

TITLE PAGE

**THE DEHUMANIZING EFFECTS OF WAR: A STUDY
OF SELECTED IGBO PROSE FICTION**

BY

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This is to certify that the work embodied in this project is original and has not been submitted in part or full for any diploma or degree of this or any other University.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Mrs. Agnes Onyia for her love for education.

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ABSTRACT

Between July 1967 and January 1970 may be described as the darkest age in the Nigerian history especially in the Biafran area south east Nigeria. It was within this period that the Nigerian civil war was executed. The civil war actually dealt a hard blow on the people of Biafra as the war centered directly on the geographical area of the Biafra (Igbo) land. Up till today, the evil effects of the war are still fresh in the people's mind. In this study, effort was geared toward portraying the negative effects of the Nigerian/Biafra War not only on the civilian population but also on the military. This is with a view to noting and x-raying the dehumanizing effects of the civil war as portrayed in the two novels, *Jxq Obinna* and *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala*. Based on his mastery of the Igbo language and the style of his writing, many critics have focused on his writing, each focusing on way area or the other. However, despite all the write-ups that have focused on Ubesie's novels, none to the best of the researcher's knowledge had focused on the dehumanization effects of war as observed in his literary works. In this study, documentary research was adopted for the collection of data while the descriptive approach was adopted in the analyses of the two novels. Apart from bringing out the unique features of the literary works, the results of the study indicate that there were excessive hunger, financial problems, psychological trauma, and excessive use of force by the Nigeria forces on the Biafrans. The dehumanizing effects of war was evident in the two novels as the people of Biafra were traumatized and in most cases, did the unimaginable just to survive. The dehumanizing effects of the war were evident in different characters and in different communities in Igbo land and as such the two novels could be described as historical novels.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Title Page-	-	-	-	--	-	-	--	-	-	-	-	i
Approval Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Dedication Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Acknowledgment		-	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	v
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	--	-	vi
Table of Content	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	-	vii

CHAPTER ONE

1.0	Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1.1	Background to the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
1.3	The Purpose of the Study--	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.4	Scope and Limitations of the study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.5	Significance of the Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
1.6	Synopsis of the Two Novels: <i>Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala</i> and <i>Jxq Obinna</i> .										10

CHAPTER TWO

2.0	Literature Review	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
2.1	Theoretical Studies	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	-	16
2.1.1	Literature and Society-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
2.1.2	African Literature and Dehumanization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22

2.1.3	War and Literature	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
2.1.4	Ubesie: The man and the Art	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41
2.3.	Empirical Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47

CHAPTER THREE

3.0	A Critical Appraisal of the Effects of Nigeria-Biafra War in <i>Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
3.1	Hunger and financial implications of the Nigeria Biafra war as contained in <i>Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala.</i>	-	-	--	-	-	-	-	61
3.2	The Psychological/Societal Effects of Nigeria/Biafra War on the People in <i>Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78
3.3	The effects of the execution of Nigeria/Biafra war in <i>Isi akwu Dara N'Ala.-</i>								85

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0	An Appraisal of the Effects of Nigeria/Biafra War in <i>Jxq Obinna.-</i>	-							94
4.1	Hunger and Financial Implication of the Nigeria Biafra War in <i>Jxq Obinna.</i>								95
4.1.2	The Psychological/Societal Effects of the Nigerian/Biafra war on the People as Contained in <i>Jxq Obinna.-</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

4.1.3 The dehumanizing Effects of the Execution of the Nigeria/Biafra

War as Contained in *Jxq Obinna*. - - - - -
 117

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Discussions, Summary and Conclusion - - - - 128

5.1 Discussion - - - - - 128

5.2 Summary - - - - - 135

5.3 Conclusion - - - - - 138

References - - - - - 140

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature in the contemporary world is seen not just as the mirror of the society but as a means of projecting what is happening in the society. This must have prompted Nwadike (1992) to affirm that literature is artistic creation which is used to x-ray and portray the world as it is. There is basically a symbolic relationship between language, culture and literature as each reinforces, projects and distills the other (Adedimeji, 2012). Adedimeji goes further to reason that the need for the projection of African culture had informed the development of modern African literature which serves to enlighten, educate, and showcase African worldview, practices and problems.

Literature, whether oral or written, fiction or real performs the above functions that one may not be able to state for example where oral literature begins and ends or where the line between fiction and non-fiction practically exists. As such, Agbedo (2012) states that though fiction presents an imaginary world in the form of narrative, it primarily concerns itself with the imaginative reconstruction of reality.

In the past, African literature was treated with disdain. When African literature appeared in the literary scene, many scholars, mostly Europeans, received it with suspicion. African literature attracted little or no critical attention because many believed that the writers would soon disappear into thin air (Adewoye, 2002). In a comprehensive manner, Ohale (2010) observes,

A relatively short while ago, the popular notion of Africa as an arid farmland with respect to literary

production was sustained by many who truly believed that Africa had contributed nothing of value to world literature. But by the 1980, works of African authors had begun to generate a great deal of interest (p. 1).

The artistic dexterity of leading African icons x-ray and wave African culture into English language in a way that re-constructed and corrected in a compelling manner the subjective portrayal of Africa, the cradle of civilization as a heart of darkness (Adedimeji, 2012). This literature was no longer seen as being fiction or non-fiction but a platform for critically expressing one's feeling and relaying the culture and the way of life of Africans to the whole world. In the light of the foregoing, it could be said, that,

Contemporary African writing constitutes a very significant part of post colonial literary discourse. Many African writers such as Ngugi Wa Thiongø, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ayikwe Armah, Cyprian Ekwensi and many others have come to identify themselves with the socio-political movements as well as with the aspirations of their people and subsequently presented the different facts of African heritage in their writings (Thakur, 2012, p.23).

Through literature, the people's culture was not only projected but also their socio-political life and aspirations especially during the colonial era came to the fore. It could be stated that while the nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Tafawa Balewa, Julius Nyerere were fighting the colonial regime through political means, the literary giants in Africa

were reaching the ends of the world through their creative works and creating a far more impact that led to the, ðde-colonization of African countriesö.

Prior to the coming on board of the African literary artist, the Europeans wrote literary works about Africa and this must have propelled some authors of African origin to venture into the literary world. In this respect, Achebe (1989) states,

At the university I read some appalling novels about Africa (eg. Joyce Cary's much praised Mister Johnson) and decided that the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well intentioned (p. 38).

Yes, this is true but Achebe forgot that for us (Africans) to tell the story well and in its original form, it must be rendered in African language(s). Achebe thus ended up telling the African story in a white man's language. Some other writers did not only tell the story as it is but did that in indigenous African languages. Tony Ubesie is one of such Africans that told the African story in purely African language. According to Emenyonu (2001), ðwhen one reads Tony Ubesie, one appreciates fully and unmistakably the handicaps of contemporary Nigerian writers who seek to communicate their cultural sensibilities in a foreign mediumö (p.33).

While commenting on his writing, Nwadike (2001) observes that what distinguishes Ubesie from his counterparts and contemporaries is not only that he uses the Igbo language but that he writes in such impeccable Standard Igbo that it is difficult to know his locality. His fame thus, according to him as a novelist derives from his mastery of the Igbo language.

But then despite his mastery of the Igbo language, Nwadike (2001), states that non author writes in a vacuum. Thus, Ubesie's experiences in the Nigeria / Biafra war as a soldier and as a member of the society prepared him adequately for his work. Ubesie was abreast with events in Igbo land and wrote in the Igbo language. Though many authors believe that his writing in the Igbo language is a plus for him, others think otherwise. The latter is the stand of the present researcher, and that is why some authors believe that he is one of the best literary artists of African extraction (Emenyonu, 2001) as he did not only produce a worthwhile African literature but also rendered same in African language. Ubesie wrote many novels, but only two of the novels focus on the Nigeria/Biafra War. According to Uzochukwu (2001),

In his handling of the war novels, *Isi Akwè Dara Nwala* and *Jwé Obinna*, Ubesie shows how to some extent, the life of an author can be reflected in his work . . . He intimately writes on the ravages caused by the war but from different perspectives. He portrays the life of a married woman of easy virtue in *Isi Akwè Dara Nwala* and that of a straggler in *Jwé Obinna*. The war novels of Ubesie mark him out as historical novelist who uses historical events to create works of fiction (p.21).

The civil war actually dealt a hard blow to the people of Biafra due to the way the war was executed and these were captured in the two novels. This attests to the fact that literature paints a picture of real and imaginary life (Abonyi 2012) and by so doing x-rays the happenings in the society. Even till today, the evil effect of the war is still fresh in the people's mind, and according to Achebe (2012), there were a lot of human right violations and deprivations during the war.

In this study, effort was geared toward portraying the negative effects of the Nigerian/Biafra War not only on the civilian population but also on the military. This is with a view to noting and x-raying the dehumanizing effects of the civil war as portrayed in the two novels, *Jxq Obinna* and *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala*.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Literary appreciation is a concept used whenever a literary work is being assessed. In it, one's work is evaluated to bring out the unique features in the person's work (Ossai, 2012). At the inception of African literature, many Europeans and even some Africans with European mentality thought that within a short while, African literature would disappear into oblivion (Adewoye, 2004). Even their appreciations of literary works produced by African writers were that of apprehension and suspicion, and thus, they viewed African literature as being sub-standard.

On the view above, Olafioye (1989: 1) observes that "the manner in which some critics express their idea is sometimes polluted with verbiage, esotericism, bias, misinterpretation, ignorance and ideological intolerance. This actually captures the way European critics view African literature. In furtherance of this line of thought, Okebalama, (2001) states,

Tony Ubesie does not quite belong to the class of universal famous literary artists. This is not because he lacks the greatness of a creative artist . . . the only reason we believe Tony Ubesie is not known is that he wrote in Igbo unlike the Achebes and the Soyinkas. Tony Ubesie is not internationally known, he is only known within a very narrow circle in Igbo (p.137).

Ubesie was thus perceived as being inferior to other great writers just because he wrote in the Igbo language. But if one may ask, when has it become a crime for someone to write in his native language, be it the Igbo language or any other language? A writer's choice of language should be guided by the message he wants to pass on and the target population he wants to address and not necessarily the language of communication. After-all Culler (1961), affirms that what makes a work great is the powerful and beautiful applications of ideas to life. In this latter stand, many scholars believe that Tony Ubesie is not only a great writer but is rated among the foremost novelists, of African literature in African languages, and as such is ahead of others who wrote African literature in foreign languages. While towing the last line of thought, Okebalama (2001) states that Ubesie is a great mind and as such, his works deserve attention. For Emenajo (2001), Ubesie is the best literary artist of Igbo extraction who wrote all his works in the Igbo language.

Specifically, Nwaozuzu, (2001) observes,

Ubesie's ability as a skilled novelist does not stop with his creative handling of themes and plots. In terms of the other aspects of style, his novels are in a class apart, especially, the artistic manner in which he weaves in such linguistic elements as proverbs and anecdotes (p. 90) .

Based on his mastery of the Igbo language and the style of his writing, many critics have focused on his writing. While Emenyonu (2001) looks at Tony as a new and exciting Nigerian novelist, Ezikeojiaku (2001), focuses on the themes of his novels, while Nwadike (2001 and 2001 a) delved into the militancy, strategies and escapist maneuvers as structural features in Tony Ubesie's novels and the stylistic study of Ubesie's first three novels. However,

despite all the write-ups that have focused on Ubesie's novels, none, to the best of this researcher's knowledge had focused on the effects of the inhuman treatments noticed in his literary works.

In view of this, the present researcher not only focuses on the effects of war in *Jụq Obinna* and *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala* which are both his war novels, but specifically looks at the dehumanizing effects of war on the Igbo people. This is with a view to pointing out the dehumanizing effects of war and crimes against humanity that were committed during the Nigeria /Biafra War as contained in the two novels, but also pointing out the moral lessons therein in the novels.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to have an in-depth study of the dehumanizing effects of the Nigeria/ Biafra War as contained in *Jụq Obinna* and *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala*. Specifically however, the main objectives of the study include;

1. To critically bring out the various negative effects of the Nigeria/ Biafra War as contained in the novels under focus.
2. To ascertain whether these negative effects as portrayed by Tony Ubesie are dehumanizing in war situation or not.
3. To find out if there are any moral lessons derivable from the various negative effects of the war.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Different themes have been handled in various novels written by Tony Ubesie. However, in the two novels under study, *Jụq Obinna* and *Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala*, the effects of the Nigeria/Biafra War stand out clear. In this study, the

effects of the war with special emphasis on the dehumanizing aspects are under focus.

War in itself is a negative phenomenon and a condemnable act in human existence due to its negative effects. It should therefore be stated here that though wars have mostly negative effects, but not all negative effects of war could be regarded as dehumanizing. There are, therefore, certain negative practices and effects of war that could be seen as normal in war situations while others are regarded as crime against humanity.

In this study, effort will be geared towards sieving out those effects of war reflected in the two novels which could be regarded as dehumanizing and as such crimes against humanity.

1.5 Significance of the Study

One of the major functions of literature is its ability to instruct and expose one's horizon to past events, the present and at times, these can be a window to what will happen in the future. One of the lessons derivable from this research endeavour is its ability to expose to us the dehumanizing effects of Nigeria/Biafra civil War. This is because, according to Isyaku (2004:3),

literature has opened man's eyes to what had happened in the past in many nations, and what is happening now, how man has been battling with his environment, that is physical problem such as famine, ecological disasters, social, political and economic problems such as war, corruption, recession, religious crisis, . . . oppression and other forms of human degradation.

Through the critical analysis given in the study, the readers will be able to see the dangerous effects of war and appreciate the suffering of the people during the civil war.

The study will also be beneficial even to other people who have not read the novels, have not heard even about the Nigeria/Biafra War or cannot read the Igbo language as the story therein will help them know and appreciate the effects of the war on the masses. This is because according to Olaaye (2002), even though literature entertains and instructs, it warns people of dangers and instructs us by opening our eyes to a wide range of experiences and avail us of the opportunities of having a deeper understanding of events within and outside our environment. Thus this appreciation cum review of the dehumanizing effects as narrated by Tony Ubesie will even help the audience to better understand and appreciate how the war was executed and the effects on the people.

The facts that crimes against humanity were committed during the Nigeria/Biafra War have continued to be re-echoed by different groups decades after the war ended. The study will be of great help as it will give the vivid description of the execution of the war from both the soldiers and the masses. Since literature can at times serve as history books, the study will reveal from the literary world the author's perspective as it relates to the effects of the war. While reviewing Chinua Achebe's work, *There was a country*, Noo (2012, P.3) observes that according to Achebe (2012),

As the conflict dragged on, Biafra buckled under a blocked so brutal it provoked an international outcry: mass starvation, Kwashiorkor and mental illness devastated the Igbo landscape, where vultures, those òavian

prognosticators of death, circled overhead. Biafra was the world's first properly televised conflict, and millions across the world were appalled by the horrors flickering on the screens.

This write-up will thus give credence to the facts and figures being put forward by the then Biafra and others who sympathized with them during the 1967-70 Nigeria civil war.

Literature is essential for the provision of didactic lessons, be it moral or other lessons. Just as Ossai (2012) states that Nwadike is down to earth and uses his work to preach against immorality, Ubesie is down to earth and uses events he under-went in his life to teach lessons, both moral and otherwise. However, what is in contention is to ascertain who did what during the civil war. As the work will bring out the effects of the war and who committed which atrocities during the war, it will serve as a lesson to people as they will come to the understanding that whether in war situation or peace, nothing is hidden under the sun. The study will therefore be of help to people as it will impart moral lessons to the readers.

1.6 Synopsis of the Two Novels: *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala* and *Jxq Obinna*.

A *Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala*.

Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala is the maiden Igbo novel of Tony Ubesie which surfaced in the Nigerian market shortly after the Nigeria, Biafra war in 1973. According to Ubesie, " . . . Otu nwoke s[, ma nd[l r qg , ma nd[gbara qsq, ha nile b agha ò(One man observed that both

those who fought and those who ran participated in the war). This novel, though written by Tony Ubesie, a soldier in the Biafra army focused on the two side of the divide- the soldiers and the Biafran masses. Thus while other soldiers were giving an oral experience which they had during the war, Tony used a literary medium to tell his own story.

The novel opens with a picture of the pre-war Igbo people's way of life where the people engaged in different economic and social activities. Within this initial period, Ada got married to Chike. But one remarkable remark was made by a mad man who after the priest admonished that, "what God has put together, no man should put asunder," the mad man responded, if they do not break their union themselves. The young family lived in peace and within five years, they were blessed with two kids-Chukwuma and Obianuju (a boy and a girl). After a short while, the Nigeria Biafra war began in 1967 and Ubesie captured the effect of the war thus,

Afq 1967 na Na[jir[a ! Onye n r maka
ya gbupu asq, n' ihi na onye buru ya
n' uche loo asq mmiri, onye e nyere
ns[ka ya mma.

This was how Ubesie captured the effect of the war. The above literally means that what happened in 1967 in Nigeria should not be heard, due to the horrible experience people went through the during the war. This shows that the war was so devastating and its effects numerous that it should be consciously be forgotten.

Chike and his family lived in Enugu when the war started. When it started, it was Chike's wish to enlist in the Biafran force but he was already married. The situation he found himself were described thus;

Chike nq na be ya na-ele n' anya.
Nwany[o l r ekele ya agb n' aka.

Q b r mgbе Chike ka na-aza Chike,
 q gara [dqwa moto otu ak k soro
 ibe ya jee kwap mgbq (p.21)

Thus he was tied down due to the fact that he was married and had two kids. Though he was adamant in terms of leaving Enugu at first because of his wealth, when the Nigerian Army reached Enugu, he did not need any preacher before he departed from the Coal City though not without the initial problem of their missing themselves.

When they reached home Chike became a philanthropist to the people that lived in his house at Awka. But this did not last as he could not withdraw money from the bank after a short while. Later-on as the Nigerian forces reached Awka, they left for Aguata, and as things had changed dramatically, he had to go for relief material as there was no food in the house. But for the priest who headed the distribution of the relief materials, he would have been killed when he tried to jump the queue. At other times he was forced to sell his radio, bed sheets and other personal effects so that he can feed his people.

Later on when every grownup male was forced to become soldiers, women became the bread winners and after Ada had played this role for a short while, she abandoned her family and followed the soldiers. She latter-on became a big trader that sold salt. But, when Ada nearly died while in this business, Chike decided to visit her but was turned back after lots of humiliations from Ada. Later Ada returned to Chike's house but his friends (soldiers) continued to visit her in her husband's house. When Chike complained, she threatened to hand him over to be enlisted as a soldier. At last when Okechukwu (Chike's younger brother) came and dealt with Ada and her friends, Ada seemed to have learnt her lessons by force. But this did not last as Ada returned to her wayward behavior thereafter

and this resulted to her being beaten by Chike. By this action, Chike broke the camel's back and in a swift manner, Ada called in her friends who caught Chike and took him to the training ground where he now became a soldier. At the end of the war, while others were rejoicing, Ada was in a dilemma because of the atrocities she committed as Chike was not ready to forgive her.

The effect of the war was so devastating as there were hunger, killings, stealing and other unimaginable acts committed by both the soldiers and civilians. But could they be said to be dehumanizing especially in war fare?

B *Juq Obinna*

Juq Obinna is another Igbo novel written by Ubesie with the Nigerian/Biafra war as its major theme. Unlike *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* which focused on the adverse effects of war on families, *Juq Obinna* beamed its satellite on the effects of the war on the young boys who were the target of the Biafran army who were looking for recruits through out the war period. In this later novel, Obinna who had boasted of his would be exploits before the war started is the chief character.

Six months into the war, Obinna was still seen in Ach[, his home town and this prompted this question from Ogbenyeau:

Obinna, isi na q b g[n[ji g[[banye
soja soro ibe g[kwawa mgbq? Mgbe qg
ebidobeghi, g[bu mmad nile bi n'ogbe
a zq tuwe qn ihe [ga-eme na soja,
ka { ga-esi gbakata egbe je kp ta nd[
iro n'aka, ka { ga -esi lugide qg , e
mee g[qchi agha, na ka { ga-esi na

nkw fere n'qj[, si n'qj[fere
 n'akpaka wutuo n'ala, buru isi mmad
 lqta (P.2)

Above state captures what Obinna boasted before the war. According to Obinna, he would be the first person to join the Biafran army once the war commences where he will show his strength and skills in shooting and bring back home the heads of the enemies. But shortly after the war started, rather than joining other soldiers in the war front, Obinna had perfected his act of running to avoid being enlisted as a soldier. Once he saw a Whiteman whom he thought to be a commando, and he had no option other than to run into the bush despite the fact that he was putting on military uniform thus,

Obinna maburu onwe ya tunye n'qhia,
 wewe qsq o mukworo am mgbe a na-ach
 ya ka a kp nye ya na soja.

Thus in above statement, Tony Ubesie described Obinna as having perfected in the act of running to avoid conscription that it has now become an act which he learnt just like one can learn any other act. Despite this feat which he has perfected, he was caught and taken to the training ground from where he ran away after sometimes. He met Onyido at different times, at the training ground and in the town when they ran away.

It should however be mentioned that his conscription and subsequent arrival at the training ground gave the reader an insight into what was going on at the training ground and among the Biafran army. At the training ground trainees were killed and those that killed them felt less concerned. Thus, the author observes,

Ihe majqrq Obinna nke ukwu ab gh[nan[na e gburu enyi ya, ihe yiri ya egwu b na nd[gburu ya emeghi ihu ka nke a ab ihe q b la, nke gosiri na o teela ha ji gbuwe d[nd[d[ka enyi Obinna.

Thank God, he was able to achieve his heart desire as he ran away with Onyido who ironically was instrumental to his running out of his village after he warned him against tarnishing his image in the village. Obinna had to head for Ihiala but a lot of problems await him as he has to travel across, Umunze, Ajaal[, Ag ata, and more importantly Nnewi where there were many Biafran soldiers who mounted road blocks along the road.

Obinna had heard that bags of stockfish õdevelop legs and walkö at Uli airport and was determined to be one of those that will help these stockfish to walk. Now that he is at Uli and with a trained thief Ndubisi, Obinna was sure that he will achieve his dream. But rather than getting stockfish or money, they stole a box containing the corpse of a child who died of malnutrition and incidentally while trying to open the box, they were caught by Biafran soldiers who arrested them. They were detained and after being tried, they were flogged and enlisted again as Biafran soldiers, but having perfected his escapist skill, he escaped again.

Obinna returned home and while narrating his cock and bull story to Nnenna and Ogbenyeanu, Onyido again came and to counteract his story with that of Obinwanne who avoided conscription throughout the war only to boast of his exploits during the war. Those present were eager to know the person but he told them to ask Obinna (*Juq Obinna*).

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Nigeria/Biafra War is one of the wars that have gained attention in both the literal world and in real life. As such, as historians, human rights activists and their likes are giving their own account, literal artists have used the instrumentality and the devices therein in literature to render their own accounts.

In this review, literature, wars/Nigeria-Biafra War and the place of Tony Ubesie in the literary world were focused at. The reviews of literatures were structured under the following subheadings:

2.1 Theoretical Studies

2.2 Empirical studies

2.1 Theoretical Studies

Literature is essentially a creative art which covers basically all aspects of human life. It is all-embracing and encapsulating and it is generally an acclaimed fact that literature mirrors the society (Nwaiwu, 2011). Most of the ideas in literature are either imagined (fiction), partially imagined or at times real (non-

fiction). In which ever way we see it, the fact remains according to Adedimeji (2012), that, "there is a symbolic relationship between language, culture and literature as each reinforces, projects and distills the other" (p.2).

Literature based on the foregoing is basically complex, not merely because it encompassed both oral and written forms or because it has both African and other types of literatures but due largely to the fact that literature and the society are inseparable. In view of this, this subheading will be handled under the following sub-topics.

2.1.1. Literature and society

2.1.2 African Literature and Dehumanisation

2.1.3 War and Literature

2.1.4 Tony Ubesie and Literary Creativity.

2.1.1 Literature and Society

The dehumanizing effects of war on the people look more as a topic meant for researchers in social sciences. One may wonder why researchers in Arts and more especially those who are in literary studies should venture into such topics instead of working on fiction and fable related topics. It is in the light of this misconception that the present sub-topic, "literature and society" becomes important.

Literature refers to any material written or not but whose features lend itself to literary appreciation and in line with these literary genres-proses, poetry and drama (Olorountoba-Oju, 1999). Thus, any literary work that fits into these literary genres could be regarded as literature.

