

Gender and Power Dynamics in Nigerian Video Films

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Abstract

Power indices are reflected in the relations between men and women. However, the power relations tend to privilege the men while the women are totally relegated to the background. Despite efforts to find a lasting solution to this problem, the discrimination still lingers on. This is also reflected in Nigerian video films where the portrayal of gender intersects the reflection of different aspects of power among characters. Again, even recent changes in gender construction still proved roles were along male and female lines. This study x-rays the power dynamics in the intersections of gender portrayed in Nigerian Video Films. The paper embraces a textual content analysis to look at how Nigerian Video Films reflect power relations between women and men and how they define the positions of men and women in society. This study concludes that Nigerian video films have helped and are still helping in the direction and construction of roles and positions in society as well as in the relegation of women to the background in the scheme of things. Hence it was recommended that there was need for the continued challenge of female subordination in Nigerian video films, reorientation of mindsets, and a deliberate reconstruction of production processes, the gender of personnel involved in production and film content to get balanced gender and better portrayal of women. The need to bridge the gender gap and pursue gender equality and equity through films is emphasized.

Introduction

What is power to both a man and a woman has emerged as a subject of much popular, policy and scholarly interest in recent times. This interest

has been sparked by multiple, competing debates about manhood for men and womanhood for women whose lives have long been shaped by male-dominant societies and patriarchal structures and yet who have, with the rapid changes resulting from a globalizing political economy, experienced a surge of new opportunities and challenges. These range from choices in the domains of personal health, sexuality, education and occupational choice to changes in their roles in their interactions with family, peers, and colleagues. Power relations tend to privilege the men while the women are relegated to the background.

In several cultures, despite the change impacted on the woman by modernization, the woman is still largely marginalized. Apparently, the feminists' manifestos have not really yielded the desired results. Women still wallow in the problem of discernment. In Nigerian communities and Africa at large, the exploitation of women is in different forms; various cultural practices exist that implies male dominance over women. Although her image may be salutary and dignified, the roles ascribed to her centre around those of housekeeping and mothering. This has tended to give her male counterpart an advantage of leading in most if not all the social affairs, especially those that are public. This may have confined the woman to a smaller space than that of the man, while the man could explore public as well as more challenging avenues of life (Evwierhoma, 2002). In order to achieve the struggle to acknowledge the need for women emancipation without seeing them as totally reliant on men, a lot of efforts have been put in place but films especially have not really helped very much in this regard. In their representations, women are not being portrayed to operate from a position of strength while the men are the subjects that drive the narrative. In a world where feature films increasingly provide the "common ground" of information, symbols and ideas for most social groups, women's representation in films helps to keep them in a place of relative powerlessness, (Gallagher, 2001).

More than any other means of mass communication, films can be used as tools to promote or hinder positive social transformation. These powerful instruments for creating and reinforcing images of reality, which according to Gerbner *et al* (1989) rivals and supersedes religion in its power to change perceptions, is a means of education and entertainment, socialisation, information and mobilizations. The visual

bias of film gives it a very high level of universal appeal and impact. What the audience watch has a profound influence on them as individuals. These, in turn, affect the orientation they have of their own perception of reality and culture. The implication of this is that long-standing exposure to relatively uniform gender sensitive film messages will gradually but surely change people's perceptions about the roles of men and women in society. In many countries, film production continues to be male-dominated, manipulated by commercial interests through their portrayal of women as sex objects, as a group that plays a secondary role to men, objects of male gaze, male sexuality and male violence. However, these negative images of women and male domination are apparent in Nigerian films. The movies perpetuate sex role stereotypes and reflect the patriarchal social values dominant in Nigerian society, which amounts to what Tuchman calls the "symbolic annihilation of women" (Strinati, 2005). This "mediated invisibility" is achieved not simply through the non-representation of women's point of view or perspectives on the world, rather, when women are 'visible', the manner of their representation reflects the biases and assumptions of those who define the public and, therefore, the media agenda.

