

Nollywood Narratives on Social Exclusion and the Challenges of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

**Ambrose Oroboh Uchenunu, Ph.D¹ and
Comfort Ene Obaje, Ph.D²**

^{1,2}Department of Mass Communication
Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

¹Email: uchenunua@yahoo.com

²Email: enemartino@gmail.com

Abstract

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which came into being in 2015, is made up of 17 goals with a blueprint to achieving a better world for all, irrespective of colour, creed or geographical location. It sets out to address issues bordering on poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice, amongst others, with a target of achieving the set goals by 2030. Nigeria gained independence on October 1st 1960 from British colonisation and adopted the politics of indirect rule, which breathed power from a central authority, insensitive to the yearning and aspirations of the multi-ethnic subjects. This exclusion was further exacerbated by years of military dictatorship and militarised civilian administration, and which thankfully the SDG is set to address. Irrespective of the changing nomenclature of these goals by the United Nations (UN) for about 70 years on, and the enormous wealth from oil exploration, 64 years on, Nigeria still wallows in the 17 underdevelopment goals professed by the UN. Deploying the post-colonialism theory, this study uses interviews and content analysis to examine three Nollywood feature movies. The respondents whose contribution is relevant to the development and exploration of the subject matter cut across the media, academia, and Nollywood industry. Through interviews, movie contents and reviewed literature, we arrived at the finding that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is lagging behind in its effort at achieving the SDGs, particularly in creating awareness. As a result, a vigorous awareness campaign to at the grassroots

is recommended. Transparency and accountability of officials assigned to implement the various programmes cannot be overemphasised in order to mitigate corruption, the bane to the success of the SDGs.

Keywords: SDGs, Post-colonialism, Nigeria, *In My Country*, *Crossroads*, *Oloibiri*.

Introduction

Nigeria was “designed by alien occupiers” and hijacked by the army for three-quarters (Maier, p. xx) of its sixty years of attainment of independence. Prior to the period of colonialism in 1897, the geographical area known as Nigeria practised a loose confederal system of government. Political power in the Northern part of Nigeria rested on the Sokoto caliphate and Bornu empires respectively as a central authority from which power emanates. In some other areas of the north, like the Tiv kingdom in the middle belt, pre-colonial political control was by far, more decentralised, loosely left to the jurisdiction of the elders of the various communities, who though are not governed by a one strong and central force, but still possessed the ‘imagined commitment’ obviously dictated by language and proximity. In some parts of South-Eastern Nigeria, pre-colonial political power rested with the *Obi* (King), but the majority of the inhabitants of the area, practised a decentralised form of traditional administration like that of the Tiv kingdom. Political power thus resides with village heads, well-revered elders, or warriors and different age grades. Judicial powers beyond the confines of the elders were handled by the traditional *egwugwu*/masquerades. Like today’s Supreme Court, the *egwugwu* were the final adjudicators to whatever difficult-to-resolve differences that existed between the people as was concisely depicted in Chinua Achebe’s novel, *Things Fall Apart* (Uchenunu, 2006).

In South-Western Nigeria, decentralised power emanates from the Oba to his chiefs and village heads. In hierarchical order, the chiefs were in-succession, answerable to other high-ranking chiefs in the milieu. The people who occupied the lower parts of the Rivers Niger and Benue also practised this form of decentralised politics. This form of monarchical politics was also practised by the people who occupied the lower parts of the Rivers Niger and Benue (Uchenunu, 2006). In Cross River State, Calabar to be precise, there

is the Obong as the king with his chiefs. In some parts of Isoko and Urhobo, there is the Odio Ologbo in some communities while others adopt the Ovie as king in the pockets of communities dotting the Niger Delta. In Warri, there is the Olu of Warri. There is also the Orodje of Okpe in Sapele axis in Delta State. Whatever name they adopt in their communities, it is the usual pyramid shape of power emanating from the peak, trickling down to a heavy bottom. In Benin kingdom, according to the organogram of administration drawn by Edionwere (2016, p. 5), power emanates from the Oba (king). There are Oredo (metropolitan) (Benin City) and Ikinkin Agbon-Edo (district heads). Under the Oredo is Eghaevbo N'ogie (palace chiefs). Under Eghaevbo N'ogie are Iwebo, Iweguae and Ibiwe. Under Iwebo are nine other sub chiefs; Iweguae six sub chiefs and Ibiwe six sub chiefs. Under Oredo also, is the Uzama N'Ihinron with sub chiefs and Eghavbo N'ore with nine sub chiefs. Under the Ikinkin Agbon-Edo is the Enogie (royal and non-royal). Under the Enogie are priests, odionwere and village heads.

