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The thesis entitled **Resisting Hegemonic Gender Relations in Buchi Emecheta's Select Novels** proposes to analyse the indomitable spirit of women characters who resist subjugation and emerge empowered. The novels taken for study are *The Bride Price* (1976), *The Slave Girl* (1977), *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), *Double Yoke* (1982), *The Rape of Shavi* (1983), *Gwendolen* (1989) and *Kehinde* (1994). The objective of the research is to prove Buchi Emecheta's primary aim is to fight for women emancipation from the hegemonic gender roles ascertained by society and to provide solution for women's liberation.

Chapter I – The introduction states the significance and objective of the research. Buchi Emecheta is one among the prominent women novelists in Nigerian literature. The chapter provides a brief outline of the Buchi Emecheta's life and works. A brief analysis of the status of Nigerian women in the Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-colonial times has been discussed. Buchi Emecheta's novels are semi-autobiographical which clearly portray the sufferings of women. She firmly asserts that women are victimized by the patriarchal force which negates the necessary rights due to women. The women fight and challenge against the collective prejudice, gender bias and misogyny imposed on them. The research establishes Buchi Emecheta as a writer committed towards women emancipation as her themes are women centric.

Chapter II entitled **Gender Bias and Cultural Constraints in *The Bride Price*** focuses on the life of the protagonist Akunna, the darling daughter of Ezekiel. Her life is exploited by external force like superstitious beliefs, patriarchal domination and traditional norms that prevails. Interference of patriarchal supremacy victimizes the protagonist which ultimately leads her to a fatal end. Akunna has been ingrained with the traditional gender

roles which she adheres until the end. Women are subjugated by certain cultural beliefs reinstated through mythology which supports the patriarchal forces. The novelist presents how these superstitious elements entangles and enslaves women in real life situation.

Chapter III entitled **Dehumanization and Displacement in *The Slave Girl*** explores the life of an orphaned girl Ogbanje Ojebeta, for whom her father Okwuekwu fetches charms to retain her worldly life. Ironically all the efforts of her father turn vain as she is sold as a slave purely for selfish reasons by her own brother after the death of her parents. The only consoling thing that Ojebeta receives in her slave life is education from her owner Ma Palagada. Education provides Ojebeta courage and helps her to take a firm decision in the most excruciating time. Ojebeta has continuous miscarriages which remind her traditional norms that unless the bride price that Ma Palagada has paid for her is returned she could not lead a happy life. Jacob, her husband reimburses the money to Ma Palagada's son Clifford. At the end Emecheta declares that women are bound to change masters but they remain slaves to their cultural beliefs.

Chapter IV entitled **Expectation Versus Reality in *The Joy of Motherhood*** highlights the life of Nnu Ego. Though born prosperous, she undergoes countless sufferings after her marriage. Her first marriage fails as she remains barren and later she marries Nnaife. She yearns for children; she attempts suicide when her first child died. Her prayers are answered she is gifted by her Chi with lots of children. Ultimately all that she receives from her children is indifference as they were concerned about their self improvement. She meets her end on the roadside, none beside her during her death. Buchi Emecheta states that motherhood the sensitive phase of womanhood has constrained her to be submissive to all suffering as her love for her children strengthens the patriarchal forces which oppress women.

Chapter V entitled **Resisting and Rebellious Patriarchy in *Double Yoke***

presents the predicament of the protagonist Nko, who overcomes adversity successfully. The novel opens up during the postcolonial period when newly established universities emerged. In spite of modernity, patriarchy exist, suffering of women remains unchanged. The exploitation of girl students in educational institution is the prime focus of the story. The story is narrated by the protagonist and her lover Ete so the narrative shifts from the past to the present. Nko, the protagonist has been raped by her Professor who cunningly utilizes her victimized state, threatens her to accept his desires but she manages to employ his weakness in her favour and cleverly intimidates him. Emecheta asserts that education would instill the necessary courage in women to break the shackle of patriarchy in future.

Chapter VI entitled **Self-Assertion of Women in *The Rape of Shavi*** records the

spirit of the Queen mother Shoshovi who resurrects the mighty kingdom after a downfall. The tribal Shavians reside in a remote place without the hindrance of modern society. Suddenly due to plane crash a group of white people accidently land in their place. The tribal group showers their hospitality, but when Asogba visited the white country he was ill-treated. Being fascinated by their technological equipments, the young prince Asogba likes to extend his tribal country. The result is the total destruction of their country. The Queen mother Shoshovi guides the youngsters and regains their country from sabotage. Emecheta upholds the value of ancestral history through the Queen mother. The younger generation in haste make decision and thereby witness destruction of their kingdom. The novelist highlights the responsibility of elderly persons who teach worldly doctrine to the youngsters and makes them to understand the basis of social equality to protect their profound history.

Chapter VII entitled **Struggle against Injustice in *Gwendolen*** narrates the life of Gwendolen, the young Jamaican girl who has been sexually harassed by the family friend, Uncle Johnny. Her prayers were answered and Gwendolen goes to live with her parents with much expectation in London. Contrary to her expectation, she is astounded when her own father indulges in incest with her. She is disowned by the family when she is found pregnant but she is unable to reveal that she is carrying her father's child. Gwendolen has no proper education, but somehow manages to overcome her psychological trauma and starts a new life on her own. At the end, Gwendolen stands firm in her decision to take care of her newborn child 'Iyamide' without depending on anyone. The novel ends with a positive note that suffering has taught Gwendolen to understand her self-worth.

Chapter VIII entitled **Retribution of a Revolutionary in *Kehinde*** describes the life of Kehinde. After completing her studies she marries her lover Albert and settles in London. Kehinde being educated her thoughts are modern but she remains a traditional wife. Though educated, Albert is unable to accept the liberty given to women. Albert leaves for Nigeria with the children. Kehinde resigns her job without the consent of Albert and reaches their native. She finds Albert married and his new wife Rike is a Professor in the local University. Kehinde is unable to tolerate Albert's betrayal. Kehinde returns to London and secures a government job. When Albert sends her son Joshua to claim her property, she simply rejects him. Kehinde has been reborn with a new insight thus proves to be a revolutionary woman.

Chapter IX – The Summation discusses patriarchy and subjugation of women in society. Buchi Emecheta's believes that her responsibility as a novelist is to throw light on the repressive state of women of all ages. Her primary intention is to give voice to the

defenselessness marginalized women, who are dominated by hegemonic power structure ingrained in the cultural milieu. She proves herself as a writer with a distinctive concern towards women related issues. Gender bias is the major theme discussed and the prerogative of her novels is to promote women to liberate themselves from the unwarranted practices in society; to self-assert their potentials and emerge empowered as independent women with self-worth. Relentless quest for identity, indomitable spirit of resilience, persistent assertion of self-esteem are the major characteristics of the women characters. Buchi Emecheta through her novels stimulates the young readers to understand the plight of women through the ages to realize their potentials and to claim equality in the social and domestic sphere.