In a broader view, Fajin, Bislu & Dawurung (2010) posit that,

Literature is the imaginative representation of reality about the experiences of people at different times and places about their culture, tradition, history and religion . . . the writer of any literature has to be constantly conscious of events around him and must develop an ability to put these down through his creativity (P.117) .

Literature is imaginative and artistic in nature, but then works of literature emanate from the society. After-all literary works can either belong to fiction or non-fiction or both, and as such deal with real or imaginary events.

In line with the above, Kabiru (2004) states that,

literature has opened man's eyes to what had happened in the past in many nations, and what is happening now, how man has been battling with his environment, that is physical problems such as famine, ecological disasters . . . social, political and economic problems such as wars, corruption, recession, religious crises, students' crises, strikes by labour unions, oppression and other forms of human degradation (P.3).

Literature thus not only mirrors the happenings in society but (came into being to) projects and x-rays what is happening in it (the society) for posterity and for the whole wide world to see. This must have prompted Ossai (2012) to observe that literature covers a lot of human activities. In their own view, Umar & Bwai (2011) observe that literature aids the understanding of social life since it is the mirror through which a society sees itself. Literature makes us aware of the world we live in by exposing its various aspects (Ikeagwu, 2000).

Furthermore, while linking literature with life in the society, Nwaiwu (2011) opines that,

Literature draws its strength from actual life. It deals with human life, with all its complexities and difficulties. Literature deals with the joys, sorrows, poverty, plenty and above all death to which man is subjected and which is man's enemy (P.14) .

Literature thus focuses existential, on realities as seen in any particular society at a particular time. Nwaiwu goes ahead to assert that literature deals with particular and contemporary events and issues or with attitudes and behaviours in contemporary and particular situation.

Literature thus in its peculiar manner aids our understanding of life (Umar & Bwai 2011), helps the reader gain insights into value and cultures different from his own (Amechi 2005), paints pictures of real life by its special ability to deal with many aspects of human life (Abonyi, 2012) and more importantly makes us aware of the world we live in by exposing us to its various facets (Ikeagwu, 2000). It is in the light of these that Eze (2009) sees literature and life in society as inseparable and thus states,

. . . Literature and life are so much intermingled that one can hardly be separate from the other. This is in the area of the experiences that make up the literary works of arts. Basically, everything we see in a literary work of art is a product of personal experiences, that is, experiences gathered from society or the world around us. . . literature transmit such personal experiences and make them

universal objects of thought and analysis. This is one of the basic elements of literariness (P.3).

Though Eze (2009) disbelieves that literature is a historical document, Chinedu and Ukachu (2010) affirm that,

Indeed, literature has served as a historical document in virtually all world cultures. Historians have found literary artifacts very useful in investigation and in the tracing of the historical highlights of a people. You can recall the cultural benefits of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which has put the Greek Trojan war and civilization a perspective still less, we cannot wish away the cultural and historical values of the Indian epic, *Maharata*, the Spanish *Cid*, . . . Each of these epics is similar to the Ijaw *Ozidi Zaga*, recreated in drama of the same title by J.P. Clark í .(P.169).

Literature as described above is a vital tool from which the people's past can be brought to fore. This is because according to Amaechi (2005), literature projects the history, culture and politics of the people. Through this, if the literary work is in written form, it widens the scope of experience of its audience about different people and cultures of the world. However, Bennett and Royle (2004) observe that,

literary texts belong to no particular time, they are universal and transcend history: the historical context of their production and reception has no bearing on the literary work which is aesthetically autonomous, having its own laws, being a world unto itself (P.114).

They believe that literary texts are bound up with other discourses and rhetorical structures. This suggests that though literature focuses on the society and draws from the society, most of what it uses, what is contained in literary works may not necessarily be facts in themselves. After-all an image cannot be said to be the object itself but rather a representation of an object.

According to Eze (2009), some schools of thought equate literature with life, while others believe the contrary. He states thus,

Some schools of thought in literary criticism equate literature with life. To them, literature is all about life. On the other hand, other schools of thought see literature and life as two parallel lines. In whichever way one sees literature, the most important thing to note is that literature has a world of its own with some elements that make up the world.

Eze opines that the world of literature is made up of its elements (characters, settings, plots, and figures of speech) which in turn make up the world of literature. In his example, he states that the Okonkwo, in *Things Fall Apart*, for instance, is a character in a literary work and may not be the Okonkwo that someone knows in the world of reality. Again, Umuofia where the story takes place is the setting of the novel and may not be the Umuofia in the world of reality. He, therefore, concludes that literature is timeless and universal unlike history that is particular and temporal.

In a similar vein, Bennett and Royle (2002) state that,

The historical context of a literary work-the circumstances surrounding its production is integral to a proper understanding of it: the text is produced within a historical

context but in its literariness, it remains separate from the context (P.114).

Context is essential part of any story, be it historical or otherwise. The dislocation of the context according to this later explanation makes literature mere fiction without much historical significance.

From the fore-going, it can be seen based on Eze (2009) that there are two opposing schools of thought, those who believe that literature and life are inseparable and those who believe that they operate at parallel lines. However, there is a consensus that literature focuses on life in the society be it imaginary or real. Nwaiwu (2011) points out the specific nature of literature, thus,

The literature of a particular community can be defined as the sum total of all works of imagination either in oral or written form, in prose or in verse which have helped to reflect and project the life and culture of that community in the three important areas of narrative fiction, drama and poetry. Literature, like all other art forms draws on human experience and tries to reflect the same and communicate it back to man in an ordered or artistic form (P.114).

In other words, through the works of literature, man projects it in various ways of life (culture) to the outside world. Little wonder then, different cultures have been beaming to the different parts of the world via literary works, how they see the world or life and more importantly how they practically live in their various communities. During the colonial rule, African culture was seen as primitive and inferior and literature written by the white men portrayed that, but even prior to the full decolonization of Africa, different authors from African

soil had sprung up to portraying the African culture in good light. All these show that literature and life in the society are inseparable, and this gave rise to African literature.

2.1.2 African Literature and Dehumanization

African literature could be said to be a child of necessity. Born to correct the bad image peddled against Africans and their culture by the white men misrule and mis-interpretation of the peoples way of life. According to Chinedu and Ukachu (2010),

í (what) gave birth to African literature lend itself to cultural bias and its backbone. Against the backdrop of colonial imperialism, which among others, subjugated the African space and denigrated its traditional administrative live hierarchies and also eroded its value systems, replacing it with foreign ones, early Africans took it upon themselves to redress the wrongs in their writings. To assert the African personality and to demonstrate that there were models of administrations and lofty traditions that stood the taste of time, African literature took off, more or less, as anthropological detail (P.165).

African literature, thus, came up not merely to rival the English literature or similar misconceptions portrayed by the un-informed as far as African literature is concerned but to tell the African story without bias. In a more explicit manner, Adedimeji (2012) explains,

African literature emerged out of a need to fill a vacuum: the gaping vacuum of voicelessness. The initial void allowed for the popularity of obviously misleading literary works about Africa, whose inhabitants were described as a race of savages, people without civilization and culture. This distortion of facts served as stimulus to the emergence of African writers producing African literature which posits to educate and enlighten the world about Africans (P.13).

Africans were thus portrayed as sub-humans who act with impunity and engage in reckless killing of fellow men either for rituals or merely as cannibals. People outside the shores of Africa did not only see Africans as a land of cannibals but also as a land where the sun set at dawn. Adedimeji thus averred that the need for the promotion of the African culture was the brain behind emergence of African literature.

Culture is thus at the fore-front of most literary work all over the world. In this respect, Chinedu & Ukachu (2010) observe that right from the Greco-Roman civilization when rituals and festivities were enacted in dramatic performances, the literary traditions of different parts of the world have been shaped by their cultures. This is imperative according to them because culture is the people's way of life and literature is a mirror that reflects the society, and what is the society without its peculiar culture? And what is literature if not a portrait of man and his environment held up for him (and others) to see by the artist. In this manner literary work becomes a veritable tool for the reflection of man's environment, his world view and general existence (Nwaiwu, 2011).

Above stand is actually why most experts think that literature is an important medium through which humans strive to make sense of the world in which they find themselves (Abrams, 2013). According to Madubuike (2007) culture is the spring board of all literary creation: this is because by valorizing our culture, our writers engage imperialism in a dialogue of values, dignity and authenticity. Freedom of expression through literary works has thus become not only a tool for cultural projection but also a key to national development. Why culture is the springboard for literary work cannot be over emphasized, this is even more so when we remember that prior to the emergence of African literature from African writers, Africans were portrayed as people who were barbaric and in dark ages.

Adedimeji (2012) observes that Achebe, an African literary colossus was taught that African had no culture while he studied Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*. These two colonial works rate Africans as a sub-human race and a continent without culture. Adedimeji (2012) thus reason that,

Given the forgoing definitions of culture (as the totality of peoples' way of life), it appears curious, if not mischievous to assume that a human society does not have (a) culture. This apparent misinformation or disparaging distortion incidentally contributed to the emergence of written African literature (p.2).

Furthermore, Chinedu & Ukachu (2010) affirm that there was pillorying of the African people and its cultures by colonial European novels, namely, Edger Wallace's *Sander of the Rivers*, John Buchan's *Prester John*, Joyce Cary's, *The African Witch* and *Mister Johnson*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In all

these literary works, the authors who are not Africans tried to paint Africans black either because of lack of knowledge about Africa or bias for Africa. Africa was thus seen as a continent where the unimaginable happens.

But literary artist from Africa came up and identified themselves according to Thakur (2012) with the socio-political movements as well as with the aspirations of the people and subsequently presented the different facets of African heritage in their writings. They, thus, came out not only to tell the African story as people of Africa but to project the true nature of African culture.

Prominent among the writers that sprang up at the early stage is Chinua Achebe. In the view of Zouiche (2002) , òthe Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe conceives of writing as an activity, through which the African writer can define his identity and recover his historical rootsø(p.208). According to Thakur (2012), Achebe is,

A soaring figure in African literature, Chinua Achebe has painted with remarkable insight the multifaceted picture of Nigeria which becomes a microcosm of the whole of Africa. He has successfully been able to perceive the African reality in the pre and post colonial context, using the western genre of fiction, he has brought into it the fine shades of African sensibility and culture. Though specially the novels are set in traditional Igbo society of east Nigeria, the depiction is so close to the truth, that it moves from the particular to embrace the general and the local scene can be extended to the ex-colonial world (p.23).

In the above quotation, Chinua Achebe is seen not only as an artist who produces imaginary works but as a man who projects the African culture. In the same line of thought, Umar & Bwai (2011) state while citing Achebe (1982) thus;

Chinua Achebe considers himself an educator who dedicates his works to the enlightenment of the masses. He says (Achebe): "I think it is part of my business as a writer to teach . . . that there is nothing disgraceful about the African weather, that the palm tree is a fit subject for poetry (p.55)

Umar and Bwai concludes by stating that Achebe, a world acclaimed writer with impeccable integrity has for long been active in the condemnation of colonialism and the portrayal of African culture as barbaric. According to Dutta (2010), Chinua Achebe has been able to make a creative Africanization of the English language in all his literary works. This is also true of some other authors like Wole Soyinka and Buchi Emecheta. Having gone thus far, one may be tempted to ask for the true definition of African literature. Is it a literature that is written in African language or a literary work that focuses on Africans and written by any literary artist? In reaction to this, Igwebuike (2005) states;

When we talk about African literature, we mean a body of literary work about Africa, her traditions, culture and beliefs. It may or may not be written by an African, or in African language. It can be written in French for example, provided what is discussed has some relevance to events of Africa; that is, the life pattern, culture, beliefs, values and traditions of African people (p.21).

African literature based on above explanation is an imaginative work that focuses on events and the people that live within the continents. African literature just like other literary works all over the world is in two forms- oral and written literature. Royanian and Yazdani (2012) do not actually see these two forms or branches of literature as being much different as they state,

African oral and written literatures are but two sides of the same coin with ordinary fundamental values. Both are for education, for esthetic satisfaction, for culture protection and for safe recognition. Both are, therefore complementary except perhaps that oral literature is the springboard of written literature. African oral literature helps in the reaffirmation of Africa culture. It is the rich storeroom of myths, the foundation of tribes, the holiness of religion and tradition beliefs (p.42).

Zouiche (2002) went ahead to state that even Chinua Achebe one of the foremost English speaking Nigeria writer conceives the African writer as a man with a mission. In his writings African writers transcend time and space to continue the education that is primarily devoted to the oral tradition. This is because the role of the writer today should not be different from that of the story teller in traditional African societies, who through stories, proverbs, charades, initiation rites and songs has contributed not only to the education of successive generation of young African but more importantly to the transmission of the cultural heritage and wisdom of African societies as accumulated through centuries of humorous communal living.

But though we know that one of the main functions of literature is its entertainment function, Adedimeji (2012) observes, that African literature is not

primarily to entertain but to educate the world. African literature thus has a profound cognitive value and dilettante is alien to African literary experience. While supporting the view of Ojaide (1992) Adedimeji states that culturally speaking, there is no art for art's sake in Africa as every literary work has a social function. African literature thus has a mission and vision.

At this juncture it should be stated that most of the African countries were colonized by foreign overlords and as such foreign languages were introduced in African soil (Igwebuike, 2005). In view of this most authors who brought African literature to limelight wrote in foreign languages. Igboanusi (2001) posits thus,

The study of an African writer who writes in English should be understood as a study of a writer who uses English as a second language. His use of English cannot but be quite different from what obtains when writers from Britain and America for instance write in English. . . they use the English language which is European in such a way that they incorporate the idiom and language resources of African languages while ensuring that the English language grammar is not terribly distorted (p.55).

In this respect, while quoting Onwubu (1976) and Achebe (1965), Igboanusi (2001) emphasized that for the English language of these writers to express adequately the way of life of a different culture, it must endure some internal structural changes and as such, the real African creative writer must alter the English language to suit African surroundings and culture.

But while these authors were trying to project African culture/way of life through literature, the efforts of these early writers came under heavy attack not

only from Europeans but also from fellow Africans especially those in Diaspora. In this respect, Roy-Omoni (2010) points out that while some authors from Nigeria/Africa were trying to decolonize African literature, other writers who have tasted Europe and were presently living there were negatively attacking their fellow writers from the continent. In this respect an interview granted Adeola James by Buchi Emecheta in 1980 comes to mind. In the interview, Buchi Emecheta affirms,

Writing coming from Nigeria . . . sounds quite stilted. After reading the first page, you tell yourself you are plodding. But when you are reading the same thing written by an English person or somebody who lives here, you find that you are enjoying it because the language is so academic, so perfect. Even if you remove the cover, you can always say who is an African writer. But with some of my books you can't tell that easily anymore because, I think using the language everyday and staying in the culture, my Africanness is in a way being diluted. My paperback, Collins, has now stopped putting my books in the African section (Adeola, 1980, p.39)

Roy-Omoni (2010) thus points out that Emecheta's reasoning and utterances can be likened to the Yoruba adage which states that it is only a mad man that points to the father's house with the left hand. Emecheta actually lost out in this argument, since rather than looking at the aim of the writers, she was more concerned with the grammar and even consumed in inferiority complex as she did not even want to identify herself with Africans. Despite the fact that many

writers continue writing African literature using English, French and other languages as their medium, Bodunde (2001) reports

Recent trends in the field of indigenous literature indicate a radical shift in style and vision especially because African writers in English are becoming more conscious of the need to write in their various native languages (p.5).

Bodunde went further to state that Ngugi is a leading figure in this respect. Ngugi's decision to write in Kikuyu was probably driven from the influence, which *Ngaahika Ndeendo* (I will marry when I want) had on the Kenyan peasants. Of course Ngugi's choice of Kikuyu as a literary language for his largely peasant audience is bound to produce mass appeal. More importantly, this language mode allows for a more effective transmission of the writer's political vision.

In this part of the world, Igbo writers have so far dominated the prose literature in Nigeria (Igboanusi 2001). In the field of indigenous literature Nwoga (1986) affirms that Tony Ubesie is the leading figure in novels written in Nigerian languages. His level of seriousness according to Bodunde (2001) has helped in a great measure on shaping the Igbo novel. As it appears, the more successful of the early indigenous writers constructed their vision on idealist or moralist principles. For instance, the moral question of the struggle between good and bad reflected in most of the early novels. This thus brings us to the question of themes in African literature.

Whether indigenous languages or foreign languages are used as the medium of rendition/writing, the struggle between good and bad and how eventually good triumphed against the evil are usually dominant themes. In all,

the aim of the African literary artists according to Adedimeji (2012), can be stated thus,

The essence of this effort by the literary artists is the portrayal of Africans as peoples, like other peoples of the world, with their own, dreams, values customs and weaknesses. After-all written literature, which evolved through colonialism from African oral literature, is concerned with reviewing the past, assessing the present and projecting a better future for Africa. It educates, informs, entertains and documents Africans as they change with the changing world (p.4).

The literary artists thus were caught in the web of expressing themselves in their works that contained varying numbers of themes. Igwebuiké (2005) thus reasons that because some African novels have more than one thematic concern, there is no specific or conventional way they can be classified. However, some major thematic concerns of African novels can be put into genre and more importantly the exposure to the west or Europe was the major thematic concern of early African fictive works. The exposure to Europe and America has its effect on the psyche of the Africans and literary works. Zouiche (2002) thus recounts,

Achebe urges the African writer to be at the vanguard of the people in the fight for the rehabilitation of the African past and for a re-appraisal of the traditions of these societies for the recovery of their lost identify. The task is of utmost importance as many Africans themselves, the western-educated in particular, have internalized many of the myths, beliefs and prejudices held by westerners,

namely that all manifestations of African culture were inferior and worthless (p.205).

Zouiche reports that while Africans were portrayed as either savages or cannibals and primitive race devoid of civilization by westerners, Achebe reports that in Igbo land, to say that a product was Igbo made was to brand it with the utmost inferiority. Little wonder then, one of the major themes in African novels was to assert the identity of the African people as people whose actions were governed by reasons just as any other race.

Other themes contained in early African novels include the clash of two cultures, the conflict between Christian and African religion and their likes (Igwebuike, 2005). Other themes that came later include, fundamental issues relating to political leadership, the place of women in society, the role of the artist and the whole question of revolution and social change. The satire contained therein in these novels (Achebe's *Arrow of God*) bite so hard that some readers even wanted to draw vague comparisons between the textual country of Kagan and any other African country that they know about (Okah, 2008).

Despite the fact that by the 1980s, works of African authors have begun to generate a great deal of interest world wide and as such African literature was no longer being ignored, Ohale (2010) reports,

. . . in spite of the critical success enjoyed by these authors, all males, the dearth of a strong female presence is apparent in their works and presents an unbalanced picture of African rural life, ignoring the important roles that women have played and continued to play in African society (p.1).

As a result of these, he posits that feminist critics have thus denounced the patriarchal bent in these novels, citing that women have been cast in marginal roles and depicted them as mere objects of sexual gratification, procreation and idle gossip.

But female writers have come up to challenge the status quo and in the view of Chukwuma (2002), feministic writing in Africa today shows the difficult haranguing process of female self-actualization. The whole rubric of feministic literature traces the processes of this self-knowledge and selfhood. Little wonder then that Ohale (2002) opines that the theme and the whole essence of feministic writing focused on reclaiming women's right and position in the society. Chukwuma (2010) affirms that the main aim of feminist writing was to stress the relevance of woman in the society and fight against the negative and docile image given to African woman.

In all the main theme of writers was first of all to tell the African story in an objective form whether such stories are told in African languages or not. Though both the male and the female artists tried to gain entrance into the literary world at different times in history, their main aim was to project the African culture and way of life. The aim of the research work is to assess the effects of war in a true African setting, especially as it is seen in Tony Ubesie's novels: *Is[Akwu Dara N'Ala* and *Juq Obinna*.

2.1.3 War and Literature

Literature is a liberating force, freeing us from inherent shackles placed upon us by the society (Eagleton, 1973). In line with this line of thought, Ahmed (2011) explains,

Literature always depends on human reality, thus literary works depict human actual situation. So, literature is a mirror which reflects man's actual life in the society where he is found. Literature . . . borrows from history and relies on everyday events (p.9).

Conflicts and wars are part and parcel of life and it can be said that just as peace is as old as man, conflicts and wars are as old as creation. It therefore suffices to state that if literature/literary works depend and mirror the society, then since conflicts and wars are part and parcel of the society, then literary works should also focus on these concepts. Conflicts are aspects of disagreements between individuals, groups and even sometimes nation states. In the case of nation states and different ethnic groups, if conflicts are not resolved on time, it may lead to actual war fare. Conflicts could be regarded as fore-runner to actual war.

Bennett and Royle (2004), therefore warn that in a moment, we shall be saying something that may be rather shocking as unresolved conflicts dovetail into full blown war. In like manner, literary works rather than covering events/themes that entertain, engage in some tragic stories that are not only breath-taking but even engage in the reportage of serious conflicts/actual war fares that took place in the past. Other even predict wars, while other through pure imagination report wars that took place outside our planet.

In view of the fore-going, Arthur (2010) while writing on war and Nigerian literature, observes,

War has provided creative artists over the ages with bumptious ecstatic inspirations in the creative enterprise. Many philosophies have sprung form the blood-nourished

fields of war and thinkers have developed certain reasoning patterns from merely studying war. In war is the widening gyre of vibrations that play the chord of human sportiveness (p.2).

Arthur went ahead to stress that in addition to the above, is the glaring verity that great men and women, great nations and empires all came to greatness in a chaotic war situation. Many have thus focused on this vital aspect of human/nations ladder to greatness or in some cases a pit that leads to the down fall of many nations.

Specifically on civil war, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2011), reports that a civil war is a war between organized groups within the same nation state or more commonly between two countries created from a formerly united nation state. In most cases, the aim of one side may be to take control of the country or region, to achieve independence for a region, or to change government policies. Wikipedia affirms that it is high-intensity conflict, often involving regular armed forces that are usually sustained and organized in a large scale. In view of this, civil wars may result in a large number of casualties and the consumption of significant resources. Fearson (2007), thus, declares that a civil war is a violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the center or in a region or to change government policies.

The Nigerian- Biafran war is one of such civil wars that have been widely reported in literature. Wikipedia (2011) reports thus,

The Nigerian civil war also known as the Nigeria-Biafran was, 6 July 1967-15 January 1970, was a political conflict caused by the attempted secession of the south eastern provinces of Nigeria as the self-proclaimed

republic of Biafra. The conflict was the result of economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various people of Nigeria (p.10).

Just as McEwan (1999) opines that in war situation, there are immediate break-down of the tranquil that is the characteristic of organized life, the Nigerian Biafran war brought untold hardship and misery to the Biafran people.

According to Noo (2012), no writer is better placed than Achebe to tell the story of the Nigerian-Biafran war from a cultural and political perspective. While reviewing the work, *There was a country*, Noo (2012) while quotes Achebe (2012) saying,

fearing the disintegration of Nigeria, the government blocked the secession with military force backed by a UK government keen to protect its oil interests. Profoundly disappointed by this turn of events, Achebe left his job at the Nigerian broadcasting corporation in Lagos and returned with his family to the south east, now calling itself the Republic of Biafra. The Nigerian army launched a three-pronged attack to subdue Biafrans, who fought back assiduously (p.1).

Achebe went further to explain a war-time spirit that inspired Biafran engineers to build army tanks out of reinforced Rangerovers and later-on invented the infamous Ogbunigwe (bucket Bomb) with much devastating effects. The devastating effect of both the air and land assault was much on the Biafran forces.

In view of this, Adinuba (2012) declares,

Scholars, analysts and commentators on the Biafran war are chagrined to understand the enigma behind the survival of the mass population in spite of the severe economic blockade and continuous shelling, bombing and massive air raids unleashed on the zone by the Federal troops, thus leaving in the trail hordes of destitute and refugee casualties (p.1).

Based on above premise, Adinuba imaged that there is no reasonable reason why the Biafran soldiers were able to resist the high artillery force of the Nigeria army, other than patriotism and love for the people of Biafra. He, thus, went further to state that answer to this and other related posers are located in the apostolic zeal to the point of martyrdom with which a consortium of religious and humanitarian organizations embarked on the rescue mission of saving a starving population.

