a sedate relationship. Beatrice as an educated and independent woman in their relationship with Chris is conservative as Chris admits and does things at her pace. "It was not coyness but she had a style and above all a pace that I decided from the very beginning to respect" (Achebe, 1987, p. 59). Chris adds: "Beatrice is a perfect embodiment of my ideal woman, beautiful without being glamorous. Peaceful but very strong. Very, very strong. I love her and will go to whatever pace she dictates" (Achebe, 1987, p. 59). This shows that women in power and politics are not only portrayed as strong, but conservative and dominant.

The above description about Beatrice is worth an interpretation. The mere fact that this admiration comes from a man speaks volume about Achebe's new representation of women. Achebe uses education as a transforming tool for women to become dignified, self-respectful and independent, which in turn earns women respect from their male partners. Chris respects Beatrice's conservativeness and thus it shows that men value women for who they are without having to compare them to their past endeavours. Therefore, Beatrice is an illustration of a modern woman who is in charge of her life. It further shows that Beatrice is a robust woman as Achebe himself through the narrator repeatedly narrated "Peaceful but very strong. Very, very strong" (Achebe, 1987, p. 59).

Taking into consideration Beatrice's level of education one would expect her character to be somewhat a disgrace. Remarkably, Achebe through Beatrice, in his depiction of educated women, paints a positive picture of an educated, respectful, strong, courageous, conservative and non-conceited woman. In the same vein, this portrayal features also in *A Man of the People* (1966) through Eunice whom regardless of her high level of education advocated for uneducated women to be part and parcel of the new formed political opposition party. Thus

the educated women in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) are portrayed as rational and selfless.

Going back to Beatrice and Chris' relationship, a striking point arises when Chris continues to narrate and proudly proclaims Beatrice's personality and their sedate relationship. "Will go at whatever pace she dictates" (Achebe, 1987, p. 59). This quote implies that Beatrice, as a woman, is in control of their love relationship with Chris, indicating that she has more power as a woman than Chris who is a man. This portrayal of a woman dominating the relationship gives a turn-around in Achebe's depiction of women. Although the aim of this study is not to make a comparison of how Achebe has depicted women in his earlier and recent novels, for the progress of this study and to validate the point of Achebe's 'feminist ideological twist' in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), a brief discussion of how men treated their women in Achebe's earlier novels is regarded necessary and therefore provided below.

Achebe's women in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) are doomed as the objects of torture, abandoned, scolded and beaten by their husbands. Women are also expected to endure domestic violence at the hands of their husbands (Rajesh, 2014). One notable abuse of women in *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is when Okonkwo brutally beats his second wife Ekwefi. As a result, Okonkwo's wives silently suffer quite under his forceful and aggressive rule of the household. However, as earlier discussed in this chapter, Achebe has twisted his initial way of portraying women in relationships. For instance, in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Achebe portrays women as the ones calling shots in their relationships, giving women more power than men. Therefore, women like Beatrice resist being pushed or tempted into accepting subservient or degrading or decorative roles in politics or relationships. It therefore shows that Beatrice is indeed empowered, as argued by Nazhath (2015), to empower women means that women are given the power to make their own decisions. In the same vein, the

term empowerment is defined by the World Bank (2001) that it is the process of enabling or authorising an individual to think, take action and control work in an independent way. This depiction of Beatrice being in charge of their love relationship with Chris symbolises women independence. In so doing, once again Achebe accords women more power than men in their relationships. Achebe through Beatrice has depicted women as educated, powerful, independent, conservative and confident in a male-driven society.

The aim of Stiwanism Theory which guided this study can only be reemphasised. Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Eunice in *A Man of the People* (1966) being independent, educated and confident women who have the audacity to stand shoulder to shoulder next to men in male driven societies; they represent the new role of women in the society which is what Stiwanism is concerned about, the contemporary social and political transformation of African women in Africa. Also, Ogundipe-Leslie (2007) points out that African women do not want to compete with men, let alone reverse gender roles. All what African women want is social transformation and to build a harmonious society where both genders have a social responsibility in transforming the livelihood of the entire African society. Achebe has placed both men and women working together and fighting the corrupt government systems in both the selected novels. By including women in social and political affairs in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) implies that Achebe aims to strike for gender balance.

