International Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Studies
ISSN XXXX-XXXX (Online)

Article History
Received: 29 July 2026
Accepted: 05 Oct 2026
Published: 21 Oct 2026

International Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Studies
Volume 1 Issue 2 (Sep – Oct) 2026

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Keywords: Domestic violence, women and film. Nollywood films.

THE ROLE OF SHORT FILMS IN FIGHTING THE SCORGE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Media in Nigeria and the world is replete with stories of violence at home or in the streets, many of this with gory endings. The rate of domestic violence worldwide is becoming too alarming with violent deaths, injuries and traumatic experiences of the victims. Domestic violence has swelled the numbers of orphans, and has caused an upward shift in the cases of abuses recorded. All these have negative effects on individual and the society in general. Therefore, there must be concerted efforts to stem the scourge before it is totally out of hand. Film cultures all over the world have used the medium to call attention to this problem including Nollywood. But not many studies have been done on the role of film in eradicating domestic violence in the global south. The aim of this paper therefore, is to analyse how film x-ray the causes and effects of domestic violence on individuals and the society at large. By deploying the case study method, two Nollywood and two foreign short films (New Morning; Say No to Domestic Violence and Female Castigation; Domestic Violence; and Caged In) with the theme of domestic violence, were analyzed. This study found that domestic violence is a worldwide scourge and that film as a form of communication, continues to proffer solutions to it all over the world including Nollywood films, which has been playing important role in calling attention to and eradicating the scourge of domestic violence in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, domestic violence can be said to be any unfair and abusive treatment of a family member by another which results in or is capable of causing physical injury, pain and traumatic experience. Domestic violence is also gender-based violence within a family. It is the violation of a family member's human rights. Flury, Nyberg and Riecher-Russler (2010) defined domestic violence as the "threat or exercise of physical, psychological, and/or emotional violence"; i.e., any type of force against another person with the intent of inflicting harm or exercising power and control over them. It is intentional and persistent Aihie (2009). The perpetrator almost always belongs to the victim's "domestic environment": either an intimate partner, husband, former intimate partner, family member, friend or acquaintance. In other words, the aggressor is someone who is close to the victim, and who one would rather expect to be a protector of the victim. Violence itself is defined by the World Health Organization (2017) as "the intentional use of physical force or power threatened against oneself, another person, a group or country that either results or has a high likelihood of affecting lives or resulting to death". Therefore, violence is clearly an illegality (Babalola, 2024), as it is perpetuated by one against another so as to force or subdue, against one's will or intentions.

Bakare, Asuquo and Agomoh (2010) assert that "domestic violence is a form of violence that occurs in a situation of intimate or family relationship". Females and children usually are often victims of this form of violence. It could be physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional and verbal abuse. What is clear in the above definitions is that domestic violence takes place within the family, and when it happens, it violates human rights of the victim, and it is usually gender based. The perpetrator of domestic violence reported most times is male, the husband, while the victim is usually female, the wife. Gender based abuse does not take place within the family only; it also takes place outside the family.

Though, any sex, whether male or female, can fall victim of domestic violence, but from reported cases, women are usually the victim of domestic violence. This is not unconnected to the fact that women are physiologically weaker compared to men. This makes them more vulnerable to abuse both within the family and outside. It is obvious that the issue of domestic violence is phenomenal and broad. Hence, it cannot be easily exhausted in one paper. Our focus in this essay, for effective discussion, is on domestic violence against women. United Nations (2021), reveals that violence against women is "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of

such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.". Salient issues such as the causes and effects of domestic violence against women, as well as the solutions to reducing the scourge will be exhaustively discussed in this paper. Focus will especially be given to the roles that film as a medium of communication can play in the reduction of the rate of domestic violence against women.

Theoretical Approach

This study considered a number of theories to buttress our findings and submissions. These include Psychopathology theory, which asserts that men abuse women because they have mental problems, and are mentally unbalanced. Women who stayed in such abusive relationships are also thought to be mentally unstable to stay in such violent relationships. The other theory is the Pavlov's Classical conditioning, which is a branch of Behavioural Learning Theory. This theory infers that, men learned violence in their homes while growing up, and therefore would more likely become violent when they have their wives and family. However, women who grow up in violent homes are not known to become husband beaters when they married and therefore this theory seems flawed.