Gender analysts and women groups argued that the way any gender perceived themselves and were perceived was ineluctably shaped by the way in which images were constructed and communicated to the population at large. According to them, these images reinforce dominant ideologies of gender difference, perpetuate and entrench them in the minds of subsequent generations. In the same vein, Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan (2004) posited that images and portrayals affect men's behaviour towards women so that they are likely to treat them as merely decorative objects, things to circulate as status symbols, without concern for their individuality or humanity. What we know of society depends on how things are presented to us and the knowledge, in turn, informs what we do and which policies we are prepared to accept. The profound effect is that women are primarily judged in their daily lives by their physical attributes and sexual attractiveness. Sociological analyses of traditional sex roles also portray men as instrumental leaders, active workers and decision-makers outside the home while women are seen as performing complementary roles.

Despite the adoption of many measures to redress gender imbalances, by feminist scholars, critics and women's movements, the power to define public and media agendas is still mainly a male privilege. Findings from research by this author validate most of the concerns of the critics and feminists. It is against this backdrop that this paper, therefore, examines the power dynamics in gender intersections as portrayed in Nigerian Home Video Films. The paper is to examine how Nigerian Video films portray men and women; the power indices and dynamics reflected in the movies using *August Meeting* and other movies as the representative sample to appraise the impact of the portrayals and what needs to be done to achieve more results in the fight for gender equity and equality. Other objectives of this paper are as follows:

- a) To examine the power relations and patriarchal elements as raised in Nigerian Video Films
- b) To examine how the elements raised influence relationships between men and women and undermine women
- c) To examine what can be done to achieve balanced representation and how

This study is therefore of immense importance in a time like this where African women are seeking their own approach of pushing forward the frontiers of their arguments on feminism. This study will thus be beneficial to various groups of people who are in the struggle to see the emancipation and empowerment of women in Africa. These groups are feminist writers, playwrights, poets, directors and producers, women's right groups and the Nigerian Video Industry as an umbrella body of movie producers. It would give the feminist playwrights and social analysts the sense of direction on new approaches and concepts to bring to the fore and concepts that need to be debunked in the view of the reconstruction processes. It has the strength of furthering the feminist struggle as well as enable script-writers and producers to fashion new methods and strategies on how to fuel a more debatable and issue-based films to project the Nigerian woman and the African woman at large in a positive light. It will also serve as an academic material for future researchers.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Feminist Muted Group theory to offer explanations for some of the communication phenomena under study. Looking at power relations, if the state can claim a monopoly on legitimate power, and the state is inherently masculine, the subordination of the feminine is therefore inherent in state societies. Shirley and Edwin Ardener in an attempt to challenge this gender imbalance found explanations to the paradigm and in 1968 propounded the *Feminist Muted Group theory*, which explains why certain groups in society are muted, silent or not heard. They suggest that in every society, a social hierarchy exists, that privileges some groups over others. These groups that function at the top of the social hierarchy determine to a great extent the communication system of the entire society and the *mutedness* occurs because of the lack of power that is given to any group that occupies the low end of the pole. In 1981 Cheri Kramarae in her work “*Women and men speaking: Frameworks for analysis*”, used the Muted Group theory to find answers to the experiences of women. Her key assumptions include:

- a) That because men are the dominant group in the society, the male perception is also dominant. Women’s perceptions and systems of perceiving are seen as less competent.
- b) That in order to become participating members in society, women must transform their perceptions and models of perceiving into terms of the dominant group.