In the same vein, educated women are also portrayed as careful and rational when it comes to decision making. This analysis can be linked to Beatrice and Chris' relationship. Beatrice narrates how she met Chris, during the time Chris was courting her. She explains how she did not easily give in and not because of coyness but she is naturally a wary person. "Being a girl of maybe somewhat above average looks, a good education, a good job you learn quickly enough that you can't open up to every sweet tongue that comes singing at your doorstep"

(Achebe, 1987, p. 83). This depiction clearly shows that educated women are not desperate to be in relationships. They are rational about their decisions which in the end gives them power. Clearly, Beatrice's level of education and exposure makes her an empowered woman who has the ability to make informed decisions.

To further explicate the point of women empowerment through education, Achebe uses Beatrice to challenge the traditional notion about a woman needing a man to complete her, thus she says:

I was determined from the very beginning to put my career first and, if need be, last. The every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinist bullshit I had completely rejected before I knew there was anything like Women's Lib (Achebe, 1987, pp. 83-84).

Beatrice challenges the traditional male chauvinist notion of women needing men to complete them. This act of women retaliation coming from Achebe first as a man and as the author of the book *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) speaks volume about his social transformation of women. It implies that Achebe as a man clearly acknowledges the fact that women do not need men to complete them. As such, women are capable of achieving their goals independently. Thus, Beatrice knows her worth and does not need any man to complete her. She prefers to put her career first. This is a perspective of an educated and empowered woman that is able to make her own informed decisions.

In addition to women empowerment through education, Mr Nanga's children went to expensive private schools run by European 'ladies' and they spoke impeccable English. According to Mantz (as cited in Mariche, 2015), among the 6000 languages in the world, half of the world's population speaks only 10 of them, and English is the most dominant and it is a language of high status which in most cases synonymous to education. The fact that Mr

Nanga's children spoke impeccable English which they have learnt in the private schools run by ladies implies a lot about the women leading those schools. It implies that the ladies themselves running the schools are highly educated and they have put up good education systems in their schools that have attracted the children of the richest and elite people in the country such as Mr Nanga, the Minister of Culture. The European ladies running the expensive schools are upholding the status of the English language, thus in the eyes of the community, these women are successful in their positions as school heads.

The ladies that are portrayed running prestigious expensive private schools represent women in powerful positions in this instance. Achebe once again intentionally assigns women characters to these prominent positions such as running prestigious schools, transforming the livelihood of the children and adults in the society, by providing them with quality education and possibly creating job opportunities. Achebe might have done this intentionally to show that women can be successful in whatever field they find themselves in and they are equally capable as men if not better.

In the same vein, Barrister Mrs Akilo in *A Man of the People* (1966) owns a law firm with her husband as they practice law jointly. "Yes, my husband and I practice jointly. 'Oh he is a lawyer too?' I asked. 'Yes, we own a firm of solicitors'" (Achebe, 1966, p. 43). As Rajesh (2014) argues that traditionally women are regarded as nothing but house wives, looking after children and tending to their husbands, Achebe on the other hand has shown the social transformation of women for instance through Mrs Akilo and other previous mentioned career women. Through Mrs Akilo, Achebe shows that women are now working next to men and excelling in many critical careers. Instead of Mrs Akilo staying home and looking after her children and husband, she is working side by side with her husband and they both pay the bills which makes her an independent woman. Sharma (2016) argues that women education is

the need of the hour that guarantees empowerment, improves economic position, gives income through employment prospects, and improves self-confidence. It can therefore be said that educating women brings about gender equality and women uplifting for sustainable development; hence it is a prime factor. Achebe therefore has depicted women in powerful positions as contributing to the economy of the country through employment. Mrs Akilo and the husband own a law firm. Apart from fighting for human rights which is the central aim of law as earlier explained, they also help restore dignified lives by employing people.