However, the study is foregrounded in Lenore Walker's Cycle of Violence Theory (1979). This theory propounds that tension builds gradually in a man because man isn't free to express his frustrations and anger as he would have wanted to. Over time, man explodes into violence when the tension becomes unbearable, but would after such explosion become apologetic to the wife, after his tension had been released. The couple then experience what is referred to as a "honeymoon" period, where the man is full of regret, remorse, and is apologetic to the wife. The couple then patches up their misunderstanding. This study is in alignment with this "cycle of violence" theory and therefore reinforces our notion that domestic violence, as perpetuated by men, is a reactionary stimulus to events around him, which have led to bottled up tension within the man leading to the rather unfortunate expression of violence.

Domestic Violence against Women

Biologically and physiologically, the female specie of human being who is characteristically capable of bearing offspring is referred to as WOMAN Comparatively, women do not possess the same physical traits that support physical use of power like men. That is why they are referred to as weaker sex, a condition that makes them vulnerable. Therefore, they tend to be at the receiving end of abuse, especially, from men.

Violence against women comes under the term "Gender Based Violence" (GBV) Uwameiye and Iserameiya (2013) quoting (Ndungu, 2004) says Gender based violence "covers those incidents in which one sex asserts power by using sexual or similar acts to achieve submissiveness and fear in another person and in the process commits an offence against the dignity or privacy of that person". More often than not, women are at the receiving end of abuse, hence, the statement, violence against women.

The Nature of Violence against Women

According to the World Health Organization (2002) and Jeyinka (2010), one-third of all women of Nigeria were at one time or the other victims of violence in its various forms as it will be discussed below.

Rape

One major form of violence against women is rape which falls under the category of sexual abuse. Women are subjected to various degrees of sexual assaults, harassment or exploitation. Rape has become rampant in the recent time with women at the receiving end. It is pathetic that rape, e, which is the forceful sexual act against women takes different forms; the use of girl-child for sexual purposes such as prostitution and pornography, and worst of all, husband forcing sex on his wife. World Health Organization report of 22 November, 2017 informed that violence against women, particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence is a major public health problem and (30%) of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical and violation of women's human rights. It further estimated that about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

Physical Abuse

Battery is another form of violence against women. It is one of the major components under physical abuse which includes all physical acts against women. In this situation, physical force is used on the victim in a way that injures the victim or put the victim at the risk of being injured. This takes the forms of violent acts like slapping or throwing something that hurts the victim, kicking, dragging or hitting with dangerous weapon. Sometimes, it also involves choking or burning of the victims. Dangerous weapons such as gun, knife are sometimes used on the victims. Unfortunately, more often than not, these victims are women. Obi and Ozumba (2007) say that 83% of respondents in their study reported physical abuse.

Verbal Abuse

Verbal violence involves the use of utterances that are capable of causing psychological pains on the victims. It is a deliberate verbal bullying intentionally aimed at creating emotional pain and mental anguish on the victim. Under these circumstances, criticizing, raging, name-calling, lying, blaming, threatening and other lethal verbal innuendoes and disparaging comments against women. Cruel jokes that are capable of humiliating the partner are another form of verbal abuse. The unifying nature of all forms of verbal abuse that women suffer from their male counterpart is that they are meant to humiliate, dehumanize, victimize, scare and intimidate women on purpose. This often results in emotional instability and devastation. This is what Aihie (2009) considers as emotional abuse. Explaining further, he said 'emotional abuse "includes threatening a person or his or her possession or harming a person's sense of self-worth by putting him/her at risk of serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders".

Forced Marriage

This is another form of domestic violence against women. Although, it does not sound or look violent, but forced marriage in itself involves a lot of violent acts. It is a cruel and violent treatment when a woman or girl is 'dashed", "gifted away" or forced to marry someone she has no emotion or feeling for. It is a double tragedy for such woman or girl because when she is suddenly pulled outside her home and family and thrown into to her new world which she most of the time does not accept. Most times, violent acts like beating, raping and caging are used to subdue her, thus violating her human rights.