In a related development while giving a critical review of the Nigeria-Biafran civil war, Akanji (2012) reports,

1967-1970 marked a dark period in the annals of the political history of Nigeria. It is a period of civil war between the Federal government of Nigeria and the break-away Republic of Biafra. At the onset of hostilities there was high expectation of an early victory on the Nigerian side. However, the war, became protracted, dragging on for thirty months, all kinds of military tactics and strategies were employed by the federal troops to ensure victory at all cost (p.1).

But Akanji asks, what were some of the military tactics and strategies employed by the Federal troops? What were the implications of these strategies for the human rights of the combatants and the civilian Igbo population?

In what looks like an answer to the above questions, Obajeun (2012) reviewing Chinua Achebe's (2012) *There was a country*, averred that truth must be told that Awolowo was a prostitute in terms of being rabid when it comes to seeking political powers. Awolowo according to him was a financial wizard who used economic tools to fight his own war. For Awo's calculation, there was no way to differentiate between the civilians, Nigerian soldiers and the Biafra warlords and as such any food supply to the war-front might not get to the intended beneficiaries. Awo then raked in the food to feed his own people in the West rather than wasting it on soldiers.

In a bias commentary which tended to be in support of Awolowo's position during the war, Obajeun (2012) declares,

For Achebe to have accused Awo of hoarding food to starve Easterners to death, is a clear case of someone who has lost touch with historical realities. On the flip-side, let us assume that Awo is guilty of the accusation, I have never read it anywhere that there was a warlord who was feeding the enemies on the war-front. Awo was human, in a clash of worldview, a principled man must take a stand (p.2).

He therefore states that Awo took a stand against Biafra. He went ahead to reason that the fact that Awo took a stand against Biafra was never a mistake and he never regretted it as Biafra never existed in his life time. Feeding your enemies

on the battle field according to Obajeun is like giving your gun to your enemies to shoot you.

Whether the above explanation is true or not, Anyaduba (2010) observed that there was no doubt that starvation has occurred as children and others were suffering from the effect of severe hunger and malnutrition due to the blockade. The war also cost the Igbo a great deal in terms of lives, money and infrastructure. It has thus been estimated according to him that up to three million people might have died due to the conflict, mostly from hunger and disease.

Once again, Akanji (2012) asks, can the civil war be situated within the ambient of humanitarian and human rights law? If so, to what extent if any at all, did the prosecutions of the war by the Nigerian troop conform to international laws? In every aspect of human life, there are rules of the game, be it in trade, games, and even in war situations. As such even in war situation there are dos and don'ts. As such, though killing of human beings are against the law, in war situation, killing of soldiers by opponents is allowed. However how the opponent is killed matters, as such soldiers are not supposed to kill with biological weapons, nuclear weapons, chemical weapons or with land mines. If soldiers go contrary to these laws, then war crime is committed.

The Nigerian/Biafran War has been widely reported both in the past and present due to the untold hardship the Biafrans suffered during the war.

As the historians, media reporters and even literary artists tell their stories, others review their stories. Tony Ubesie is one of those artists who captures the Nigeria/Biafra War in *Jxq Obinna* and *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala*. The two novels under focus in this study highlights the war and its effects on the Igbo people. But the questions now are, to what extent did the war stories in his literary works correspond to factual reports by historians, media men, international observers

and other writers in relation to what happened during the war? Whether it does or not, can the effects of the war as reported in the novels of study be such that what happened during the actual war could be regarded as dehumanizing and as such a case of war crime? At this juncture a review of Tony Ubesie's works and his place in the literary world becomes necessary.

2.1. Ubesie: The man and the Art

Tony Ubesie hails from Achi in Enugu state and spent his early life in Enugu, the capital of the then Eastern Region of Nigeria. While describing his early life with his father who is an orthodox Anglican, Ememanjo (2001) states,

. . . Tony's orthodox Anglican father, an Enugu-based artisan with the public works Department and church warden is his church insisted that Tony should have an Anglican upbringing. On the eve of the Nigeria-Biafra war in 1966, Tony was admitted to the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna. He never took up the offer. Rather, he joined the Biafran Army Eastern command at Enugu in 1967 as a recruit with the enlistment No. BA 5750 (p.2).

Tony rose through the ranks, from a lance corporal a captain with the registration number B1110. Due to his popularity and the zeal with which he discharged his duties during the war, he was nicknamed Captain Bullet. He later on bagged a bachelor's degree from the Department of Languages of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka after the war.

What distinguishes Ubesie, a second generation Igbo novelist from his counterparts and contemporaries according to Nwadike (2001) is his style. Nwadike thus declares,

He writes in such impeccable standard Igbo that is difficult to distinguish his locality except in commentaries and personal authorial interruptions where he tells the reader that Achi is his home town, *Xkpana Okpoko Buuru* (p.61). Even though he has contributed some dialect words and expressions into the dynamic lexicon of standard Igbo, he is not a dialectal writer (p.64).

Nwadike went ahead to observe that Ubesie consistently adopted lexical borrowing and Igbonization strategies in enriching the Igbo language. His fame as a novelist derives from his mastery of the Igbo language and the effective use of same in his work.

Tony Ubesie had thus used his mastery of the Igbo language in the publication of different stories in the three major genre of Igbo literature. According to Emenanjo (2001), Ubesie wrote the following:

1. *A Chụwa Onye Qma* (1970) (never published)
2. *Ugochukwu* (1970) (never published)
3. *Xkwa Ruo Oge Ya* (1973) O.U.P.
4. *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala* (1973) O.U.P
5. *Mmiri Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe* (1974) Longman
6. *Xkpana Okpoko Buuru* (1975) O.U.P.

7. *Xkpaka M[r[Onye Xb[am* (1975) fourth Dimension
8. *Juq Obinna* (written 1975 published 1977) O.U.P
9. *Qd[nala Ndi Igbo* (1978) O.U.P
10. *E Nenebe Eje Qlu* (written in 1976 published in 1977 -1993) U.P.L
11. *Mkpa Akwukwq Darue Ala, O zuolu ikuku ike* (1993)
12. Nine poems in *Akpa Uche* (197 - - -) O.U.P. (p.3) .

Emenanjo comments that out of his works listed above, number ten (10) above is drama, number nine (9) a book of essays on selected Igbo customs and traditions while number twelve (12) is a selection of his poems published in a book. The rest of his literary works are prose narratives. In support of this, Uzochukwu (2001) observes that Ubesie is a prolific novelist who has written many novels in Igbo. He specifically observes that apart from his six published novels, in his private discussion with Ubesie, Ubesie disclosed that he had some other unpublished works.

Ubesie's writing style is peculiar and this has given him an edge over other contemporaries in the literary world. Dike (2001) thus states that Ubesie possessed most, if not all the attribute of a good writer. His style is peculiar and rare to copy aptly. People thus, admire his novels because of the competence and his vivid representation of realities or thoughts and feelings.

Still on style Nwadike (2001a) discloses thus,

One aspect of Ubesie's literary style is his art of characterization. He very often imbues his chief or major character with high intelligence, which results, in their

being very resourceful and creative in terms of emergency to disentangle themselves from difficult situations (p.65).

Through this literary style, Nwadike observes that he is able to create and manipulate artificial *deus ex machina* at each stage of a rising action where the character (s) involved is (are) put in a difficult situation, which eventually get resolved on a happy note.

In line with the above, Nwaozuzu (2001) discloses thus,

.. . Ubesie's characterization becomes unique. His protagonists are creatures of flesh and blood rather than symbols of some higher, abstract quality of the spirit. They are amply imbued with the elements of honour and humanity. The heroine of *Xkwa Ruo Oge Ya*, Ngozi Onwuka for example, is sufficiently endowed with a well-delineated personality, which not only commands respect but arouses sympathy for her and her poor lover Chude Obi. The same is true of Chinyere in *Xkpaka M[[r[Onye Xb[am* (p.90).

This later explication portrays the fact that Ubesie fashions his chief characters in such a manner that they do not only maneuver themselves out of difficult situations, but also in such a manner that thrills the imagination of the readers.

Ubesie's works are filled with lots of literary devices. Onyekeonwu (2001) while commenting on one of the devices mostly used by Ubesie states,

One of the literary devices Ubesie is prominent and proficient in is his use of Igbo proverbs. It is true that

Ubesie could be guilty of overuse of this literary device, it is nevertheless obvious that he does not misuse them. He neither clusters, nor uses them inappropriately (p.119).

It should be said here that though Onyekaonwu's claim that Ubesie use of proverbs is much, in Igbo context, it is a fallacy to state that excessive use of proverb is a misuse or a negative phenomenon. It is rather a show of linguistic artistry rather than weakness.

In an, earlier publication, Onyekaonwu (1986) had described Ubesie as a conscious user of proverb. In his explanation, he observed that Ubesie falls under the category of conscious users of proverb. While observing that Pita Nwana's work *Omenụkọ* is a typical example of a work that obeys the rule of unconscious use of proverbs, he categorically opines that Ubesie falls into the conscious use of proverb users though his is not found culpable in most of the shortcomings of using proverbs consciously. Ubesie is fond of bringing in as many proverbs as possible into his work. This according to Onyekaonwu is sure evidence that he is conscious of their use. Equally, he is fond of incorporating proverbs that are not originally Igbo proverbs into his works. At times these proverbs are his own coinage and are thus mechanized. After-all one who has mastery of Igbo proverbs and oracy do not only have at the tips of his fingers, Igbo proverb but should be able to construct proverbs that suit any speech situation. A powerful blending of these two skills which Ubesie has show-cased in his works attest to his mastery of Igbo proverbs.

Based on his style of writing, use of literary devices and infusion of his personal experiences in his works, most experts see him as a foremost literary icon in African languages/literature. In a subtle manner, Emenyonu (2001) stresses,

Tony Ubesie may be an unfamiliar name to many readers of fiction in English or French. He may be totally unknown to readers whose reading excludes materials written in the Igbo language. Among Igbo readers too, his popularity or even an awareness of his existence as a writer may be limited to those students in secondary schools . . . (p.33).

He, however, concludes that despite all these, Tony Ubesie remains a very important contemporary Nigerian creative artist and probably the most gifted and accomplished fiction writer today in the Igbo language.

Furthermore, Uzochukwu (2001) affirms that there is no doubt that Ubesie is the most prolific novelists that have written in the Igbo language. According to Uzochukwu, he creates through his fertile imagination and through reconstruction of life experiences, powerful works. This is coupled with the fact that he is always in control of his subject matter and is adept at making thematic contrasts. He concludes that based on the number and quality of his work, Tony Ubesie remains the Charles Dickens in our own literary world.

In a comparative mode, Emenyonu (1981) reveals,

Tony Uchenna Ubesie is in a class by himself. His distinction lies in his ability as a skilled narrator, who maintains a worthy distance between his message and his medium. He achieves for fiction in Igbo what Chinua Achebe, has achieved for Igbo literary creativity in English (p. 10).

Emenyonu (2001) goes further to affirm that Ubesie is an outstanding writer by all standards. Specifically, he points out that his two novels on the Nigerian civil war provide an illuminating picture of the varying perspectives of the human tragedy, which engulfed the Nigeria nation at a particular point in time in Nigerian history. War in itself is a tragedy in human existence but there is always a right way of engaging in both the good and the ugly part of human life. The study therefore focuses on the dehumanizing practices meted on the people as well as establishes if the rule of the game (war) was strictly adhered to.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Tony Ubesie does not quite belong to the class of universal famous literary artists. He is not internationally known and it could be said that he is only known within a very narrow circle in Igbo (Okebalama, 2001). But even at that studies have been carried out in relation to his literary works. In this sub-heading, effort will be geared toward the review of such studies.

Literary works according to Ossai (2012) serve the tremendous purpose of improving the societal way of life. This is achieved due to the various themes that are handled by literary artist. These themes most often as it relate to African literature focuses on events in society with a view to affecting it positively. In this respect, Ezikeojiaku handles the, ðThemes in the novels of Tony Ubesieö.

According to Ezikeojiaku (2001),

Tony Ubeise is perceived as a humanist, an idealist, a romanticist and a realist, he is probably the most mature writer in Igbo novels among his contemporaries. He is not only perceived as an author who portrays cultural

practices but also a novelist who in his themes x-rays the Igbo society (p.47).

He opines that Ubesie is a universalist who in spite of the setting of his novels in Igbo land, moves from romantic comedy to romantic tragedy, from thriller detective to the picaresque exploring human values that would help re-shape the contemporary society.

The main objective of the study was to find out the various themes in Ubesie's novels. Ezikeojoaku (2001) made it clear that Ubesie was concerned with human life in all his works, the way people live their life in the society. The various themes of Ubesie's novels according to Ezikeojoaku include;

1. How people suffered and were dehumanized during the Nigerian Biafran war, the theme of *Isi Akwu Daara N'ala*
2. In *Xkwa Ruo Oge ya*, the theme is the relationship that exists between young men and women with less interference from the older generation in a society that is filled with vices.
3. The themes of *Juq Obinna* and *Xkpana Okpoko Buuru* are the same as they hinge on the fact that it is one who live the next day that will be able to fight or tell the story (life first) .
4. The law of retributive justice which is outstanding in Igbo belief and cosmology is another theme in *Xkpana Okpoko Buuru* and *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* as Ndi Odogwu paid for their lust for brazen materialism (in *Xkpana Okpoko buuru*) while

Ada paid for her infidelity to Chike in *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala*.

In view of the above stated themes, Ezikeojiaku (2001) Opines,

Ubesie uses his novels . . . to entertain, teach or correct the ills of the society. He uses í (behaviours of) characters to correct the ills in Igbo society or its cultural practices. One can see that through an artistic manipulation of setting, character, plot and language, this vibrant novelist portrays the effect of environment and situations on the individual (p.59).

He, therefore, concludes that Ubesie's message in his story is not only that the law of retributive justice is here and now in our life but also that any dynamic culture ought to accommodate the good features of another culture. This according to Ezikeojiaku is the bottom line of what Ubesie is saying in his novels.

The study however handled only the themes of the novels and as such not an indebt study that is capable of bringing out all the social ills noticed in the novels and determines the effects on the people. The present study is not only an indept study of the effects of the war on the people (as contained in *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* and *Jxq Obinna*) and to determine if these negative effects of war on the people were dehumanizing especially in a war situation.

Another study carried out by Ikeokwu (2009) was captioned, òAkara Ikom na Akara inyomi Ngughar *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala*ö. A direct translation of this topic in the Igbo language will be, òThe state of being a male and a female: A review of *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala*. The main objective of this study is the re-

examination of the role of males and females in relation to their natural endowment and cultural expectations assigned to each gender in the society. According to the author, the assessment of the two prominent male and female characters (Chike and Ada) in the novel, while taking cognizance of their biological endowment and cultural setting will not only help us to understand their actions better but will in no small measure help us in making an informed decision about the role they played in the novel. Specifically, the author affirms,

A b a n a d b e n d , a g b r b l a n w e r e
z w u r u e w u r u , d i i c h e s i t e n ' a g b r
n d z , e j i e n y e m m a d a k a r a n w o k e
m a b a k a r a n w a n y . E b e b n a
a g m a g n a - e s i n ' o m e n a l a n d e t o p t a ,
m m a a t a n y [g a - e s i t e n ' a g m a g n a
o m e n a l a i j i k w a d o o e c h i c h e a n y
n ' e b e a (Ikeokwu, 2009, p.16) .

In above illustration, Ikeokwu (2009) reasoned that in all traditions, each race has an established role for both males and females and this differs from one race to the other. In view of this, according to Ikeokwu, since literature emanates from the peoples culture, examples that guided the study followed this direction.

In this study, Ikeokwu through different authors/reviews showed that different genders have different assignment/assigned role in all cultures. Thus, as men face masculine duties such as going to war, feeding their families, taking decisions for their families and the whole community at large, etc. the female on the other hand, take care of domestic chores, and perform other works in the husbands house and in the community.

However, Ikeokwu (2009) with much textual references from *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* were able to establish the fact that rather than going to war, Chike was more interested in avoiding conscription. Ikeokwu (2009, p.20) advises the reader to look at the following statements from the novel:

Nan ihe b mkpa Chike b ihe oriri
 (67). Ma Chike s, onye ch ije ebe
 b la a na-ejeta ihe oriri, onye
 ah kp ya (118). Egwu na-atx ya
 ab gh maka ije qg ... Ma naan ihe na-
 eche Chike uche b m ya na nne ya
 ... na-ah ihe Ada na-eme nne ya na
 m ya mgbe ya... na-ejebeghi am, o
 jewe am, gn ka o ga-eme ha?
 (p.136).

Chike left his masculine duties assign to him biologically and culturally and were thus more interested in food. Chike even declared that any one that knows where to go and get food, let him call him. He was pre-occupied with the thought of what would happen to his children and mother in the event of his going to war especially having seen the behaviour of his wife Ada.

Having surrendered his masculine duties and taken the feminine role, the way his wife looked at him also changed. This was even more so, when Ada had assumed the masculine duties dropped by Chike and was taking care of the whole family (at least for sometimes). But after performing this role for some times Ada abandoned the family and left. Things became so hard for members of the family, to the extent that they were finding it hard to feed themselves. At a stage, Chike even begged Ada to literally be his *õhusbandõ* provided that Ada gave him

money and food. But Ada, indirectly reminded him of his masculine role, by telling him that he would equally ask her to impregnate him. Even Ubesie, according to Ikeokwu agreed that Chike lost all his masculine nature during the war. In view of this, Ikeokwu (2009) did not see why Ada should be condemned entirely for losing herø.

The study concludes that in Igbo culture, male and female gender have their assigned roles and when a man is unable to perform his roles he becomes ònwanyi nwokeö (woman man). During the war, Chike literally became a woman due to his actions and inactions, while Ada became a man due to her actions and the risks she took during the war. The author thus concludes that Chike should equally have his own blames for foregoing his duties/roles. This was equally instrumental to Ada's behaviours.

The present researcher should be commended for towing this line of thought as the war affected not only the men only. The war affected both the male and female gender, and as such condemning the actions of one group and not the other is injustice according to Ikeokwu (2009). The present study took a holistic approach, as it looked at the effects of the war on the whole Igbo nation (Biafra).

Another critical appraisal of Ubesie's novels is carried out by Nwadike (2001). According to Nwadike (2001 a),

One aspect of Ubesie's literary style is his art of characterization. He very often imbues his chief or major characters with high intelligence, which results in their being very resourceful and creative in times of emergency to detangle themselves from difficult situations. Thus, by this literary style he creates and manipulates artificial *deus ex machina* at each stage of

rising action where the character (s) involved is (are) put
in a difficult situation . . . (p.66)

Despite being in difficult situation because of the quality ascribed to these characters, they are usually able to manipulate the situation to their own good. Imbued with much intelligence, characters in Ubesie's novel are able to employ different strategies, militancy and escapist maneuvers to ensure that they are not caught and disgraced. The main objective of this study was mainly to bring out instances where the chief characters employed, militancy, different strategies and escapist maneuvers in *Mm[r[Oku E Ji Egbu Mbe*, *Xkwa Ruo Oge Ya*, *Xkpana Okpoko Buuru*, and *Juq Obinna*.

According to Nwadike (2001) *Mm[r[Oku E ji Egbu Mbe*, is a detective novel while Enyi is the chief character. In this novel Enyi and his group employed a lot of militancy, escapist maneuvers and strategies as a means of either getting themselves free from difficult situations or in achieving their goals. When Enyi was entrapped on the mango tree for example, he used all these strategies. Seeing that the cook was bent on catching him, the first strategy was to plead with the man but when this failed on deaf ears, he had to match force with force against the man and from half way up the tree, he jumped on the man's chest just as a cat would pounces on a prey from a height. Ubesie (1974) described this thus,

. . . Enyi we si n'elu w q ya
qkpa n'obi, Q s q ike n'ala. Enyi
biliri n'ike, wewe qsq (p.23).

Having disarmed the man after jumping on him, he ran away. The second time when the cook invited the dog to keep watch over him, he climbed from tree to tree until he was far away before jumping down (first strategy and escapist maneuver), then when the dog was sent to pursue him, he first of all beckoned on the dog to come as a friend (second strategy) but when the dog failed to acknowledge him as a friend, he poured sand into his mouth and disarmed not only the dog but the man who sent it (third strategy and the last that freed him). Even when Enyi became a full fledged armed robber, he was able to use different strategies to succeed in any robbery operation they carried out.

In *Xkwa Ruo Oge ya*, Nwadike (2001) recounts that the students used up to six different strategies in a bid to execute a rebellion against the school authority. The strategies include

- i. Excluding the blacklegs among the students who they suspected may leak their plan to the school authority.
- ii. Planning and successfully executing the plan to stop the principal of the school from coming out by brandishing different weapon in front of his house to scar him and members of his household.
- iii. Barricading the teachers quarters to prevent them from coming out as they thought that if they are able to come out, they may persuade them against their plan.
- iv. Laying mine of nails on the ground in the pastors house so that it would puncture the tyres of his vehicle and prevent him from coming out
- v. Singing the national anthem in the event of the police men coming. This will make them stand at attention while they continue with their assignment.

- vi. Painting themselves with charcoal and white chalk to hide their identity.

All these plans were geared toward seeing that they succeed in just this one operation and more importantly ensure that actors were not caught and punished.

Xkpana Okpoko Buuru according to Nwadike (2001) is one of Ubesie's novels where the greatest military strategies were employed. The novel is an encounter between the Obijiofor and the Nd[Odogwu. Though the Nd[Odogwu are a gang of criminals whose powers are great, the military strategies and escape routes employed by the Obijiofor and his sons during the various times they attacked were able to contain and humiliate them.

In *Juq Obinna*, Nwadike narrates that before the war, Obinna was quick to boast of his exploits in the event of any war, but when the Nigeria-Biafran war broke out, he declines to enroll in the army and made every effort to avoid conscription. His first line of action/strategy was to consult the native doctor, but when this failed he resorted to the spiritual churches.

At last when he was conscripted into the commando as a result of impersonation, Nwadike (2001) again explained that Obinna had no other option than to struggle, but immediately he saw Onyido they perfected a plan that helped them escape despite the tight security. At various other time, he was able to pass a Captin at Nkwq Umunze, escape being caught at Owere Ezukala by the white man, employed the tactics of divide and rule when he met two soldiers on conscription exercise and lied to them that some young men of the town were gathered somewhere to share beef and as such that they will make good catch there. This helped him thwart the chase bid of the people after him. Even on his way to Uli he was able to use many tactics to deceive the soldiers he met on the way till he arrived his destination.

Nwadike (2001) concludes that, Ubesie's experiences in the Nigeria Biafra war as a soldier, coupled with the experiences he drew from the society equipped him with the tool as a writer and in his creative ability, he was able to infuse the militant qualities of soldiers, the strategies and escape routes available to man in times of emergencies to create artificial dues *ex machina* to resolve complexities in the novels reviewed. Nwadike did not however look on the effects of the actions of both the military and the major characters on the people. This is the focus of the present study.

Related to above study is the one that was carried out by Nwaozuzu in 2001. While stressing the fact that Ubesie is a skilled novelist that weaves in linguistic element in his work, Nwaozuzu (2001) observes,

His stylistic devices are what distinguishes him from his contemporaries . . . one of these stylistic devices is his method of characterization which is unique to him. This view is consistent with the views of Emenyonu (1982) who also stated that Ubesie is a contemporary Igbo writer who combines the mastery of language with sense of humour which traps the reader (p.90).

In line with the artistry in Ubesie's novels, Nwaozuzu (2001) in her study, captioned, "Characterization in Tony Ubesie's novels" attempts using four of Ubesie's novels, *Xkwa Ruo Oge ya* (1973), *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* (1973), *Xkpaka M[r[Onye Xb[am* (1975) and *Juq Obinna* (1979) as specific examples to demonstrate further the degree of artistic creativity in Ubesie's work.

One of the criticisms leveled against Igbo literary work and African literature in general is the fact that the characters in the literary works were not

well developed. At other times, the characters in it are likened to that of stories in folktales. It is against this backdrop, that Nwaozuzu (2001) explains that this is where Ubesie's characterization becomes unique as his protagonists are creatures that seem to be real rather than symbols of some higher, abstract quality of the spirit as is seen in most other Igbo novels written during the period. The heroine of Ngozi Onwuka, in *Xkwa Ruo Oge ya* for example is sufficiently endowed with well-delineated personality which not only commands respect but arouses sympathy for her and her poor lover Chude Obi. The same thing is applicable to Chinyere in *Xkpaka M[r[Onye Xb[am*.

