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Abstract

The world is meant to be well habitable for the people, if not for issues of class conflicts that have orchestrated poverty in the society as portrayed in Festus Iyayi's Violence. This study therefore, investigates the causes of class conflict, class division and poverty in a stratified society like Nigeria. The study draws inspiration from Marxist literary theory, especially the model that postulated the essence of the reactions of the exploited and the oppressed is to get rid of exploitation and the exploiters, and the oppression and the oppressors. The reason for the adoption of the theory is to investigate issues of class conflict, division and stratification in Nigerian novel Violence by Festus Iyayi was purposively selected and subjected to critical textual analysis. The findings of the study show that the leaders deliberately create class conflicts for their political and material gain. They create poverty through their callous and avaricious attitudes to impoverish the masses. They reneged from their political promises and duties, they become enriched that the masses will always need them for survival. They do this in order to always remain in power while the masses will remain at the lowest ebb if the society. Significantly, the study reveals that the poor masses can break the cord that divides their society through a well-planned revolution. The study concludes that the wide gap between the rich and the poor, the leaders and the led, the oppressors and the oppressed can be filled with a conscious and joint revolt the by all and sundry of the less privileged in the society.

Keywords: Class Conflict, Division, Poverty, Leaders, Led.

Introduction

Conflict is part of human society. An ideal conflict is the one which involves at least two individuals. The first person is the one who cheats and the other is the one being exploited. In so far as the business of conflict is concerned, the stronger person is always referred to as the one who uses his economic power against the second person usually referred to as being in the lower class and the less privileged, who feels threatened and thereby tries to counter. The fact that conflict is taken to be part of life in human society, the perpetrators are indirectly permitted to celebrate with impunity and thereby propagate the erroneous impression that conflict is a value to be cultivated and appreciated in human culture and in the world. Due to the high level of the desire to get rich quickly which is prevalent among human beings, conflict becomes an everyday affair and that those in charge of the economic power visibly and shamelessly



try to exploit the lower-class people before they could do what they are supposed to do for the development and progress of their country.

The history of all society in existence is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman (Marx and Engel)¹. In summary, the oppressor and the oppressed are in constant opposition to one another.

According to Mbah, the term 'class conflict' applies to contest or struggles between two opposing classes of society. These classes are the proletariat and bourgeoisie.² According to Grusky, 'In all complex societies, the total stock of valued goods is distributed unequally, with the most privileged individuals and families enjoying a disproportionate share of income, power and other valued resources'³. This means that the already privileged people enjoy more of the economic resources and value than the less privileged people.

Adagonye et al. points that, the basis of the struggle between the two classes is the control of the state so as to determine the social policies especially the authoritative allocation of values and scarce resources. While the oppressed class agitates for a new social order that ensure fairly equitable distribution of resources, the bourgeoisie class preoccupies itself with maintaining their class advantage by extension the structural inequality. Since the ruling class does not willingly surrender power, it has to be compelled to do so through intense struggle and/or violence. Such agitations result in class conflict⁴.

In Tobalase, James Baba explains that "a safe explanation for the existence of social classes is to simply agree that it was all part of the cosmic experimentation that produce the human race, to simply assert that men by default are created unequally. But as close as this may sound, it negates the very tenets of human rights which suggest that all men are born equal irrespective of age, race, colour, gender, religion and creed."⁵ This means that, even though, it is believed that men are not created equally, the fundamental human right has given room for equality and fair play at all levels and situations.

Marx and Class Conflict

According to Rummel, it is important to recognize Marx's view that the structure of the society is in relation to its major classes⁶. Marx notes that, conflict was not derivational within society's structure, nor were classes

¹Karl Marx and Frederich Engels *Manifesto of the communist Party*.

<https://www.marxist.org>.1848

²Peter Mbah, "Class Struggles and Revolutionary Pressures in Nigeria", *IJMPAS* (2014): 15-31.

³David Grusky, "Can Class Analysis Be Salvaged"? *American Journal of Sociology* (1998):

⁴ Adileje, Igwiro and Adagonye. 'Politics and Class Analysis in Nigeria', *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Science*, Volume 5, No 2, (2013): 319-330.

⁵ Adegbite Tobalase "Class Stratification and Poverty in Nigerian Literature: A Study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Festus Iyayi's *Violence*". *Annals of Language and Literature* (2018): 26-35.

⁶ R. Rummel "Marxism, Class Conflict and The Conflict Helix". *Understanding Conflict and War*, Volume 3, (2008): 207-219

functional elements maintaining the system. The structure itself was a derivative of and makeup in the conflict of classes.