The Muted group theory explains why women have difficulty being accepted in and becoming part of an organization whose rules have been constructed primarily by a male-dominated world. In this theory, men are the cause of women’s *mutedness* because they do not want to understand any language but the one created and constructed by them. They have enjoyed untold powers for too long that they do not wish to relinquish power to women (Evvierhoma, 2005). They do not want to acknowledge that there is a woman’s language as they would be compelled to lose some of their powers to women. The theory thus essentially challenges traditionally accepted paradigmatic assumptions and explains why some societies have found it difficult to embrace the shifts in paradigms which

are sweeping across the rest of the world. It validates and explains the experiences and perceptions of women and helps us to understand power and its structure and how it is used against people. It explains why women are misrepresented in films, stereotyped as vague and flowery in cartoons and underrepresented in the workplace. It gives us an insight into the reasons for the imbalance portrayal in films and explains the insecure feelings of men which are rooted in their fear of losing their dominant position if they listen to women incorporate their experiences and allow women to be equal partners.

Gender and Power Dynamics in Society

The hierarchical relations of power between women and men tend to disadvantage women, preventing gender equality. This theme explores key connected issues including the pathways to women's empowerment, access to resources such as land and credit, gender roles and stereotypes, and where understandings of men and masculinities can helpfully update gender and development thinking and practice.

Looking at power as the ability of a person or a group to influence the beliefs and actions of other people, he who possesses power, therefore, has the ability to influence society. This could be legitimate, economic, financial, religious or official power which comes from a higher authority (Akroni, 2011). Power indices thus involve the ability or right to control people, events or things; political control of an entity, a country or area; control and influence over other people or organizations, (Linthicum, 2006). A person may also get his personal power from his or her personality or from his or her expert knowledge such as Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Programmers and so on (Akroni, 2011). Ability to make decisions, get things done through others; give orders to subordinates and to get obedience from them constitute authority. Not having to explain everything but being able to wield legitimate power anyway (Fayol, 1949). Power is thus largely reflected in the assignment of roles and possession of decision-making rights.

Polite Ire, in looking at the connections between gender and the state, argues that masculinity is constructed in the image of the state. Politics is dominated by men. In spite of equality legislation, as well as the ability of individual women to work within the parliamentary system,

as a whole, the structure remains dominated by men – a state of affairs that is entirely predictable given the socialised gender norms (Ire, 2011). Enloe (2000) in writing about women in politics presents facts of socially created gender norms which continue to accept the division of masculinity and femininity between the sexes. She stresses the need “for women to be involved in politics in order to bring feminine views to this otherwise masculine sphere” (Enloe, 2000). According to her, political structures continue to be male-dominated, the reason being that men have traditionally held power and desire to place women in subservient positions. From this standpoint, Enloe believes that gender inequality can be solved by more female participation within political institutions. She notes that “the conduct of international politics has depended on men’s control of women” (Enloe 2000, p. 4). While on the surface this seems a probable explanation for a patriarchal structure, which is to say men create structures to further their own interests, it also implies that men have constructed gender roles for women, and thus fail to appreciate that the gender role of men is also a product of social construction (Ire, 2011). Theorists of international politics nevertheless suggest that the ‘masculine’ state is a reflection of human society, but at the same time they question their labelling of the cause and effect, as well as if gendered societies reflect the requirements of a state system.

Enloe (2000) in writing on self-determination in post-colonial countries talks about the difficulty in ensuring nationalism works for women as well as men. The complexity, she claims, stems from nationalistic men who view women as the property of the community, those who will give birth to future generations of nationalists and ensure the continuation of shared values and traditions. The subjugation of women is, therefore, not the free choice of powerful men, but one that is dictated by a structural necessity to divide the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, and subordinate the latter to the former. Feminist scholars of political theory assert that ‘the personal is political’, i.e. private interpersonal relationships are power relationships. The relationship of gender to the society is then considered, as are the implications for the struggle. Ire (2011) states that the supposedly perceived differences between sexes have historically been used as an argument against equal rights, particularly in the opposition to women's suffrage. Ire (2011) also

states that in the early 20th century this opposition was supported by the science of phrenology but was later discredited and its conclusions were found to be spurious and based on prejudice. More recently, Neuroscientific researchers claim that essential differences between the male and female brain have been uncovered, ‘evidenced’ by neuroimaging that suggests differing brain structures (Fine, 2010). Where socio-biologists have relied upon the notion of a universal, innate, human nature, a nature that includes gender divisions, they have faced condemnation for the inability for this “universal” to be universally applied; which means, while all human societies include a division of labour by sex, these divisions are varied, the social structures changing the form, rigidity and cultural meaning of such divisions (Fausto-Sterling, 1992). Thus gender is socially constructed, and certainly affects the experiences of men and women.