Spiritual Abuse

In many societies, especially, in Africa, the mindset is that women do not have right to religious beliefs other than that of her husband. It is possible that a woman had a different spiritual belief and religion prior coming together with a man. In situations like this, most times, the man forces his religious beliefs and affiliations on the woman. This force most of the times involves the use physical, abusive and violent acts against the woman in the home. The degree of the violence involved in cases like this becomes worst if the woman continues to be repellant. This is so because most society ascribes very little rights to women, but have placed them totally under men.

Violence against women takes other forms such as death/widow rites, socio-political limitation, and forceful takeover of inheritance after husband's death and so on. It is no doubt that domestic violence against women has become a scourge world over. World Health Organisation report of

22 November, 2017 informed that 'violence against women...is a major public health problem" It is important then, to look deeply at the causes and effects of domestic violence against women.

Causes of Domestic Violence

Biological and Physiological factor

By nature, women are biologically, physiologically and psychologically weaker when compared to men. Man, psychologically takes this advantage to abuse women because of the physiological advantage they possess against women. When it comes to physical actions, on an average, a woman cannot withstand the strength of a man. This vulnerability makes them to be at the receiving end of domestic and gender-based violence.

Cultural Factor

The family structure of most African families, especially, in Nigeria is patriarchal in nature. This system places men over women and put women in a subordinate position playing second fiddle role. Bakare et al (2010, pg 6.) opined that "The Nigerian traditional cultural practices embrace the belief in the inherent superiority of males over females". Furthermore, Nigerian marriage institutions which introduced the payment of dowries gives men sense of ownership over their wives. This situation encourages domestic violence as women are seen as property and object which can be used for anything, anyway and anyhow.

Religious factor

All the religions, both modern and traditional religions place women at the receiving end. Some sects in the traditional religion discourage the involvement of women in some rites and decision. For instance, Women are forbidden to come out during "Oro" festival in the southwest Nigeria. Situation like this gives the men the feeling of superiority and thus belief they can do anything they wish to the woman. Bakare et al (2010) citing Uchem (2000) asserts that "While Islam promotes the culture of early girl child marriage and polygamy in Northern Nigeria, the Christian religion in Southern Nigeria in some of its doctrine and practices encourages women subordination". He further said that in Northern Nigeria, girls are often married out at an early age, some without completing primary school education. It is pertinent to note that none of the three major religions in Nigeria encourage divorce as an option. The knowledge that women are forbidden to leave the relationship no matter what they pass through gives more ego to the men who treat the women anyhow.

Economic Factor

The socio-cultural setting of Nigeria deliberately designs a system in which the woman is at the centre, playing the role of an "ideal woman'. A role that only places her within context of family setting, a mere offspring bearer and the caretaker of the home. This role makes her to be dependent on man whose role is to source for financial resources. Bakare et el (2010) buttressed this when he says "Nigerian women because of the enforced societal gender roles and unequal opportunities to education, employment among others, are often not economically empowered and are financially dependent on men" This encourages the feeling of superiority in men, hence, they treat women with violence when they feel their sense of superiority questioned.

Legal and Political Status

When it comes to legal status in Nigeria, women are at big disadvantages. For instance, the laws regarding issues like rape, divorce, inheritance put women at unfavorable conditions. A situation that indirectly or directly encourages the men to maltreat and disrespect women. For instance, in the issue of rape, the law is paying lip service to the protection of women as it seems to rely on some physical evidences that may not exist and which may cause stigmatization for the victim, the woman. This discourages women to speak out and come out when they fall victim of rape.

Besides this, the legal system of Nigeria banishes the woman to the second-class citizen status. Nigeria law encourages the patriarchal nature of the social structure of our societies and cultures in Nigeria. Politically, the law does not give backing to women to aspire to some level in the country's political system. Up till today, the involvement and participation of women in Nigerian politics is still restricted. This has denied them the political power to make laws and policies that can protect them against domestic violence they all experience at one point or the other of their lives.