The key to understanding Marx is in his definition of class. He defines class by the ownership of property⁷. Such ownership vests a person with the power to exclude others from the property and to use it for personal reasons and gains. In relation to property, there are three great classes of society: the bourgeoisie (they own the means of production and whose income is profit), landowners (whose income is rent) and the proletariat (who own labor and sell it for a wage). Thus, class is determined by property, not by income or status. These are determined by distribution and consumption, which itself ultimately reflects the production and power relations to classes. The social conditions of bourgeoisie production are defined by bourgeoisie property. Class, to Marx is therefore, a theoretical and formal relationship among individuals. Class interest is major force that made class membership turn to class struggle, i.e. the proletariat do not have/show interest to the less privileged, they are only interested in the people belonging to the same social class with them. Out of similar class situations, members of the same class act similarly. They develop a common dependence, a community, a shared goal with a mutual income of profit or wages. From this common interest, classes are formed. Marx notes that individuals form classes to the extent that their interests engage them in a struggle with the opposite class.

As Marx saw the development of class conflict, the struggle between classes was at first based on each individual. Eventually, given the maturing of capitalism, the growing disparity between life struggles of bourgeoisie and proletariat, and the increasing homogenization within each class, individual struggles become generalized to merging across classes. Increasingly, class conflict is manifested at the societal level. Class consciousness is increased, mutual interests and policies are organized, and the use of struggle for political power occurs. Classes become political forces.

According to the Marxist-Leninist theory of the society, the underlying reason for the struggle between the classes is very simple indeed: exploiters oppress the exploited, while the exploited wants to rid themselves of the exploitation and the exploiters⁸. The class struggle mirrors the irreconcilable character of the class interests of the exploiter and the exploited. The concept of class struggle defines the history of all existing human civilization. It has persisted through history, between freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, bourgeois and proletariat, oppressor and oppressed. Two broad ranks in constant opposition to one another, a fight that often end in a revolution changing the social order or at times leading to the common ruin of the contending classes and birth of other social ranks.

⁷ Karl Marx, 1972 *Capital*. 3 vols. Lawrence and Wishart. 1894.

⁸ Karl Marx. 1972 *Capital*. 3 vols. Lawrence and Wishart. 1894.

Class and Determinants

An explanation for the existence of social classes is to simply agree that it was all part of the basic procedure that produce the human race, to simply assert that men by default are created unequally. But as close to common sense as this may sound, it negates the very tenets of human rights which suggest that all men are born equal irrespective of race, color, gender, religion and creed.

Capital and Wage-Labour

According to Karl Marx (Manifesto of the communist party) two notable determinants of class in the society are – *capital and wage-labour*. The concept of capital as relates to existence of class in the society refers to the control of means of production. Karl Marx refers to the owner of the means of production as the bourgeoisie. This class of people has all the resources to dictate the economic pulse of the populace; they buy cheap labour to maximize their profit with very little regard to welfare and fairness. The other determinant of class is the wage-labour concept. The proletariat with no means of production of their own are left with no choice than to sell their labour for a wage⁹.

Private Property

The extent of a man's estate and the quality of luxury is often a clear indication of class. The communist agenda to which Karl Marx was an ardent promoter seeks the abolition of private property, clearly the property in question thus not include hard won, self-acquired, self-earned properties like those of small peasants who have toiled for years but rather the communist idea of abolition of private property was directed at private luxurious properties of the bourgeoisies. The communist promotes the existence of common property as opposed to private property, with the belief that it will eradicate class. Instead of having a few privileged capitalists acquire luxurious properties at the expense of general wellbeing of the majority, why not have common provisions of basic infrastructures and amenities for the common good.

Literacy Level

Education is another delineating factor. It is common practice to refer to the Literates and the Illiterates. The educated are seen as the elite in most societies. It is not difficult to also understand why the so-called literates are also the bourgeoisies in societies where the illiterates are the majority. The rich can afford quality education for their wards while the laborers do not earn enough to give even the most basic of education to their children. It is therefore not strange that free education for all children is a major content of the communist manifesto by Karl Marx.

⁹ Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, "Manifesto of the communist Party".
<https://www.marxist.org>.1848

Trade/Profession

Certain professions are accorded respect and prestige while others are not as dignified. The concept of dignity of labour albeit fundamental to how society perceive different professions, it can be greatly improved if every trade can provide basic necessities of life. Professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. are classed higher even in the most advanced societies than occupation like taxi driving. Certain professions are debasing and dehumanizing, for example street begging and prostitution.

