CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preliminaries

The purpose of the present research is to study the novels of Chinua Achebe by applying the principles of Sociolinguistics. Since, Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to the society; the novels are examined against the backdrop of the socio-cultural context existing at the times when the novels of Chinua Achebe were being written. This chapter serves as the general introduction to the thesis as a whole. In the beginning of this chapter, an effort is made to state the aims and objectives of the research study. It also justifies the rationale and significance of the study, scope and limitations and selection of the author and his novels. Then, the chapter throws light on life and works of Chinua Achebe. It discusses in detail the novelist’s philosophy of life, the nature of the society in which he lived and his contribution to English literature and language.

It is necessary to understand the social networks in order to understand the language. The study of Sociolinguistics is the study of effects of all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations and the context in the way language is used. In view of this, an attempt is made to explore and various socio-cultural factors in Chinua Achebe’s novels. His novels can be best understood against the existing socio-cultural and socio-political background.
1.2 Aims and Objectives

1) To examine and analyze the aspects of Sociolinguistics in the novels of Chinua Achebe.

2) To investigate the effects of social and regional dialects in the novels of Chinua Achebe.

3) To critically analyze the main characters against the socio-cultural background and socio-political background.

4) To examine and highlight the use of language in general and the bilingualism in particular.

5) To study the use of Pidgin words in the African context.

6) To study the Code mixing and Code switching strategies used by the characters in the novels.

7) To explicate the address terms, the terms of greetings, kinship terms, blessings, abuses or curses and honorific terms, initialism and acronyms in the African context.

8) To throw light on the nature of language contact with the help of the conversations of the characters.

9) To understand the sufferings of the oppressed class with the help of
the language use.

10) To discover the cultural conflict through the use of language of the characters.

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

The present study is an attempt to apply the sociolinguistic approach to the novels of Chinua Achebe. Sociolinguistics is one of the approaches which analyses and interprets literature. It is an effective tool to reveal the social nature of the characters. As, social changes incessantly take place in society, literature is bound to mirror it. Literature is, like all its forms, a social creation; it studies the social system in which it is produced. Therefore, an effort is made to study the novels taking in to account the language used by the characters.

This study is also an attempt to add a new association to the chain of research work done on sociolinguistic approach in general and dialects in particular. Generally, a dialect is linked with a specific geographical region. However, social class within the geographical region also has its own dialect. In fact, this social dialect presents another important type of language. A dialect of a language has certain associations with an individual and social class. One comes across the typical styles of characters in the novels of Chinua Achebe, which are worth studying from the point of Sociolinguistics.

The sociolinguistic approach boosts the pleasure of reading the novels by encouraging reading to focus on the unseen bits and pieces. Achebe makes
linguistic experiment against the backdrop of the social reality that existed in his time.

The contextual information is observed and the evidences presented in the novels are set in the structural design. The linguistic expressions used by the characters of Achebe are interesting and appealing. Therefore, the linguistic utterances of the characters are worth studying from the sociolinguistic point of view. Moreover, they make the readers aware of the socio-cultural aspects of the life reflected in the novels and enhance their ability to understand, interpret and admire the fictional work in general and novels in particular.

Use of typical utterances or linguistic expressions in the novels of Chinua Achebe are worth studying from the point of view of Sociolinguistics. Since most of the characters belong to rustic background, they are bound to use a certain kind of language, abusive terms, unusual spellings, terms of greetings, Pidgin English, Code mixing, Code switching and mispronunciation which can be examined from the socio-cultural point of view. The writer uses typical African English with dialectical variation. It has a certain relation with an individual and social class.

It is emphasized categorically that pleasure of reading a novel is increased by the sociolinguistic approach. The reason for this is: different layers of meanings are revealed by this approach. It is observed that a linguistic experiment against the backdrop of the social reality seems to have been made by Chinua Achebe. The language used by the characters of Chinua Achebe is highly remarkable and engaging. It is, therefore, thought that the sociolinguistic approach is a vital tool to explore several dimensions of the utterances of the characters in a given context.
Achebe’s fiction deals with the socio-cultural and socio-political problems of the developing nation. His inventive uneasiness of the African reality in the novels merits an in-depth consideration. His writing career has carved out a permanent niche in the literary world. His writings are marked by his fine perception of the African beliefs, the evil forces that operate in African society, his benevolent outlook and profound sympathy for the downtrodden and the underprivileged.

Achebe’s literary structure in the English speaking world is evident in not only the critical attention he has attracted but also in the popularity of his works among Africans as well as non-Africans all over the world. Achebe’s novels are, thus, faithful records of and serious comments on the contemporary social reality. Hence, it is thought that the rationale and significance of the research study is to fill the gap and provide an appropriate situation for understanding the world famous novels of Chinua Achebe from sociolinguistic point of view.

1.4 Scope and Limitations

As far as sociolinguistic interpretation is concerned, there is a tremendous scope to interpret the novels of Achebe. His novels are primarily directed to African readers, but their psychological visions have gained them universal acceptance.

It is also found that Achebe’s novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effects of Christian impact, and the clash of values during and after the colonial period. His style depends on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines free narration with depictions of folk stories, proverbs and speech-making. He has also published a number of short stories, children’s
books, poems and essay collections. His novels are exceptional for the study with linguistic experiment; they are complete with examples of code mixing and code switching and other linguistic items. The characters in the novels belong to varied linguistic background. They also come under the influence of different factors such as education, age, ethnicity, social context and gender. Therefore, the language variation is bound to take place such as borrowing of words, phrases, slang expressions, use of Pidgin English, code mixing and code switching. The style of Achebe’s fiction possesses oral tradition of the Igbo people. He links folk tales into the material of his stories. Consequently, they highlight community values in both the content and the form of the storytelling. The tale about the “Earth and Sky” in Things Fall Apart, for example, emphasizes the interdependency of the masculine and the feminine genders. Although Nwoye enjoys hearing his mother tell the tale, Okonkwo’s dislike for it is the evidence of his imbalance. Later, Nwoye avoids beating from his father by pretending to dislike such “women’s stories”.