In addition, it is worth clarifying that the fact that Mrs Akilo practices law together with her husband does not make her dependent on the husband as it may be interpreted. On the contrary, Mrs Akilo represents gender equality between men and women. Through her, Achebe has shown that the same job done by men, women too can fulfil it successfully. The depiction of Mrs Akilo as an African married woman practicing law jointly with her husband coincides with the theory of this study, Stiwanism, which attempts to strike gender balance. She is said to be sophisticated and assured manner, hence through her, Achebe depicts the typical modern educated women.

It is clear that Achebe in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) has portrayed women undertaking delicate and powerful professions such as law, ambassador and political activism. In so doing, Achebe has accorded the women characters their rightful position by allowing them to stand successfully shoulder to shoulder next to men in a male driven society. As pointed out by Ogundipe-Leslie (2007), African women do not want to compete with men, let alone reverse gender roles. All what the African women want and what Achebe has depicted through the women characters in powerful positions such as Eunice, Mrs Akilo, Mrs John and Jean in *A Man of the People* (1966) and Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) just to mention but a few, building a harmonious society where both

genders have a social responsibility in transforming the livelihood of the entire African society. The above mentioned educated career women have undertaken critical careers such as law, which gives them a social responsibility to transform the livelihood of their societies.

To further explicate Mrs Akilo's portrayal in *A Man of the People* (1966), she is depicted as an educated, sophisticated and has assured manners. Mr Nanga offered Mrs Akilo to rather sleep in his wife's bedroom instead of going to expensive hotels. Even Odili the narrator had already concluded she would say yes to the offer and would end up sleeping with Mr Nanga. "Chief Nanga who was barely literate was probably going to sleep with her that night. 'Look Agnes, why don't you use my wife's bedroom instead of wasting money'" (Achebe, 1966, p. 43). Mrs Akilo surprised both Mr Nanga and Odili by turning down the imprudent offer. She opted to go check in at International Hotel. This proves that a woman can be highly educated, but still retains her moral principles. Showing that she respects herself and even more, she respects other women and their territories. The fact that Mrs Akilo is able to pay her own bills liberates her from accepting any ill-intended and indecent offer as opposed to being vulnerable and giving in to Mr Nanga's imprudent offer.

Apart from the above mentioned career women practicing law, Achebe has also depicted another educated woman called Elsie. Elsie is portrayed as a nurse by profession and she attended the same university with Odili, her lover. Elsie works at the hospital in Bori and when a woman earns her own salary and pays her own bills, not only does it liberate and make her independent, but she also shares the same status, expectations and responsibilities as men within the society. In so doing, Elsie inspires other women to disregard the traditional notion of men being the sole provider which in the end makes them weaker and inferior to men. It is without doubt that women who have acquired education helps them transform their role within the modern society. In this case, Elsie being a nurse has a social responsibility of

treating and caring for the patients. Therefore through Elsie, Achebe has assigned women to important roles such as being a nurse.

4.6 Chapter summary

Chapter 4 explained how women in power and politics are portrayed by *Achebe in Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *A Man of the People* (1966). Achebe has depicted women as politically conscious, rebellious, highly educated, businesswomen, intelligent and courageous. Eunice in *A Man of the People* (1966) is portrayed as a lawyer by profession, political activist and fearless woman as she starts up an opposition political party together with her fiancé Max. Eunice's fearlessness has startled everyone as she is able to remain calm during a political violence and fiasco. When Max is killed, she first retaliates and ambushes Max's murderer and only then she weeps like a woman. In the same vein, Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) is portrayed as a highly educated woman who holds a first class degree from London University and she is admired by men for her amazing level of education, political interest, intelligence, and independence. Apart from that, Beatrice is a rebellious woman who challenged male chauvinist and she goes against the tradition which does not allow a woman to name a child. Beatrice named Elewa and Ikem's child Amaechina, a name that is regarded as a boy's name. In so doing, Beatrice shows the entire society that women should not be undermined and have pre-determined roles. Women are free to be who they want to be and carry out any role in the society. Beatrice therefore advocates for women and men to share equal responsibilities within the society, which is the central point of Stiwanism Theory which guided this study.