The characters in Ubesie's novels are more real unlike the previous writers in Igbo language whose characters were more of metaphysical beings capable of performing the unimaginary. Nwaozuzu states that Onwuka and Chinyere's father are true to life. These people represent the average Igbo father who is eager to marry his daughter to wealth and affluence despite their daughter's choice. In *Juq Obinna* (war novels), characters' reactions during the Nigerian Biafran war come to fore. According to Nwaozuzu (2001),

Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala, portrays the habitual greedy woman, who cannot bear the suffering inherent in a war situation. Consequently, she jumps from one affluent man to the other, in the guise of marriage or friendship. *Juq Obinna* on the other hand depicts the extent to which most able bodied men went to evade conscription in to the Biafran army (p.96).

The characters in these novels are so real that Nwaozuzu opines that a reader who lived during the Nigerian civil war (on the Biafran side) can substitute Obinna's name for several others who fought tooth and nail to avoid being drafted to the

battle field. She, therefore, concludes that though Ubesie's novels stimulate pleasure and thought, the characters on the whole are sufficiently endowed with convincing attributes.

In another study titled, "Tony Ubesie and the art of the Igbo novel: Some brief notes", Uzochukwu (2001) adopted Ngara (1982)'s framework for the analysis of Ubesie's novels. While quoting Ngara (1982), Uzochukwu (2001:19) affirms that Fiction can be analyzed into four main constituents: content, narrative structure, character and linguistic format. In a more simplified manner, Uzochukwu states that two major constituents can be carved out from above format namely; content and form. While content comprises the subject matter (*isiokwu*) and the theme, form consists of three parts namely, narrative structure, characters and linguistic format.

The main objectives of this study according to Uzochukwu (2001) are in two aspects,

Under narrative structure, attention is paid to plot & point of view . . . and narrative device. Under character, we are to examine the novelist's delineation of characters, whether the characters are round or flat, the type of conflicts they experience etc. In the treatment of linguistic format, we shall examine the author's use of linguistic features. . . (p.20).

Also among the aims of the study is the examination of the use of paralinguistic devices such as proverbs, myths and allusion.

Under content, Uzochukwu observes that among the six novels written by Ubesie, two issues feature prominently. These include marriage and the civil war.

Ubesie in his view is at his best when he writes on these two as they seem to afford him the opportunity of exploring thematic similarities and contrasts. In *Xkwa Ruo Oge ya* and *Xkpaka M[[r[Onye Xb[am*, marriage is the subject matter but his handling of the theme exhibits marked contrast. In *Xkwa Ruo Oge ya*, the marriage is founded on love while it is forced marriage in *Xkpaka M[[r[Onye Xb[am*. In *Isi Akwu Dara N'ala* and *Juqo Obinna*, Ubesie shows how to some extent the life of an author can be reflected in his work.

Nwogu (1991) in reaction to this observes that he wrote as an insider involved in the prosecution of the war. Uzochukwu (2001) went ahead to narrate that he wrote on the ravages caused by the war but from different perspectives. He portrays the life of a married woman of easy virtue in *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* and that of a straggler in *Juq Obinna*. In the former, the phenomenon of broken home occasioned by the husband and children abandonment for extra-marital relationship was the focus, while Obinna in the later novel who earlier-on, prior to the war was boasting of his would be exploit ended up making frantic efforts to ensure that he avoided conscription into the Biafran army. Thus while Ada went to the soldiers voluntarily, Obinna avoided them with all his strength.

Then on the forms of Ubesie's novels, Uzochukwu (2001) explains that his plot is generally non-episodic and the stories told in a chronological manner. As it relates to the point of view, he uses the third person omniscient narrator point-of-view, while his narrative devices mainly included suspense, dramatic irony, and coincidences. Onyido the native doctor who made charms for soldiers and others for protection and to avoid conscription respectively was conscripted first leaving the reader in serious suspense of what will become the faith of his followers like Obinna.

The characters in Ubesie's novels according to Uzochukwu are mainly round characters as most of the characters change with circumstances. Furthermore, his vocabulary and sentences are such that indicate the use of proverbs which are aspects of his paralinguistic features. They were extensively used to drive home his points. Based on all these, Uzochukwu (2001) affirms that, "there is no doubt that Ubesie is the most prolific novelist that have written in the Igbo language" (p.30) as his characters are delineated realistically and are always true to life.

From the light of the fore-going, it can be seen that though the style of Ubesie, his narrative technique, and other creative abilities therein in his novels have been studied. Little effort has been paid in term of highlighting the effects of the war on the masses in these studies. This is even more important in the present Nigerian society where the Igbos are still crying fowl based on the alleged atrocities committed by the Nigeria soldiers on the defenseless Biafran masses. This study therefore uses the literary medium to x-ray the effects of the Nigerian Biafran war on the masses. This is with a view to determining if the effects were really dehumanizing in war situation as is being suggested by some analyst (especially those on the Biafran side) in Ubesie's novels- *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala* and *Juq Obinna*.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 A Critical Appraisal of the Effects of Nigeria-Biafra War in *Isi Akwu Dara N'Ala*.

Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala, is a contemporary Nigeria post-war fiction where Ubesie highlights the human tragedy of the war (Emenyonu, 2001). Most post war artists describe families torn apart by the events and illustrate ways in which the war affected many families negatively (Ugochukwu, 2001). Ubesie is one of the authors that told the story of the war from the family perspective. His narrative technique is splendid and as such in the words of Ojinmah (2012), ò when one considers the preponderance of works on the subject of Nigeria civil war, it is surprising to see a novel that probes this over trodden path with deft freshness, and that is a compelling readö (p.4).

In *Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala*, both Chike and his wife Ada could be described as ideal husband and wife respectively. And their home could be said to be an ideal home where peace reigned. But at the heat of the Nigeria/Biafra war, the family was torn apart as Ada could not see any reason in feeding the whole family from her toils and at the same time remaining loyal to her husband who now depended on her. According to Emenyomu (2001) while describing the family of Chike,

While the going is good, his family life is intact and harmonious. When the time changes and money and food are hard to come byí . His family disintegrates. His wife Ada goes after men in uniform for her survival abandoning her children and even betrays her husband to the army because he appeared to be in her way for a full amorous satisfaction (p. 41).

Though, this development gives vivid effects of war on the masses, as people decided to go contrary to the societal ways of life even to the extent of abandoning their children and husbands, the case of Ada helped in the development of the plot. This is because Ada's infidelity was instrumental to her having a close contact with soldiers on friendly basis and during her trade at the

heat of the Nigeria/Baifra war. All these also gave the readers insights of what were going on in the war fronts. The dehumanizing effects of the war in Ubesieø *Isi Akwụ dara N'Ala* have been structured under the following subheadings for proper analysis.

3.1 Hunger and financial implications of the Nigeria Biafra War in *Isi Akwụ dara N'Ala*.

3.2 The psychological/societal effects of the war on the people as contained in *Isi Akwụ dara N'Ala*.

3.3 The dehumanizing effects of the execution of the Nigeria/ Biafra war in *Isi Akwụ dara N'Ala*.

3.1 Hunger and financial implications of the Nigeria Biafra war as contained in *Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala*.

The Biafra soldiers seemed to be strong and tough at the beginning of the Nigeria Biafra war, but with the introduction of financial policies and the blockade of Biafra from the outside world with the aid of Britain and USSR (Present Russia), the Biafrans found themselves in a fix. In line with this, De Mey (2011) narrates,

Even though The Biafran troops were outnumbered, and had a shortage of weapons, they managed to achieve some wins in the beginning of the war. However, with the support of the United Kingdom and USSR, the federal troops encircled the area and blocked Biafraø entire link to the outside world (p.5).

This was coupled with the fact that the bank accounts of Biafrans were frozen as a strategy to cut off food supply and military equipment to the soldiers. The ethnic groups were therefore caught up in the strife and suffered deprivation, financial ruin and various degrees of starvation (Matters of Iregbulem, 2013).

The financial implications of the war, deprivations, and starvation were vividly captured by Tony Ubesie in his novel, *Isi Akwụ Dara N'ala*. Chike's financial problem started when there was inconsistency in the monetary policies. These policies did not only lead to devaluation but also led to uncertainties on the part of the people who were afraid of events that would surface in the near future. Chike came to the bank and unlike before, he was paid only in coins. At first Chike received this with apprehension and fear and according to Ubesie,

Chike amagh ihe ga-eme. Xd ibu
a ab gh d a na-akp nd na-ebu
ibu ka ha ba buwere mmad . O wee
si otu onye n'ime nd na-ar qr
ebe ah , ya ledoro ya ego ah anya
ka ya ba. jere n' gb ala ya,
ch[ta otu uwe d ebe ah , b[a na-
ekporo ego ah ka a na-ekpo akx.

Nd Igbo b nd kwere na a na-
akpata ego akpata. Ego ab gh ihe
a na-ekpota ekpota. Ma mgbe Chike
ji kpowe ego ekpowe ka o ji mara
na b ch ad gh mma (p.34).

At the bank as stated above, Chike was paid in coins, and as the load was much, he had to collect his cloth from the car to be able to carry it. This is because, this kind of load was not such that should be carried by pay agents or loaders. But even as all these were happening Chike knew that something was in the offing.

This is because according to an Igbo proverb, money is not meant to be collected in such a great quantity but should be gotten in small quantity. But now that Chike was collecting money in such magnitude, he knew that something was wrong. Since the quantity of the money was much, Chike thought that it was not wise to have such quantity of money in his house especially in war situation where many people were wallowing in abject poverty. He then decided to pay part of the money back to his bank in order to get the paper counterpart.

Within two day after he had changed his coins to naira note, the government announced that they were going to change naira note. As Ubesie Observers,

...onye jiri ego akw kw jee aha, e
 lewe ya anya ka b ego ay r ka
 o ji ba. O kwebie ihe n , o
 wep ta akw kw ego ka kw gw ,
 a s ya na a gagh eresi ya ma
 b r na o jighi ego krkr . Onye
 jiri akw kw ego jee aha, gagh
 az ta nnu, ya f d z ta ose. Onye
 ah na-ad ka onye na-ejighi ego wee b a ah a.

Pound notes were thus not looked at as a legal tender but as cowries which were used in the past. Pound notes could not buy anything again, even the least commodities. Those who had naira notes had money, but the money could not buy anything. They were thus not only in financial crisis but also in abject poverty and hunger. They could not buy food and other commodities necessary for their up-keep. This was actually a manifestation of human right violation as any responsible government should provide appropriate avenue for people to

change their currency gradually if there should be a change in currency in any nation state.

On Chike's side, the whole scenario was traumatizing as he had little to take care of his family. This was even more so as he had to take his coins to the bank to get naira notes. The only coins left in his house were twenty pounds (£20). However, their hope rose when they were told to pay in their pound notes. But instead of giving them coins, Ubesie states,

Ndi mmad che na onye kw nye ego,
e nye ha ego z ebe ahx. Ma,
mgbe nd mmad jere, onye kw nye
ego, a d kanye ya akw kw ga-egosi
na kw nyere ego. Ebe a ka o
biri. Onye na-at anya ka a kp
ya aha si ya ba were ego, oge ka
na-ala onwe ya n'iyi (p.35).

After paying in their money, they waited in vain without being given any money in return. They were rather given papers to indicate that they paid in certain amount of money in the bank. The people dispersed and went home with no money in their pockets. This in itself was a traumatic event as it left them worse than they were before coming to the bank. While going back to their various families, one can then imagine the thoughts in their minds. Even when some of them like Chike went to their various banks other than the place they paid in their money to collect money, they were told that the banks had no currency in stock. They all returned home without money and as such Ubesie (1973) declared,

O wee b r na a makwagh onye b
ogbenye. A makwagh onye b
qgaranya. Ka ego k r ogbenye ka

k r garanya. Chike wee tinye isi
n'xz la (p.36).

Since neither the rich nor the poor had any money on them, one cannot then differentiate the poor from the rich. People now had to resort to moving out to work for other people. But even those that should have ordinarily hired them had no money on them as there was no rich man around then. Only those that had food could be regarded as rich men. Equally, people that were regarded as being wealthy were those whose wives cooked daily not minding the number of times they cooked or ate.

Chike, like many other people, had little money left on him but their food stock were running down fast even when they have no hope of getting money for food again. In view of this, Ubesie described the situation thus,

...no na-ele ihe oriri d na be ya
anya ka na-agw . Ma nchekwube
adigh maka ebe a ga-esi nweta z .
dgh ihe na-agba nwoke ara ka
k ego. Chike laba n'elekere iri
n'abal , na-ah[ghar onwe ya
n'akwa, ruo mgbe onye b la rahxr
xra, nke b na dgh onye ga-aba
mara ma q na-arah ra, ka o b na
nagh arah ra. N' d oge d otu
a, bilie n'akwa ya, ga n r
n'oche. Ebe ah ka na-an , chi
efoo (Ubesie, 1973, p. 37).

Chike now looked with dismay how his food stuffs were going down with no hope of where to replenish them. This made him have sleepless nights and

most often, he would stay awake till dawn thinking of what to do when the food he had in stock was exhausted.

The only option left for Chike was to look for friends that could lend him money. He went to a Biafra soldier for this purpose and in their discussion, the officer informed Chike that he needed to buy a radio. Chike offered to sell his radio immediately and later sold the radio to Obi. The point here was that the situation had degenerated to the extent that a big man like Chike had to sell his property just to feed his house-hold. In war situation, information is vital but Chike had to sell the only source of getting information from the outside world. This actually put the family in a dangerous angle as the only way they could get information about the war and other things were now through rumor. Also, he had already promised his wife Ada that he was going to give the same radio to her when he buys a new one. But now without recourse to Ada, he sold the radio, an action Ada frowned at despite the fact that the money earned from the sale was for the up-keep of the family. In view of this it could be deduced that the twin problem of hunger and financial predicament, led the foundation for the crises that later on resulted in Chike's family.

Financial problem and food scarcity or hunger in various household were great, as the only achievement families were making during the war was in the area of feeding. The war had as such reduced all citizens to a situation where the only ambition was to eat and wait for tomorrow, but even at that, one needs to be active to achieve this. As such Ubesie recounts,

Agha emeela Chike ka gh obere
 mmqnrw . bxr na o soghi ibe ya
 na-agbaghari, gagh adata ego.
 b r na datagh ego, ag egbuo

nd so ya n'az . Ma Chineke agagh
ekwe ka ngwere gbaa aj (p.57) .

The war according to the above made everyone to be equal on the Biafran side. Every body had to resort to menial jobs to feed their families. From the above, one can understand that the war made everybody to be running around to feed their household despite their status. In any human society, there are always different strata and different levels at which the individuals may fall in. But in a situation where everybody is equal and poor, then the society has a serious problem and has fallen to the lowest level of human existence. This was the situation the Igbo people found themselves as reported in *Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala*.

Hunger and starvation in the Biafra territory reached a stage where the brotherly and communal life of the society seemed to be extinct as people were no longer ready to help one another. As the days rolled by, Ubesie observes that things got harder thus,

b ch na-aga, ihe ana-esiwanye
ike. Onye s ya kunye g mmiri
n n , j g ga-akw ya ego
ole. Onye i jere n'ak k ubi ya
kpara nk , gwa gi ego ole nk
ah nyere. Nwataki r s ya m tara
g k ka wee see s ga, j g
ego ole ga-akw ya... d gh onye
ta d r maka mmad kw r agu jewe
m ta k s ga ah , ikekwe q daa mba
n'xs ekwu, danye n'ime k ... s a
na-agba ugb a ab gh nke nwanne
na-echeta nwanne ya. Agha a na-
ebuso ag ugbu a ab gh d agha
mmad na-az onye agbata b ya...
(p.57-60).

Communal life which the Igbo people were known for had thus changed as people could neither give water to people to quench their thirst, nor collect firewood from someone's farm without the owner demanding for money. Even children were not left out in this as they could demand for money just because they were asked to lit a cigarette. But in his commentary, Ubesie justified these actions as the persons may fall into the fire due to fatigue occasioned by hunger and lack of strength. Ubesie thus states that the situation was not such that one could help even one's own brother. And this was how people were strategizing to fight hunger and starvation.

Hunger and starvation did not only reduce the communal life in the society but also made the people so daring that they could even challenge lions. Chike was introduced by a friend to supply food to the military. He did this for sometime and it yielded great divided for him but this did not last as they were given cheques in their last trip. As the banks were not paying more than ten ponds, Chike was paid the amount and this dashed his hope of survival. He therefore had to go to the place where relief materials (food especially) were being distributed. Sensing that he may not get anything even after he had stayed for a long time, he decided to brave it and walked inside without being called in. Even when he was called back by the solders, he continued going and they had to stop him in their own way,

Otu n'ime ha chxkwudoro ya ebe
na-aga, j ya onye na-ach .
Tupu saghee n saa ya aj j ,
s lar ya egbe n'ubu. Tupu na-
etipu mkp , kutuola ya n'ala,
na-agba ya xkw n'is . Ka na-ach
ka o si n'ala bilie, nd uwe ojii
nd agha n ebe ah abala gbaa ya

gburugburu, na-eti ya ihe. b r
na Chike na-erij af , gaara
ibesi akwa ike... Mgbe nd m
malitere kwewe Chike n b mgbe
otu onye n'ime ha mara ya ra
n'ekwu. Chike wee jiri ume ikpe
az o nwere ike ikute, tie mkpu di
mwute... (p.62).

Chike went in without being called in and was asked to give the name of the person he was looking for by the military police that were on guard, but before he could say anything the soldier had started beating him. He was later joined by other military policemen that helped in inflicting serious injuries on Chike. As Chike sensed that he was about to die, he let out an agonizing cry that forced the priest to leave whatever he was doing inside to see what was happening. He came out and ordered the soldiers to stop the beating and asked Chike to go. But Chike refused to go until he was given something.

The dehumanizing aspect of this situation was that in the first instance, when Chike was supplying food to the military, on that faithful day when they collected the food he supplied, they knew quite alright that they had no money and that even if they give Chike cheque, that he would only get either eight (₦ 8.00) or ten pounds (₦ 10.00). But they went ahead and collected the food. If they told Chike the situation, at least he would have taken the foods home for his family or sold them else where. They therefore defrauded him just because he could not do or say anything. On the second encounter with the soldiers at the place where relief materials were being distributed, the soldiers malhanded him and were ready to kill him because of that singular act if not because of the intervention of the priest.

Due to the war and blockade, there was extreme hunger and inflation. In view of this Ubesie reports that some civil servants were paid thirty pounds, but a cup of salt cost twenty pounds while a cup of gari cost fifty sterlings. In terms of yam, nobody had the gut to even prize it. But even at that, people continued to live and survive. When everybody realized that all had gone wrong was when people were advised to eat lizards as a source of protein. Ubesie reports thus,

Mgbe nd dibia bekee s[nd mmad
riwe ngwere, ka egwu hap r ihe
na-ak , k wa ihe z . A nagh
ah kwa ngwere anya... Egwu anagh
ekwekwa ngwere rkwasa n'elu l
mmad . Ka nd mmad si esi akwxkw
akp ugbu a d egwu. b ya n chr
anya ji. Akp n'onwe ya bx akwa
eke ugbu a.

Apart from being told to eat lizard which were no where to be found as they did not come out or stay on top of people's roofs any longer, people were now eating cassava leaves. The tubers were then a rare commodity which can only be purchased by the wealthy. Little wonder then, malnourishment were the order of the day as young boys grew gray hairs while almost all members of the Biafran society resembled walking skeletons.

The Nigeria forces in alliance with Uk and USSR as stated earlier perpetuated this evil against humanity even when they knew that millions of Biafran people were dying of hunger. This is actually a dehumanizing effect of the war and the highest point of man's inhumanity to man as captured by Ubesie (1973).

Onye i lere anya n'ubu, [g ta ya
okpukp ole d ya n'obi. I lechaa

okorob a mmadx anya, na-aga ka
ihe a na-akwa aka. (p.90)

The present comments by Ubesie did not come as a surprise as the people were already eating lizard and cassava leaves and tubers. This then made them a moving skeleton as described by Tony Ubesie in the above statement. It was hunger and the need to get a little money for feeding that forced Ada to embark on that dangerous trip of going through the enemy zone to buy salt and in one of such trips one of the young boys fainted. According to Ubesie,

b mgbe ha rutere n'ebe nd agha
bi nso ka otu nwa k r b a mabuuru
onwe ya na nnu ya t n'ala, tie
mkpu tiri, nd agha na-arahx xra
ebe ah teta, gbalibe egbe elu.
bxrx na a hxr ya mgbe na-emege
n maka iti mkpu ah , otu onye
gaara t do ya aka n'akpr , gbuo
ya. Ma ugbu a, tiri mkpu a, igbu
ya egbu abagh[uru, n'ihina ihe e
ji af opi awaala.

In the above quote, Ubesie narrated the incidence that took place in one of Ada's trips, when a young man who accompanied them became fatigued due to hunger and decided either intentionally or unintentionally to shout and gave out a depressing but loud cry. Whether the cry was intentional or not the fact was that the young man was so hungry and depressed that he was tired of living. If he was not he could not have made such a loud cry if he was not ready to die judging from the fact that he knew very well that they were at the lions den. The soldiers readily woke up and ordered them not to run as running would be a direct way of running to the great beyond. They were promptly arrested.

Ada later gave herself as a bait to seduce the young army leader by crying. Her plan worked as the man took her apart while others were digging their own graves and asked Ada to marry him. Ada promptly accepted and demanded that her kinsmen should be allowed to go. This request was accepted by the man who also warned them not to cross their zone again. In this incidence, three things stand out clearly;

- a) The young man was very hungry and tired of living.
- b) The young men who accompanied Ada for this trip did that to get money as that was the only way they could get money for feeding,
- c) Ada also accepted to marry the army officer not necessarily because she wanted to save herself and her men servants but because she wanted to make sure that her goods were safe as she promptly asked the leader of the team to take care of her property pending the time she would return.

Ada was able to escape and return home from this trip which was in the first place necessitated by financial problem and the need to acquire money for feeding but Ubesie states,

Ada nke ruru na Nanka, ab gh Ada nke si na
Nanka jewe Anambra. Nke jewere Anambra buru
ibu, ju eju na nwany , ma nke l tara ugbu a
tachaara ah , d ka ihe a na-ahxna nrq (P. 108).

On her return to Nanka, Ada was so emaciated that Ubesie now described her as two persons-the thin Ada and the fat Ada. According to Ubesie the Ada that left Nanka was fat but the Ada that eventually returned was thin. But in all, it was due to the financial predicament that forced people especially people like Ada during the war to embark on such dangerous trips.

According to Ubesie's narration, the financial situation during the Nigeria/Biafra war was so devastating that the unimaginable were happening. Paradoxically, those that were on the ground were falling on top of people who were on top. In view of this, both the rich and the poor were in quandary. On the side of Chike, Ubesie narrates,

Chike akqghi ji. k gh ede. Egwu
ijide ya ka o jewe qgx ekweghi ya
az aha. Onye na-akqgh ji na ede
anagh anw anwx, ma nqkata nd,
nqkwudo ihe kar r qnw, maka na
mmad [n nd na-ele qnwx n'anya
d[nj kara na mmad nwrxqnw .

E mechara, Chike wee s[na ya ga-
eje zqwa onwe ya, ma ya bxr na ya
azqtagh ya, kar[a na ya n nd
ag mee ya ewu d nd, ma mp ya
kp r nkx (P. 117).

Yam (ji) is symbolically the highest crop which any wealthy man should cultivate while coco yam (ede) is the least. For Chike not to have cultivated these crops, meant that he did not cultivate anything at all and as such he was living in abject poverty and financial deprivation. Since Chike did not have any, Chike and others that were in his shoes were seen as those who were living but the dead were better than them. Chike now decide to go out and look for what to do to feed the family. He would have ventured into serious business, but he could not do so due to the war. But when Chike convinced himself to go out and for the main purpose of finding food for himself and his family, he left his house early in the morning with a pad- a material used in carrying loads. But alas, when he reached the market, there were no buying and selling taking place as people had nothing to sell just as there was nobody to buy. In this place Ubesie described the level of

hunger and financial deprivation and categorically made it known that, the level among the Biafrans during the Nigeria/Biafra war was great. A situation where there were no buying and selling going on in a community/town is a state of hopelessness and brings man back to the primitive age. Also, for a big man like Chike to descend so low as to going to the market to carry other peoples' loads in order to earn money, describes vividly the horrible state of affair during the war. To compound the matter, immediately Chike returned, the children welcomed him with the news that they were hungry and there was no food in the house.