Another hallmark of Achebe’s style is the use of proverbs, which often illustrates the values of the rural Igbo tradition. He sprinkles them throughout the narratives, repeating points made in conversation. A well-known critic Anjali Gera (2001: 31) notes:

“Through proverbs Achebe is able to acquaint his non Igbo reader with the milieu and value system within which his novels operate”.

The use of proverbs in Arrow of God serves to create an effect through an echo on the judgment of an individual and community. The use of such repetition in Achebe’s urban novels, No Longer at Ease and A Man of the People, is less pronounced.
For Achebe, however, proverbs and folk stories are not the sum total of the oral Igbo tradition. In combining philosophical thought and public performance into the use of oratory (“Okwu Oka” – “speech artistry” – in the Igbo phrase), his characters exhibit what he called “a matter of individual excellence” part of Igbo culture. John F. Povey (1970: 02) is full of praise for Achebe when he writes:

“Undoubtedly, the most skillful and perhaps the most successful African novelist is Achebe . . . . Achebe’s writing has the solidarity and of the best of English novels in both structure and seriousness”. 02

Proverbs are commonly used in everyday speech; Achebe gives several examples of how he alters the English translation of a proverb to better fit it into the context. The proverbs give a vivid picture of how the Igbo people experience the world around them. Achebe uses proverbs in different instances such as animal instances, family instances, homestead instances, people in general and spirits.

In Things Fall Apart, Okonkwo’s friend Obierika voices the most impassioned oratory, crystallizing the events and their significance for the village. Nwaka in Arrow of God also exhibits a mastery of oratory, although for malicious ends. Therefore, the above examples and the opinions of the critics of these novels provide a large scope for research.

Achebe has a variety of literary works to his credit such as novels, short stories, essays, poems, children’s books and other miscellaneous writings. The present study is mainly confined to the five novels of Chinua Achebe:
1. Things Fall Apart (1958)
2. No Longer at Ease (1960)
3. *Arrow of God* (1964)
4. *A Man of the People* (1966)

The study is limited to the dialects used in the novels under consideration. Embarking on a scientific inquiry necessary for a research study, the researcher gets on methodological description of the chosen topic, presents clinically concrete evidence and sensibly enunciates scholarly conclusion with the help of language. Therefore, a sociolinguistic approach to the novels leads from a linguistic background to richer appreciation of the actual working of the novels.

1.5 Selection of the Author and his Novels

The selection of the author and his novels is made on the basis of influencing factors that are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

Chinua Achebe is a world famous Nigerian writer. His writings are based on themes like corruption, power struggle and free love. Themes of his work arise naturally from an interaction of all the other elements of the work, character, setting, conflict, atmosphere, imagery, symbolism and even the narrative perspective. David Carroll (1980:26) states:

‘Achebe’s novels deal primarily with one group of people in one part of Africa from pre-colonial days to the present’. 03

Growing up in the Igbo town of Ogidi, Achebe spoke Igbo at home and studied English in school. He absorbed the dual culture in his early life. In an autobiographical essay, he describes his childhood as being "at the crossroads of cultures."
Achebe's novels give an air of historical authenticity to his use of the English language. He has developed not one prose style but several, and in each novel he is careful to select the style that best suits his subject. For example, a Westernized African character never speaks exactly like a European character nor does he speak like an illiterate village elder. Achebe, a gifted ventriloquist, is able to individualize his characters by differentiating their speech.

In the course of a distinguished academic and literary career, much of it in exile, Achebe had been the recipient of many awards, beginning with the Margaret Wrong Memorial Prize in 1959 for his novel Things Fall Apart (1958) and including more than thirty Honorary Doctorates. Achebe had been in great demand throughout the world as a speaker and visiting lecturer during his lifetime. An attempt, therefore, is made to justify the selection of the author and his novels by taking a brief review of the novels along with opinions of some critics. An effort is also made to discuss the social and political background of the author.

Achebe uses the English of literary forms skillfully in his novels, to make the story easy to get to the Westerners. He interweaves the narrative with Igbo proverbs and folktales.

The novel, Things Fall Apart,(1958) challenges Western concepts of historical truth, and expects readers into questioning the perception of pre-colonial and colonial Africa. More than half the novel is devoted to the depiction of Igbo culture, artfully drawn as it has followed the rise to status of the hero to community leadership. As a champion wrestler and a great warrior, Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel is a natural leader. His
flaw, however, is that he never questions the received wisdom of his ancestors. For this reason, he is not drawn in a flattering light, but his culture is given a full and fair representation. There is no culture shock in discovering that Okonkwo's father has low status because of his laziness and extravagance. He would rather play his flute than repay his debts. It follows, then, that land, a full barn, expensive titles, and many wives confer status. The protagonist is ambitious. Indeed, one of his flaws is his fear of failure of becoming like his father.

The second and third parts of the novel touch the unavoidable advance of Europeans. The first white man to arrive in a nearby village is killed because of an omen, and in retaliation all are crushed by British guns. Christian missionaries seem to be madmen, their message of wicked ways and false gods attracts only the outcastes. But along with Christianity come hospitals and schools, converting farmers to court clerks and teachers. Business stores pay high charges for palm oil.