Class Conflict in Nigeria

According to Falola, when Nigeria achieved independence from British colonial rule on October 1, 1960, the prospects appeared promising and expectations for the future of the country were high. Nigeria was the most populous country in Africa, and the potential for economic growth was great, buoyed largely by the discovery of commercial quantities of petroleum in the Niger delta region in 1958. Nigeria was dubbed the "Giant of Africa," and many people both inside and outside the country believed that Nigeria would soon rise to claim a leading position in African and world affairs. Nigeria also saw itself as a beacon of hope and progress for other colonized peoples emerging from the yoke of alien rule. By 1970, however, Nigeria's stability and prestige had been greatly damaged by a decade of political corruption, economic underdevelopment, and military coups.¹⁰ In pre-colonial Nigeria, classes and class struggle were associated with slaves and feudal mode of production depending on the development of a particular society. Under the slave mode of production, the social classes were freemen (slave owners) and slaves. Some slaves gained their freedom through loyal service to their masters and were absorbed into the society as freemen (Bode).¹¹ Because it is the desire of many of the slaves to be free, many had to work out their freedom by themselves. They want freedom from the bondage of slavery in order to be able to participate in economic and political activities in the society.

Class struggle under colonialism can be traced to the early resistance by African chiefs against the occupation of their territories by the colonialists. Worthy of mention were the ifole riot in Abeokuta in 1867 against the imperialist penetration of south-western Nigeria, the 1895 Brass offensive against trade monopoly of the Royal Nigeria company, the Benin massacre of 1897 and other "punitive expeditions" unleashed on Nigeria by the imperialists¹²(Bode). Because of the activities of the imperialists/colonial masters, there was unity among the people of the country in order to gain independence for the Nation. Series of Nationalist movements was carried out, for instance the emergence of the three ethnic political parties (AG, NPC, NCNC). However, the struggle is not for the total liberation of the people, rather those at the helms of affairs just want independence in order to rule the common people as they deem fit.

¹⁰ Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, "A History of Nigeria", Cambridge University Press (2008).

¹¹ O. Bode, "Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria", Macmillan Press Ltd (1998).

¹² Bode, "Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria".

The Nigerian ruling class who took over from colonial masters ruling class had better jobs, housing, prestigious cars, and immense political power without corresponding improvements in the condition of the workers and peasants. A new class struggle ensued. The June 1964 „general strike“ and the 1960 „work-to-rule“ actions forced the government to appoint Adebayo commission to review wages and salaries. There were also other manifestations of class struggle that culminated in the resistance by farmers against government tax extortions, police repression and grinding poverty led to the Agbekoya revolt between 1968 -1969.

The plight of the workers was compounded by their total neglect in terms of the provision of infrastructure facilities like roads, pipe-borne water, health centers, school and electricity. The agitations for better education and improved health services resulted in the launching of Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme in 1976, abolition of tuition in universities and polytechnic and National Health programme in 1977. The post-colonial student agitation for a better management of the economy was also intense. Students protested against the endemic corruption under the General Obasanjo Military regime in April, 1978, the result was the murder and mutilations of several students, as well as, the sadistic expulsion of their leader. The National union of Nigeria students was also banned (Bode, 1981). The protests were actually triggered off by the outrageous increase in school fees by 200 percent, and was followed by the students“ demand for the dismissal of Colonel Ahmadu Ali, the then Federal Commissioner for Education and Dr. Jubril Aminu, the Executive Secretary of National University Commission (NUC) consequently, tuition fees were temporarily suspended. The increasing disquiet by the oppressed class in Nigeria for a better management of the country’s political economy compelled past regimes to embark on democratization programme.

Democratization is intended as a tool for deepening social equality and attainment of better standards of living through political participation. In this regard, Joseph has also observed that the “level of antagonisms in political conflicts might decline if politics and government were to become less salient, less important as a source of advantages and disadvantages”.¹³ The Human Right Group and democracy activists never gave up fight for the institutionalization of democracy in Nigeria. The annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential election degenerated into major political crisis situation in the country as the masses stood up to defend democracy and virtually grounded government for several months. The struggle by the Nigeria Labour Congress against the increase in the pump price of petroleum is also manifestation of the pervasive class struggle in Nigeria. The outright removal of fuel subsidy during the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2012 and the protest that rocks the nation during the period is clear evidence that class conflict still pervades the nation. Despite the removal, no clear development in the state of the nation. Inflation has been the order of the day and the economic situation has been degenerating from bad to worse thereby making the citizens to live in abject poverty. The industrial action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities

¹³ Joseph, Richard, “Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic”, Spectrum Books Limited (1991): 22.

is another form of class conflict that has rocked Nigeria. Their demand is not too much for the Federal Government to grant, since those holding government positions loot away the public treasury and enriching themselves more. The 'END-SARS' protest of 2021 also bring to fore the outright rejection of the ruling class and their activities. Hence, Nigeria is not free from class struggle.