Chike had no other option than to cry in front of his children but crying can not bring food and despite the fact that Chike had made up his mind not to visit Ada again to beg her for anything, he had a rethink and left for Ada's place. After all the insults and display of wealth by Ada, when Chike saw that she was not ready to give him anything, he begged and told Ada that the children were dying of hunger. Ada reminded him that he is the man of the house, but in a swift reply Chike made her understand that they were their children. Ubesie (1997) reports the ensuing discussion thus,

...Biko nye aka ka a hx ka a ga-
esi mee maka ab a. m g ka
ha b . 'O - o - o? Ha ab kwagi m
nke g? Nne, ha b m any ab . S
mara ka e mere ha, n'ihina nd
m aka a ab gh ihe e ji agba
n'anya. "Chike, b g na-al m
ka o b m na- al gi?" Ada biko,
masi g, l wa m nke taa." Ada
wee t ghee n ya gwawa Chike ihe
nile q chqr gwa ya. d gh xd n
k gh Chike (p.123).

As they continued arguing on who should take the responsibility of the children, Chike told Ada that the most important thing was to see that the children were taken care of. Chike even accepted to be a *õwifeõ* to Ada provided the children were taken care of. The point being made here is that, the parent of the children was engaging in this dialogue not because they want to send their children to school or to buy expensive materials for them but just to feed them. But this was even the time Ada found the greatest opportunity to insult her husband the more. Despite these insults, Chike still begged Ada for food and after hesitation and insults, Ada gave her food but the complain by Chike after he had first of all eaten the food was that the meat given to him was bonny, landed on deaf ears. He even begged his wife to accept being his wife again but she refused. It should however be noted that begging his wife to come back was not mainly because he was the one who offended the wife but because he knew that the coming back of his wife would mean that food would be on the table for every one to eat. When he was ready to leave, he asked Ada to give him something for the children. But Ada refused and told him that even if he gave him food, that he would eat it up before reaching home. she requested that he leaves as she will reach their house before his arrival.

With the help of the army friend who came in a car while Chike was still with her, she was able to reach Chike's house before him, but her request for the children to follow her were rejected by the children themselves. On Chike's return, she handed him four hundred pounds (£400.00) with a warning that he should not come back to her if he squandered the money. But in a swift commentary, Ubesie state that one would ordinarily think that this amount was not up to twenty pounds (£ 20.00) due to inflation. This shows that the war reduced the pounds to a mere paper equivalent as a result of high inflation with serious negative implications to the masses especially those on the Biafran side.

The state of affairs deteriorated and Ubesie reports that eating once a day was now a very difficult thing while those that ate meat in their house-holds were people who either had rats or lizards as doctors have certified lizards good for human consumption. Ubesie testifies that the story is hard to narrate thus,

í Onye k wa ak k maka an na az ,
 a j ya mgbe agwx malitere mewe
 ya. Nani nd na-ataghar n ma ha
 rcha ihe b nd nwere ngwere ma
 b oke ha na-echekp n' k .

Ubesie thus reported that apart from lizards and rats, anyone who talks about meat or fish may be suffering from a serious spiritual problem. The situation was not different at the war front since Ubesie reports that even when Chike was conscripted and forced to join the army by his wife Ada and her friends, Chike encountered the same problem,

A manyere onye b la otu iko
 gari, ka ha wee gbaa az[. Onye
 mas r , ya txnye nke ya n' ha. onye
 sqr , ya jiri mm r nx nke ya.
 Onye q mas r , ya taa nke ya ata.
 Nke ahu b okwu aka onye ah . Ihe
 a maara b na ihe txtt agaala
 (p.179) .

Chike and other members of the Biafran army as stated above were given one cup of gari each for the breakfast. Thus, even feeding among the military personnel were not better of, as even the cup of gari that was given was not accompanied by soup or any other thing that will add value to the food. The soldres were left with the option of either chewing or soaking the cup of gari that was given to them. What that meant was that at a particular time in the execution

of the war, it was almost impossible for people to either cultivate food crops or move out to search for food outside. People were then forced to eat all sorts of things that would ordinarily be served to domestic pets like dogs and cats. People ate lizards, rats, cassava leaves and the like. Little wonder then that Ubesie reports,

Mgbe ha kwx ebe ah , nd mmad nusara. b gn? A gbawa d qsq a, ike kwe bxxr xgb elu e ji eje qgx b[ara. Ma na nke, q bx onye agx na-agx dara ebe ha nile kwx n'ahir . Uf du ch[r qch , ma nd d ka Chike tanwuru ihu na-ele ihe na-eme, n'ihhi na ha maara na b ka ga-ad[zucha ha nile n'otu n'otu (p.180) .

A soldier while they were on the line for their usual training, slumped and died instantly due to hunger. Some soldiers ran while others laughed, but others saw it as a pathetic situation, since they knew that one day it would be their turn to slump and die due to the same problem.

There was extreme hunger especially on the Biafra side, be it at the military side or at the civilian side. On the part of Chike, Ubesie explains,

O dighi ihe na-ewute Chike ka kw ag je gbawa s n' z , si na ha na-enwe z z . d[la ugboro ab Chike dara n' z , ma nan Chi ya na-edu ya.

O nwere otu egwu na-abx ha na-ag , na-ebu Chike isi, na-ach

imep ta ya anya mmiri. Egwu a b
nke si otu a na-ag ... (P.181).

In above statement, Ubesie discloses that there was nothing that pained Chike more than going out with empty stomach to run in the name of training. According to Ubesie, Chike had done that before and had fallen down twice but it was only God that was leading him. Even more painful was the song that they usually sing which almost made Chike to cry. The song if literally translated reads thus,

Nne m am tala m, kp m s ja n'ime
oha.

My mother has given birth to me and
called me a soldier that lives in the
bush,

Ag agxgbuolan soja lee, n'ike
n'ike

Look quickly, hunger is killing the soldier fast.

In the above song the soldiers sang that their mothers gave birth to them and called them soldiers that live in the bush where they are dying of hunger. But the most agonizing aspect of Chike's own problem was that it was his wife that brought him to the war front to die of hunger. Even what they were paid could not do anything to ameliorate their problems as they were paid six pounds (£6.00) (Ubesie, 1973, p.185).

Even shortly after the war, the situation did not change, as there was nothing for people that were returning to fall to and people now even started stealing from other people's farms.

O jee n'ugbo ya si otu ak k fota
akp , nd z ag na-egbu esi

akxk nke z ba foro nke ha (p.
191)

Chike has a cassava farm and at the end of the war, while he was up-rooting/harvesting from one side, when he returned the next time, he would find out that others were harvesting from another side. This was due to hunger, as such rather than taking it seriously, he laughed over that.

By and large it could be stated that what pushed the people into all these were hunger and the financial predicament the Biafrans found themselves due to the way they were persecuted and executed.

3.2 The Psychological/Societal Effects of Nigeria/Biafra War on the People in *Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala*.

Most often, the psychological effects of wars are usually neglected despite the fact that the negative effects of wars remain long after the end of hostilities. The negative effects of the eroding of societal values and the debasing of the people therein in the society are better imagined than experienced. Ubesie (1973) must be talking about the psychological effect of the civil war when he states,

Af 1967 na Na[jir ai! Onye n r
maka ya gb p as , n' ihi na onye
buru ya n' uche loo as mmiri, onye
e nyere ns[ka ya mma (p.20).

The year 1967 was seen by Ubesie as stated above as a time Nigeria passed through a very difficult and trial moment in her history. This period was so bad that people would not even like to remember it. The effect was so much that children even failed to heed the advice of the parents. This can be seen when

Okechukwu, Chike's brother voluntarily decided to enlist in the Biafran Army despite his mother's opposition to this. While explaining the situation to Chike and the people that came, with deep emotion Chike's mother recounts,

Nwa m, mmad anwxgh, ma nw mmad akagh nke a nj . Ji ole ka m nwere, wee h nke m ga-eji aka m t hap r onye m amagh? m nwoke ole ka m m tara, nwanne g[nwoke b Okechukwu na-ekwu na ya ga-eje ch[r[uwe kaki soro ibe ya jewe agha? (p. 21)

Chike's mother explained to him, his brother's decision to become a Biafran soldier with lots of rhetoric questions. With rhetoric questions laden with figurative expressions, Chike's mother explains to Chike that the situation she found herself was more than death and can be likened to a situation where someone (Okechukwu) had decided to choose death instead of life. Okechukwu had decided to join the army not minding the fact that she has only two male children. Apart from the psychological/mental state this woman found herself, this was a situation where children abandoned the societal values and norms especially in Igbo society where children are supposed to listen to the parent's advice. Okechukwu did not only refuse to heed his mother plea but left before the family was give the opportunity to discuss the situation/matter that night. This was a clear case of being disobedient as children are not only expected to obey and respect their parents in Igbo land but in all cultures of the world.

Families were torn apart during the Nigeria/Biafra War (Uzochukwu, 2001). Chike's family was not an exception as the one time happy family became a place where their life styles and values degenerated to the extent that one can enjoy while the other members of the family wallow in abject poverty. Ada

performed the role of feeding the family for a while but could not continue. Ubesie reports,

Ebe b na b Ada na-eweta ihe a na-eri, q malitere na-eme ka q ga-as[na q bxkwagh[Chike na-alx ya; na q bx ya na-alx Chike, na-emezi Chike ka onye a na-alx alx, nsogbu agagh[ad[. Ma nke a q na-eme Chike, ka odibo q ghatara agbata. ...

Ada now behaves as if she married Chike. Chike would have been able to contend with this, if she was treating him well. But the reverse was the case as Chike was treated as a house boy. This situation was not only demoralizing on the part of Chike but also an abomination in Igbo cultural setting. Worse still Chike started getting reports that his wife was now turning to a prostitute as she visited army officers with reckless abandon not minding that she was married. It got to a stage that Ada even decided to leave Chike, her children and other members of her family.

At another time, Ada accepted to marry an army officer to save herself, her workers and her goods despite the fact that she was married. But one traumatizing aspect of the whole deal on the part of Ada was that as she accepted to marry the soldier, it happened that the soldier was living in their house at Awka. Though, Ada had left her husband and had been flirting around with other men, living with another man in her husband's house pained her. The way they reduced their mighty building to a mere kitchen as the whole building was covered with smoke also pained her.

The state of man's mind during the war really was astonishing as one could see when Ada told the new husband that they were living in her husband's house.

This did not pain the man that he was marrying another man's wife in his house. Ordinarily, the man should have known that he was committing an abomination and consequently ask the woman to go. But what he did was to ask Ada the where-about of her husband and when Ada disclosed that the husband was dead, the man pretended to be sad but was happy inside him. This showed that the war reduced men to mere beasts that could be happy when the neighbours were in problem or even dead as displayed by this army officer.

Furthermore, to show the extent of deprivation cum dehumanizing effects of the war, Chike decided to visit his wife to beg her for fund despite the fact that he knew that Ada was having extra-marital relationship. This is actually an abomination in Igbo society. But Chike did not only visit her but had to kneel down to beg Ada for money,

Chike wee gbudo otu ikpere n'ala
na-ar Ada ka o nyet ya ego ya na
m ya na Ada m tara ga-eji na-
eri ihe. Ma Ada bu igbe ego ah
n'aka ab , na-ele ya anya (p.
122) .

Thus it could be seen from the statement that Ada intentionally brought out the money for Chike to see because even though Chike begged to be given money not necessarily for himself, but for their children, Ada gave him nothing. Later-on, Ada gave a plate of rice to Chike, and when Chike complained that what was in his plate in form of meat was bone, Ada asked him if he could afford such in his house. Ada not only hugged another man in Chike's presence but denounced him in his presence as her husband. Even, after ejection from her house, she was forced to come back to Chike's house and continued with the same way of life. All these were different ways Ada reduced her husband to mere house boy which in itself was part and parcel of the dehumanizing effects of the

war. This is because it could be seen that Ada was good and loyal to the husband even to the extent of leaving her job in obedience to Chike before the war, but Ada was now proud to bring another man into Chike's house without fear.

One other negative and dehumanizing effect of the Nigeria-Biafra war was the way marital homes were desecrated by others. Men and even wives did not respect their marital homes again. At this juncture, it could be said that what actually pained Chike was the fact that another man could come to his house and engage in illicit activities with his wife without his doing anything. Ordinarily, a man should respect other people's matrimonial homes, but the soldiers did not respect this because they had the gun. Another instance was when Chike had to beat his wife at least to teach her some lessons, but Ada went and called some soldiers in retaliation. However, as the soldiers were meant to understand the impending danger (that Chike was waiting for them with a gun), they had to retreat. The soldiers were supposed to be at the war front and not going around in people's homes to beat people or men who had problems with their wives. The soldiers due to selfish reasons were there having illicit affairs with women, breaking people's homes and beating the hell out of those who stood on their way. The actions of the soldiers were not only dehumanizing but constituted war crimes that go contrary to the societal norms and values.

While describing this situation explicitly, Ubesie narrates,

b chi Chike ji ch kw d b
 ub ch nd s ja ab ch r Ada b a
 kwuwa moto ha n'ezi, b[a j
 Chike ma Ada n ya. Chike j r
 ha nd ha b ma dighi nke
 t px r ya n , hap ya n'ezi ebe

ah bakwuru Ada n' l . Ak k ha n
 n'ime l Chike na-ak , na qch ha
 n ebe ah na-ach[ab gh ihe
 nwoke bi be ya ga-eji nti ya ab
 n (p. 80).

Ubesie explains that the day two soldiers came to Chike's house and asked for his wife was the day Chike wanted to commit suicide. The men came and could not see any other person they could ask for Ada's whereabouts but her husband (Chike). They did not only neglect Chike by not answering his questions of introducing themselves and their mission but went into Chike's house to chat with the wife. If not because of Chukwuma and Qb[anuju (his children) he would have gone into the house with his matehet to kill the visitors.

When the visitors left, Chike damned the consequences that could result from his beating Ada and gave her the beating of her life. In retaliation, Ada went out and called her friends (soldiers) to teach Chike a hard lesson but Chike was ready for them with his gun. These soldiers went back as they learnt that Chike was ready for them. But the point here is that a wife went out to call soldiers because her husband beat her, and again possibly to force him to the battle field. This, thus, show us how the war turned a previously happy home to a home where the husband beats the wife while the wife on the other hand could go to the extent of allowing other men to come and deal with the husband in the full glare of Chike's mother, children and members of the public. One could thus imagine the mental trauma Chike was in when he came out with the gun ready to shoot the soldiers. The effect was not restricted to Chike and Ada but to the mother, children and other members of the public. This is because they could not rightly imagine the outcome of the whole exercise or what would happen to Chike if he

succeeds in killing the soldiers. On the other hand, the effect of a civilian killing a soldier in the community could be devastating.

At a point in time, Ada even thought that Chike was a stumbling block to her as she had no opportunity of receiving her male friends. According to Ubesie,

Ndi enyi Ada anakwaghi achqta ya.
 O nweghi onye ya na Ada na-ad[na
 mma n'ime nd[nile ha na ha
 biderere... Xb ch na-akp ya akp
 n'anya. Q d[gh[ihe na-aga ya aga
 n'anya. d[ya ka wa nile kp r
 ya as[... gb a, o ruola mgbe ga-
 ama ihe o mere Chike ka o wee
 nwere onwe ya. t t ihe malitere
 gbatawa ya n'uche. Nke mb ,
 inyegbu Chike na ns[. Nke ab
 ikp nye ya n'am[. Nke at b
 [hap r ya xlq, gbapx (p.174).

Thus, as Ada's friends were not coming to look for her again due to the previous threat by her husband, she now thought of three things,

- (i) Finding a way to kill Chike through poisoning,
- (ii) Forcing him to join the army and
- (iii) Moving away from their matrimonial home again.

These thoughts came to her due to the fact that not only did the people around hate her but also, she wouldn't like to have anything to do with him again. After weighing the three options, she decided to force Chike to enlist in Biafra army. As such, on one faithful day Chike was accosted by soldiers early in the morning thus,

Ka na-emeghe z , nd kp r ya
ihu xt t b nd am ab ji egbe,
s[ya agbakwala s , makana gba
s b nw . kw r otu ebe,
ch[lie aka elu, na-ele ha n'anya.
Otu n'ime ha wee s ya, 'O nwee
ihe i nwere izi nd be gi, zie ha
ugbu a , maka ije am[eruola.

The soldiers informed him that running away leaves them with no other option than shooting him down. Chike now saw that it was not necessary running and thus raised his hands. One of them instructed him to have a word with his family as it was time for him to join the army. The conscription of grown up men in war situation may not be viewed as a serious offence on the part of the military. However what makes this one peculiar, traumatic and dehumanizing was that the person that set him up was his wife. It is thus heart-breaking for Chike and his family members that while other women were providing and hiding their husbands, Chike's wife handed him over to her soldier friends who took him to the war front. The war thus changed some people like Ada to the extent that she not only forgot their marital vows but also the place of a woman in marriage.

The societal effect of Nigeria Biafra war could be said to be great as it impacted negatively on the people. The people were not only traumatized but were forced to forget their roles and ways of life. Both the civilians and soldiers were thus seen engaging in unimaginable acts.

3.3 The effects of the execution of Nigeria/Biafra war in *Isi akwu Dara N'Ala*.

The execution of Nigeria/Biafra war has continued to be a burning issue decades after the war due to the way the war was executed. While reporting on the execution of the war, Achebe (2012) reports,

í Gowon reorganized his war strategy. He placed some of his best military personnel in three key roles as part of his agenda, òcrush Biafranøóí armed with direct orders to retake the occupied areas at all costs, the division rounded up and shot as many defenseless Igbo men and boys as they could find (p.132).

The atrocities committed according to Achebe were so much that General Gowon apologized thirty-five years later. The question now is, did Ubesie capture such atrocities inherent in the execution of the war and what the people suffered during the war in his novel *Isi Akwụ Dara N'Ala*. If the answer is in the affirmative, then the next question is, did Ubesie capture the effect on the people. This is because according to Umelo (2012) ÷ it takes guts to talk on the intimidating horror of Nigeria civil war without looking awayø or did he look away or cover these atrocities in the novels?

One of the major effects of the war on the people was that the freedom of expression was denied as one may just literally, òtalk him or herself into troubleö. Ubesie (1977), reports,

Otu onye chi j ikwu na ibe ya na-ekwu, nd soja we kpara ya aka, s[na b 'sabo' (Nke a b ihe a na-akp nd na-agba nd na-ach ach mgba az). E gbughi nwoke ah egbu ebe ah , ma onye e gburu egbu akagh ya nj . Ha ji isi egbe s jacha ya isi, nke b na mmad

n r ebe d[anya lee nwoke ah
 anya, gagh ama nke b ekwo ya
 na nke b ihu ya... E wezuga Chike,
 nd am gara igbu nwoke ah (p.45).

In the above narration, Ubesie described how one man was manhandled by soldiers just because he participated in a discussion and his utterances did not go down well with the soldiers who were around. They hit him until, according to Ubesie, one could not be able to distinguish between his neck and his face. The same man would have been killed if it was not because of the intervention of Chike. It therefore means that one can be killed or malhandled just because the person aired his views. This is a clear case of impunity and the violation of fundamental human right of individuals.

In war situation, civilian areas are usually not targets of the military, rather through intelligence reports, officers usually discover where the opposing forces are and reach them. However, the Nigerian army did not observe this in the execution of the war as Ubesie (1977) narrates,

Wu-u-u! wim!! `wuu-u-u! wuu!! wim
 !!!

Mba! Nke a di nso kara nd a na-
 anx n'oge mb! A nagh agwa chi
 nt na aha esula... j gh ase nd
 na-adap n'ala. Nan otu ihe Chike
 mere b na o jere kp ta m ya
 ab , sekpudo ha n'aka. b lad na
 ihe Chike nile at n'Awka na nke
 a, m ya ab ga-esoriri ya p ...
 Mgbe sheel dawara aka nri na aka
 ekpe, dgh mkpa gwa onye b la

na o ruola mgbe a ga-azqwa isi...
(p.46).

In the above narration, Ubesie described how the civilian population of the Biafra people in disbelief could not accept the fact that Nigerian army was shelling residential area even when that became apparent. When the sound of the shelling became closer, people took to their heels. Chike was contented in taking his two children and running away despite the fact that all his belongings were left behind. As he was doing this, the noise of the shelling was heard very close and people had to leave for their dear lives.

The soldiers also acted as if they were above the law as they beat and imprisoned the civilian population. At one time, Chike was beaten to the extent that he could have been killed if not because of the intervention of the priest who was in-charge of the distribution of the relief materials. At another time, Azuka's father was kept in a solitary cell with attendant consequences. The effect was evident when Azuka's father was called out from his cell,

Ha kp r nna Azuka rute. nagh
asaghe anya ya nke ma, n' ihi na
ihe ekweghi ya ah uz maka na o
teela o ji n wa n' ch ch . manye
aka nri n' ime uwe ya, ya na k a
na-eme. manye aka ekpe n' akpa,
ya na k a na-eme. (Ubesie, 1973,p.75).

Azuka's father could not see well because he was now used to staying in darkness and as such when he was brought out in the open, he was unable to see clearly. He was equally constantly scratching all over his body. This is in line with what Stuart (2012) described,

í I have observed that, for many of the inmates in the house, incarceration in solitary caused either

severe exacerbation or recurrence of preexisting illness, or the appearance of an acute mental illness in individuals who had previously been free of any such illness. I became aware of the particular toxicity of solitary confinementí (p.333).

Solitary confinement for any reason as explained above have no positive benefits as it leaves the person devastated after the release. But this was practised by the soldiers during the Nigeria/Biafra war.

The way residential areas were bombarded and how freely weapon of mass destruction were used during the war made the people of Biafra to think that the western world have made the Biafra soil an area for the testing and use of these weapons. Ubesie (1977) narrates again,

N'Agxata, ugbu a, ebe nile na-
akp t akp t
... shell daa n'Inyi, d[ka mmad
agw la! daa n'Ag l , d ka b
na nwekwagh onye f r ! o daa
n'Ontsha, onye mbx ga-esi Nnewi
p ta as na ub ch akp r la qk
n' n (p.89).

One can just imagine a situation described above where almost all the major towns in Igbo land were being bombarded at the same time. Inyi, Aguata, Agulu, Onitsha and Nnewi among other towns were under the superior power of the Nigeria forces that were backed by Britain. Achebe (2012) affirms that BBC's Rick Fountain, in a story on Monday, January. 3, 2000, called "secret papers Reveal Biafra Intrigue," confirms that,

At first Biafra was successful and this alarmed Britain, the former colonial power, anxious for its big oil holding. It also interested the Soviet Union which saw a chance to increase its influence in West Africa. Both sent arms to boost the federal military government, under General Yakubu Gowon (p.99).

The supply and use of this arm can even be described better in this narration,

Nan mgbe nd mmadu n wara ihe na-ada 'wara wara wara', ka ihe kar r[nte ji bakwute nte n' n . mmadx nx xd mkp t a, a nagh akqr mmadx ihe na-ab[a. b odogwu zara ihe yiri egbe, ma na-akpakar[egbe ike! A nagh[akqr mmadx ak r na b ugb elu e ji eje og . ba nchi ka e ji amata ebe nch gara ije. bxgh b mb na-at b ebe isi okwu d. Nke b nke j ya b mkp tu na-eme, maka na mkp t na-eme ezuola ime ka af malite sawa nd mmad ... Ma, egbe nile ugbo elu ah gbara, na bomb nile tur ebe ah emegh ka Ada si ebe kw p (Ubesie, 1974, p.157).

The narration above even described more vividly the execution of the war by continued bombing of the residential area with war planes. The effects were far reaching, from producing sounds that can even be heard by deaf people themselves, to leaving behind a lot of destructions when the war planes had gone.

But even more frustrating was the fact that some people like Ada who were fed-up with life due to the effect of the war, refused to run away while the bombardment lasted. Thus, many people would have died not because they can not run away and hide but because the effect of the execution of the war was such that made people think that there was no hope for tomorrow.

Even more horrifying were the way people were forcefully enlisted in the army. Because of the way people's residences were bombarded and its effects, one can just imagine why people were not ready to give themselves up to become military men. But the military in those days had a culture of forcefully conscripting men to join the military. This made the men to devote themselves to perfecting in the act of hiding and or running away from the soldiers. The men could thus not come out because according to Ubesie (1973),

Onye b la n'ime ha p tara, a
 chxwa ya s ka o zuru ohi, ruo
 mgbe a nwudere ya ch nye ya uwe
 kak . Nke a anagh ekwe Chike
 emeghar ahx ka nd z . p ka o
 jee ch ihe ya na m aka ga-eri, s ka o
 ga-eji gbalata (p.91).