African society is patriarchal and their institutions, traditions, as well as everyday lives, are filled with examples of men in positions of authority over women. In most of Africa, you are born and take your father’s surname; you also marry, and tradition holds that a father gives away his daughter to become the wife of a man whose name she shall adopt. Until very recently (and as is often still the case) it is the man in a relationship who holds financial control, and the woman who takes the (unpaid) responsibility for the home and the children (Ire, 2011). If a woman is a wife and/or mother, she will also, on average, continue to take responsibility for the home and the family in addition to her paid employment. The decisions made on society’s behalf by representatives of unions, councils and governments are made predominantly by men. In spite of the current higher proportion of female law graduates to their male counterparts, the legal system remains dominated by men. Equality reflected in legislation has not resulted in equality of men and women in respect of gender roles and hold onto power.

Cordelia Fine (2010) in her book *Delusions of Gender* argues that associational learning is key to our socialisation, a process that includes the internalisation of gender roles and can account for the apparent differences between men and women. Our young malleable brains are subjected to pressures to conform to gender norms deemed appropriate for our sex. Society as a whole also ensures that a child will become

aware of what is 'normal' for a girl and how that differs from what is 'normal' for a boy. Violation of these norms has serious consequences which include; bullying, harassment, depression and suicide.

Research portrays that without the awareness, intention or control of an individual, the perception of a connection between subjects and behaviours are reinforced by their repetition. This is not simply a matter of affecting opinion but of having a real effect upon behaviours and ability, says Ire (2011). Fine establishes that, from research findings when gender is made salient, people perform according to the stereotypical ability of their gender (e.g. women less capable at maths, men less capable at empathy) – however, when gender is not mentioned there is no such correlation in performance. The subconscious nature of this compliance to a norm displays that while individuals may deliberately reject gender roles, their subconscious continues to unknowingly make gendered associations and behave in gender 'appropriate' ways (Fine, 2000).

Though discrimination according to gender is not permitted legally, in reality, it is much harder to avoid. It is important to recognise that the effects of a patriarchal society are not limited to women, but to people as a whole, distorting the complex and malleable nature of individuals and presenting them as binary and definitive. While it may be difficult for a woman to gain acceptance in a high-status professional role it is equally true that a man who wishes to look after his children full time may meet equivalent challenges.

Gender and Power Relations in Nigerian Video Films

In spite of the unprecedented growth and success in the Nigerian film industry, the content of movies rather than reflect messages that correct societal ills appear to reinforce gender disparity in their portrayal of women and men. The portrayals are largely traditional and stereotypical. This serves to promote a polarization of gender roles. With femininity are associated traits such as emotionality, prudence, co-operation, a communal sense, and compliance. Masculinity tends to be associated with such traits as rationality, efficiency, competition, individualism and ruthlessness (Chandler, 2008). In films, 'good' women are presented as submissive, sensitive and domesticated; 'bad' women are rebellious,

independent and selfish. The 'dream-girl' stereotype is gentle, demure, sensitive, submissive, non-competitive, sweet-natured and dependent. The male hero tends to be physically strong, aggressive, assertive, takes the initiative, is independent, competitive and ambitious. Despite the crucial role women play in the economic welfare of the family, their important role is not recognised and, therefore still not accepted in decision-making. Even though in reality they play a great role in overall development and progress of the nation, their participation in different fields either directly or indirectly are still behind in many aspects. In most cases, they are considered inferior to men, and their life is restricted within four walls of the house. For taking any decision, less power is given to women. The man is saddled with the decision-making rights and placed in the dominant position through decision-making rights, nature of job – (prestigious and higher paying job positions are given to men), political control, economic control, religious power and so on. With these weapons, they are able to subjugate women.