Ethno-cultural diversity took pre-eminence in Nigerian politics with the exit of the imperial government in 1960. The common national goal, through which the 'nationalists' clamoured for and gained self-government from the colonial administrators, became divided mainly along with the three major ethnicities/languages of the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. The diversity grew into political rivalries with incessant civil disorders and refusal to concede defeats after elections which ushered in the first military coup in the political history of Nigeria and the beginning of yet more unresolved political problems that degenerated into a coup. The lingering crisis which followed the violent elections of 1964-1965 provided the immediate grounds for the intervention by the young, idealistic officers who wanted to 'stamp out tribalism, nepotism and regionalism' and fight the enemies of progress- the ten percenters, homosexuals, feudal lords and so on (Osaghae, 1998, p. 56).

These problems constitute the focus of this study, which the sustainable development goals (SDGs) project is set to resolve in its utopian stance with these mind boggling questions: How much do the movies highlight the prevalence of the problems of the SDGs?; How much do the movie scenes reflect exclusion of the Niger Delta in Nigeria? What challenges are evident in the actualisation of the SDGs as reflected in the movies? It is in this regard, therefore, that

this article looks at the implementation of the SDG in Nigeria and the obvious social exclusions in some parts of the country, through interviews of newspaper columnists, academia and content analysis of Nollywood narratives of select features. There are four respondents made up of two media columnists, one from the academia and one from the Nollywood industry. The responsibility of the columnists and the Nollywood features borders on the SDGs goals, which are all-embracing of the utopia of humankind. There is no gainsaying that every frame read, captures the ideology of the SDGs, framed by the filmmakers consciously or otherwise, highlighting the goals unachieved. The gamut of the discussion in this article is deeply rooted on the theory of post-colonialism, that is, if Darian-Smith's (1996) overt explanation of post colonialism did justice to the theory by this simple, but far-reaching explanation that it "... is a term with multiple meanings and political associations, cutting across and implicated within theories of imperialism, modernity, racism, ethnicity, cultural geography and post modernism" (p. 291). Analysing every keyword in Darian-Smith's one will observe the prevalence of those in our daily lives and distorting the balance of the existence of those in the developing world, which the SDGs project is formulated to address.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Historically, sustainable development goals (SDGs) project is an offshoot of the millennium development goals (MDGs). The MDGs project was signed by the United Nations in 2000. A target date of 15 years (2015) was set for accomplishing the goals. It committed world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. The goals were eight (8) in number:

1. to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. to achieve global primary education;
3. to empower women and promote gender equality;
4. to reduce child mortality;
5. to promote maternal health;
6. to fight malaria, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases;
7. to promote environmental sustainability; and
8. to develop a universal partnership for development.

The target year of 2015 caught up with the world in slumber with little or no achievement. So, the goals have to go through a rebirth with the added word, sustainable, which turns out to be sustainable development goals, and expanded to a set of 17 integrated and indivisible goals that portend to be a builtup on the achievements of the MDGs, with broader, deeper and far more ambitious objectives. **The SDG was adopted in September 2015 and came into operation on the 1st of January 2016.** According to the MDG monitor website, substantial positive progress has been recorded over the past 15 years. Without critiquing the achievement of the 8 goals in this article, we want to recall that Universal Primary Education (UPE) is the same as goal number 2, and this was started since the 1950s. According to the MDG monitor,

Universal Primary Education in Nigeria started in the mid1950s following the Macpherson constitution of 1951, which granted democratic rights to the citizens to elect members to the regional House of Assemblies of the three Nigerian regions. The elected governments in Western region and later in the East selected an ambitious literacy and educational program to see through that most primary school age students attend primary schools.

Further in 1976, the federal government, which had in 1972 assumed more responsibility for education took on the challenge of seeing all primary age pupils attending school. It also launched the UPE scheme to correct regional, rural-urban and sex imbalances in the educational system and invest in human capital (Nigerianwiki). UPE made a rebound in MDG in 2000, same as the gender equality and human development. These were subdivided to make 17 goals in the SDG, which **are the blueprints to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all by the year 2030. They address the global challenges humanity is confronted with, namely:** (1) No Poverty; (2) Zero Hunger; (3) Good Health and Well-being; (4) Quality Education; (5) Gender Equality; (6) Clean Water and Sanitation; (7) Affordable and Clean Energy; (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth; (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; (10) Reduced Inequality; (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities; (12) Responsible Consumption and Production; (13) Climate Action; (14) Life Below Water; (15) Life on Land; (16) Peace and Justice Strong Institutions; (17) Partnerships to achieve the Goal.