The chapter also analysed scenarios where women were involved in politics and public spheres such as various the political gatherings attended by different women of different political level and meaningfully contributing to political conversations. For example, in *A*

Man of the People (1966), the women ambassadors and Mrs John a very successful influential woman, they were on several occasions at political gatherings such as the book exhibition opened by Chief Nanga, the Minister of Culture. Through Mrs John women are portrayed as goal oriented and resilient as she is said to have started off as a poor orphan and succeed to being an influential business woman running a clothing empire. Furthermore, Chapter 4 also looked at the motivating factors for women to take up powerful positions which in most cases various interpretations were given. For example, it was interpreted that women took up powerful and dangerous positions in both the two novels because of their interest in politics and their duty which obliged them to fight corruption and for their democratic rights as both novels are set in countries ruled by oppressive and corrupt governments. Women are also portrayed as strong and having high interest in politics which is expounded to their level of education and exposure to the rest of the world. Therefore, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) portray women as fearless and dominating in male driven societies.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore Achebe's 'feminist ideological turn' by analysing how women in power and politics are portrayed in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). The study also aimed to investigate how education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in the society. Further, the study aimed to analyse the background information of the women depicted in power and politics in order to determine the motivating factors for them to take up powerful positions within the society. This study employed content analysis research method to categorise and classify data accordingly. The study also used the Stiwanism as the guiding theory to analyse how women characters are socially transformed in the novels, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). This study was carried out from a qualitative approach point of view. The qualitative research approach was considered the most appropriate for this study since it made the research as efficient as possible by yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure. As such, the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding on how women are portrayed in power and politics in the selected novels. The population of the study was textual materials; particularly all seven novels written by Chinua Achebe. The novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) were purposively selected as the sample for this study for the reason that they have a preselected relevant criteria to the study.

This chapter, therefore, provides summative conclusions concerning the major findings of the study as presented in chapter 4. This chapter further offers recommendations that are relevant to the field of literature pertaining to the positive portrayal of women in literary texts.

5.2 Summary of the major study findings as related to the research objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

- Analyse how women in power and politics are portrayed in *A Man of People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*,
- Analyse how education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in the society as portrayed in the two selected novels, and
- Examine the motivating factors for women to take up powerful and political positions as depicted in the two selected novels.

5.2.1 The portrayal of women in power and politics in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987)

The study revealed that Achebe has portrayed women in power and politics in the two novels, *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), as highly educated, strong, fearless, rebellious, intelligent, political activists, conservative, respectful, having successful careers, persistent, not conceited, selfless, dominant, intimidating, business women running clothing empires, head masters of prestigious private schools, members of statutory boards, and dominant in love relationships.

The study also found that women in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) have been socially transformed by participating in public and political affairs, which coincides with the role of Stiwanism as the guiding theory of this study which above all, is concerned about the contemporary social and political transformation of African women in Africa. In addition, the study revealed that women characters in the two novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) share equal responsibilities with men in the society particularly their involvement in politics. As pointed out by Ogundipe-Leslie

(2007), African women do not want to compete with men, let alone reverse gender roles. All what African women want is social transformation and to build a harmonious society where both genders have a social responsibility in transforming the livelihood of the entire African society. Achebe therefore, has purposively included women in different public spheres and political activism by opposing corrupt and oppressive governments within the two novels. As such, Achebe has transformed the social responsibility of women by allowing women in the two novels help to build harmonious societies where the two novels are set, particularly Eunice's political position in *A Man of the People* (1966), (see section 4.3.1.1). Thus, the study shows that Achebe has made a feminist paradigm shift by according equal rights to both genders particularly women who in his earlier novels have been relegated to household chores and were not involved in any serious discussion or any government formation. As a result, the study concludes that the modern African women have new roles within the society as relative to the traditional roles of women. One of the most astounding findings of the study is that women, just like men, have independent rights and they can successfully take up any role within the society not on the basis of gender prejudice.