Giving credence to this, Bakare et al (2010) citing Uchendu (1993) on USAID report of (2003) says; “Going through the trend of history from 1979 till date, women participation in polities in Nigeria had improved marginally, but not yet at the level where it could make significant impact on decision making in governance” As at 1999, about twenty percent of females constituted Ministers/Special Advisers, about three percent were Speakers of the State House of Assemblies, there was no female State Governor and the level of participation at the Local Government politics as Chairperson and Councilors were less than four percent.

Social Status

In Nigeria, Africa and other part of the world, the societies have ascribed the women the role of passive and lower component of the society who is expected to swallow anything forced down her throat without complain. The social status given to women in most of the communities of the world is that of the "help" to the men. Sociologically, our patriarchal society does not allow women to do most of what men take for granted, if she does, she is labeled. For instance, men commit adultery for the fun of it and get away with it. But if a woman dares it, she will be labeled as being bad, corrupt and of distorted manners. In another instance, most societies encourage men to be polygamist while a woman can only have one husband at a time. Even, in a situation when a woman finds it unavoidably to leave her husband, she is tagged as a bad woman. She will face serious challenges of name calling and bad tagging, even from her own family and people.

Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women The attending consequences of violence against women are too many. The major effects of domestic violence include death of the victim which may take the form of murder or suicide. Unabated violent acts against women most of the time eventually result in the death of the woman. There are also physical consequences of domestic violence against women which include but not limited to temporary of permanent physical injury. Other physical consequences according to Bakare et al (2010) are "bruises, lacerations, fractures, internal organs injury. Health consequences of domestic violence against women include but not limited to abortion, STDS and HIV/AIDS that may result from forced sexual acts. Other consequences also include Emotional consequences which includes traumatic experiences leading to emotional instability, low self-esteem, and depression, fear, anxiety and post traumatic disorder and so on.

Domestic violence also has its attending effects and consequences on the family as a whole and the larger society at large. Bakare et al (2010), notes that, studies from other parts of the world suggest that children of mothers exposed to domestic violence are likely to display more internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems compared to children of mothers not exposed to domestic violence. The internalizing behavioral problems include anxiety, depression withdrawal to self and somatic complaints, while the eternalizing behavioral problems include attention deficit, aggressive behavior and conduct disorder". Such children when in larger society bring their behavioral problems like aggression and outburst at slight provocation which can lead to acts that can endanger other people in the society.

Evidently, the scourge of domestic violence should not be allowed to go on like this unabated as it poses great negative consequences for our society, and the society can't cope with the consequences if it continues at this rate. What then are the ways out? Though, there may not be a way out to totally stop the acts of violence against women because of some factors, experts and researchers have proffered different ways to at least reduce the scourge to the barest minimum and discourage it happening. This paper considers the use of film as one of the veritable tools in discouraging the scourge of domestic violence and helping to reduce it.

Why Film?

Since this paper is geared towards examining domestic violence and its consequences in society, we have chosen to use the medium of film in buttressing the need to pay attention to, and expose the brutality of domestic violence in our society. As a popular medium of entertainment, enlightenment, education and communication, the genre of film provides us a useful telescope through which domestic violence can be examined, as its visual representations of characters by actors and enactments of dramatic plots resonates clearer and better in the minds of the viewers.

Film can be said to be the telling of previously recorded story in form of moving images which is shown through audio visual play back devices like cinema, television and so on. As a form of art, film has as its primary function to entertain. But beyond this, film is a medium of mass media.

The recent concept of "convergence of media" gives credence to this fact as film is brought together with the category of mass media that now all converge and rely on the internet. Film therefore plays the roles of mass media. It is used to educate, inform, propagate and influence the mind of the people. Film plays great sociological roles and has huge impacts on the society. Sudhakar S. (2018) says "the role of cinema in society is to provide entertainment, impart education and teach positive values, according to this statement, films are used to teach moral and positive values and to discourage wrong values in the society. It is premised on this that film is considered as a veritable tool for effectual campaign against domestic violence against women. Film is effective as a tool because of its reach. Almost every home, especially, in the cities across the country has access to film.