Chike, just like any other man, could not go out because if they venture out, the soldiers would continue pursuing them until they were caught and forced to join the army. This was the major challenge Chike had as he would always run back home with great speed any time he left home to see if he could get something for his house hold.

The soldiers were also in the habit of allowing themselves to be used by women to oppress the menfolk during the war. Ada, for instance, handed her husband over to the army when she brought her military friends to come and take

away Chike who proved to be a stumbling block in her extra-marital relationships with the soldiers. Ubesie narrates how Chike was conscripted thus,

Ka na-emege z , nd kp r ya
ihu xttx b nd am ab ji egbe,
s[ya agbakwala s , maka na [gba
s b qnwx. kw r otu ebe,
chilie aka elu, na-ele ha n'anya.
Otu n'ime ha wee s[ya, ` nwee
ihe i nwere izi nd be g , zie ha
ugbu a, maka na ije am aruola g .

As Chike opened the door early in the morning, the soldiers were there and ordered him not to run as that would mean instant death. He stood still and raised up his hands like a common criminal even though the only crime he committed was that he was against their relationship with his own wife. From the above utterance we could also observe that people could be killed just because they ran away to avoid being conscripted. Chike was promptly arrested and taken to the war front. This took Chike by surprise because in the past, he had used many tricks to avoid coming in contact with the soldiers, in one of such occasion, he hid in a food condiment box,

Chike wee p ba nɔkpuru igbe nri ha, nne ya were
ji na ihe oriri nd z kwachibido ya (Ubesie 1977,
p.161).

He hid in the box and the mother had to place food items like yam and other edibles to cover him the more. This was to avoid what may happen to him as he would either get killed by the soldiers and in some instances be forced to dig his own grave before he would be killed as was the case with the Biafrans the Nigeria forces caught while returning from market. The young men that were caught while returning from the market were forced to dig their own grave.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that the execution of the war by the soldiers were beyond what one could imagine as the army officers trample on people's right with impurity by forcefully enlisting them in the army, kill those who ran away or even forcing them to dig their own graves before they were killed.

Added to these was the fact that people can be evicted or chased away from their houses whenever the soldiers wanted as can be seen in this command.

Eh-e, Ada, ch ebe z ga-
akwaga ugbu a. Ndi otu any[ch r
iji ebe a mere isi l rx agha
any . Mee ngwa n'ih i na gagh
anqzucha awa at , anyi eburu
ngwongwo any wxchie. (Ubesie,
1977, p.130) .

Ada was told to pack out because according to the soldiers who came, they were packing in there within three hours as the place had been designated their new head quarters. As Ada was reluctant to pack out, her goods were latter thrown out when they arrived. These, they could do because they did not observe the laws since there were neither any court around to persecute them nor were there policemen that could arrest them. According to Ubesie,

... l ikpe adgh nso. Nd uwe ojii
s[ya b[a ikpe, nwere ike sie
nw , n r n'ihu qg na-akwa mgb .
E zite onye uwe ojii ka ba kp ta
Okechukwu ebe ah , Okechukwu nwere
ike izi nd otu ya, si ha nwude
onye uwe ojii ah , chinye ya uwe

kak , kp tara ya nwoke ah n'ihu
 qg ka si n' [b onye uwe ojii
 gh onye soja.

However, anyone that had any problem with an army officer during the war could be said to be in dilemma since the officer could do anything and get away with it. In the above illustration, Ada was at the mercy of Okechukwu as Okechukwu could do anything to her since there were practically no court and the police force were incapacitated when it comes to apprehending a soldier. This was because in event of venturing into such an expedition (i.e trying to arrest an officer), the soldier could even arrest him and force him to become a soldier. The army thus became a powerful institution as the army could arrest, sentence people to death and execute the person. They could eject people out of their houses within a short period of time as it happened to Ada when her properties were even thrown outside.

At this juncture, it could be seen that the execution of the war by the army was such that the human rights of individuals were violated whether such a person was in the military or not. People's residential areas could be bombarded at will with the support of foreign powers and nobody was there to talk and save the masses, even when there were mass execution or massacre, nobody condemned the act, and food supply/aids were blocked from reaching the Biafran side. It can thus be said that what happened during the war was such that there was impunity on the part of the army. There were also extra-judicial killings/executions, abuse of human rights and excessive use of force from the federal force who were backed by the Western world.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 An Appraisal of the Effects of Nigeria/Biafra War in *Jxq Obinna*.

Soldiering, escapades, conscription exercises and air-raids are the major activities cum themes portrayed in *Jxq Obinna* (Onyekaonwu, 2001). Both *Isi*

Akwx Dara N'Ala and *Jxq Obinna* are war novels that project the activities of two chief characters that never wanted to see the war front. However, according to Nwaozuzu (2001), even though both Chike in *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and Obinna in *Jxq Obinna* tried to evade going to the war front, the author makes the reader to appreciate the fact that they did this for different reasons/objectives. For Chike, the security of his children and mother were paramount in his mind while Obinna's fear of joining the army was mainly egoistic.

For three years, Biafran men were either seen in the war front or at home perfecting their running skills to avoid conscription. According to Emenyonu (2001),

Jxq Obinna is an ironic commentary of the Biafran "Straglerö, the loud-mouthed, we must fight to the last man advocate who show dexterity in dodging the conscriptor. He is an adept in military tactics without reaching the war fronts. He has a fantastic imagination and can weave endless stories of his gallantry so effortlessly, fitting in every minute detail of military manoeuvre that you cannot but believe and acknowledge him as a war hero (p. 35).

One may be quick to write him off due to his activities but one thing stand out clearly and that is the fact that in his bid to evade conscription, he shuttled to and fro between the civilian area and the military arena. How the war affected both the military and the civilian population came to the fore due to his actions and inaction during the war. According to Umelo (2012),

When one considers the preponderance of works on the subject of Nigeria civil war, it is surprising to see a novel that probes the over trodden path with deft freshness, and that is compelling read. It handle the historical truths of the brutalities and effect of the war showing the ravaging influence of the war on the psyche of various

actorsí ÷Stripping our humanity from usöí
(p.4).

Thus, through brutality, starvation and other atrocities committed during the Nigeria/Biafra war, Ayodele (2012) observed that up to two million Igbos were killed. The humanity of the Igbos was stripped from them and the killings according to Obinna, Chukwukelue, Ugochukwu and Ojo (2011), the killings could be appropriately referred to as Biafran War of genocide. But then, the question now is, did Ubesie (1979) capture these atrocities in his novel *Jxq Obinna?* In a bid to x-ray the events of the Nigeria/Biafra war as captured in *Jxq Obinna*, this chapter is sub-divided into the following sub-headings:

- 4.1 Hunger and Financial Implications of the Nigeria/Biafra war in *Jxq Obinna*.
- 4.2 The Psychological/Societal effects of the war on the people as contained in *Jxq Obinna*.
- 4.3 The Effects of the Execution of the Nigeria/Biafra War in *Jxq Obinna*.

4.1 Hunger and Financial Implication of the Nigeria Biafra War in *Jxq Obinna*.

One major strategy which the Nigerian ÷warlordsø used against the Biafrans was to ensure that the Biafrans were financially ÷disabledø and the subsequent hunger and deprivation that followed. Though Obajeun (2012) was arguing in favour of the Nigerian side and the policies brought to bear to ensure that Biafrans were defeated, Obajeun states,

Awolowo was a financial wizard who used economic tools to fight his own war. From Awoø calculation, there was no way to differentiate

between the civilians, Nigerian soldiers and the Biafran warlords and as such any food supply to the war-front might not get to the intended beneficiaries. Awo then raked in the food to feed his own people in the West rather than wasting it on soldiers. For Achebe to have accused Awo of hoarding food to starve Easterners to death, is a clear case of someone who has lost touch with historical realities. I have never read it anywhere that there was a warlord who was feeding his enemies on the war-front (p. 2).

Above citation even though was meant to defend Awolowo's policy during the war ended up showing how selfish and inhuman Awo was. Even if the author of above citation has not seen a warlord that fed his enemies in the war front, at least Awolowo should have feed the Nigerian Army who was fighting on his side. But instead he channeled the food to his people (the Yoruba) alone and not to other parts of Nigeria and this complicated the food crises that remained throughout the war as the civilians and the soldiers from both the Nigerian and Biafran sides scrambled for the few available food in Biafra. Thus the assertion of Achebe that Awolowo hoarded food to starve the Easterners to death (Achebe, 2012), could be said not only to be true but also that he starved even the Nigerian army for ethnic reasons. However, this is not the concern of the present researcher, the concern of the present research is to ascertain if the novel ***Jxq Obinna*** contains instances that show that the people of Biafra had food crises that resulted from the execution of the war and the extent of the food crises.

The first major crisis that results from the execution of the war was financial problems with its attendant consequences especially among the men folk. According to Ubesie, (1979)

Nke ka nke ugbu a bx na umunne ya na nne ya anakwagh[edewe ego n'ebe q na -ahx ya anya. Nan[ihe q nq bx, ihe oriri ghee, o si n'ebe q nq pxta b[a rie nke ya, je zokwa qzq. Afx ad[gh[ya n'aka nke kqbq ji ad[ya n'aka (p.11).

To compound Obinna's problem, his mother and sisters kept their money away from him and as such he had nothing in his pocket. The only thing he was now doing was to occasionally come out of his hiding place to collect his own ration of food and retire to his hiding place. For somebody like Obinna who boasted a lot, it was a pathetic situation not to have anything on him. The situation was the same for all other grown-up men in Biafra and this was occasioned by the blockage by the Nigerian forces and their allies which made economic activities impossible in Biafran soil.

As the economic situation continued to bite harder, Captain Emeka came back home and was able to convince Obinna to come out of his shell and become a fuel attendant. But even as a fuel attendant, his financial position did not change as the monthly pay could not sustain him for just a month. This situation was not peculiar to Obinna as no worker could boast of having any amount of money on him at month end. But this particular month was peculiar as Obinna had just one pound or two on him. In view of this, Obinna decided to borrow certain amount of money from his friend. But Ubesie (1979) reports,

Ka o ruru, anya enyi ya nwoke lere ya ka q na - abata d[ka q na - achq ibu xzq r[q Obinna ego. Ka Obinna kwutere okwu maka xgwq qnwa ya, enyi ya nwoke buuru xzq fqpxtara ya akpa ya, si ya na q

bxx na ya ahxgh[onye ya natara
ego n' ehie a, na q bx agxx ka
ya ga - amalite ugbu a wee kwxwa
ruo mgbe a ga - akwx xgwq...(p.29).

Thus, as Obinna went to his friend for help, little did he know that his friend was in a more financial predicament than himself. The friend not only looked devastated but could not hide his feelings and told Obinna that if help did not come his way that afternoon, he would continue starving till they are paid at the end of the month. Obinna could not say anything again as his friend was in a more precarious situation. One may be tempted to ask, if those that were working were seen in this type of financial quagmire, then what were the financial position and poverty level of those that were not working? The answer is obvious; they were not only financially devastated but had little or nothing to eat.

At a point, Obinna and his friend were alive because they were still breathing as Ubesie narrates,

Onye lere enyi Obinna anya ga -
amata na xqch[amagh[dewe ihu
n' akxx xwa nke ya. Ka Obinna
pxtara ezi, nan[ihe q maara bx
na ya kwx qtq, xkwx ya na - aga
ije. Q magh[ebe q na - aga. N'
eziokwu, q nagh[ahx ebe q na -
eje. Agxx kpxrx ya isi, afq nri
na - ad[gh[na - akxx ya egwu,
xb[am na - ekwere ya ekwere...
mmadx Chukwu Xkpabi hiri aka
n'anya wee kee na - achaz[anwx
anwx (Ubesie, 1977, p.30).

In the above narration, Ubesie remarks that one who looks at the duo will realize that things were not going on well with them especially in area of seeing what to eat. They were so devastated and hungry that they seem to have literally gone out of their mind as Ubesie observed that their legs were walking but where they

were going was not known to them. Starvation had become part of their lives that Obinna would have contemplated leaving his work place if not because of the fear of conscription. The situation reached a stage where the response Obinna could give to one who came to him and inquired of his health was that he was still breathing,

Ehe-e-e! Obinna, kedu ka i mere?

Aka m nq ndx na - eku ume (Ubesie, 1977, p.31).

The response that he was still alive and breathing was a nice indication that things were not well for Obinna and a spring-board for the visitor (oil dealer) who came to request that Obinna steal fuel for him which was the purpose of his visit. After much persuasion and eventually giving him certain amount of money without even supplying him anything, the stage was now set for Obinna to go into stealing. He promptly convinced Ikechukwu his friend and they were now set to carry out their first operation which started well thus,

Ikechukwu jiiiri nwayqq nwayqq
f[qghee qnx nnukwu abanx ahx. Ka
q f[qghere ya, o were roba e ji
na - am[pxta mmanx wee m[wa
mmanx, bido gbanyewe na galqn d[
n'ebe ahx: nke q gbajuru, q m[px
je bunye Obinna, o je gbanye
n'otu nnukwu ite mmiri d[n'ebe
Obinna bi weghachitakwa ihe ahx
qzq (Ubesie, 1977, p.36).

As they were at the oil depot, Ikechukwu was raising a rubber pipe to collect the oil into the gallon they brought. As oil was handed over to Obinna, he emptied it into a big pot and came back. After sometime, Obinna advised that it was time

for them to go but Ikechukwu refused, and they would have been caught when Ikechukwu stepped on an object that made a loud noise if not because of the trick Ikechukwu applied that made everyone to think that the enemy was around. During the commotion that ensued, they were able to run away. This action shows that starvation has put them on the tight conner. This is because it is only a mad man that can go to the lion's den to steal. The place they went to steal oil was well guarded by soldiers but due to excessive hunger and financial problem, they had to dare the soldiers.

They continued with this practice of stealing oil to make ends meet, but the soldiers that guarded the place were later replaced and the new people that came looked more dreadful. However the person that bought oil from them had a brilliant idea and as he was about to advise them on what to do, the enemy came with their war plane and Ubesie narrates that the sound was shocking thus,

...xzu xgbq elu ahx na - eme wee na
 - ab[a egbuolari Obinna egbuo, nke
 mere na mgbe q nxrx xda bqmbx, ebe
 q na - atx anya na ya nq bx n'elu
 igwe ma q bx qkx mxq (Ubesie,
 1977, p.40).

The noise of the aircraft had already killed Obinna and when he heard the sound of the bomb, he thought that he was dead and may possible, be either in heaven or hell. But even at that, that situation was what the buyer of their oil made them to accept as the best time for stealing oil as everybody must have run away. Because of hunger and the financial situation they found themselves, they accepted to follow his advice. Ubesie (1977) sums it up when he declared that they had accepted both life and death. And due to the fact that they needed to feed by all means and there was no other way practical in the situation they found themselves other than going to steal in a highly guarded place by the military,

they had to do this only when the war plane from the Nigerian forces were on rampage.

In one of those air raids, Obinna and Ikechukwu were there to do their job of stealing to feed but after the air raid, the two were affected. Ubesie (1977) described the whole scenario thus,

N'ime ihe nile xgbq elu mere n'ebe
ahx, nan[mmadx abxq ka o
metxtara. A na-ekwu ka a ga-esi
buga Obinna xlq qgw, nqrqkwa
n'ebe ahx na-ekwukwa maka 'ebe'
ga-aka mma ili ozu ya'. Ozu onye?
Ozu Ikechukwu, onye ya na Obinna
na-egbukq, na- etinye n'otu akpa
(p.45).

In the above illustration, the narrator states that after the air-raid, two people were affected. The reason being that they were the only people that conducted their business when the war planes were around. However, after the raid, while preparations were on to take Obinna to the hospital, a space for the burial of Ikechukwu was being sought for, as he died in the air raid.

The above situation just described vividly the financial and food crises that enveloped Biafra during the war. The situation reached a situation where one can come out to steal in order to feed. Thus, while the plane was raining bomb from above, some people were out and within the area the bomb were landing to be able to steal after the air raid. This stresses the fact that the only people that could feed themselves were only those that can perform some extra-ordinary actions.

At this point, it should be stated that Obinna was there alone but could not feed himself and his stomach could not stop reminding him of the fact that nothing have been eaten by him for sometime, Ubesie thus recounts,

Afq Obinna sxrx ka obere egbe mmiri. Obinna wee cheta na q d[la anya mgbe qnx ya detxrx ihe q b[la a kpqrq ihe oriri. Ugbu a, xda egbe na-ada n'ime afq ya akar[r[ala nke na-ada n'ihu qgx Qlq. Agx na-ebuso afq ya ogx.

As Obinna had become accustomed to not eating, it was only when his stomach makes noise signaling the fact that it was empty that the attention of Obinna was drawn to that situation. The noise that emanated from Obinna's stomach was likened to the gun-shots heard at the war front. One can just imagine what was happening to other men like Obinna who had to feed themselves and their families or children who were orphaned by the war.

As Obinna reached home, he had no money on him and as a young man who should ordinarily provide for the girl friend, he lied to the friend and explained that he was returning from the hospital. One can just imagine the psychological trauma Obinna was in, staying with the family and friends after the alleged return from the war front as a soldier without even a penny in his pocket. As Onyido threatened him after he accused Obinna of 'spoiling his name', Obinna had to leave for Ihiala and preferably Uli, where he learnt that stock fish walked. He was then bent on going to Uli and ensuring that he would be part of those people that aid stock fish in making this wonderful movement.

But before he reached his destination, he must pass many military check points and many towns where there were heavy military presence. Ubesie narrates that even if he was able to go through Umueze, he still needed to pass through Ajali, Aguata and more importantly, Nnewi, where the situation was tense. The point here was that Obinna had to trek to reach his destination. Secondly, he was going to this place to know if he could steal stock fish and be

able to feed himself and not necessarily to get rich. This journey could therefore be likened to what he did with Ikechukwu, coming out to steal while there were air raids. And all these were done just for him to feed himself.

At a stage, palm kernel became a precious object and was called *õthe seed of lifeö* or *õthe seed that gives lifeö*. What a young man who boast a lot like Obinna could find in his pocket at such a critical time was this seed. According to Ubesie,

Mmadx mara ihe o nwere, o nwee ike
marra ihe q ga-eji ya wee menwuo.
Obinna manyere aka n'akpa ya hx
akx; mkpxrx na-enye ndx mgbe a na-
alx agha (Ubesie, 1977, p.132).

As Ubesie described above, when one knows what he has, one will know what to do with it. As Obinna dipped his hand into his pocket, he found what could be helpful for him, palm kernel, the seed of life or the seed that gave life during the war. This description shows that the food crises that enveloped Biafra during the war reached an alarming situation with no one to help out. With this precarious situation, Obinna accepted to follow Ndubisi to the air-port where they off-loaded relief materials and steal some at any slightest opportunity.

Obinna's first visit to the airport to help his friend steal was eventful as his friend came out with a box which they thought contained the new currency note (money). The box was given to Obinna with the instruction to carry it away. This he did but when the box was opened, what it contained was the corpse of a dead child who died of kwashiorkor. Incidentally, they were caught by soldiers and were locked up in the prison for stealing. This incidence confirmed the fact that people were stealing and doing all sorts of things to survive while others who could not find what to eat were dying away.

At the prison, the food crises continued and the prisoners lamented that though, people who were sentenced to death were given enough food to aid them their journey to the other world, their own was different as they were not even given palm kernel to eat. At a time, one of them died and they failed to report to those in charge so that they could be getting the dead man's portion of food. They were staying with the corpse of this man even when he was decaying. Little wonder, most analysts were surprised that Biafrans survived the food crises that enveloped them during the war.

From the light of the foregoing, it could be seen that financial predicament and subsequent food crises that the people of Biafra went through could not be imagined. This did not only create psychological problems during the war but also resulted in the death of many, especially those on the Biafran side.

4.1.2. The Psychological/Societal Effects of the Nigerian/Biafra war on the People as Contained in *Jxq Obinna*.

Hunger and financial problem actually dealt a heavy blow to the people of Biafra during the war. In view of this, people may erroneously think that it was the greatest misfortune that befall Biafra during the war, based on our discussion in the preceding subheading. However, Ubesie (1975) observed that,

Ma abxzx hx nke anya ya na-
ekwesighi [hx, o were xkwx gbapuo
onwe ya afq, gba xwa nk[t[(p.31).

With the above statement, Ubesie did not only recount an Igbo proverb which is usually cited when a strange and abominable act occurs but extended it to suit the Nigerian/Biafran war. Literally, the proverb translates thus, when a cricket sees what it should not see, or sees an unbelievable act, it uses its own limbs/legs to

pierce its own stomach. Ubesie narrates that the cricket did not only pierce its own stomach (commit suicide) but after that relaxes to watch the world.

In the above statement, Ubesie described the unbelievable acts that were happening in Biafra and as such the masses were traumatized and people were committing abominable acts despite the societal views about the acts. First of all, young men hold their heads high in Igbo land especially after puberty when they have been initiated into the *Ommanwxö* cult. They are not only seen as men but as those that must be respected by the opposite sex, even their mothers. But during the war as reported by Ubesie in *Jxq Obinna*, young men and even older men were not respected by the opposite sex as they were no longer in control of their families (not the bread winners again). They were not holding their heads high as they could run for their lives at any slightest provocation and as such the respect accorded them vanished.

In Igbo land, life is sacred and none would wish the other person death or wish that such a person goes to a place such a person may likely be killed. But Ubesie (1977) commenced his narration in *Jxq Obinna* with a query demanding to know why Obinna has not gone to the war front;

{ ka nqr[r[, Obinna?

Obinna txghar[r[hx Ogbenyeax.
Mgbe Ogbenyeax ji ruo ya nso
txkwasi ya aka n'ubu, Obinna
amagh[. Nke a na-eme ya ugboro anq
mmadx na-ajx ya q ka anqr[r[n'ime
otu izu xka.

Obinna looked back to know who asked the question but due to the psychological state of his mind, he could not know when Ogbenyeax approached him and held his shoulder. This shows that the war had affected him negatively that most often

he seemed to be absent minded. Coupled with that, Obinna had boasted before the war started about his would be exploit in the event of any war between Biafra and Nigeria. But as he was still discussing with Ogbenyeax and Nnenna, a man ran with all his stenght, and after passing where they were discussing, another man followed suit. According to Ubesie, (1977),

Xmx ibe, ihe suru ozugbo, a malite gbawa ya ozugbo, q bugh[qsq, q bxx egwu. Ma, nke a bx qsq. Ka obi si fepu Obinna ekweghi ya mara ihe q ga-eme eme. Nan[ihe q fqrq ya bx izo n'azx Nnenna na Ogbenyeanu. Ka q nqrq obere oge, Q malite gawa mbq xkwx ya n'ala, na-ewer[qsq ya (p.3) .

In the above, Ubesie narrates that whatever happens accidentally should be handled urgently. If it is not running, it should be dancing. But in this case the only thing it requires is running away. At first, Obinna was psychologically disturbed that he could not figure out what to do and when he eventually realized himself, he nearly hid behind the girls he was discussing with. But within a short time, Obinna joined others in fleeing despite the fact that he could not state why he was running. However, the way Ubesie personalized how Obinna fled showed that running has become part of Obinna judging from the skills he has acquired via running constantly at any slightest provocation.

This is actually dehumanizing as young men who were suppose to be the live wire of the society had no other job other than running or fleeing from either soldiers who came for conscription or to kill them. Young men and other able-bodied men in Igbo land were reduced to less humanö who were constantly under fear to the extent that they developed phobia for soldiers or anyone that

could send them to the war front. One funny thing that happened after Obinna ran away was that rather than having pity for him, Ubesie (1977) observes,

Ogbenyeany na Nnenna dapxrx n' qch[.

The two girls started laughing, showing the fact that Obinna's running away to save his life was now a laughing matter. The society thus degenerated to the extent that the Igbo people who were known for communal life now rejoiced or laughed when their own people were suffering or in danger.