Portrayal of Class Conflict in *Violence*

Festus Iyayi, the author is one of Nigeria's finest post-colonial writers. He is a pioneer of social realism, a literary approach that analyzes society and its problems in Marxist terms. His works, *Violence* (1979), *The Contract* (1982), *Heroes* (1986) and *Awaiting Court Martial* (1996) expose the abject penury and disenfranchisement that constitute the social reality of the majority of Nigerians. His works clearly describe the concept of class conflict as his protagonists potently display his contempt for the rampant corruption that strangles the contemporary Nigeria. Businesspersons, politicians and other officials hoard the country's wealth and power at the expense of the working class. He employs simplistic and realistic style in his literary works often depicting the wide gap between the poor and the rich in the society.

His novel, *Violence* has been referred as one of the first truly proletarian novel in Nigeria. In the work, he describes the Nigerian society as being partitioned into two clearly distinct groups – the Bourgeoisies and the Proletariats. Akingbe and Ogunyemi (2013) notes that Iyayi's identification with the condition of the working classes buttresses protest that also partly reflects his own class position as a petit-bourgeois intellectual who is able to emphasize effectively with the working classes through his writing. While Obofun, Queen, Iriso and Dala are portrayed as the exploiters (bourgeoisie), the novel has Idemudia, Adisa, Osaro, Patrick and Omoifo at the receiving end of the exploitation (proletariats).

P Anawi writes that Festus Iyayi's:

*'Violence ... exposes the abject penury ... that constitutes the social reality of the majority of Nigerians. In language that is often vitriolic and stinging, Iyayi's protagonists potently display his contempt for the rampant corruption that strangles contemporary Nigeria. This base depravity of the ruling class manifests itself in various forms and ultimately trickles down to the ruled class.... The real tragedy is that those of the ruled class are either forced or coerced to absorb their oppressor's abuse.... Violence usually connotes physical abuse, but in his first novel, Violence, Iyayi redefines it as a continual, demoralizing structure that eliminates hope, pride, self-esteem, health, and the ability to live independently....Iyayi's Violence creeps into the corners of the pneuma of the lower classes, the have-nots, and renders them helpless against the socio-political machine powered solely by money, corruption and privilege.'*¹⁴

¹⁴ P Anawi. 'Marxist aesthetics in Festus Iyayi's *Violence*'. *Journal de la Recherche Scientifique de l'Universite de Lome* 11 No 1. (2013), 47

<<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jrsul/article/view/56790>>.

Right from the beginning of the novel, the author presents the predicament of the life of the poor in contrast to the rich folks in the work. The area Idemudia, Adisa and their neighbour, Papa and Mama Jimoh are living in is a dilapidated neighborhood which is described thus:

He and his wife Adisa were tenants in one of the low and zinced houses along Owode Street, Adisa who had been sweeping the badly cemented floor of the room dropped the broom and stretched her hand across the table which stood against the window. The broom was so short she had to stop substantially to sweep clean.

The Owode Street itself is not safe area to reside due to its poor state especially during the raining season:

Owode street, like its father, Ekenwan Road, was always over-flooded anytime rain fell. Two days ago, before, two houses had collapsed on the street. A small child had been trapped in one of the buildings under the fallen mud walls.... For the people who lived in the mud houses on Owode Street, there was another major preoccupation: which house would be the next to fall?¹⁵

Such is the life of the people living in the area. Whereas the affluent ones live a luxurious lifestyle. Iyayi describes Queen's house as a "luxurious place". Even when Adisa visits Obofun at the Samson and Delilah, 'she was a little bit uncomfortable in this room that was so big and so polished'.¹⁶ Adisa is already used to their slum that seeing the beautifully furnished room made her uncomfortable.

The life of Idemudia himself has never been a bed of roses. Right from his father's house, he was being maltreated and even when he became an adult and married, he continues the struggle. He recognizes the class difference between him and the bourgeoisie. He knows that they do not mean well for them and do not care so much about them. According to him, 'when they are in trouble, they remember us'.¹⁷ This is a pointer to the fact that the ruling class only care about what the working class can do for them.