Government is closely linked to religion and literacy. A District Commissioner covers Queen Victoria's laws. Okonkwo, protector of the ways of his ancestors, unavoidably plays a role of tragic hero. His eldest son's early conversion merely strengthens his belief in a rigid code of manly behavior. In exile during the first years of colonization, he has less understanding of the power of the Europeans than his now-passive kinsmen. In *Things fall Apart*, Achebe depicts the collapse of tribal culture under the pressure of colonization through trade, religion, superior weaponry and administration. The novel is a story of deterioration and fall of the Igbo people of Africa. They had an ancient civilization but it had no strength to survive and tolerate. It is a regional novel, which describes the
life of the Igbo people of Africa. The people fall prey to the religious and political expansion of the white Christian missionaries. The novel describes the destruction of an ancient civilization and social anarchy.

Women characters in this novel are shown secondary in a male-dominated society. The reasonable domain of activity for women is the household which include the kitchen and the cradle. The Igbo man can marry as many virgins as he wishes or pleases and affords. He can have as many children as he desires, may be much against the will of his wife. The region where in the nine villages of the Igbo are situated, does not have any particular language. The novel is not written in Igbo language. As observed in the book of Pandurang Mala (2006:53), women play a significant role in the novels of Achebe:

“In the more traditional Igbo society, Achebe shows women as defined by their roles as wives, mothers, and priestess. With social change and modernity, there is a paradigm shift as women’s socio political roles and latent power emerge in a dynamic way.”

Things Fall Apart is applauded as the finest novel written about life in Nigeria at the end of the nineteenth century. Published in 1958, it is unquestionably the world's most widely read African novel, having sold more than eight million copies in English and having been translated into fifty languages. But it offers far more than an access to pre-colonial Nigeria and the devastating changes brought about by the British. David Carroll (1980:57) rightly remarks in this regard:

“This is how Christianity makes its inroads in the novel, not by a frontal attack, backed by the colonizing forces, but by responding clearly to a need so deeply felt that it has not been clearly
The novel *No Longer at Ease* (1960) is about a civil servant who is involved in the corruption of Lagos. Achebe describes the colonial rule with his usual self-respect and sensitivities. Achebe writes about Obi’s experiences in Lagos to reproduce the challenges facing a new generation on the verge of Nigerian independence. Obi is trapped between the expectations of his family, its clan and larger society. He is crushed by these forces and finds himself imprisoned for bribery.

Achebe shows his capability to represent modern Nigerian life. At the opening of *No Longer at Ease*, it is learnt that the main character, Obi Okonkwo, is on trial for charges of corruption and bribery. The judge and the audience have similar surprise of how such a talented young man could have made bad choices. Obi, whose mother has recently died and whose engagement to Clara has just finished, feels tears spring to his eyes. The novel then goes into contrary in time and tells the story of how Obi ended up in such a horrible situation.

The readers are taken to Obi’s return to Nigeria from England, where he had an education at a British university. Obi sees Clara on the boat back to Nigeria. They flash up a relationship quickly, and by the time Obi has got a job in the civil service, they fall in love. Obi’s return is noticed by trumpet blast; the Umuofia Progressive Union (U.P.U.), which offered him a scholarship more like a loan to go to school, arranges a huge party and welcomes him back as their local hero.

In fact, the expectation is that Obi's repayment of his debt will allow them to send others to school, and his position in the civil government will place the whole region of Umuofia in a position of power within the
government. They feel that through Obi, they may be able to get jobs. This anticipation is seen as a part of helping a member of his stretched family, and accepting bribes is understood to be a necessary evil. But Obi has other plans. He has no wish to play the role of a corrupt civil servant, accepting bribes in order to help others achieve their dreams of getting scholarships or jobs. It is at this point that shows how Obi distinguishes himself from his kinsmen.

Obi begins to pay a monthly sum to the Umuofia Progressive Union to pay back his school loan, and he begins to send his parents a monthly sum of money, as well as pay for his brother's school fees and his mother’s hospital charges when she is sick. In the short period Obi's finances are stretched beyond their capacity. It is partly that Obi lacks in planning well, but it is also partly that, in addition to meeting all the duties to the Union and to his family, he is expected to live a lifestyle suitable to his social status and the government position.

Soon, Obi finds he does not have enough money to continue. First, he buys Clara's engagement ring after she discloses that she is osu and so he will never be able to marry her. (It is forbidden in Igbo culture to marry an osu, since the osu class is dedicated to a particular god.) Obi gives Clara an engagement ring and then assumes that they are engaged. Obi discovers that he needs forty pounds to pay for his car insurance. He does not even realize that there is an annual car insurance fee. Therefore, he goes to get a bank loan of fifty pounds. That night, Clara gets upset because he has not asked for her help.

The next day, however, Clara sends Obi fifty pounds and tells him to go and pay it back to the bank. He does not think perhaps that he can make her take it back, knowing she will insist that he should keep it. Obi does not really want to give back the loan from Clara. The two make up and go
dancing. It turns out that luck is just not with Obi. While they are dancing, somebody enters their unlocked car and steals Clara’s fifty pounds.

Obi owes Clara fifty pounds, and he still owes the bank fifty pounds. To top it off, his mother becomes so ill that she has to go to hospital. Since Obi’s parents live on the money Obi sends them, it is obvious who will be responsible for the hospital bill. In addition, his father has indicated that there is something "serious" he wants to discuss with Obi. Obi realizes that the news of Clara – and her status as osu – has finally reached his parents.

Obi takes a two weeks' leave from his job. The job pays him twenty-five pounds for his leave, and Obi decides to pay for his brother's school fees out of that money, realizing that if he does not pay it now when he has the money, he will not have it in a few months when it is due. At home, Obi's parents disapprove his affair with Clara.

As a result, they oppose him about his engagement to Clara. Though Obi's parents raised him as Christian, and though they avoid many aspects of Igbo culture up to that point, now his father simply insists he cannot marry Clara. He says that though Christians must give up part of their native culture and beliefs when they convert, this is not one of those things – it runs too deep in Igbo culture. In the words of David Carroll (1980:85):

“Obi realizes that although the ramshackle structure of his life has been dismantled he cannot return to its origin. Now more than ever is he no longer at ease here in the old dispensation.”