Synopses of the Select Films and Review in Relation to the SDGs

The dialogue and scenes of the three movies reviewed for this study are awash with issues bordering on the SDGs, even the documentary that was not planned for at the conception of this research. Whether consciously crafted or by default, the three movies – *Oloibiri* (2016), *In my Country* (2018), and *Crossroads* (2018) analysed, inadvertently X-rays the struggle of the SDGs, and a glaring failure of the United Nations agency – the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Oloibiri* (2016) is a narrative about the 1st oil well drilled in Nigeria and the negative impact on Oloibiri, a small Niger Delta village and the lives of those affected by the spillages by the destruction of marine lives which had an untold effect on the people whose livelihood depends on the creeks and land as farming and fishing community. Directed by Curtis Graham, *Oloibiri* is all about a crusade to liberate the oil-producing communities from the throes of oil companies' exploration in the communities, the compromise by the government and communities without recourse to the communities whose major source of livelihood in fishing and subsistence farming has been destroyed by oil spillages. Gunpowder is a ruthless outlaw who is out to fight anyone irrespective of race or kin working for the oil companies that disregard the pain of the people of Oloibiri. The movie X-rays the injustices meted out on the oil-rich Niger Deltans and the years of neglect drawing a contrast between it and the skyscrapers of Houston or the Western cities in all its cleanliness and glamour.

Reminiscent of Robin Hood, Gunpowder shares the money recovered from breakaway Dogo to the public. The abduction of Robert Powell, the Executive of Foreshore Oil soon changes the narratives sending military personnel into the hideout of Gunpowder. In his den, abducted indigenes are hanged and whipped, the manner Jesus is whipped in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004). Gunpowder is overpowered and when he falls, crude oil from a can pours over him in sludge. Gunpowder is not free of corruption as he is seen sending money to some people to settle them. When Timpriye accuses Powell of complicity, Powell replies that "it takes two to tangle, it takes two to get fucked," which brings out the balance in the movie narrative, establishing the theory of postcolonialism as greed, corruption, disloyalty, rivalry and

compromise play out in the indigenes as well as in the multinationals. The multinationals exploit former colonies of their mineral resources, earning huge amounts of money to build their safe and alluring cities while lives in the former colonies, and particularly communities where mineral resources are mined, are left degraded. At the end of the movie, the death toll by gunshots is higher on the sons of Oloibiri followed by security personnel. Powell leaves unhurt, his abducted family in Houston also leave unhurt. While a huge death toll is recorded, as is the case always, not a single Whiteman loses a limb. Powell wants Foreshore Oil to be different from other oil companies, but his Nigerian counterpart tells him never to ask a poor man what he wants. The Nigerian counterpart's mental state has been twisted by the postcolonial culture he grew into where the self is put forward.

Powell's good intention calls to mind Ani's postcolonial treatment of the self image in which the "... European image of the "non-European," ... Africans, or their own antithesis reinforces these observations. In their view, people of other cultures are basically irrational ... these people do not choose; they do not make decisions. They have no control over their destinies" (1994 p.240). Powell in his supposed rational stance was not moved to fly from Houston to Nigeria for charity. He already had his mind on the humongous profit that will accrue to Foreshore Oil. Whatever makes him to start considering doing business differently was borne by the agitation championed by Gunpowder through photo shots of oil spill and contamination of the creeks in Oloibiri. The marginalisation suffered by the people of the Niger Delta region is represented cosmically by Oloibiri in the movie, *Oloibiri*. Fiction became fact in October 2020 as the outburst over the exploitation of the Niger-Delta reared its head in the Nigerian senate when Senator Ovie Omo-Agege queried the ... arrangement that allowed Zamfara State, Bello Matawalle to keep the proceeds of the sale of N5 billion worth of gold bar in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) at a time when the proceeds of oil in the Niger Delta region are shared by all the federating units.