Even native doctor who were known to be the custodian of Igbo culture and mouth piece of the people to both the living, the dead and the spirits, capitalized on the phobia developed by both the soldiers and ordinary people to exploit them. Onyido for example, who knew he did not possess the power to prevent people from being hit by bullet, assured Obinna thus,

Aga m agwqrq g[nke q ga-abx [gaa
n'ihu qgx, mgbq agagh[atxta g[
n'ahx, shel agagh[na-adadebe
n'akxkx ebe [nq. Q mas[g[kwxrx
qtq na-aga, onye ga na-agba g[
egbe bx mgbq ya ka q na-ekponye
n'olulu...(P.9).

The native doctor (Onyido) in the above statement told Obinna that he was capable of preparing a charm that will make him a super-human, one who cannot be gunned down as anyone who aimed at him would be practically wasting his bullets. Even shell could not get at him as it cannot fall beside him. He thus advised him to stand up at the war front and walk without fear as no weapon fashioned against him could reach him.

This same native doctor who was later caught and was taken to the war front was the person who was advising a fellow man to even go to the war front

and stand tall as neither bullet nor shell could kill him. This was thus a deceit and an indirect way of encouraging people to go and die at the war front. This is a clear case of the eroding of societal values as one who ordinarily should tell the truth and save people from premature death was the one who was giving fake charms to deceive people into going to the war front to die just to get money and other materials. The war thus impacted negatively on the people of Biafra to the extent that even people who should lead others turned out to deceive their own people.

Despite all these promises by the native doctor, Obinna's state of mind did not change as he was afraid as ever before and when he reached home that same night, he went through a hole he created as an escape route whenever the soldiers come. This type of hole (mpio) were usually created for fowls and other domestic animals. But Obinna reduced himself to a less human being by taking a route which ordinarily should be meant for domestic animals. The fear in Obinna had so much affected him that even when his friend, Emeka, came to his house, he nearly collapsed as Ubesie (1977) narrates,

The Obi ya gwara ya bx na ha
ab[ala! Ya bx na qsq nile ya gbara
maka [gbannah nd[sqja abxrxla ihe
lara n'iyi.

Oo-o! Chi ya - o! Q bx ka ihe xwa
na-ad[? ...Q gbanahxrx nd[sqja
n'okporo xzq, gbanahx ha n'oh[a, o
wee bxx n'ime xlq be ya ka ha ga-
ab[a nwxx ya ka uriom qkxkq (p.19-
20) .

With fear, Obinna thought that the soldiers have caught him red-handed. He recounted that all his former efforts aimed at evading conscription were all in

vain. With exclamation, he called on his Chi (personal god) and stated that he was able to escape being caught on the road, in the bush and now he would just be picked up like a chicken. The fear had affected him so much that he could not even remember that he had an escape route ó i.e the small hole he made on the wall of their house.

One can just imagine that rather than coming out from ones house and opening the door for whoever was knocking, an able bodied man was almost collapsing because someone knocked. Thus, it could be seen that the psychological state of Obinna and other average men were filled with the fear of the unknown. To make the matter worse, even young girls could call soldiers to catch any young man that proves tough. The fear that over-shadowed Obinna soon faded away as the army officer that came was just on visit as he was Obinna's friend. However, after a short while, Emeka, the army officer told Obinna his mission and that is, taking him away to find a job for him. This led him to more trouble as he connived with his friend to steal oil from the same place he worked. While on such expedition, he was hit by a war plane that attacked them and was taken to the hospital.

Ordinarily, no right thinking individual would like to be a patient perpetually in any hospital. But Obinna, an able bodied young man found the hospital a safe haven and as an enjoyable place where he became a clown, manufacturing stories that amused nurses and others.

Ahx ad[txla Obinna mma, ma onye
ga-ekwute ka o si n' xlq qgwx pxq
bx onye iro o nwere...Mgbe q bxla
dqk[ta b[rara ka q mara nd[ahx
gbasiri ike, bx nd[ga-enyere nd[
qzq ohere n' xlq qgwx, nd[nqqsx
na-enye aka zofuo Obinna; dqk[ta

laa, Obinna esi ebe e zoro ya
 pxtakwa qzq..Obinna nwere akwa n'
 xlg qgwx ahx, nqrq n'elu nke a
 nwekwas[oche (Ubesie, 1977,
 p.46) .

In the above narration, Ubesie states that though Obinna was well, he could not accept to be discharged or chased away from the hospital. Anyone that should attempt to eject him from the hospital becomes his number one enemy. At any time the doctor came for the purpose of discharging those that have recovered, the nurses would just hide Obinna till the doctor was through with his work. But once the doctor moves out, Obinna resurfaces. This behavior speaks volume of the psychological state of Obinna. It is only one who has been traumatized that can accept to take the hospital as a home. Even at that, his fate lies on the nurses who hide him and who would possibly expose him any time they like.

But Obinna was later caught when he specialized in giving soldiers fake doctor's report that enabled them to go home for rest. After getting the beating of his life, he was taken to the *commando* unit of the Biafran army. This group is a special crack squad and a special unit where soldiers were given hard training before being taken to the war front. Obinna has already heard that most of the soldiers that belong to this group usually die at the war front. At the training ground, Obinna was psychologically down and was more interested in calculating the number of soldiers that would die at the war front rather than listening to their trainer. As the man continued to dish out instructions, Obinna's psychological state was at such a state where he could not even hear what was being said. The fear that enveloped him was such that it affected him physically and when it was time for them to jump into the vehicle, Obinna could not jump in at once like others. Even when he was insulted by someone who accused him of being afraid, he did not look back. Ubesie states thus,

Obinna elegh[anya n'azx ka q mata onye kpqrq ya iyi a, buru onwe ya ebu txba n'xgbq ala. Nan[[tx egwu onye ahx kpqrq aha nutere ya n'xra q mx anya na-arahx. D[ka q maara, nan[xgwq a na-akwx onye a s[na q na-atx egwu na kqmando bx otu mkpxrx mgbq ma q bx abxq. Na mmadx esigh[n'azx gbakanye Obinna egbe bx nnukwu [he qma meere ya. (p.64 - 65).

The consequence of someone among the *commandos* being branded as some one who is afraid is instant death and this was well known to Obinna. This at the back of his mind, having been called or mentioned as one who was afraid had a dual effect on Obinna. It not only energized him to throw himself into the van which hither-to looked as an impossible task for him, but also woke him up from the sleep he was deep in even though he was awake (absent minded). According to the narrator (Ubesie) that he did not receive one or two bullets from behind was a fortune for him as the appropriate reward for a *commando* who was filled with phobia was instant death.

From the above illustration, one can understand the psychological state of Obinna who had vowed not to be a soldier and had perfected in the act of running away and hiding from soldiers whenever they came for conscription. Obinna could not even imagine that he was a soldier, not to talk of being a *commando*, and the thought of this filled him with fear. Thus, a young man like Obinna was reduced to nothing due to fear and the only propelling force that enabled him to perform whatever action he was told to perform was fear rather than his strength.

But Obinna was not alone in this type of psychological trauma/fear as Ubesie (1977) states,

...Ma Obi ad[nd[mmadx qcha, ma q d[ha ilu, ugbo ala nd[komandq bu ha na-aga ebe q na-aga, ebe ha ga-eje sie qnwx n'imi. Ka ha nqkatara mmadx mmadx na-eme mmxq mxq, otu onye malitere otu egwu nd[kqmando ji eje n'ihu qgx, mmadx ole na ole kweere ya. O kwekwara ukwe ahx qzq, ma tupu nd[mmadx ekwechaara ya, ihe ha nuru bx:

Kom, Kom, Kom'.

Onye q bxxla mech[r[qnx ya ka a mara ihe na-eme mkpqtz a, maka na ihe nile mxtara ime mkpqtz ka ngwa qgx n'ime oge a na-alx qgx. Q bxladi afere nk[t[dara n'ala na-ada ka egbe shel.

In the above narration, Ubesie affirms that whether the people like it or not, the army vehicles were taking them to a place where they would practically perceive (small) death. Knowing fully well that they were being brought to the war front where majority of them would die, the fear that enveloped them could not allow them to respond to the war song that was tuned by their colleague. Even when they wanted to respond later, the sound -kom kom \emptyset interrupted them. Ubesie thus states that they all stopped singing because during the war, everything learnt how to make sound, which resembled weapons of war. According to him, even a plate that falls on the ground sounded like the sound of shelling. It should however be stated that rather than plates and other objects changing their sounds, it was the fear in human being during the time of war that made their ears to perceive the sounds of objects wrongly. It could thus be stated that the war devastated both the soldiers and civilians alike to the extent that it affected their sense of judgement.

If Obinna could be said to be afraid of the war front, Onyido was practically terrified at the mere mention of war front. As such, when it dawned on him that they will be at the war front the next day, he declared to Obinna thus,

Achqrq m ka [mara mgbe m biliri,
 marakwa ebe m na-eje, ka q ga-abx
 nd[xlq ahxgh[m, [kqqrq ha ebe [hxdewere m. Anxla m na a ga-eje
 qgx echi. Obi m ekweteghi qgx a
 ga-alx echi. M nqrq lxq ya, o rie
 isi m. Ka m je kwadoo pxq. (P.77).

Onyido did not mince words when he called Obinna to declare his intention to leave the war front and go despite the fact he knew that fearing alone as a òcommandoö attracts instant death. One could just imagine what can happen to one who was caught running away. But Onyido was fearless in his òstate of fearfulnessö and precisely told Obinna that he wanted to inform him of his plan so that in the event of his people not seeing him, Obinna could at least tell them what he knew about his whereabouts. He specifically told Obinna that he learnt that they would be at the war front tomorrow, which according to him did not go down well with his soul as he was certain that he would die if he ventured to go to the war front tomorrow. Obinna was convinced by Onyido who was not even certain that he would reach home safely and followed him.

The duo left the soldiers despite the danger in their action and not minding the fact that there were soldiers who were guarding the place. This, they did due to extreme fear that have enslaved them and cowed their sense of judgment. Due to the fear in them, it could be said that people like Onyido and Obinna were taking actions that were suicidal. More importantly, people were forced to become soldiers not minding their psychological state. Rather than checking the psychological state of those that enrolled in the army, and find ways of boosting

their psychological moral, they were more interested in inflicting pains and sometime killing them during training sessions without showing any remorse whenever one died. Soldiers like Obinna and Onyido were only terrified and would take any risk to leave the army.

Though it was Onyido that helped Obinna to escape from the war front via the use of many tricks which included carrying Obinna on his shoulder as a wounded soldier to deceive other soldiers whom they met on their way back home, Onyido was also the person that forced him to leave the community. Onyido knowing the psyche or psychological state of Obinna especially when it comes to joining the army, threatened him when he learnt that Obinna was gossiping with his name, and that was enough to send Obinna out of the village to an unknown destination. According to Ubesie (1977),

N'eziokwu, Obinna ji aka ya bilie, mana q magh[ebe q na-eje, n'ihina o nwere ihe na-achx ya. Mmadx ahxbegh[ihe ahx anya ugbu a, mana Obinna nqrq na-etufu oge, ama ak[d[ga-agba n'ikpo ns[. Mgbe q hapxrx Owerre-Ezukala nke qma na-erute Xmunze nso ka q ji mata na ya ga-eche echiche tupu o ruo n'ebe okwu na-agara qnx. O jiiiri nwayqq nqrq ala n'akxxkx xzq chee echiche maka ebe q na-aga, na ka q ga-esi hx na ego ya ji agwxnagh[ya (p.114).

Obinna left his house without knowing where he was going just because Onyido whom he knew pretty well was more afraid of himself threatened him. He left Owerre-Ezukala and it was only when he reached Umunze that he realized himself and thought it a worthwhile venture to think of where he was going and

how the money he had could sustain him. It was thus so devastating that one could be afraid of his fellow man and more importantly one he knew could not come out when a soldier approaches. Obinna knew that Onyido was a weakling but was still afraid of his threat and had to set out to an unknown destination. It is only one who is mentally derailed that can start moving/travelling without actually thinking and deciding on where he was going. But at a particular point in the execution of Nigeria/Biafra war, people were in the habit of moving out without having any particular place in mind as exhibited by Obinna.

Obinna trekked this long distance from Owerre-Ezukala to Uli only to be caught on the first day of his outing where his friend, Ndubisi, handed him a box containing a child who died of malnutrition. The two thought that the box was containing money but while they were opening the box with another man who joined them later and forced himself on them, they were caught by soldiers who imprisoned them. They were subjected to such dehumanizing conditions that they were convinced that if any of them died there, such a person would go straight to heaven. Ubesie thus states,

...O nwegh[qkx mxq ga-aka ebe a ha
no ugbu a njq. O bxlad[na ha ga-
eje qkx mxq, Chineke ga-emere ha
ebere n' ihi na ha ejetxla ya bx
qkx mmxq n' elu xwa. (p.153)

The prisoners likened their condition to be equal to what is obtainable in hell and thus, thought that God will spare them hell when they die since they have tasted hell on earth. That notwithstanding, prisoners were called out of the prison at intervals for the execution of any assignment. But one thing was clear, none of them ever came back. In view of this, whenever anyone was called out, the others paid him the last homage which was singing or reciting a traditional Igbo dirge.

One can just imagine the psychological trauma being suffered by the people there. They were not certain of what will happen to them the next day and this actually was not only against the communal life in the Igbo communities but is abhorred in all societies.

In view of this situation, when Obinna and his group were called, Obinna was not perturbed as he even thanked God that he even came out there to see the light of the day. Ubesie narrates,

Ekele d[r[Chineke na anya Obinna
 hxxr ihē qzq ghara [bx nan[
 qch[ch[. Ekele d[r[ihē kere xwa,
 na ezigbo ikuku Qbas[d[n'elu
 kere na-aba ya n'imi ugbo a, q
 ghara [bx nan[isi ahxxr mmadx
 nyxxr, isi ozu oke nwxr, ...na isi
 ozu mmadx. Qnwx bia ugbo a gbuo
 Obinna, q b[akwagh[n'oge, maka na
 Obinna anqkatala n'xlq nga,
 nqkwuru ihē ka qnwx (P.153).

In the above statement, Obinna thanked God for seeing day light again. He specifically thanked God who created the earth for allowing him breath fresh air other than odour from; polluted air, decaying dead rats, and even dead bodies. He reasoned that even if he died then, that death came too late as the condition he suffered in the prison was worse than death.

If one was given the opportunity of seeing Obinna saying this type of prayer when he had a gun pointed at him from behind, that person would think that Obinna was a strong man and a brave soldier but the reverse was the case. Obinna psyche and way of thinking has been greatly affected by the dehumanizing condition they were subjected to in the prison. A situation where people defecate where they live and rarely eat to the extent that they could afford

to stay with a dead person for days and refuse to report the demise of such a person just to eat his own ration of food was really devastating. In view of this, Obinna was happy that he was afforded the opportunity of seeing day light and breathing fresh air.

Even the soldiers were not left out in this type of negative behavior as the army officers had lost all moral and societal virtue. They were morally down that they could afford to call a dead colleague a bag of garri. In relation to this, Ubesie reported,

Sajin kwuru s[na ya chqqrq mmadx
isii ga-eje bute ihe d[n'azx xgbq
ala Land Rova ahx, Obinna na
Ndxbisi machapxta. Saj[n s[ha je
butuo akpa gar[d[n'azx xgbq ala
ahx. Onye mbx mabara bx Obinna.
Obere ihe ka q zqq onye d[na ala
n'azx xgbq ala ahx xkwx n' afq. Q
s[r[onye ahx dina ala ndq, ma
mgbe o lere anya, q hxgh[akpa
gar[q bxla...N'ezikwu, mmadx
anqgh[n'ime xgbq ala ahx. Ihe d[
n'ime ya bx ozu qch[agha ahx s[r[
ha nqrq ala ka ya je chqqrq ha
nri!

The sergent commanded that six persons should bring down the bag of garri (a type of cassava flour) from the vehicle. Obinna hurriedly jumped into the vehicle apparently to show that he was a brave man, but, what he saw shocked him as he nearly stepped on a man who lay on the floor of the vehicle. He felt sorry for his action but when he looked round, he could not see any bag of garri but rather saw a dead army commander lying motionless on the floor of the vehicle. Obinna was filled with fear to the extent that he had to jump down from the vehicle. Obinna

was taken aback by this incident but the concern of this researcher was that these soldiers were morally bankrupt and have lost all sense of communal life which is cultural in all African society. Rather than being filled with sorrow that an officer of that cadre died, the soldier was proud to call on the likes of Obinna to bring down the bag of garri which indirectly showed Obinna that human life was not sacred to them again.

From the different incidences contained in *Jxq Obinna*, it was clear that Obinna and other characters, especially the young men who were afraid of joining the army were perpetually scared of going to the war front due to the fact that the soldiers do not have any respect for human life. They malhandled and killed them either in the name of giving them training or due to the fact that such people were running away. At times a whole community may leave their place due to fear as Obinna noticed when he reached some communities on his way to Uli. Some of the communities were deserted apparently due to fear of attack. The people of Biafra were subjected to inhuman conditions that they were psychologically down not only because of hunger, shelling of residential area which killed many, but mostly due to the execution of the war as contained in *Jxq Obinna*.

4.1.3 The dehumanizing Effects of the Execution of the Nigeria/Biafra War as Contained in *Jxq Obinna*.

Hunger, financial problems, and psychological trauma seen in *Jxq Obinna* were actually brought about by the execution of the Nigeria/Biafra war by the soldiers and other major stakeholders. Right from the beginning of the war, there were unimaginable abuses of human rights, shelling of residential area and

constant invading of residential area for the main purpose of forcefully making the young men to join the army.

Right from the beginning of the novel *Jxq Obinna*, Obinna and other people like him were seen running for their lives at any slightest provocation or just because they saw other persons running. In one of such occasions, Ubesie (1977) narrates,

Obinna gbatetxrx aka, lee anya n'azx, wee hx ebe xmx agbqghq nd[na-ach[okorobia d[ka ya qch[. Otu Obi gwara ya ka q kwxs[[gba qsq je baa soja, mara ma ha ga-enyedewe ya mpakar[. Ma... mba, Chineke ekwela! Q bxgh[ya ka a ga-akpxrx jee n'ihu qgx, mgbq txgbuo ya... Ime okorqb[a erughi na nke a. Ya onwe ya bx Obinna ad[gh[ka ihe a na-ekpochi n'ala, si na q bx mgbq txgburu ya n'ihu qgx (p.4).

Obinna ran away for his dear life and it was only when he was at a distance that he summoned the courage to look back to see the girls that were laughing at him. He thought of joining the army voluntarily to stop all these nonsense of fleeing away from soldiers always and the insult that accompanied them but on a second thought he rejected the idea. According to him, going to join the army meant going to war front and obviously being killed by bullet and as such he thought that it cannot be said or even imagined that he would be buried due to gunshot wounds. He did not see himself as being worthy of being buried and as such he concluded that nothing would make him join the army.

From the above, we can deduce that the execution of the war was such that human rights of individuals were constantly violated as men were being pursued

to join the army. The way the soldiers went on with the conscription exercise was such that people were killed, maimed and sometimes pushed to the war front with little or no training. Because of these, people were always running and hiding, and at times, men would start running even when they did not see any one chasing them other than the mere fact that they saw another person(s) running.

Obinna did not only perfect his act of running but had also like other men who dreaded joining the army learnt how to come out only at night and any other time they thought that soldiers would not come out. While reporting this ordeal, Ubesie (1977) says,

Nd[soja emekatala ya ihe nke bx
na q bx nan[n'abal[ka q na-
apxtakar[qr[r[. N'ih i nke a, anya
ya na qch[ch[agbaala ndx... Ebe ihe
xwa mesikatara ya [ke nke bx na
nwa okorob[a d[ka ya ga na-eji
nan[abal[na-awaghar[. Q mxtala
[hx xzq n'abal[ka nwa mba... (p.5).

In the above, Ubesie explains that the soldiers had severally dealt with Obinna to the extent that the only time he came out was at night. In view of this he had mastered darkness to the extent that he could see at night like cats. The soldiers were able to subject them to this practice because soldiers kill those that ventured to run away on sighting them as Obinna recalls,

Amxma mmiri sekwara qzq n'ike, nke
bx na ozuzo q na-ezo onwe ya
enwekwagh[isi. Qch[agha ahx hxr
ya, Maz[Qnyido hxkwa ya. Nke ka
njq bx na [gba qsq ad[gh[ya. Q
nxla akxkq ka nwoke ahx si na-agba
nd[na-agba qsq egbe (p.6).

In the above, Ubesie explained that while Obinna was hiding near Onyido's house, there was lightning and as the second one was severe, Obinna was seen by both the army officer and Onyido. There was no sense in hiding again and to complicate the issue, Obinna had heard how the same officer killed those that ran away when they sighted him. This confirms the fact that just running away to avoid conscription could earn someone instant death during the Nigerian Biafra War.

Worse still the soldiers did not even respect the traditional institutions and the custodians of traditional institution. People were surprised that somebody like Onyido, a native doctor and a custodian of the people's culture, could be forced to join the army. Ubesie thus narrates,

Maz[Onyido na-agwqrq nd[mmadx
qgwu ka a ga-esi na-agbanahx nd[
na-akpxnye mmadx na soja, na ka
mgbq agagh[esi na-atxpu ha ahx.
Ma xd[ihe mere taa mere nd[mmadx
ji wee nyowe ikoro na onye na-eti
ya enyo... (Ubesie, 1977, p.15).

Onyido, the native doctor, prepares charms for those who want to evade conscription and even soldiers who want to be safe at the war front. Members of the community were amazed at what happened and even started doubting Onyido and the institution he represents. The fact here is that looking at the way Onyido and others were caught and taken to the war front, it showed that not only did the soldiers force people, and these included both married and unmarried men, custodian of the people's culture and ordinary citizens alike. Not minding that these people were afraid of joining the army, when they were caught, they were taken straight to the war front and that explained why Onyido sustained bullet wound on his hand shortly after he was caught. Thus, the execution of the war

was such that the sacredness of people's life was not taken into cognizance by the soldiers.

Because the execution of the war was terrible, people knew that they were still alive because they were breathing. In line with this, Ubesie narrates,

...Ma, ka ihe si dewe ihu ugbu a,
onye q bɔla nq ndɔ bɔ ume q na-eku
ka o ji ka nd[nwxrx anwx mma
(p.31).

As it stands now, according to Ubesie, anyone who was living knew that why he was better than the dead was just because the person was breathing. This thus meant that due to the execution of the war which blocked food aids, and subjected the people to untold hardship, the people were just living based on providence.

Nigeria/Biafran war was really a civil war but the execution of the war looked as if it was between two countries that have been in enmity for a very long time. This assertion was due largely to the use of excessive force that had lasting effect on not only the people and animals but even in the spirit world. Ubesie narrates,

Ka Obinna na Ikechukwu si na be
Obinna pɔta, ebe nile dqqrq jxx ka
qdq mmiri. Nan[mkpqtɔ ha na-anx
bɔ xda egbe a ka na-agba n'ihu
qgx. Q bɔlad[xmx nnxnx na xmx
ahxhx na-ebe n'ime abal[anakwagh[
ebe ugbu a, n'ihɔ na qgx a na-alx
na-enyi mmxq na mmadx na xmx anx
qh[a egwu (p.35).

In the above illustration, Ubesie narrates that as Obinna and Ikechukwu came out, everywhere was as quiet as a lake. The only noise that could be heard was gunshots coming from war front as even animals and insects did not make noise again. This was because the war created phobia in the spirit world, among humans and even animals. This scenario attests to the fact that there was use of excessive force which affected not only the physical world but even at the spiritual realm.

The fears that griped both the human and the non human elements at the Biafran side were due to the excessive shelling and bombardment of the area by war planes. In one of such bombardments, Ubesie (1977) reports,

...Xzx xgbq elu ahx na-eme wee na-
ab[a egbuolar[Obinna egbuo, nke
mere na mgbe q nxrx xda bqmbx, ebe
q na-atx anya na ya nq bx n'elu
igwe ma q bx qkx mxq (p.40).

The noise that came from the war plane had already killed Obinna and when then it started dropping the bombs, Obinna thought that the only likely place he could be was either in heaven or hell. Little wonder then, that Ubesie earlier stated that there were thin lines that separate the living from the dead. Both the war front and residential areas were under constant bombardment and all these created fear and frustration in the mind of the people.