The attitude of Queen as one of the ruling class is wicked and demeaning. She contracted Idemudia and his friends to offload cement from three trailers with each trailer carrying five hundred bags and she only offered them two naira for the whole job. Queen is aware that the work is worth more than the five naira that the men agreed that she should pay. "If they refused, she would obviously offer them more than five naira each".¹⁸ She feels satisfied when she saw them

¹⁵ Festus Iyayi, "Violence", Longman Nigeria Plc (1979), 1-2.

¹⁶ Iyayi, "Violence", 121.

¹⁷ Iyayi, "Violence", 17.

¹⁸ Iyayi, "Violence", 22.

doing the work. Even after the men finished the job, Queen refuses to attend to them on time and keeps them waiting for another twenty minutes with the notion that the men should come back the following day. It was the men's protest that made her to give them their money as if they did not work for it. 'I have brought your money,'¹⁹ she announced benevolently.

The men's conversation at the Freedom Motel shows that they are aware of the class division and they know where they belong.

'Well, all fingers are not equal. Everything is God's work'
Patrick said.
'kai it's not God's work, it's man's made,' Omoifo disagreed.
(20)

The stress of work has its toll on Idemudia as he gets sick in the middle of the night that the five naira he was paid is not enough for the treatment.

The activities at the University Hospital depicts the failure of the government to have compassion on the masses. The government do not bother about their well-being but rather to enrich themselves, thereby making them richer and the masses poorer. "He couldn't understand why in the midst of so much disease, the government concentrated on building hotels instead of hospitals. He simply couldn't understand".²⁰ The government are building business empires for themselves and their generation unborn, yet they couldn't provide adequate health facilities for the masses. Since they will not make use of the hospitals, they do not bother to rehabilitate them.

The situation at the Ogbe Hospital is not different as patients are made to share bed or sleep on the floor. The place has been jam-packed that they had to reject some patients due to inadequate space. In all of this, the Senior Service ward is available but the doctor cannot admit patients there because the ward is reserved for the high and mighty.

The exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie is not only physical but also sexual. While Queen exploits Idemudia, Obofun exploits Adisa. Obofun knowing the predicament of Adisa decides to take advantage of it by giving her mouth watery offers for a token of money when he knows that Adisa cannot boast of any penny. He uses the opportunity to turn the table around by telling her "Perhaps you can give me a guarantee in another way".²¹ Even though Adisa bluntly refused at first, due to the pressure mounted on her by Obofun and her desperation to save her husband, she gives in to Obofun.

Within her, she knew she was defeated. Only Obofun did not know this. He thought he was uninterested and hostile.... Adisa knew that if he grabbed her and embraced her, she would be unable to fend him off. not with her mind the way it was.²²

¹⁹ Iyayi, "Violence", 37.

²⁰ Iyayi, "Violence", 55.

²¹ Iyayi, "Violence", 127.

²² Iyayi, "Violence", 168-169.

The exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie extends to Queen's site. Due to the unemployment in the society, she feels she can hire and fire at any time which is why she fired some men in order to bring in Idemudia and his friends. The workers on the site earn wage that does not commensurate with what they are doing on the site and they dare not complain, if not they will be fired. Both Queen and the site engineer, a Greekman do not expect the men to protest about how badly they are being treated. When they asked for more money, they are fired. The Greek man explained to them 'you heard what Madam said. No laziness and no agitation. If you work hard, you stay. If not, you go.²³ If you are not satisfied, you go, and we hire someone else'.²⁴ The people on site are already used to it that they warned Idemudia and his friends when they complained about how little the wage is. He said 'the best thing to do is to keep your mouths shut. Personally, I have children to feed and jobs don't come easy' (237). Even when the workers held a meeting in order to embark on industrial action, Queen does not see it as a big deal because she believes she can always have her way any time. The author puts it thus: 'She would buy him over now, in the future, she could do away with him, discard him as rubbish into the dustbin'.²⁵

Apart from Idemudia, Osaro, Omoifo, Patrick and Adisa that are being maltreated and exploited by the bourgeoisie, Papa Jimoh also was maltreated by his former employer for an accident he knows nothing about. He was released after two days in the cell. "Papa Jimoh is beaten down. His human pride is flat out, knocked down by his cruel bout with other human beings.... He is subdued".²⁶