However, Nigerian videos have since their inception been mostly produced and directed by men and this has an adverse effect on how women are represented in the videos. Their representation tends to have a bearing on the social constructions of the society especially as that which privileges patriarchy. Patriarchy is a form of social organisation that recognises and privileges the male as the head of the family and title is traced through the male line. The man becomes the dominant one within the patriarchal society thereby reducing women to the periphery and silencing them politically, socially, economically and otherwise. Olujinmi (2008) attests to the fact that film producers/directors churn out films in line with the male domineering status that emanates from the patriarchal school of thought. In consequence, the woman is tempestuous, devilish and perpetually the weeping and unsympathetic character. Men are portrayed as strong personalities while women are weak vessels who cannot make important decisions or stand on their own as is demonstrated in movies such as *Onome*, where Uncle Dafe the hero is the breadwinner while his submissive wife is a fulltime housewife whose job is to look good and to remain calm in the home. Women are either cast as students; stay at home wives or helpless women who cannot fend for themselves. The women depend on them and as the saying goes “he who pays the

piper dictates the piper's tone, the women remain loyal and submissive to the men. Uncle Dafe picks up Onome whom he starts catering for as a daughter without consulting his wife first. A woman is expected to be submissive to the husband and not question his actions no matter what, as he is seen as the head. The hero represents goodness, power, control, confidence, competence and success why the woman is rendered powerless with meekness. She does not ask questions and she is expected to obey the man blindly. The element of blind devotion is largely reflected in Nigerian home video films. This obviously is drawn from the colouration of society as the roles are not too different. The men are geared, in other words, to succeed in a competitive economic system. There is no shortage of aggressive male role-models in films and many boys try to emulate such characteristics through action and aggression, from these films they watch.

In the same vein, in *Girls Cot* the men in the film are cast as high profiled men like ministers, Inspector General of police, Vice President while the women are students and stay at home wives that depend on the men for their survival. The men use them as playthings. Genevieve Nnaji the heroine who is the vice president's unknown love child parades herself in school as the vice president's daughter and somehow she is connected to high profiled men in the society who she constantly supplies girls to keep them company and make them happy in bed. She recruits a group of young girls whom she sends to these men. Each of these girls also has negative talents such as stealing, forging of signatures and so on that they make use of in getting more money from these men. The young girls who refused to be just playthings who employed other means to get more money from these men resort to blackmail when they are being chased by these men. They, however, are freed at the end as the heroine blackmails the vice president about exposing her identity and he uses his powers to get them freed. The men here are placed in the dominant positions through, their possession of decision-making rights, political control, economic control and financial power. They are the subjects that drive the narrative while the women are objects used for their gratification.

In *August Meeting* while the men are depicted as epitomes of strength and good reasoning who make decisions in the home and in the social arena; women were portrayed as weak and incapable of leading. The film tells the story of two women who were in a struggle for power for who will emerge the new leader of a women's group from the village of Umuoji in Eastern Nigeria which holds in August. The film portrays women to be power hungry, selfish, high maintenance, uncaring mothers and wives. These women stopped at nothing to emerge the leaders. The presented and suggested elements of the film are shown, leading to the identification of a patriarchal ideology.

Moreover, men were portrayed as victims of women's selfishness and greed and ultimately as the masters of women, the final decision-makers, and as heroes who saved the community from the evil hands of the women's movement. The patriarchal ideology of the film is seen in the depiction of women and the production style of the film. Men belonged at the top of the social hierarchy. The men are dominant both in their marriages and in their community. Victor blames his wife for the loss of their son, and as a result, he sends her back to her parents' house. Evidently, his dominant position entitles him to throw his wife into the street and terminate the marriage on his own terms.