Obi returns to Lagos in a distressed state of mind. None wants to be responsible for his mother’s suicide. He tells Clara that they must just lay low, but Clara understands that his parents will never accept their
relationship. She breaks up with him. Obi discovers she is pregnant. Therefore, he decides that he has to borrow money to pay for an abortion. When Clara is hospitalized due to an infection from the abortion procedure, he realizes that he has made a mistake. He sends Clara a letter and begs her to come back to him. But it is too late.

Clara returns his letter unopened and leaves Lagos soon after. Then, his mother dies, and Obi sends all the money he can to pay for her funeral, but he stays in Lagos and does not go home for her funeral. C. L. Innes (1990:150) points out:

“Achebe’s second novel contrasts the literary consciousness of its chief protagonist, Obi Okonkwo, with the consciousness formed by oral tradition (both Igbo and Christian) of his parents and the majority of his society. Obi is unable to bridge the gap between these two kinds of consciousness”.

As mentioned above, the character of Obi is unable to fill the breach between these two kinds of perception. Obi sinks into a deep despair after Clara and his mother are gone. He begins to let go of his former opinions.

Apparently, Clara keeps Obi on the straight and narrow all along. Deeply in debt, with no one to keep him steady, and mourning his mother's death, Obi leaves behind all his disdainful principles and begins to accept bribes left and right. But he does maintain a certain impression of principles. He refuses to accept bribes from people who do not have the minimum qualifications to appear before the Scholarship Board. Because he only accepts bribes from people who are going to appear before the Board anyway, he gets a reputation for following through on his bribes. At last, Obi is caught accepting a bribe and found guilty at his trial.
The novel *Arrow of God* (1964) is a comprehensive depiction of Igbo culture. It throws light on the white man’s arrival in Umuaro. *Arrow of God* is Achebe’s first novel on the theme of interpreting the religion in terms of secularism; it attempts a combination of the spiritual with the material values. It explores the intersections of Igbo tradition and European Christianity set in the village of Umuaro in the beginning of the twentieth century. Margaret E. Turner (1990:36) opines:

“*Arrow of God* is the central novel in Achebe’s work as it describes the relationship between religion and social order. The loss of spiritual bearings causes the collapse of both the individual and the social order.” ⁰⁸

The novel depicts the story of Ezeulu, a chief priest of Ulu. He is shocked by the power of British involvement. Therefore, he asks his son to learn the secrets of the foreigners. As a result, Ezeulu is expended by the resulting tragedy. The novel presents the truthful account of the lives of depressed people who suffer poverty and exploitation.

*Arrow of God* is set in rural Nigeria during the 1920s in the southern part of the country where the Igbo people live. The novel begins with a war between two neighboring regions of rural Igbo land: *Umuaro and Okperi*. Umuaro is made up of six villages. These six villages are linked by their worship of a common god, Ulu.

The people of Umuaro start a war with Okperi over the land they want to claim. They are overjoyed to start the war by a wealthy man named Nwaka, who challenges Ulu. This war is launched against the advice of Ulu's chief priest, Ezeulu. The colonial administration steps in to stop the war and rules in favor of Okperi after discussing the matter with Ezeulu, the one man in Umuaro who tells the truth. Captain Winterbottom, a
British colonial official who orders the local station, breaks and burns all the guns in Umuaro, becoming a legend. Meanwhile, the people of Umuaro become angry with Ezeulu because he does not take their side.

Five years later, life in Umuaro has returned to normal state. Some Christian missionaries have made major inroads into society. They create the converts and try to show that the old gods are useless. Ezeulu sends his son Oduche to church and to learn the ways of the white man.

Animosity between Ezeulu and Nwaka and their respective villages reaches to the point called *kill and take the head*. In other words, things get to the point where men in the two villages try to kill each other using poison. Nwaka is equipped and strengthened by his relationship with Ezidemili, the high priest of the god, Idemili. Though Idemili is a lesser god in comparison to Ulu, the competition between the two priests is dividing Umuaro, creating doubt and ill will among brothers. But the competition is not limited within the Igbo religion. The missionaries call the Christian Igbo, including Oduche, to kill the sacred python. Oduche runaways out at the last minute, putting the snake in a box instead, but his family discover the terrible feat when he is at church. Doing anything to the royal python is considered a disgrace. The royal python belongs to the god Idemili. As soon as the priest of Idemili hears about it, he sends a messenger to scold Ezeulu, and to ask what he intends to do to purify his house. Ezeulu responds by telling Ezidemili to literally die and the matter rests there, uneasily.

The colonial administration orders a new road to be built, connecting Okperi to Umuaro. They finish the funds, but still need to complete the road. Mr. Wright, the overseer, appeals to recruit the labors in order to complete the work. He receives permission and Umuaro is the unlucky beneficiary of the demand for free labors. One day, Ezeulu's son Obika is
late for the work. He had too much palm wine the previous day. But when Mr. Wright beats him, it stirs up the hatred of all the men.

As Ezeulu takes up that Obika has done something to be worthy of the punishment, he creates a crisis in his own household. Edogo, his eldest son, gets to thinking, and decides that the old man's tendency to choose favorites among his sons has created a problem. By sending Oduche to learn the religion of the white man, Ezeulu has essentially taken Oduche out of the succession. In addition, Ezeulu has trained Nwafo in the ways of the priesthood, so he is clearly venturing his claim on Nwafo as the one Ulu will choose. As a result, it creates friction and fraction in the family. Consequently, Edogo, as eldest son has to deal with it. He goes to Ezeulu's friend, Akuebue, and asks him to communicate to Ezeulu. The people of Umuaro try to blame Ezeulu because he told the white man the truth when Winterbottom stepped in to stop the war between Okperi and Umuaro. Ezeulu accepts that he sacrificed Oduche, not so much to put him out of the running for the priesthood, but because he sees the threat to Umuaro and to the Igbo posed by Christianity. Such a situation requires the supreme sacrifice, that of a human being.