The study also revealed that Achebe has used empowerment as a tool to socially transform women. As discussed in the previous chapters, empowerment is the process of enabling or authorising individual to think, take action and control work in an independent way, thus it connotes power. Hence, the study revealed that women in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) are socially, politically, economically and culturally empowered as they have participated in social discussions, political gatherings and cultural practices. In the light of the foregoing, women are also portrayed as influential people with access to opportunities as well as resources, and they are part of decision making boards.

The two novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) reveal how the role of women has changed from private to public spheres. Women are depicted as

successful career women and politically conscious. One of the significant findings of this study is the involvement of women in revolution. In *A Man of the People* (1966), through Eunice, the study revealed a striking representation of modern African women involved in political activism. Women have initiated and are the forefront of an official opposition political party which aims to overthrow the corrupt government. Hence, the study found that women in power and politics in the two selected novels are politically conscious and they are their own agents of change in transforming the society.

Lastly, the study also found that women in power and politics are culturally conscious and rebellious as they boldly challenge the traditional practices that discriminate against women. In *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) Achebe has twisted the role of women in the society by allowing Beatrice to perform a naming ceremony, something which was solely done by men. Women are therefore portrayed as politically conscious and rebellious. Women have challenged the long practiced tradition to the extent of naming a baby girl a name which is traditionally classified as a boy's name. Taken together, the results of this study indicate that women in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *A Man of the People* (1966) have been socially transformed by including them in different social, economic and political affairs. The study indicates that women in power and politics are portrayed as educated, intelligent, courageous, rebellious, successful business women, respectful, having successful careers, persistent, and dominant in love relationships, just to mention but a few.

5.2.2 Education as a tool to transform the role of women in the society as portrayed in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987)

As discussed in the literature review, education is a powerful aspect in transforming women and a society, and the only institution which gives women equal status, equal rights and equal opportunities (Nazhath, 2015). The findings of the study revealed that Achebe in his two selected novels used education as a tool to transform the role of women in the society by

assigning educated women to important roles within the society in the two selected novels. For instance, Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) is portrayed as a highly educated woman who has acquired a first class honours degree in English. The study found out that through Beatrice, women's role in the society transformed as she is fully aware of her rights and goal-oriented. This is incidence throughout the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), where Beatrice has stood her grounds and not let anyone push her around, not even her boyfriend Chris. Thus, through Beatrice women are portrayed as empowered because she is able to make her own choices. She is depicted as conservative and dictates the pace of their love relationship with Chris (see section 4.3).

Again, through Beatrice the study found out that education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in the society as Beatrice is highly involved in the political affairs of Kangan where the story is set. The strength of her political and feminist field is lodged in her quality education, exposure, tendency and quest for political participation (see section 4.5).

Another finding of the study is that education is used as a tool to transform the role of women in the society which accorded women an opportunity to not only question but also challenge the political systems of corrupt governments where the two novels are set. For instance, this is evident through Eunice in *A Man of the People* (1966). Eunice is a young educated lawyer who represents the new role of women in the society. As discussed earlier, Dominic (2011) argues that education plays an important role in developing the personality of a human completely not only capable of resisting war, violence, injustice and oppression, but building a society where human can live in harmony among each other. The study thus found out that Eunice's level of education drives her political interest. Through Eunice, the study revealed that educated women are fearless and at the forefront of revolutionary act. The study further revealed that, Eunice's education makes her confident in a realm of political violence and

mostly the only woman among men as members of the opposition political party. To categorically state this point clearly, the study found out that education is a powerful tool that Achebe used to transform women's roles in the society. As such, educated women are able to make informed decisions and fight for human rights. The study also provides a clear finding that Achebe has transformed the role of women in the society by giving them a platform to contribute to the development of the country because education helps women to be in a position to reason better and see things much clearly (see section 4.5).