The film is undoubtedly produced and directed from men's perspective following its negative representation of women and a women's forum. The film on many instances presents the inequalities that exist in gender relations in the family and in the society at large. The men in the film have more economic power than their wives. Since the men have more money at their disposal, their wives rely on them to provide them with their needs. Many of the difficulties that the Umuoji women encountered during their preparation for the August meeting came as a result of lack of resources. Even the women who seem to have the resources are dependent on their husbands. The men indirectly control the affairs of the organisation because they finance the women's campaigns and in return ask their wives to honour their wishes. The husbands of Angela and Amaka, the two women who ran for the office of the president, empowered their wives financially to a great extent so as to help them win the election. Both men were hoping that once their wives

won the election and start controlling the organisation's money, they would benefit from it by asking for loans.

The men also strategise for their wives and give them tips on how to win the election. Amaka's husband, Chief Johnson said to his wife: "We cannot allow Chief Festus and his wife to donate more than us. You must win that election by all means and if you need more money let me know, tell me." Conversely, Chief Festus advised his wife, Angela to seek the help of a voodoo doctor so she might win the election. "As a matter of fact, you should ask him anything you should take to destabilise Amaka. Angela, this is warfare, and in warfare, people die. No sentiment, an enemy is an enemy." In other words, the Umuoji women's organization may be run by women but indirectly controlled by men.

Male dominance over women's affairs is largely reflected. In the community, men were responsible for maintaining the social order. They had the power to make community decisions and regulate the affairs of the community while the women were depicted as their subordinates and subjects. In their position as the dominant group, men stopped their wives from attending the August meeting, and also banned women from holding the event. Even when they eventually allowed the women to hold the event, the community leaders gave the women conditions to which they must adhere. The men demanded that women must wear cheap clothes and jewellery throughout the event and women would not be allowed to show off their husbands' wealth in any shape or form during the event. Perhaps the series of events would have turned out differently if women were part of the decision-making. But in this case, the women were not part of the social hierarchy that controls the social system, and in fact, their choices were limited because they could only take what was offered to them. The elements presented in the film show a lack of equality when it comes to gender but highlights male privilege in a patriarchal society such as the Umuoji village. The gender composition in the making of the film suggests that men are privileged in power relations.

However, it is also sad to note that these roles are also seen in the films produced by women such as *Jenifa* produced by Funke Akindele. The film which is centred on Jenifa and her various exploits to become a "big girl" like her friends at all cost had the girls procuring charms to attract men and collect money from men. The men are rich businessmen

and some also hold key positions in the society. The young women in this film are playthings for the men. They are used as objects to gratify their sexual desires and also for ritual purposes. The wives and mothers are stay-at-home women and women who do not have a say in affairs of the society. The women are portrayed as weak vessels that cannot stand on their own while the men are strong and use the women as playthings who must dance according to their tunes.

The film on many instances presents the inequalities that exist in gender relations and in the community at large. The men in the film have more economic power than the women. Since the men have more money at their disposal, their wives and the young women they have affairs with, rely on them to provide them with their needs. Many of the difficulties and setbacks that the women encountered came as a result of lack of resources or struggle for resources. Their anticipated reward from going to these men was money. Even the women who seem to have the resources are dependent on the men to forge ahead. The men therefore, directly and indirectly, control the women.

With these roles, this indicates that women participate in the objectification of women. It further portrays that the producer is unconscious of the effects of films on society and the purpose of a film as a work of art. This calls for a reorientation of mindsets as the younger generation is being brainwashed.