Even the way soldiers treated the civilians did not help issues as people were beaten at the slightest excuse. When Obinna was eventually caught impersonating the doctors, he was not given a fair hearing because according to Ubesie, in the military, when one is higher than you, his god is equally higher than your god and as such you should not open your mouth when such a person is talking. According to Ubesie,

Ozugbo sajin na-ekwucha okwu, ihe pxxr Obinna n'qnx bx 'Q bx xgha!... Na soja, q mas[onye ka g[ya na- ebo gi ebubo dum, [si na q na- agha xgha, iwu qzq ji g[aka, maka na i kwuru na onye kar[r[g[n'qkwa na-agma xgha.

Ka mkpxrx okwu atq a s[Obinna n'qnx na-adapx; onye soja so sajin je kppta ya, hapxx ya otx xtar[a n'obe azx, mkpu pxq Obinna n'qnx. Nwoke ahx seliri xtar[ya qzq ka q p[a Obinna. Obinna txghar[ka o jide ya n'xtar[, sajin si n'azx maa ya xra n'ekwu, ajx butuo Obinna n'ala. Ihe nd[a e mere ya eme nq qnqdx ka q bx aka ka a ka kwqrq (p.51).

Ubesie explained in the above comments that as the sergeant finished his speech, Obinna replied immediately that what he said were lies. In the military as explained above, even if your senior was heaping lies on you, if for any reason you state that what he said were lies, then that automatically becomes another offence. As Obinna made this three word statement, ò Q bx xghaö, a soldier that accompanied the sergent flogged him at the back (shoulder) and Obinna gave out a loud cry. The soldier wanted to flog him again but Obinna attempted to hold the cane. This infuriated the sergent and the slap he gave Obinna made him to faint. But even at that, Ubesie observed that this was just the beginning of Obinna's ordeal.

After all said and done, Obinna landed at the training ground without being given a fair hearing or being interviewed to know whether he was interested in joining the army. The action of these soldiers proved that they were above the

laws and can treat any civilian and even soldiers that they were higher than in rank the way they liked. Even as they went round to get people to join the army, there were not adequate infrastructures for their training. The soldiers on training, most of whom were forced to join the army were subjected to such inhuman treatment to the extent that they were not given uniforms which is a basic necessity of life. Ubesie reports,

Ka (Obinna) ruru n'ebe ahx, q
bxgh[ihe q txrx anya na ya ga-ahx
ka q hrx. Uwe a na-enye nd[soja
ad[kwagh[ugbu a ka o si na-agbqbu
kasaa (p.53).

When Obinna reached the training ground, he did not see what he expected to see as soldiers uniforms were not in abundance as it use to be. But even at that the soldiers were always raiding different communities to force men into to the army.

At the training ground, the soldiers or trainees were not valued as human beings as they could be killed at any time especially when they displayed any form of fear or try to run away. Ubesie reports the punishment given to one soldier thus,

Otu onye n'ime ha chqrq [gba qsq
n'qnx xttx, ma ihe q hrx n'xzq
wee gbaghach[ta abxgh[ihe q ga-
akqzuru mmadx, n'ihhi na q magh[ma
nd[na-eche nche aka na-achq ya.
Ha agbagh[ya egbe ka ha gbagbuo
ya agbagbu, n'ihhi na e wepu na q
makpuuru ala n'ike, n'isi ka mgbq
ahx gaara [tx ya (p.57)

Ubesie recounts that one of the soldiers wanted to escape very early in the morning but what he saw that made him to run back was not what he could

explain to any one because he could not say if the soldiers on guard were still looking for him or not. They did not shoot him on the leg but rather on the head, but for the fact that he quickly bent down, the bullet would have hit him on the head. This showed that soldiers on guard were given instruction to kill any fleeing soldier rather than catching the person and punishing him. This is in fact an inhuman treatment.

Even at the training ground, one can be killed without his death obstructing the activities of the day. Obinna's friend escaped death when he wanted to run away, but he was not so lucky at the training ground as shown below,

í Q chqrq ka o selite isi, otu
sajin we chetara ya na nan[xgwq
nd[kqmando na-akwx onye na-atx
egwx bx qnwx. 'Oo-ee! Oo-ee!! Nan[
olu mkpu abxq; mmadx anxkwagh[
mkpqtX! Onye na-agba egbe kwxs[r[
[gba egbe, ma a s[gh[onye dina
n'ala bilie, n'ihí na nke ahx
agagh[enwe isi... Nan[ihe atq ka q
hxrX. Nke mbx, ebe mgbq si baa
enyi ya n'etiti isi. Nke abxq,
ah[h[a qbara dere ede n'akxkx enyi
ya. Nke atq, ebe ozu enyi Obinna
nq na-eche nd[ga-ab[a ibupx ya
(p.61).

At this juncture, it was the turn of Obinna and his friend to be trained in the art of crawling and dodging bullets at the war front. Obinna's friend became afraid half way and as explained by Ubesie above, one sergeant reminded him that the only reward for a fearful commando is instant death. After this statement, Obinna's friend gave out a loud cry twice either in response to what was said or as a result of fear and ceased to talk. The person who was shooting stopped, but nobody told

the person lying down to get up because that was useless. But Obinna saw three things; the first was where the bullet entered the centre of his friend's head, the second one were leaves that were soaked with blood, while the third was the corpse of his friend that was waiting for those that would carry him away.

Above explanation goes a long way to assert the the manner those that executed the war discharged their duties without regard to human life. People were maltreated both at the training ground and outside. Worse still, people were not interviewed to know where they can fit in before they were forced to go into training. At the training ground, killing soldiers in training was a usual occurrence and even when one dies in active service or training, no due respect was paid to one. This was due largely to the fact that they had no regard for human life and these terrified people like Obinna.

Obinna was able to escape from the 'commando' but the effects of the execution of the war were severe among various communities in Biafra. People could not move about freely either because they wanted to avoid being forced to join the army or due to air raid. At a time when Obinna was on his way to Uli, when he reached Umunze, he could not see anybody in the market and when he asked an old woman what the problem was, the answer was simple

Nwa m, jekwuru nd[sqja a s[unu
na ha lxwa ogx n'ihu ogx. Q bxgh[
n'ime obodo ka a s[unu gbawa
mmadx egbe (p.120)

My child, go and meet the soldiers you were told to fight with at the war front. You were not told to go about shooting people in the villages. Though this answer came as a surprise to Obinna as he was not carrying any gun, it apparently showed that other soldiers have been terrorizing the villagers and killing their

people. This also showed how the soldiers treated the people during the war. Because of fear, most communities and their markets were deserted.

Obinna was again caught with his friend Ndubisi in Uli where they were about to share their booty. This time, they saw themselves in prison and Ubesie described the prison thus,

N'ime xlq nga ebe e dewere ha, ha
 d[ihe kar[r[mmadx iri na asatq
 n' qtx qnx xlq ahx. E ji akanya
 kpachichaa ebe ikuku si na-abatara
 ha nke qma ka onye q bxxla n'ime ha
 ghara [mapx n'ime abal[gba qsq.
 N'eziokwu, o nwegh[onye maara ihu
 ibe ya, maka na qch[ch[anagh[
 ekwe ha hx ihu ibe ha anya nke
 qma. Oge nile bxxrx ha abal[í .

In the prison and in the room where they were kept, they were more than eighteen persons in one room. Raffia mat of rope was used to block available spaces where they can receive air from. They were used to prevent them from running away in the night. In truth, they could not recognize themselves because the whole place was dark. The room was dark both at day time and at night. They were neither given clothe nor mat and even at that, the room was infested with bed-bugs. They were rarely given food to eat and even though they were not given water to take their bath, they defecated in the same room.

The soldiers also embarked on extra-judicial killings as nobody that was called out of the room ever came back. In view of this, once any one was called out, fellow prisoners sang a dirge for him knowing fully well that the person may be shot. However, Obinna and his group were not killed when they were called out, but they were not given fair hearing as Ubesie recounts,

Ikpe amalitelala! Otu ihe d[iche
 n'xd[ikpe a na-ekpe ha ugbu a, na
 xd[ikpe Obinna hxr̄ a na-ekpe nd[
 qzq. N'xd[a na-ekpe oge xdo, a
 jxq g[ajxjx, [sachaa, i nwere
 ike jxq ajxjx nke g[. Mana nke a,
 nan[ajxjx ka Obinna, Ndx̄bisi na
 enyi ha nwoke nq na-asa. Ha anagh[
 ajx nke ha. A hapx ha ka ha jxq,
 onye ka ha ga-ajx?

The illustration averred that the trial of Obinna and his friends have started but the only difference is that the trials that took place during peaceful periods and war time were different. When people are not fighting any type of war, when one was asked question, after answering the question, the person can also ask question (s). But Obinna and his friends were only answering questions that were asked by the soldiers. They asked no questions, but the authour asked a rhetorical question that even if they wanted to ask, who would they ask? After the trial, they were convicted, but while Obinna and Ndubisi were locked up in the prisons that were reserved for army officer, for four days, in addition to receiving seven strokes of the cane every morning, their friend was flogged, and left to go. The soldiers thus arrogated all types of authorities and responsibilities to themselves during the war.

From the light of the fore-going, it could be seen that the soldiers made life unbearable to the masses. They not only chased people around to force them into the army but killed them either when they were running away to avoid being caught or even at times killed at the training ground. They did all sorts of things in the name of fighting the war and these included imprisonment and extra-judicial killings. The execution of the war by the soldiers was thus nothing to

write home about in terms of the respect for freedom of movement, respect for human rights and the sacredness of human life.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Discussions, Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion.

There is a special kind of inspiration that usually propels a literary artist to engage in his job. Some were motivated by certain existential phenomenon and thus decide to write on such subjects like imperialism, slavery, independence, gender, racism and even wars (Achebe, 2012). Ubesie is one of the literary artists that focused on wars, particularly the Nigerian/Biafran War, which lasted for three years (1967-1970). *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna* are the two Igbo novels written by Tony Ubesie that focused on the events of the civil war. Literature, according to Chinedu and Ukachi (2010), has served as historical document in virtually all world cultures. The two novels could be said to be a historical document as Ubesie (1973) even stated that the war in question took off in 1967 while the special setting was the then Biafran territory - Igbo land.

Wars are bad omen in the history of any country and as such, events that usually take place during war time are usually condemnable due to its side effects on people. However, based on the instances that are contained in the two novels

on focus, the effects of the Nigerian/Biafran war were not only devastating on the people of Biafra but dehumanizing and more importantly a clear case of an attempt to annihilate a particular race. The special setting of the novel laid credence to this fact. Throughout the war, the battle ground was the Igbo land or the Biafran territory and it could be reasoned that while the objectives of the Biafran was to ward-off the Nigerian soldiers and lay claim to their territory, the Nigerian soldiers caged in the Igbo people with the sole aim of crushing them to death. Names of places where the war was fought included Nsukka, Enugu, Onitsha, Aguata, Awka, Umuze, Uli etc. The Igbo people were not only driven out from other parts of Nigeria to Igbo land but efforts were made to ensure that they had no opportunity of getting out of Igbo land. It is therefore dehumanizing to see that neither the outside world nor the Nigerian government gave Igbo people who wanted to leave Biafra the opportunity to leave.

While supporting the fact that the war had its setting in Igbo land and the fact that the novels qualify as a historical document, Ezikeojiaku (2001) states,

Ubesie's novels reflect both historical and cultural setting (Igbo land) against which his characters live out their lives. Historical development show how Nigeria between 1967 and 1970 as a fragmented country torn to shreds by a bloody and fratricidal war. After the war in 1970, he (Tony Ubesie) wrote novels which reflect some of the happenings during the war (p. 49).

Thus, since the setting of the novels and the actual war fronts were in Igbo land, whatever atrocities committed during the war were committed in Igbo land. The effects were so devastating that according to Ikuomola (2009), the dehumanizing effects of the war lingers till the present day.

The effects of the war were so dehumanizing and traumatic that it changed most of the characters found in the two novels - *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna*. In *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala*, Chike who was formerly rich and maintained a nice home where mutual relationship and love once enveloped the family and thus became the envy of everyone, changed during the way and became one that was dejected and had a broken relationship/home. Chike became poor, dejected and since his major objective was to avoid being conscripted into the army, had no job and was most of the time hiding in the bush. Ada (his wife) became a bread winner and equally changed to a bad and arrogant wife and later-on engaged in extra-marital relationships. Obinna in *Jxq Obinna* must have been an enterprising and energetic young man before the war and that was why the members of the community believed him when he boasted before the war of his would-be exploit in the event of any war. But the effect of the war was so devastating on this character that when the war eventually came, he went into hiding. Obinna ordinarily should be the one providing the essential and other needs of the family but could not come out openly again and thus resorted to stealing from the family members who were females.

In the two novels, there were extreme hungers as most families could not boast of seeing what to eat. At no place in both novels did we see any Biafran who was rich either in the army or among the civilian population. Nobody had any plan of how to live and achieve greatness other than trying all their possible best to see that they ate and stayed alive. In *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala*, it came to a stage when the medical doctors declared that lizards could be eaten by Biafrans. In view of this, lizards and other animals which hitherto were not eaten in Igbo land became a special delicacy. On the other hand, in *Jxq Obinna*, palm kernel was referred to as òseed of lifeö by people. When Obinna was in prison, the starvation in the prison was extreme that when one of them died, they

failed to tell the soldiers to take him away so that they could be getting his own ration. It is only in a place where starvation and food situation have reached a crises situation that people could afford to stay with a corpse with the bad odour that came out from the decaying body.

Furthermore, the Biafran peoples were subjected to such inhuman situation that it came to a state where people took extra-ordinary risk in order to get food. Chike has to risk his life to get food at the relief centre where different edible materials were being distributed. When Chike went to the centre and sensing that he might go home without getting anything for himself and the family, he decided to jump the queue and went straight to the person distributing the materials. Chike knew that what he was doing was suicidal knowing fully well that the place was being guarded by stern-looking military men, but he was motivated to take the action due to the food situation in his family. Even when the soldiers bounced on him and gave him the beating of his life, he was crying with the last breath and strength, but he was ready to die rather than leave the place empty handed. It was only when the priest in charge came to his rescue and gave him food to take home that he accepted to go.

In like manner, Obinna and his friends agreed to come out when the war planes were on rampage and doing what they (the war planes) do best at war time, to steal oil in order to feed. The duo were advised by the person who usually bought the oil from them to embark on the expedition whenever the war planes were on the air. According to him, after the bombardment, no soldier or guard comes out immediately and as such a good time for them to go in and steal as much as they wanted. Obinna and his friend tried this and it worked for them for sometimes and they were happy that they were at least feeding well. In one of their outings however, they were hit by the war plane but as Obinna was wounded and taken to the hospital, Ndubisi, his friend did not survive, he died.

At another time, Obinna had to trek and pass many towns to reach Uli just because he heard that people had devised means of making stock fish to walk and he was determined to be among those that would be performing this act. He knew that those who were committing this crime were doing so and stealing under heavy surveillance by the military guards. After using so many tricks to evade conscription, he reached Uli and was caught the first day he went to the airport to actualize his dream of stealing with others. He was caught the same day as the friend handed him a box which contained the dead body of a malnourished child which they thought was filled with money. They were caught and thrown into prison. The point here was that people were taking unimaginable risks just to feed.

Even the execution of the war as contained in the two books/novels by soldiers was nothing to write home about. Based on instances from the two novels, the Biafran soldiers were not in the habit of running to the villages/Biafran towns to hide from the Nigerian soldiers. But even though there was no intelligence gathering on the part of the Nigerian forces to show that Biafran soldiers hide in villages/town, they still went ahead to shell and bombard residential areas. Apart from making life unbearable for the Biafrans, many civilian women and children were killed. Though the Biafran soldiers engaged in forceful conscription of people who had no business going to war front like Onyido, Obinna and his friends as they are cowards, the situation was even worse if you are caught by the Nigerian soldiers. If Biafrans were caught by Nigerian soldiers, they were not only terrified by the way they were handled, but were forced to dig their own graves before they were killed and buried in the graves. In ***Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala***, while Ada was returning with her men from a commercial trip, they were caught by Nigerian soldiers and were forced to dig their graves by themselves. It was only when Ada accepted to be forcefully

married by the commander that her men were allowed to go, while leaving Ada behind.

The soldiers did not stop at shelling residential areas, farm lands and other places from war fronts and air strikes but practically moved into the communities to deal with the masses. They went into villages and mixed freely with the young girls and married ladies to the extent that men could not raise their heads up and challenge ladies because if they did, the ladies would just call their army friends who would force them to become soldiers. Obinna could not talk to the girls but remained silent even when provoked by the girls. Due to this reason also, Chike allowed his wife Ada to mingle with soldiers even in his own house just to avoid being forced to join the army. When however, Chike dared Ada and gave her the beating of her life due to her infidelity, Ada promptly brought soldiers who forced him to join the army, leaving their children and mother to their fate. All these are instances of the effect of the war on the Biafrans. These effects did not only leave the people dehumanized but highly traumatized.

Thus, the constant air raids, shelling of residential areas, forcing people out of their homes by soldiers, as it is contained in *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala*, when Ada was forced out of her house and when the Nigerian forces occupied Chike's house at Awka are instances of human right abuses displayed by soldiers during the war. The starvation level was so high that people had to forget any other thing other than looking for ways of getting food or any other thing that can sustain their lives. The loss of lives and property were so much that during and after the war, the effect remained and while the army officer that protected Chike when the wife forced him to become a soldier wanted to commit suicide at the end of the war due to past experiences, Obinna's friend consoled him thus,

Mazi Okeke n' Xmxabi nwere ugbo ala asaa tupu a lxwa ogx, ma ebea ka Mazi Okeke nq ugbu a? N'ili. Eke banyere sqja mgbe qgx na-akwado ibi ebi, ma ebee ka q nq ugbu a? Aga m agxx otu onye ka q bx mmadx abxq. { bara soja n'oge, lxq ogx ukwu, lxq qgx nta, buru apa mgbq abxq, jiri isi gi lqta, b[a ebe a [kqrq any[akxkq ihe funahxrx g[n'agha, ebe i ji isi g[lqta (Ubesie, 1977, p.170).

When Obinna talked about the properties he lost during the war, his friends admonished him by reminding him that somebody like Mr.Okeke of Xmxab [had seven vehicles but had since died. Even Eke who entered the military (Biafran army) when the war was about to end also lost his life. But you, Obinna, became a soldier early, fought both the big and small wars and sustained two bullet injuries, but returned alive only to tell us stories of what you lost. Obinna, just like most other Biafrans, had nothing other than their lives at the end of the war. But the memories of this war lingered in the minds of characters seen in both novels even after the war and even in Biafrans in real life. As such even the trauma and inhuman treatment meted out to Biafrans have remained till date and this latest stand became evident in the *Half of a yellow sun* written by Adichie, Chimamanda. According to Joke (2011)

The novel (Half a yellow sun) as a whole represents Adichie's trauma of the war of Biafra; a trauma which she inherited from her family: I was aware of how this war haunted my familyí some characters are significantly changed by their traumas (p.7).

These vividly show that the dehumanizing effects of the Nigeria/Biafra war linger till today. The effects of the war as contained in the two books/novels clearly show that there are instances of extreme starvation, conscription, killings and bombardment of residential areas by the military during the Nigeria/Biafra war.

5.2 Summary

The proliferation of writings in Igbo literary work in Igbo at the end of Nigerian/Biafra war was propelled by some factors that are more or less predicated upon the influence of the civil war itself. Apart from direct lessons learnt from the war, the era of Nigeria/Biafra conflict in itself provided some authors with ready materials for fashioning out their themes and issues for discussion (Onyekaonwu, 2001). In *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna*, Nwaozuzu (2001) states that, the two novels

Portray the various reactions of characters inhabiting the embattled state of Biafra during the Nigerian civil war. *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* portrays the habitual greedy woman, who cannot bear the suffering inherent in war situation.

Consequently, she jumped from one affluent man to the other. *Jxq Obinna* on the other hand depicts the extent to which most able-bodied men went to evade conscription (p.96).

A look at the two novels may give the impression that Ubesie was interested in bringing out the weaknesses exhibited by the people of Biafra during the war. Though the novels are all comedies, Ubesie used this medium to bring out the tragedies that enveloped the people of Biafra during the war. Most of these characters which may be tagged weak characters aided us in seeing various Biafran communities and the various war fronts. They also enabled the readers to see the atrocities that were committed. Thus, apart from seeing what the characters suffered, we are able to see what both the soldiers and other people suffered during the war.

The present researcher commenced this research endeavour by giving an overview of literature and more importantly, African literature. Thereafter, the main crux of the research which was to ascertain if there were dehumanizing effects of the war on the people of Biafra during the Nigeria/Biafra war came into focus. The synopses of the two novels were briefly given and as *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* focuses on the effect of the war on the family of Chike, *Jxq Obinna* focused on Obinna and his other friends whose pre-occupations during the war were perfecting their plan to evade conscription and how to escape from the army camps whenever they were caught.

In review of literature, the following sub-topics were handled; Literature and Society, African Literature and Dehumanization, War and Literature and Tony Ubesie and Literary Creativity. Here, how literature focuses on the society and uses it as foundation for all literary work were x-rayed. But, then, the review

stressed that though oral literature were well developed in Africa, written literature was given prominence lately by writers who wrote literary works in African languages as well as those who wrote in English language from the colonial era. Thereafter, as wars are inevitable in human societies, how this has been captured in literary works of which *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna*, are inclusive were handled. To cap it up, the place of Tony Ubesie as a creative writer was handled and based on the review, it could be said that he is among the foremost literary artists in the Igbo language. In empirical studies, reviews of different research works based on Ubesie's works were focused at. While various researchers focused on different themes in his works, others focused on style.

In chapter three and four, efforts were made to bring out the different dehumanizing effects of Nigeria/Biafra war on the people as contained in *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna* respectively. The two chapters have three sub-divisions which focused; on hunger, financial implications of the war and the dehumanizing effects of the execution of the war. In *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala*, it was found out that extreme hunger and government financial policies pushed the Biafrans to the wall and this affected them negatively. Chike became so poor that the wife who was the bread winner left him for other men. As the war progressed, Chike had no other choice than to look for his wife who not only molested him but allowed men to play with her in his presence. The war thus affected the characters psychologically to the extent that people started doing what the society abhorred. The execution of the war by the soldiers was terrible as they had no respect for human right and human life. The effects of the war were also devastating in *Jxq Obinna* that people were taking all sorts of risks just to eat. Due to the execution of the war, hunger and extreme starvation affected the people to the extent that people did the unthinkable just to feed.

The dehumanizing effects of the war in both *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna* were articulated jointly in discussions before a comprehensive summary of the research endeavour was handled. The research work concluded that though Ubesie employed humour in the novels, there were various evidences of the dehumanizing effects of the Nigeria/Biafra war on the people of Biafra in the novels.

5.3 Conclusion

War in itself is an activity that is dreaded by any human society due to its effects on the people. Wars usually produce negative effects with devastating results on both human and material resources. However, wars have become inevitable in human lives and as such there are certain things which may be bad but are allowed in war times. In short, there is the rule of the game, but evidence contained in *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna* show that the Nigerian/Biafran War was done or executed without recourse to the rules of the game/engagement. As such, the people of the Biafra were not only traumatized but that the dehumanizing effects of the war were evident in different characters/communities therein in the novels.

Little wonder then, Ikuqmqla (2009: 1) opined that there is no doubt that many literatures have shown the negative effects of the wars on nations and the people in general. Ubesie's novels (*Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna*) are good examples of a situation where comedy was used to showcase tragic situations/events. The humour, proverbs and other devices used by Ubesie made the novel so interesting that at times, readers may forget that they are reading a novel that treated one of the worst wars that ever took place in human history. But the author did not lose sight of the atrocities committed during the war as Ubesie (1973) warned right from the beginning of the novel that one who while having the 1967 war in mind, swallows his own saliva is like one who has been given poison, as the person will die instantly. This directly or indirectly warns his audiences against embarking on war and conflict due to its devastating effects.

Ubesie's war novels as analyzed in this research endeavour could be referred to as historical novels. While affirming the view of Brady (1993), Jokes

(2011) reasoned that historical novel just like history, refers to a ðrealö past but neither aims nor claims to reproduce it with scrupulous accuracy. Though there is no where where it is on record that Ubesie claimed to have reproduced his war novels with scrupulous accuracy, the way he narrated the story looked so real that one would have thought Ubesie is Chike in *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* or Obinna in *Jxq Obinna*. *Isi Akwx Dara N'Ala* and *Jxq Obinna* are thus historical novels that clearly documented not only the various atrocities committed during the Nigeria/Biafra War but vividly illustrated how dehumanizing the effects of the war were on Biafrans.

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