Idemudia represents everyday African who despite the odds will keep on fighting and hoping that tomorrow will be better. Idemudia portrays a man resolved to achieve a set goal, 'I am not going to give up, I am going to continue to struggle, to fight'.²⁷

The Bourgeoisies capitalize on the hardships facing the working class like unemployment, poverty and hunger to continually perpetrate immoral exploitation of labour. A worker paid so little is left with no choice than to accept it just because if he complains he loses his job to thousands of jobless men like him waiting for any kind of job. The reaction of Queen to the strike describes poor and often insensitive approach of government to workers' demands during labour disputes in our contemporary society. Rather than granting the workers better working conditions, Queen resort to frantic efforts to suppress the strike, using intimidation as a tool and will to use sexual enticement to convince Idemudia to convince other workers to call off the strike.

²³ Iyayi, "Violence", 236.

²⁴ Iyayi, "Violence", 239.

²⁵ Iyayi, "Violence", 252.

²⁶ Iyayi, "Violence", 82.

²⁷ Iyayi, "Violence", 184.

Representation of Class Conflict in *Violence*

Idemudia, the protagonist in Festus Iyayi's *Violence* is portrayed as a poor, jobless man. He faces difficult and very challenging everyday situations just to be able to feed his family. He is the victim of this state of violence as his life threatened severally and severely with abject poverty. To survive he has to sell his blood on a daily basis, to make a living for himself and his wife. Idemudia's struggle against poverty describes the unfortunate fate of poor unemployed Nigerians burdened by hunger, unemployment, poverty and lack of social security and despite going through hardships still faces oppression from the ruling class always.

Similarly, Adisa, his wife is faced with the dilemma of remaining a faithful wife while her family languishes perilously under the claws of hunger. She faces domestic violence from her husband due to the poor state of her husband. Despite everything, she loves her husband and even refuses different pieces of advice coming from neighbors to leave her husband for a rich man that will take care of her. She unfortunately falls a prey in the hand of Obofun, a bourgeoisie who will not offer her any help until he has gets down with her. She represents the African women who are loyal to their spouse no matter the condition. Her situation describes the many challenges facing the female gender in Nigeria even in work environment including schools and colleges of higher learning. Unemployed youths are asked to surrender their dignity in order to get job, promotion, grades etc.

A character that epitomizes class division is Queen, the wife of Obofun. She belongs to the bourgeoisie class who would stop at nothing to ensure profit at the expense of the dignity and welfare of her workers. She sleeps with men to get what she wants using sexual gratification as a means to an end. The fact that she is rich does not matter to her. She always wants to have her way with anyone so far, the person will do her bidding. This points to the reason why she sleeps with Iriso, not because she does not have money to pay but because she wants other advantages ahead of other. Her sexual gratification is not only to the people of her class (bourgeoisie) but also to the poor folks. This she did when she tried to bribe Idemudia with sex so that he could talk to the other people on site so as not to go ahead with the strike.

Queen represents the affluent African women who use what they have to get what they want. These women sleep with politicians for political post and appointments; leader of market for securing a stall; CEO of companies for employment and other people that can be of help to them.

Obofun is another character that exhibits the trait of the rich or bourgeoisie, the oppressing side. He is the husband of Queen, he represents Nigeria's corrupt, wealthy upper class. Obofun makes his millions by winning coveted building contracts through his connections in the government and through the relinquishing of percentages of the contracts' total worth to those who award them. He represents Nigeria's corrupt elite who often request sexual gratification in exchange before granting favours. This is what he did to Adisa, knowing how important the money is to her, not minding whether her husband is dying or not insisted on laying with her before rendering any help to her.

Conclusion

Every individual in the society is important but some set of people are seeing themselves as more important at the expense of the other group thereby making them feel less of human. It is the protest by the less privileged group that make way for class conflict. This struggle includes but not limited to industrial strike actions and labour disputes. Workers demand for better pay is a common display of class struggle often resulting in strikes, the workers try to get the highest possible wage in order to provide for their families with sufficient and wholesome food, to live in good homes, and to dress as other people do and not like beggars. A constant struggle is, therefore, going on between employers and workers over wages.

The members of the less privileged group are victims of exploitation, misery, degradation suffering etc. They are supposed to have freedom but they are being enslaved economically. The absence of economic freedom denies them political freedom.

Festus Iyayi is a Nigerian author and he uses his work, *Violence* to x-ray the extent of class struggle in the context of the African society. Class conflict will not be easily eradicated or preventable until democratic principles, human rights, equity and justice are imbibed.

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