This leaves a puzzle of where to heap the blame of marginalisation that was created and left with the colonised long after *in-dependence* – Europeans of the natives? The imperial culture is well entrenched in the natives more so when the West continues

to fan it by the divide and rule ideology with economic exploitation as an undertone and political subjugation as an overtone. Darian-Smith (1996) succinctly captures this in treating the theory of post-colonialism by writing that “it optically suggests the transcendence of nineteenth century imperialism and a greater balancing of respective political and economic power between the west and developing countries” (p. 292). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002, p. 1) write that, “the most formidable ally of economic and political control had long been the business of ‘knowing’ other peoples because this ‘knowing’ underpinned imperial dominance and became the mode by which they were persuaded to know themselves; that is, as subordinate to Europe.” What plays up in the three movies is well encapsulated by the studies above, and to relate it to the formation of the SDGs spells post-colonialism and power play.

The sharp contrast could be seen in the social living conditions between Oloibiri and Houston, in *Oloibiri*; Adesuwa, her community and the Health minister in, *In My Country*; and in *Crossroads*, the police representing the authority, the politician versus the poor and innocent citizens that are arrested and detained without committing a crime. *Crossroads* was a mere entertainment to those in the corridors of power, but October 2020 #endsars protest has turned fiction to reality, throwing a spot light on the vestiges of postcolonialism including the SDG which is a creation meant for the third world. The developed countries have moved beyond the goals of the SDG. They also know that the goals will never be achieved by their machinations and the ideology of wanting to remain a superior race. Ani berates the racist tendencies which stems from fear and traits of the primitive Aryan and the desire to want to remain relevant and on top of every aspect of life (p. 304). By the reports of the *Vanguard* Newspaper online (in March 2016), oil explorers made history in June 1956 at Oloibiri by Shell Darcy and rather following the footprints of similar development that saw a forest transforming into a megacity with affluence from oil in California USA, Oloibiri is left in abject poverty.

The communities, today, lack the basic necessities of life as the black gold, an exhaustible asset, which then made the area to be called Bioforoama, nicknamed “Eastern Congo”, due to its booming social life, has since dried up and Shell moved to another location regardless of the dislocation caused to the

locals. Oloibiri was one of disappointment and shock as the expectation of seeing the benefits of oil wealth on the communities was not to be. The people still face basic development challenges and environmental pollution caused by oil spills (Oyadongha & Idio; Vanguardnews online).

Environmental pollution is a major highlight in *Oloibiri* in frames, dialogue and dramatization. This highlights the goals of the SDGs with a few being silent. *In My Country* (2018) directed by Frank Rajah Arase is replete with the images of pain, depravity, militancy and protest. Again, the image of *Oloibiri* resonates. The narrative of deprivation, stealing by government and oil multinationals in the midst of so much affluence is played up using a woman (Adesuwa) desperate to raise money for an expensive surgery on her eight-year-old daughter suffering from sudden heart and respiratory-related illness. In the midst of affluence, she is refused financial assistance in her place of work as a secondary school teacher, the banks also ask for collateral to loan her money. She embarks on a media campaign soliciting for help and as her desperation heightened, she solicits the assistance General in her slum neighbourhood, a man linked to her past that she despises because of his subversive lifestyle. This unleashes a series of events that kick-start a chain of unfortunate plots and unearthing a shocking revelation. The Health Minister is brought down to succumb after he is abducted and kept in the den of mean-looking militants, made up of under-aged and a gender mix, by using threats and blackmail. The unfolding events reveal that the little girl in the hospital for which the Minister is adopted, is his granddaughter, fathered by his son who went missing years back and is never found.

This discovery makes him to swing into action to use his official powers to order doctors to attend to the child by making a series of phone calls. More revelations unfolded that the General is the father to Adesuwa who she never grows up to know, because of his lifestyle and being incarcerated throughout Adesuwa's years in the slum. False alarm the little girl passed on, angered General to shoot and kill the Minister. Years later, Adesuwa recounts her ordeal having started an NGO and reveals that his father the General spent the rest of his life in jail where he died. *In My Country* highlights the marginalisation in Nigeria by the ruling class, and in its clairvoyance, it plays a precursor to Professor Kemebradikumo Pondei infamous

line while responding to allegations of financial mismanagement of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) captured by Akinpelu for *Premiumtimesng*. He said, "We used ₦1.32 billion, not ₦1.5bn to take care of ourselves as COVID-19 palliative." This is similar to the defence of the Minister of Health in the film, *In My Country* when bandying words with old soldier. He defends why they, in the corridors of power have the best of medical treatment no matter the cost by saying, "We need to take care of ourselves".