Meanwhile, Captain Winterbottom decides that Ezeulu is just the man for the job, and sends a messenger to bring Ezeulu. Ezeulu refuses to go to him, saying that the Priest of Ulu does not leave his shelter, and sends the messenger back to Winterbottom with the message that if he wants to see Ezeulu; he will have to come to visit Ezeulu. Winterbottom issues an order for Ezeulu's arrest and sends two policemen to bring him.

The next day, after consulting with the elders and men of title in Umuaro, Ezeulu resolves to set out for Okperi, to find out what Winterbottom wanted. His heart is angry because Umuaro continues blaming him for the white man's presence, and not showing Ulu proper reverence.
His rival, Nwaka, continues to challenge Ulu and the people for doing nothing about it. The two policemen sent to arrest Ezeulu pass him on the way, but do not understand it until they reach his compound and learn that Ezeulu has gone to Okperi.

In Okperi, Winterbottom suddenly falls ill. The African servants think that Ezeulu must be a powerful man because of which Winterbottom is struck ill. Therefore, when Ezeulu arrives, the servants are afraid. They do not dare to lock him up as ordered. Instead, they pretend that the guardroom is a guest room and try to make him feel comfortable.

On this first night in Okperi, Ezeulu realizes that his real combat is with his own people, not with the white man at all. In his vision, he sees Nwaka challenge Ulu, and the people spitting on him (Ezeulu), saying he is the priest of a dead god. He begins to see that the white man has been able to take advantage of Umuaro's division to sow further seeds of ruin. He hopes Winterbottom holds up him for a long time, so he can better plan his retaliation.

Ezeulu is held up for a couple of months. First, Clarke decides to teach him a lesson by detaining him. Then, he proposes Ezeulu the position of chief, but Ezeulu declines. Clarke is angry and he thrusts him in prison, and Winterbottom praises him, saying he should keep Ezeulu locked up until he learns to cooperate. But Clarke begins to suffer shooting pain of conscience. He understands that he does not have an honest reason to keep Ezeulu imprisoned. He is relieved when he knows about creating new Warrant Chiefs. This gives Clarke the justification to let Ezeulu go.

Ezeulu returns home. Everybody is happy to see him again and Ezeulu realizes that his anger was directed not against his real neighbors but
against an idea that they were mocking Ulu and insulting Ezeulu. Then, he arranges a plan of action. When the time for announcing the Feast of the New Yam approaches, he fails to announce it. His subordinates ask if he has ignored his duties. He gets mad and sends them away.

Then, the elders of the village ask gently why he has not declared the Feast of the New Yam. Ezeulu tells them that he has three sacred yams left. He cannot announce the Feast of the New Yam until he has completed all the sacred yams. He was unable to eat the sacred yams while imprisoned in Okperi, and now he has to follow the rule: one yam a month. The men are shocked. If they wait three months before they are permitted to harvest their crops, the crops will be ruined and the people of Umuaro will suffer extensive famine.

The elders tell Ezeulu that he should just quickly eat the yams and if there are any consequences, they will ask Ulu to let it fall away on their heads, not Ezeulu's. But Ezeulu is firm. Such a thing is unheard of. As a chief priest, he will be the one to suffer the consequences of breaking the rules.

Mr. Goodcountry, the Christian priest, recognizes this as an opportunity. He says that anybody who wants to offer their yams to the Christian god instead, they can yield their yams, will receive the security of the Christian god as well. As people begin to suffer, they do just that.

Meanwhile, sick Obika is asked to support in the funeral preparations for Amalu, one of the elders in the village who had died some months back. He helps with one of the funeral rituals by carrying the mask for Ogbazulobodo, the night spirit, and chasing after day. He runs so hard and so fast, however, that he drops dead when he returns. The people say
it is a verdict against Ezeulu. That year, many of the yams were reaped in the name of the Christian god; and the crops reaped afterwards were also reaped in the name of the Christian god. As *Arrow of God* comes to a close, it seems that worship of the Christian god has replaced that of Ulu.

*A Man of the People* (1966) is a bleak satire. It is set in an anonymous African State. The novel represents a teacher named Odili Samalu from the village of Anata who opposes a corrupt Minister of Culture named Nanga for his Parliament seat. The novel portrays the disgusting game of the politics of power in a decolonized and under-developed country.

Operating under the disguise of democratic structure, Chief Nanga is a talented deceiver who sedulously built up his image as a man of the people. Absolute power corrupts Chief Nanga. Achebe analyses the psychological truth about the black politicians in a newly independent country through the typical character of Nanga.

The ending of the novel brought Achebe to the attention of military personnel who suspected him of having foreknowledge of the coup.

*A Man of the People* is a relatively concise novel that presents human attitudes in a post-independent nation. However, unlike most western nations, Achebe’s *A Man of the People* emerges in Nigeria, a nation that experiences a cultural weakening between European norms and native customs. England itself was the imposing ruler over Nigeria, prior to their independence, and transplanted their systems of society into Nigerian culture.

The novel, overall, is touching in its tone. The situation in the novel is more depressing than in other works. It reflects the terrible political
decline, which Nigeria has suffered since independence. Chinua Achebe allows his readers to experience the predicament of Nigeria at first hand, which is not only credited to Westernization, but the native people who blindly accept its system. In his criticism Povey, (1970:38) says:

*Achebe gives a detailed insight into the spirit of his main characters, providing a first-hand account of how the educated “elite” think and operate.*

The novelist takes care of showing the character exploitation, which projects the cultural disorder. It is a result of individual greed as well as European imperialism. Achebe uses the actions of the characters to display the environment utterly degraded of moral foundations. The unethical indifference of the people shown at the story’s conclusion is yet another vice that discharges the social negligence featured in the novel.