Another finding of the study is that, through education, women are empowered and given new roles in the society to challenge the patriarchal ideology and advocate for the feminist paradigm shift. This is done through Beatrice who challenges the traditional notion about a woman needing a man to complete her (see section 4.5).

In addition, the study revealed that through education women also have other prominent roles in the society such as being career women who are in charge of their finances, working next to men and excelling in many critical careers. Moreover, the study indicated that education has given women new roles in the society such as running prestigious institutions, creating employment opportunities, transforming the livelihood of children and adults in the society and immensely contributing to the economy of the country (see section 4.5).

In conclusion, through the depiction of women in the two selected novels, the study found out that education has not only availed opportunities for women to transform their status, but they themselves are their own representatives of their own transformation in their lives, marking their worth and stance in the public sphere (see sections 2.3.3 and 4.3.1.2).

5.2.3 The motivating factors for women to take up powerful and political positions as depicted in *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987)

The findings of the study revealed various motivating factors of women to take up powerful and hazardous positions in the two novels such as the level of education, exposure, career obligation, urge to persevere and the upbringing contextual. The study also found out that the motivating factors of women to take up powerful positions in the two novels are grounded on their background knowledge. The study therefore interpreted that some women might have taken up powerful and hazardous positions in both novels because of their career obligations. For instance lawyers help to create a setting in which democracy can flourish and in whole to improve the society. It is further argued that lawyers have a role in changing and safeguarding democratic society or democratic governmental structures (Zacharias, 2009). As such, the study discovered that women in the profession of law like Eunice are compelled to fight for justice and they also play important roles in promoting human rights.

The study also discovered that women's exposure and level of education is also one of the motivating factors of women to take up powerful positions in the two novels. For example in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Beatrice's high interest in politics is lodged into her level of education and exposure. Beatrice is therefore a representation of educated modern African women who are socially and politically conscious.

In addition, Poverty is also one of the motivating factors that the study revealed for women to take up powerful positions in the society. This is particularly pertaining to the novel *A Man of the People* (1966), where Mrs John, is an influential business woman who owns a clothing empire and she also serves in a ministerial board. Mrs John, despite being an orphan without any educational background, has managed to pull through the odds. She has taken up her rightful position within the society as a successful business woman. The study therefore interpreted that her perseverance, persistence and high interest in politics can be lodged into her childhood background. Growing up as an orphan and being poor, could have given her the motive to stand up for her own rights and that of other women.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

The study confirms that literature is essential in rearranging political processes and there is a direct relationship between literature and social institutions. Therefore, the social steadiness and turbulence of the time is reflected in the writings of the stint. As such, there seems to be vast amount of literature pertaining to the negative representation of women in literary texts, which as a result gave birth to different branches of feminisms including Stiwanism Theory which guided this study.

However, the study at hand particularly makes several worthy contributions to the field of literature pertaining to the positive portrayal of women in literary texts. And on the basis of the findings of this study which are presented in chapter 4 and summarised in this chapter, the researcher recommends that:

- for future studies there might be a need to consider using Critical Discourse Analysis as a theory for analysing the portrayal of women in the same novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987),
- further studies may also be carried out using Stiwanism as a guiding theory for the analysis of the depiction of women in power and politics in other literary texts.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter provided summative conclusions of the research findings pertinent to the research objectives which informed this study. The chapter also offered recommendations for future research pertaining to the positive representation of women in literary texts.

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