Crossroads (2018) deals with police brutality and illegal arrests, torture and intimidation in detention and even death due to lack of care, which goes unchallenged. Directed by Seyi Siwoku, marginalisation also plays out, spelling the absence of comets at the death of beggars, while at the death of princes, the heaven themselves blazes forth, to borrow an expression from William Shakespeare. There is an unease occurrence at the State Police Headquarters over the robbery experienced by a gorgeous wife of a high profile politician, spelling sleepless nights and worrisome moments to a senior police detective on the eve of his retirement. He has to stay a little longer to solve the case where innocent citizens are arrested and tortured to show their dexterity to those in the corridors of power in the society, making a joke of goal number 10, Reduced Inequality, and 16, Peace and Justice at the least which are the major highlights of the #EndSars protest of October 2020, exposing police brutality and police impunity, and complete disregard for human lives.

While the movies through the narratives and images have left so much to be desired in the implementation of the SDG, the excerpt from the interview of two Journalists, a doctoral student and a filmmaker, further throws light on the awareness, application and sustainability of the SDG. Out of the seventeengoals, fifteen plays up in the movies as still suffering implementation, and this is corroborated by the three respondents interviewed, either alluding or directly referring to the lack of implementation of the goals. Clean Water and Sanitation was a major highlight in *Oloibiri*. The rivers and creeks are polluted with oil spills, which deplete the population of marine lives. The surviving fishes are not healthy for consumption either as they are laced with carcinogen. Drinking from the river had also got some people infected and with casualty due to oil pollution in the waterways. Those still hanging on, suffer one ailment or the other.

Personal Communication with Professionals and their Views about the SDG

Four respondents were contacted for the interview, and they cut across the academia, media professionals who are correspondents of some of the goals to their media firms and feature and documentary filmmaker. Youdeowei, an education correspondent with the *Punch* and the *Vanguard* newspapers wondered whether Nigeria has its own adapted SDG, but the general 17 points that were raised in the SDG, she said from observation of the media over the years, the Niger Delta still lags behind as well as the country, with lip services being paid to the SDG. Implementation is an issue, and sustainability is even more grotesque. She has emotion towards education being her area of correspondence. The Niger Delta she said, were the first to have edu-marshals, where children are forced to go to school. She is of the opinion that if the school feeding programme is being practised, it would mean taking a step towards education which is one of the points in the SDG, since satisfying hunger would have eliminated problems associated with poverty. That if children are fed, they will be more open to learning and will have a love for the learning environment that will invariably expose them to better chances and opportunities because they may be more equipped. Somehow, school feeding would have cut down the poverty rate. That is, if it is not just scam or fraud, which characterise Nigerian politics. Hence, edu-marshals were limited to Warri, Asaba or major cities, but not in localities like Olomoro (Youdeowei, T., personal communication, June 12, 2020).

Another interviewee, Elohor Oziwelewho is a lecturer at Delta State University Mass Communication Department and a doctoral student with the University of Benin, discussed the research she conducted in 2016 on goal number 4 about quality education. She said that a 2008 statistics reveals about 10 million out of school children, and as of 2020, the number has increased to 12 million in Nigeria. Meaning that in that aspect, there is no improvement. It is a common sight to see so many children who are out of school, and which is hinged on the insurgency in the Northern part of Nigeria. In Olomoro, her locality, the illiteracy level she responded, is very high, the reason being that most of the parents never went to school so they do not see the importance of educating their children. They encourage them to stay at home and assist with subsistence farm

work and other survival chores. This makes Fajana doubt Nigeria's attainment of the SDG goals even at the 2030 date set. Fajana's response to Atueyi on the topic, "Education as a Tool in Creating Political Stability and Sustainable Development in Africa," corroborates the scepticisms of Youdeowei and Oziwele on education. "Fajana noted that the aim of ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant effective learning outcomes, is ... not realisable with the way things are currently going in the country" (Guardianonline, 2016).