Achebe presents Odili Samalu as the eyewitness narrator of the story. Odili, in the present time, is an ordinary schoolteacher and a well-educated Nigerian man. In fact, Odili is primarily depicted as an average citizen when the story starts. His narrative begins by recalling in his mind the political scandal committed by Nanga, his former teacher, now a politician.

The memory recalls how the country slips into financial decline in the midst of Nanga’s run for re-election. Their main crop, coffee, has not been traded well enough to even out the market, which is now threatening their economic balance. The economic advisors suggest a solution that could possibly resolve their dilemma. However, the means would require an excessive loss of votes from the farming population. Nanga permanently bans the scheme and in turn wins the election.
Odili believes he possesses a superior sense of intellect over his colleagues, who still stick to their fundamental traditions. Nigeria itself has been reputed for its conventional, tribal communities and here Achebe interconnects the two different distinctions of principles. After Nanga arrives, he showers Odili with professional and personal flattery.

The two carry on the conversation as if they have been best friends. Odili’s innocent impression, given at the beginning of the story, is further shattered by Nanga’s immoral approach towards women. An incentive for Odili was the possibility for a post-graduate scholarship, which would offer him a trip to England. Odili inevitably does meet up with Elsie and even escorts her, along with Nanga, to Nanga’s place of residence. However, in a whimsical turn, Nanga and Elsie are the two who play sex game beneath the sheets, leave Odili to spend the night in loneliness. The pathetic part of Odili’s loneliness is how he is determined to be furious at the two lovers and so taken aback that he packed his belongings as if to leave, yet he remains at Nanga’s residence until next morning. After all the insult and defamation to his name, Odili sleeps while Nanga and Elsie indulge their own sexual desire. At this point, the book is not only a reflection of abusive politics, but also a game of sexual episodes.

Sex seems to be directly related to corrupt politics. This is the story’s turning point, which explores deeper into the exploitation of traditional Africa by means of the political sphere. The peculiarity that emerges from this misunderstanding is that Odili seems to convince himself that he truly cared for Elsie. If anything, Odili is taken more aback by the embarrassment of believing he was the mediator of Elsie and possessed her loyalty.
Odili’s psychological passion and hostility become forged with the stage of revolutionary politics to avenge cunning Nanga. Odili openly admits the ends he seeks by participating in the *Common People’s Convention* (C.P.C.), as it became to be known, by saying:

> “I must admit I was immediately taken with the idea of the Common People’s Convention. Apart from everything else it would add a second string to my bow when I came to deal with Nanga.” *A.M.P.* (p. 79)

Later, as Odili and the CPC finish their campaign, the sexual instinct and ego once again find middle ground to pacify each other. The means comes in the form of a girl named Edna, who is fated to be Nanga’s wife. Odili does succeed in befriending Edna and the two form a steady friendship of confidence. Nonetheless, Edna is torn as to whether she should consider calling off her engagement or honor her father’s wishes by pursuing a life with Nanga. Tensions grow up, however, when Nanga learns of Odili’s candidacy and his intervention with Edna Nanga in turn paints Odili as a vagabond flirt to Edna. Then, Odili and Edna’s relationship become shaky. Odili becomes enraged with Nanga and Edna.

However, the story does not provide adequate information concerning his toilet training as a child. Political corruption is not a new concept in the Nigerian society. The European influence, Nanga, and also Odili, act as prime examples of democratic deterioration within a foreign market. The people observe the conduct and realize what modernization calls for to improve the “rank” of their country. The story attentively rotates around Nanga and Odili. However, there are nobilities such as the scene
at Josiah’s shop. Who a ‘Man of the People’ really is in this novel has long been debated.

Two scholars, Liukkonen and Povey argue that Nanga is the Man of the People. Personally, Odili could be another possibility for the title’s consequence. Nevertheless, the people recognize the corruption taking place in the politics and are indifferent to its existence.

In the conclusion, Odili attends a rally of Nanga in disguise to hear Nanga’s speech to the people. Eventually, Odili is exposed by Nanga’s people and march onto the stage to become a product of Nanga’s inquiry. Nanga, indeed, sensibly ignores Odili amongst the crowd of his supporters and declares an anti-sentimental view towards Odili. The people degrade Odili and Nanga, along with his thugs, organize a brutal beating on Odili. The entire election concludes in uproar, Odili is in the hospital, his friend Max is killed by friends of Nanga, and the military. During Odili’s recovery, Edna changes her mind about Odili and decides to stand by him. In brief, by attaining the prized beautiful girl and the army overthrowing Nanga, Odili reaches his level of great respect and status. Also, in capitalist fashion, his party is dispersed and he decides to misuse the CPC’s funds to finance the bride price that was custom for him to marry Edna. Chinua Achebe appropriately traces the most productive disorganizations back to Western influence by using his characters as imitators of Western values. The story ends miserably.

The novel *Anthills of the Savannah (1987)* is about a military rebellion in the fictional West African nation of Kangan. It is a powerful combination of myth, legend and modern styles. The role of women is remarkable in the novel. The comment in the edited book of Pandurang Mala (2006:156) shows how women characters play important role in Achebe’s novels:
“In its representation of Beatrice as a leader, prophetess and goddess *Anthills of the Savannah* addresses the gender issues Achebe had eschewed in *Things Fall Apart* and his earlier fiction.”

This splendid short novel demonstrates Achebe's continuing ability to represent the challenges posed to African societies by modernism and Western influence. It details the predicament of three educated, upper-class Africans attempting to survive in an atmosphere of political harassment and cultural confusion. Set in the fictional African country of Kangan, it is clearly patterned after Achebe's native Nigeria, though elements of Liberia and Ghana are seen to some extent.