In *Egg of life* which stars mostly women, the portrayal is a little different but the patriarchal ideology still holds, as men still dominate. The chief priestess of Efuru here tries to unravel the mystery behind a death. The story is anchored around her. Apart from anchoring the narrative action, as a storyteller of some sort, she is a leader and a vital source of inspiration in the community. The quest to save the prince is an all women affair. In the early sequences in the film, we see the Igwe as an arrogant king, but by the second half of the film, he is totally broken, looking towards the priestess for inspiration. The Igwe had banished a woman for having the effrontery to call the heir to the throne an ogbanje; he asks his wife to keep quiet and not plead on behalf of her friend. When the priestess calls his son “that thing”, and that he is an ogbanje, the Igwe is helpless. By the second half of the film, his confidence is totally drained. The leadership position shifts from the Igwe to the Priestess of

Efuru as everybody now looks upon her to safeguard the life of the community as the prince in question symbolizes the continuity of that community. However, though the women played major roles in this movie they are still subservient to the men. It still stems from a patriarchal setting. The men possess the political control and economic control. This is also repeated in *The Devil in Her*. The men in the movie have the most prestigious jobs and have the resources. They are in control both in the home front and social arena. The women are in less prestigious positions and in subservient roles. In the movie, Mirabel's husband engages in multiple extra-marital affairs in the office and gives the totally submissive wife attitude at home. She, however, finds solace in her work and concentrates on taking care of her daughter. She abandons the marriage and moves to her parents' house the very day she saw him having sex in the office. Her boss in the office, a man who has been interested in her all these while tries to take advantage of her predicaments. In the process of consoling her in the office, he gets her drunk and tries to make love to her. The husband sees her in an uncompromising position with the boss and puts a stop to all reconciliation moves and asks for a divorce. After many deliberations between both parents, the marriage is restored at the end of the day. The wife in this film represents the typical submissive Nigerian woman and the husband the typical Nigerian man. The society believes a man is allowed to have many women but the woman is not allowed to see anyone other than her husband. What is good for the goose is not good for the gander. Typical of "it is a man's world". Women are made a ridicule of. The female characters are depicted as derailed women who express ambition but are broadsided by romantic love, or babes who in their desperation to acquire material things, children or husbands would stop at nothing, even murder. Looking at how the women in Kenneth's office will stop at nothing to gain his attention is highly degrading.

The depictions of women and the storylines in the films may have been different if told from a feminist perspective. Even though some feminist critics such as the third wave feminists may argue that these films are capable of raising women's consciousness about social injustice, and gender inequality in our societies and will encourage feminists, particularly African feminists, to continue to challenge the

ideology of male domination and eliminate it, the patriarchal ideology in the films discredits women's work and struggles. The suggested elements have anti-feminism "written all over them", as men occupy the front burner and women are placed in secondary roles. The patriarchal ideology also reinforces traditional hegemonic positions that emphasize the interest of men over that of women. It also represses the rhetoric of women and classifies men as superior and women as subservient to men. Perhaps the series of events would have turned out differently if women were part of the decision-making. But the women are not part of the social hierarchy that controls the social system, and in fact, their choices are limited because they can only take what is offered to them. According to Demaris & Longmore (1993), social and traditional norms enhance gender inequality, by shaping our expectations of gender behaviour. The elements presented in Nigerian video films show a lack of equality when it comes to gender but highlights male privilege in a patriarchal society. According to Stoudt (2009), privilege concerns the structurally associated advantages available to some groups in a society at the disadvantage of others. The gender composition in the making of the films suggests that men are privileged in terms of power sharing.

Going Forward

The Muted Group theory gave rise to other feminist theories and indeed movements, which have continued to challenge gender injustice in society. Such movements have focused on gender politics, power relations and sexuality, analyzing gender inequality and promoting women's rights issues and interests, clearly standing in opposition to the image of the woman in the home and ultimately oriented toward the achievement of gender justice. Their stance is to ameliorate the systems of domination that operate through the axis of gender. Therefore there is the need for the implementation of wide-scale social and political transformation policies, which will be truly respected both by film producers and society at large.