For Oziwele, the awareness of the SDG is not really there. Her results from a radio programme - Quest FM, on creating awareness of the SDG, revealed that people are not aware, and do not know what the SDGs are all about, a sure case of failure of goal number 17 which borders on partnerships to achieving the goals. She attests to the fact that there are no changes or any effect of the SDG in Olomoro, her community. The poverty rate has increased, and that nothing is being done to alleviate poverty. People still find it difficult to eat three square meals a day and that has led to reports of stealing of cooked food when the opportunity avails itself (Oziwele, E., personal communication, June 13, 2020). Furthermore, Oziwele decried the non-performance of the UNDP and the Nigerian government. She said the only or major area that Nigeria performed well was in terms of partnership with other nations of the world, ECOWAS and AU. That under normal circumstance, Nigeria partner well with other nations, but it is just unfortunate that whatever comes in that partnership never gets implemented by the government. Hence, achievement of goal numbers one and two which is combating poverty and achieving zero hunger, failed. Gender equality, which was not well highlighted in the movies, forms the response of Youdeowei, America men earn more than women doing the same job. So, it is not a coincidence that the UN included this on the SDG. They know this disparity exists in jobs, but kudos to Nigeria, a developing country riddled with corruption and all manner of political vices that did not toe the line of the gender wage disparity even though patriarchal dominance is rife. In the political arena, women are barely given the chance to hold public offices even if they are more qualified than their male counterparts. She cites Daisy Danjuma contest against Uzamere and irrespective of the money politics and

the wealth and the weight thrown in by Theophilus Danjuma, Daisy's versatility over issues and the people over Uzamere, Daisy lost the election because of biases and culture.

Youdeowei registered her displeasure at goal number six and seven, clean water and sanitation, and affordable and clean energy. She feels education and general hygiene will improve the state of cleanliness in Nigeria. Sanitation is on the individual level, but no enforcement of partnership with the government, a major reason why the country still lags behind on affordable and clean energy despite all the sunshine. She tells how in Alausa, Ikeja Lagos State (the seat of the Governor of Lagos State, the former capital of Nigeria, now the commercial city of Nigeria), security personnel are stationed at points where there is power generating plants for street lights that burn till 10 pm, after which the power plants are turned off leaving the street dark the rest of the night. So, if the government cannot achieve solar powered street light, which is clean energy, means households are still going to suffer, leaving only the middle class with the power to affordable and clean energy. Even at that, it is still an expensive lifestyle because the least price for an inverter battery is ₦50, 000 (which is about \$100 as of August 2020) for one, depending on the price of the naira to the dollar. Cheap battery from China lasts for six months, instead of the usual one-year life span. Even at that, the middle class still fall back on their power generators for support. "If it is power electricity, we don't have. Clean and affordable is next to nil" (Youdeowei). The discussion of social strata brought us to reduction of inequality, goal number 10.

Realistically, there can never be a reduction in inequality in the world. This is purely utopian in all ramifications. Policies are relaxed politically to favour and make some individual rich at the expense of others. Licenses may not be approved and competition may be stifled in bias. As long as there is a Forbes list of the riches person, which has set a tone for completion of the wealthiest, reduction of inequality is a far cry (Youdeowei).

Sharing similarity with the problems of inequality is peace and justice, strong institutions, which is goal number 16. A conversation with Ehigiator, a journalist, X-rays problems of injustice in Nigeria without prompting: I can count 2-3 investigations for over 2 years that were left to fly about big personalities and corporate

organisations like banks. How banks will invade other peoples' properties and bulldoze without a proper eviction notice. The press establishment will not let it fly because if it does, adverts will stop coming and such establishment will be starved of means of operation. Wema Bank, for instance, bought a property in Surulere and rather than give an eviction notice to the occupants, they swoop in on a Sunday morning when they are in church and bulldoze their shops. The aggrieved owners brought the media in and all the media including *ThisDay*, none published the incidence. I even went further to talk to the bank they called me aside and start "toasting" me. Up till this moment, it did not fly and will never (Ehigiator, S., personal communication, June 12, 2020).

A docu-feature, titled *Ugomimi* (2009) is replete with the failure of the SDG particularly highlighting poverty or absence of food which "...is the most crucial need of the human population because man cannot survive without food, and the scarcity of food leads to starvation and starvation indicates that there is poverty in a given community" (Umolu & Egwa, 2012). *Ugomimi* is about the survival of herdsmen attack and how a young girl is able to live through the hardship and dislocation from home to going back to school in the denouement of the documentary. In an interview, Emeka T. Emelobe, director at Royal Arts Academy and the artistic director of *Ugomimi*, said, I consciously infused some of the SDG goals in the movie because I have total control of the production. It is a community that does not have government presence, even when they do, it is being siphoned from the top, it does not trickle down to them spelling failure of the SDG goals. The Internally Displaced People (IDP) camp is worse. The character could not stay in the IDP camp. The character had to leave the IDP camp to the market to solicit arms, because the IDP camp does not have food, health care, but the way we made the film because of funding, we made it look like they have all that, but they do not have in reality (Emelobe E.T., personal communication, June 14, 2020). All the problems of the Sustainable Development Goals play out significantly in most Nollywood movies, more so with the three movies selected for this research, which also highlighted the problems and neglect in the Niger Delta.