The protagonists are Ikem, a spirited and narrow-minded newspaper editor; Chris, his friend and predecessor as editor, now the somewhat-reluctant Commissioner of Information in a military-led government; and Beatrice, a brilliant, beautiful mid-level civil servant, also Chris's lover.

Each studied abroad and is comfortable in using literary references and cultural indications from the West. At the same time, each is proud of and clearly shaped by his/her African heritage.

Kangan is ruled by a smart but narrow-minded military officer who rose to power following a coup. "His Excellency" is also coincidentally and not at all unbelievably an acquaintance of all three main characters, bringing a very personal dynamic to the struggles they face as Ikem sharpens his already bitter criticism of the government, to the professional discomfort of Chris and the personal alarm of Beatrice.

Workers and peasants in *Anthills of the Savannah* are presented as a social class with huge potential. It is this group that actually shakes the
rule of “His Excellency” and frightens him. They are unwilling to remain burdened, but would rather choose to fight against the lies, corruption, and tyranny of the ruling class in order to protect their interests. They may not possess the knowledge of books, but they have experience and wisdom from their traditional heritage.

In the novel, the mix class of scholars is portrayed as an immature yet promising social class. It has its own limitations. Yet, after a process of development, it slowly improves itself, and finally is able to play an emancipating role in the Kingdom of Kangan. Specifically, this mix class has two big obstacles to jump in order to fulfill its historical task. First, they have to give up their social status as members of the ruling elite.

Secondly and above all, they need to submerge themselves in the mass of ordinary people. In short, they have to identify themselves with the people, and become a part of them. Thus, this hybrid class of intellectuals is put in a unique social situation in which they have to find their way out to cross two class borders.

The first crossing, which does not prove too difficult, is most clear in the acts of Chris and Ikem. Chris has become disillusioned with the bureaucracy and despotism of His Excellency and the government.

Chris consciously disconnects himself from the ruling elite and takes an attitude of "pure, unadulterated disinterest". Chris does not care too much about the security of his social position as the Minister for Information. He suggests that “His Excellency” visits people in Abazon, which no ministers in the government dare to do. He even refuses to cooperate with the supreme leader who tells Chris to issue a letter to suspend Ikem as Editor of the National Gazette. When pressed and threatened, Chris offers his resignation from his post, which is a further
indication that he is anything but sentimentally attached to this ruling class.

Like Chris, Ikem has identified the unpredictability of the President, and realizes that "worshipping a dictator is such a pain in the ass." Unlike Chris, however, Ikem does not become disillusioned, but rather determines to fight with his pen. He writes crusading editorials in the National Gazette, revealing the miserable living conditions of the poor people in Abazon. He even suggests that the President propagates a verdict repealing capital punishment. Owing to his disclosure of the dark side of the country, Ikem is suspended by Sam from his post, and is later brutally murdered by the secret police.

Achebe scatters humor liberally throughout the text. The characters serve up a steady stream of clever, expressive African sayings. The most memorable of these are delivered by a tribal elder from Abazon in an impromptu tribute to Ikem. Achebe also paints vivid and funny accounts of outrageous traffic jam, a conflict with soldiers at a checkpoint, and an up-country bus trip. Those who have spent any significant time on the continent will give affirmation and chuckle at these uniquely African scenes.

Achebe seems not so much to be blaming the West for Africa's problems as pointing out the ways in which, years after independence -- and even longer since things first "fell apart" -- African societies continue to struggle with the legacy of colonialism. The villains are not Europeans but the opportunistic soldiers, politicians, and businessmen who came to power after the departure of the colonists.

*Anthills of the Savannah* is a piece of fiction centered on power play in the gendered postcolonial Nigeria, where women have been kept at the
zero level for a long time. Themes, characters, use of language, places and incidents make Achebe’s novels worth studying from the point of view of sociolinguistics.

There is a profound narrative shift in Achebe’s craft in *Anthills of the Savannah*. The typical shift in content and style reflects a literary commitment towards addressing the issues posed by women’s slavery in postcolonial Nigeria. Therefore, this shift in artistic presentation is a transition from gender disparity to equality.

1.6 Making of Chinua Achebe

It is necessary to study the biographical aspect of Achebe’s life. It is useful to discuss the details of his life from his childhood till this date. Therefore, an attempt is made to accumulate a few facts about the life and times of Achebe.

Chinua Achebe was born on November 15, 1930, in Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria. His family belonged to the Igbo tribe, and he was the fifth of six children. Representatives of the British government that controlled Nigeria convinced his parents, Isaiah Okafor Achebe and Janet Ileogbunam, to give up their traditional religion and follow Christianity. He was educated at a Government College in Umuahia, Nigeria, and graduated from the University College at Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1954. He began his professional career in broadcasting in 1954 and eventually became the Director of External Broadcasting for Nigeria.

Achebe was unhappy with books about Africa written by British authors such as Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) and John Buchan (1875–1940), because he felt the descriptions of African people were inaccurate and wounding. While working for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, he
wrote his first novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), the story of a traditional warrior hero who is unable to adapt to changing conditions in the early days of British rule.

The book won immediate international recognition. Years later, in 1997, the Performance Studio Workshop of Nigeria put on a production of the play, which was then presented in the United States as part of the Kennedy Center's African Odyssey series in 1999. Achebe's next two novels, *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964), were set in the past as well.

The country faced some political problems. By the mid-1960s, the newness of independence had died out in Nigeria. The Igbo, who had played a leading role in Nigerian politics, then began to feel that the Muslim Hausa people of Northern Nigeria considered the Igbos second-class citizens. Achebe wrote *A Man of the People* (1966), a story about a crooked Nigerian politician. The book was published at the very moment a military takeover removed the old political leadership. This made some Northern military officers doubt that Achebe had played a role in the takeover, but there was never any evidence supporting the theory.