As Phillips (1987) suggests, every woman needs the freedom to decide her destiny, freedom from society's oppressive restrictions: freedom to express her thoughts fully and convert them freely into action. Feminism demands the acceptance of women's right to individual

conscience and judgement. It postulates that women's essential worth stems from her common humanity and does not depend on another relationship of her life. The Nigerian movie industry should be seen as a veritable tool and a platform for the advancement of the cause of women liberation, development and empowerment. Thus apart from better and balanced representation of men and women, producers must reflect balance and fairness in their employment policies in order to achieve equal participation of women in the industry. Again, many gender ideologies are developed in school. Consequently, there is a need to introduce gender studies in the curriculum in schools as this will help create the much-needed awareness about gender parity and also produce gender-sensitive individuals.

Furthermore, women need to be empowered educationally. Nwoye (2014) suggests that the knowledge and skills acquired during the process of education empower you with capacities and capabilities to perform towards improving yourself, your family and the society, enabling you to create an atmosphere of self-reliance thereby experiencing inner change and ultimately increased personal sense of worth. This will therefore also lead to their empowerment economically. Only when women are empowered and self-reliant will they be able to compete with men as partners and counterparts instead of objects meant to play secondary roles.

Furthermore, on the societal level, even if women are empowered in their economic production capacities, their labour and efforts would only be exploited if there is no change in the unequal structures of government. Power-sharing needs to move beyond the present gender impasse in order to find an alternative that is inclusive and balanced as regards gender and power relations. Also, there is need for equal rights for women, full participation for women in all spheres of social life for complete development to take place in.

Feminism should also not be viewed from a negative perspective as the aim is actually not to benefit any specific group of women or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. On the contrary, as Obiadegwu (2009) has observed, the movement has the power to transform the whole society in a meaningful way. The world needs the resources represented by the abilities and talents of women. Filmmakers

and practitioners in the industry should think and act along this line. This is because, there needs to be balance in terms of gender and power relations in the the portrayal of men and women. Since films are powerful instruments for creating and reinforcing images of reality, which according to Gerbner et al (1989), rivals and supersedes religion in its power to change perceptions, a positive change in film content will send the right signal to society at large.

Conclusion

This study concludes that patriarchal elements are reflected in Nigerian Video Films. The man is given decision-making rights and he is placed as the head of the home as well as the head in society at large. He is armed with expert power; economic, political as well as financial resources and otherwise to enable him lead naturally. Women, on the other hand, are relegated to the background and are not given decision-making rights or seen as fit to lead or capable of making important decisions. These portrayals have adverse effects on society which calls for the need to balance power roles in the representations of men and women in Nigerian video films.

The responsibility of reversing and reverting the social order as portrayed by the films is a task that must be carried out by all who are gender-sensitive. The current focus on gender as a development issue stemming from the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs as well as the SDGs presents a great challenge to filmmakers as agents of change to promote gender parity in a patriarchal society through a total re-engineering and reconstruction of film content. The need to bridge the imbalance in films by improving the representation of women and increasing their visibility while eliminating sexism and discrimination in film content cannot be overemphasized. The introduction of gender studies in school curriculums from the elementary level will raise consciousness regarding gender roles and the imbalance that exists as well as contribute greatly in changing the status quo.

The Nigerian film industry should work on identified flaws and learn from their mistakes, in order to make good films that will promote women in the best possible way'. It is therefore advocated that women should reject roles that will relegate them to the background and be

encouraged to seek more positive and active roles that are positive. And for confidence to be boosted through films, the roles ascribed to women must be seen to advance their cause.

Finally, as often said, *a woman trained is a woman empowered, a woman empowered is a woman emancipated, a woman emancipated is a generation emancipated, a generation emancipated is a nation developed*. There is, therefore, need to empower women but women on their own part, have only one real shot at 'liberation' and that is to emancipate themselves from within. There is need to forget what the films and society have taught them in the past and take positive steps towards emancipating themselves from within. Power is precious to men and cannot be given to them just like that. They have to take responsibility and come out from the laid back position of being at the receiving end. They have to contribute more and participate more in development. The more they contribute and participate the more they will be respected and the more power they will hold.

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