Taking the caption that poverty cannot be eradicated in Nigeria or even Africa, in a 12-page document by Dr. Tola Winjobi in an

interview with *Thisday* reporter, Abimbola Akosile, clearly expressed an utmost pessimism on the success of the SDGs drawing inference from the MDGs. Winjobi discussed the failures of all the goals of the MDG and what led to their failure, and sums up by saying, “If this business as usual continues, SDGs will suffer the same fate that befell MDGs”. The business as usual points to the attitude of the ruling class to education, with the lack of implementation of memoranda of understanding (MoU) reached with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), medical tourism abroad issues, etc. Similar fear of failure and criticism is captured by Jeremiah. According to him, Oluseun Onigbinde says, “I don’t think SDGs project is the right solution. SDGs are the output of a working system. Let’s do much more to get our system working with the right application of public resources”.

Content Analysis

A table of content analysis of the SDGs represented by numbers 1-17 is drawn. Beneath are the movies content analysed, showing the number of times the problems of the goals play up. The content analysis is drawn from the scenes (dialogue and visuals) of the movies. For example, goal number 1 which is No poverty, plays up 14 times in *Oloibiri*, 28 times in *In my Country*, and 3 times in *Crossroads*.

Tabulated Content Analysis of the Three Movies Studied

Movies	The 17 Sustainable Development Goals																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<i>Oloibiri</i>	14	14	5	5	0	12	9	5	5	10	4	0	8	12	12	15	0
<i>In My Country</i>	28	6	6	6	0	5	3	7	6	7	8	0	5	8	10	19	0
<i>Crossroads</i>	3	3	4	0	0	0	0	7	0	12	2	0	0	0	0	12	0

From the table above, *Oloibiri* polled high with 130 frames depicting the absence of implementation of the SDGs, followed by *In My Country* with 124, and lastly *Crossroads* with 43. This is a response to question number one, how much do the movies highlight the prevalence of the problems of the SDGs and two, how much do the movie scenes reflect exclusion of the Niger Delta in Nigeria? These numbers represent how many times they are highlighted in

the visuals as well as in the dialogue. The recurring projections of these goals in the movies, is an indication of failure and a call on those concerned to implement the goals. The projection of Niger Delta through the setting and reference through dialogue is an indication of exclusion of the region. Irrespective of the huge earning from oil the leaders of the country have continued to neglect the region. There are categories that polled nil. The nil categories do not indicate that the goals have been implemented either. The goals may not have a role to play in the narratives and so are not highlighted. The pictorial representation or dialogue of the movies may be blind to the existence of the goals, which is dangerous because it is an open indication of lipservice by the UNDP. This nil score is seen in goal number 17 which is partnering to achieving the goals.

Conclusion

In the course of this work, the interviews and movie narratives show that the problems of Universal Primary Education of the mid-1950s, about 70 years after, are still and very much prevalent today irrespective of the mutation into the SDGs in 2015. The discussion on social exclusion and the challenges or non-implementation of the SDGs by UNDP in collaboration with the home government in Nigeria is a glaring indication that there is so much to be done, taking a cue from the reviewed literature on the SDGs, the interviews conducted, and the content of the movie narratives analysed in this essay. Research question number three – what challenges are evident in the actualisation of the SDGs as reflected in the movies is well played out in goal number 17 which records zero in the content analysis in all the three movies. Ironically, it is the highest, because of the lacking of partnerships to creating awareness and achieving the goals. This rubs off on every other goal negatively.