During the years when Biafra attempted to break itself off as a separate state from Nigeria (1967–70), however, Achebe served as an ambassador to Biafra. He travelled to different countries discussing the problems of his people, especially the starving and slaughtering of Igbo children. He wrote articles for newspapers and magazines about the Biafran struggle and founded the Citadel Press with Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo. Writing a novel at this time was out of the question, he said during a 1969 interview: "I can't write a novel now; I wouldn't want to. And even if I wanted to, I couldn't. I can write poetry—something short, intense, more in keeping with my mood." Three volumes of poetry emerged
during this time, as well as a collection of short stories and children's stories.

After the fall of the Republic of Biafra, Achebe continued to work at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, and devoted time to the Heinemann Educational Books' Writers Series which was designed to promote the careers of young African writers.

In 1972, Achebe came to the United States to become an English professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (he taught there again in 1987). In 1975, he joined the faculty at the University of Connecticut. He returned to the University of Nigeria in 1976. His novel *Anthills of the Savanna* (1987) tells the story of three boyhood friends in a West African nation and the deadly effects of the desire for power and wanting to be elected "president for life." After its release, Achebe returned to the United States and took teaching positions at Stanford University, Dartmouth College, and other universities. He died on 23rd March, 2013.

1.7 Achebe’s Works

Achebe is known for his significant contribution to English literature. His novels are a study of the past and the present of the African society. He deals with the social, political and moral issues relevant to the African society through the personal tragedies of many of his central characters. His fiction often works through association with the native culture, which is evident in his use of proverbs and folk-tales. He is an inventive novelist from English speaking Africa who obtained worldwide reputation with his first novel: *Things Fall Apart* (1958). His literary structure in the English-speaking world is evident in not only the critical attention he has attracted but also in the popularity of his works among Africans as well as non-Africans all over the world.
Achebe believes that the fundamental function of the artist is to deal with the contemporary issues of his society. Even a casual reader will admit that Achebe in each of his novels has had something new, and different to offer to his readers all over the English-speaking world. However, despite the thematic, narrative and linguistic diversity of his novels it is possible to see a common “sensibility” or “approach” at the basis of the function.

As mentioned earlier, Achebe is known for his multifaceted and multi-dimensional variety of writings. His contribution to the literary world is beyond appreciation. The list of his literary creation other than the novels is given below:

**Short Stories**

- *Marriage Is A Private Affair* (1952)
- *Dead Men's Path*(1953)
- *The Sacrificial Egg and Other Stories* (1959)
- *Civil Peace* (1971)
- *Girls at War and Other Stories* (1972)
- ‘Sugar Baby’, Obike 3 (1972)

**Poetry**

- *Beware, Soul-Brother and Other poems* (1971)
- *Don't let him die: [ An Anthology of memorial Poems for Christopher Okigbo]* (1978)
- *Another Africa* (1998)
Chinua Achebe’s literary output includes five novels, seven collections of short stories, six volumes of poetry, four children books and six works of non-fiction and some essays, talks and miscellaneous pieces. The human
concern that is the undercurrent of all his writings has made his literary works universally appealing with a touch of immortality.

1.8 Methodology and Techniques

The research study is applied in nature. Therefore, sociolinguistic approach is used to analyze the novels of Chinua Achebe. The study aims at analyzing the use of language, structure, style, and socio cultural nuances. It is interesting to study how language operates in the African society. This study of language in relation to society has been the focus of the present study. The categorically selected literary pieces, conversations, and linguistic expressions from the novels are examined against the socio-cultural realities existing at the time when the novels were being written. The sociocultural factors such as social context, education, age, gender, ethnicity, power and solidarity are used as parameters to study the influences on the language of the characters. At the same time, the following sociolinguistic factors are taken into account for analyzing the novels:

- **Addressee – Addresser Relationship**
- **Kinship Terms**
- **Greetings and farewells**
- **Syntactic Deviations**
- **Morphological Deviations**
- **Phonological Deviations**
- **Honorific Terms**
- **Kinship Terms**
- Abusive Expressions
- Code-Mixing and Code-switching
- Use of Unusual Spellings
- Acronyms
- Diminutive Expressions

During the study, the process of acculturation is carefully examined. The material sources for this research are mainly collected from both primary and secondary sources as follows:

The Primary data is collected mainly from the novels of Achebe. The highly marked examples of linguistic expressions, speech events and speech situations involving the dialect are examined using the principles and relevant theories of sociolinguistics.

The Secondary data is collected from critical analysis made by different linguists in their articles, books and interviews regarding the language and dialects used in the novels of Achebe.

On the basis of the above-mentioned sources, the researcher has applied the sociolinguistic approach to interpret and analyze the characters in the light of the socio-cultural and socio-political background.

It also analyzes the linguistic features such as phonological, morphological and syntactic for this purpose. Categorically selected linguistic expressions of the characters are examined against the socio-cultural environment of the characters’ language and their social background. Finally, it establishes the opinion that the characters and the society in which they live have much to do with the kind of language they use or otherwise. The results of the analysis are included in the concluding chapter.
1.9 Conclusion

In the beginning of the chapter, an effort has been made to state the aims and objectives of the research study. Then, the rationale and significance, scope and limitations, methodology and techniques are discussed. The reasons for the selection of the novelist and his novels have been adequately justified. The list of the other literary contributions of the novelist is also given. In fact, the chapter lays the foundation for promoting an in depth study to the sociolinguistic aspects of Achebe’s novels.

The next chapter is devoted to the discussion on sociolinguistics in general and sociolinguistic background of the novels under consideration in particular.
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