

# Journal



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Okonkwo was strong. His prowess lay in his pure physical strength and his ability to work hard. It was no wonder that his fame had spread far and wide. He was revered for his achievements which included a personal fortune consisting of barns full of Yams, a house full of children and 3 wives. Above all, his greatest achievement was that he had felled Amalinze the cat, a great wrestler in the wrestling field. He was a hero- an achiever-(Achebe 3)

In spite of his achievements, Okonkwo struggled to get rid of a secret fear through most part of his life-his father's shadow on his existence. According to Okonkwo, his father, Unoka, was everything a man should not be. He was passionate about music and a merriment and lived a life devoid of care. Okonkwo, who did not share his father's passion on music, thought of him as a hopeless idler. His belief was supported by the fact that his father hadn't managed to take a single title from his clan, which essentially proved him an outcast in a society which positioned a man based on the number of titles he managed to take. Above all, Unoka also lived and died in debt. This gave enough reasons for Okonkwo to dread this kind of existence for the rest of his life. So most part of Okonkwo's life sees him trying hard to convince himself and others that he was strong, unlike his father-(Achebe 3)

Okonkwo's son Nwoye was a cause of much distress to his father. As a 12-year old lad, he had inherited his grandfather's gentle nature, passion for music and the love for a peaceful life. In Okonkwo's perspective, he was turning out to be an incompetent man... But Okonkwo was firm in his belief that he could bring his son to the right path by beating and forcing him towards it. Nwoye himself was striving to please his father. Though he was still a child, he found secret pleasure in feigning masculinity and in the process, pleasing his father. He was forced to rebuke his mother's gentle

ways, thanks to his father's violent commandments. But deep within, he was unsure of his thoughts and what he actually wanted. And more importantly, he lacked the freedom to think, thanks to his father's tyrannical ways. He found much needed companionship and a role model in Ikemefuna, who came to stay with the family as a punishment to a crime committed by a member of the village he belonged to. But Nwoye's joy was short-lived as the elders of the village decide to murder Ikemefuna, a wise, fine lad of 18, based on the command of the oracle. Not only does Okonkwo support the decision, he also delivers the final blow of the machete on the lad who had trusted him completely, to prove his strength. Nwoye eventually finds peace in religion which answers some of his questions. He joins a Christian missionary, leaving his father convinced that he-the raging fire could produce nothing but incompetent ash-(Achebe 3)

The depiction of this story is set in a close knit tribal community of pre colonial Igbo. Not only are the people belonging to the society ignorant, they are also firm in their belief. They take pride in taking titles, which are achieved by means of physical strength and show of wealth. Talent like music is considered a useless past time. A man is allowed to have multiple wives. The women have no say on matters of importance. All this shows that lack of a well defined system of rules had forced the members of this society to dwell among themselves and come up with unusual practises to run the society like speaking to the spirits of their ancestors and consulting the oracle for matters requiring common sense. Not only was this system ruthless, but also dangerous.

When a society lacks direction, it results in each of its members bearing its wrath. People are forced to live a life lacking comfort and security. In order

to cater to everyone's needs, a society needs to function according to some rules and definitions. These rules can be found only upto some extent in religion. Though a well defined religion, free of suppositious beliefs can inculcate peaceful co-existence and a sense of well being among its members, it still can't match the impact education can have. The concept of religion enjoys immense popularity among the masses; but every religion has its own set of pros and cons and can only provide society with a way of life. Education is the only means through which humanity can view the world with unbiased truth.

#### Works Cited

Achebe, Chinua. Things fall apart, 1959