Without calling goal number 17 by its name, the interview respondents – Oziwele and Youdeowei retorted about lack of awareness of the SDGs among the populace, and particularly those that are set to benefit more from its implementation. The public needs to be aware first that the government owe them the obligation of certain goals declared by the United Nations, and to keep the government on track. This conspiracy of keeping this information from the public would have affected the implementation of the other

goals. Findings from literature and personal communicationx-rays a failure of the SDG in Nigeria owing to absence of accountability leading to uncontrolled corruption of those in the ruling class, which has left them paying lip services to the SDG. It is discovered through just the three movie narratives and *Ugomimi*, the docu-feature that cineastes have decried the situation of the nation, but their messages are either disregarded as mere entertainment by the ruling class, or completely ignored. The three movie narratives treated the problems highlighted in the 17 SDGs unconsciously without scripting purposely to highlight them.

From the findings, we recommend that goal number 17 should come to the fore as number 1. More effort should be channelled to partner with those at the grassroots, to create awareness so that those in political offices could be held accountable where failure or neglect exudes. Treating the nitty-gritty that has beleaguered the SDGs in Nigeria, we recommend simply to upholding to the issues of accountability and flagrant disobedience to the rule of law without prejudice. The immunity clause abused by political office holders should be expunged from the constitution. We recommend that even those in political offices be investigated to ascertain their level of awareness of the existence of the 17 SDGs, for further studies.

References

- Akinpelu, Y., (2020) *We used N1.32 billion, not N1.5bn to take care of ourselves as COVID-19 palliative – NDDC Chief*. Retrieved from 3 December 2019, from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/404039-we-used-n1-32-billion-not-n1-5bn-to-take-care-of-ourselves-as-covid-19-palliative-nddc-chief.html>
- Akosile, A. (2017). *Winjobi: Poverty cannot be eradicated in Nigeria or even Africa*. Retrieved 31 August 2020, from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/08/31/winjobi-poverty-cannot-be-eradicated-in-nigeria-or-even-africa/>
- Ani, M. (2007). *Yurugu: An African-centred critique of European cultural thought and behaviour*. Washington: Nkonmifo Publications.
- Arase, F. R. (Director) 2018. *In My Country Nigeria* [video movie].
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths., G & Tiffin, H. (2002) (Eds.), *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Atueyi, U., (2016). *Fajana doubts Nigeria's attainment of SDGs in in 2030*. Retrieved 12 December 2018, from <https://guardian.ng/features/fajana-doubts-nigerias-attainment-of-sdgs-in-2030/>

- Darian-Smith, E. (1996). *Post-colonialism: A brief introduction*. Retrieved 25 October 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240702005_Postcolonialism_A_Brief_Introduction
- Emelobe, E. T. (Director) 2019. *Ugomimi*[video movie].
- Edionwe, O.A. (2016). *History of past and present Benin Obas - Period of reign and remarkable events*. Benin City: Butterworth Productions Ltd.
- Jeremiah, K. (2017). *How Nigeria can achieve sustainable development goals*. Retrieved 30 August 2020, from <https://guardian.ng/business-services/how-nigeria-can-achieve-sustainable-development-goals/>
- Maier, K. (2001). *This house has fallen: Nigeria in crisis*. London: Penguin Books.
- Mdgmmonitor, (n.d.). Retrieved 19 March 2019, from <https://www.mdgmmonitor.org/millennium-development-goals/>
- Nigerianwiki (n.d.). Retrieved 19 March 2019, from http://nigerianwiki.com/Universal_Primary_Education
- Ofime, R. (Producer) Graham, C. (Director) 2016. *Oloibiri*[video movie].
- Osaghae, E.E. (1998). *Crippled giant: Nigeria since independence*. London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Limited.
- Oyadongha, S.& Idio, E. (2016). *60 years after Nigeria's first crude Oloibiri oil dries up natives wallow in abject poverty*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/03/60-years-after-nigerias-first-crude-oloibiri-oil-dries-up-natives-wallow-in-abject-poverty/>
- Siwoku, S. (Director) 2018. *CrossroadsNigeria*[video movie].
- Uchenunu, A. (2006). *Cinema in Nigeria: Culture, change and the problems of national identity, 1960 to the present* (Ph.D thesis). University of Nottingham, Nottingham, United Kingdom.
- Umolu, P. & Egwu, R. (2012). Addressing Africa's foods crisis through broadcasting: An appraisal of NTA "food basket". *Journal of Media and Aesthetics, Special Issue*.
- Umoru, H., (2020). *Budget debate: Omo-Agege kicks against sale of N5bn Zamfara gold to CBN*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/10/budget-debate-omo-agege-kicks-against-sale-of-n5billion-zamfara-gold-to-cbn/>