Filmmakers Cooperative of Nigeria in an article on Wikipedia says "every film in Nigeria had a potential audience of 15 million people in Nigeria and about 5 million people outside Nigeria". In fact, Nigeria's film industry, christened Nollywood is now assumed the third largest film industry in the world. As a tool for teaching morals and discouraging wrong values, many films world over have been produced with focus on domestic violence against women, its cause and effects,

as well as the solutions for individual women who fall victims, as well as making attempt to discourage the perpetrator.

Depiction of Domestic Violence in Selected Short Films

The dramatic plots of some short films, both Nigerian and foreign, reveal how these plots have helped to discourage domestic violence against women.

New Morning

New Morning, a Nollywood short film is produced and directed by Deji Alosho. The seventeen minutes and fifty-seven seconds focus on the experience of the heroine of the story, a woman character, Bisi as played by Adejoke Ajibade. The film opened with Bisi in a chartered vehicle with her mother with the opening dialogue from the mother telling her she must go back to her husband. Evidence of physical assault is conspicuous on Bisi's face. Her mind flashed back at the last violent act she suffered against the background of her mother's voice strongly telling her why she must go back to her husband. Her mum is already returning her to the husband. Why? There is nowhere for her, except her husband's place. The mother even emphatically added that it was Bisi who provoked her husband to have beaten her to the extent that she 'nearly lost life. According to her, Bisi must go back to her husband's house because of 'what people will say. She told her daughter point black that they will have to beg the husband. She even went as far as preparing special soup and meal with her own money to 'pacify' the man. When finally, they got to the house, the mother went on her knees with her daughter while dishing out the food to the husband. They start begging as the man enjoys the meal. The evident that her husband has very little or no regard at all for her became obvious as he sleeps off while the woman still plead for the assault to stop.

To get out of the economic dependency which places her in the mercy of the husband, she borrowed money to start a business as a food seller. She got another beating of her life on the day the husband found out. An acquaintance thereafter introduced her to people from a Non-Governmental Organisation [NGO] who made her understand that she was in a great risk by continuing to stay in the relationship. The NGO helped her to get out so that she could stay on her own. This is made possible because of a special savings she had started. Her planned nearly failed when the husband got to discover the money and squandered it. She had to cajole him that the money she was saving was to expand business so she can buy him a car. She had appealed to his sense of male ego and selfishness. By the time her husband gets to know the true picture, it

was too late. The NGO had made it a legal issue. She could take the custody of their only child. The husband became so powerless.

Theme:

The thematic occupation of the films revolves around male domination. Violence, abuse, hope and victory.

Lessons:

Families and society do not give a damn to what a woman suffers in the family; she is expected to weathered it, even when her life is danger. This increases men's ego. Sometimes, it is better for a woman to quit an abusive relationship when her life is threatened, as value for life is the most important thing. If a woman can find ways to whet the male ego, she would more often than not be able to protect herself from abuse by the male. In case of fracas and physical abusive, women should know how to appeal to the man's ego. But if the man is a maniac or sadist who derives satisfaction from mistreating the wife, the wisest thing is to take a walk, at least for the tension to cool down. In case of a woman getting out of abusive relationship, the protection of the law should be sought.

Say No to Domestic Violence and Female Castigation

In *Say No to Domestic Violence and Female Castigation*, a five minutes and twenty-five seconds short film shot on 35mm, and directed by Jeff Williams Clarke, the main character, a young house wife narrated the ordeal her husband made her pass through. We get to know of this ordeal through the letter she drops because she has already taken a walk out of the marriage. In the letter being read by the now shivering husband with high sense of regret and loss, the wife narrates how she nearly became a slave to satisfy the husband. She stayed to do all house chores unassisted, cooked her husband food, did the laundry and tried all in her best to remain beautiful for him. She regretted all was in vain because her husband never appreciated her but was doing everything to maltreat her. He neglected her and came back home drunk very late every day. He didn't give her attention at home but engages in series of extra marital affairs. In a particular instance, the wife caught the husband with a lover. When the wife challenged him, she was physically abused by the husband and his lover. The wife experienced deep emotional and traumatic experience, when it became too much to bear, she decided to run for dear life. She went back to her parent's house. Reactions show that her mother pities her and accepts her, while her father, the man was indifferent.

Theme

The central ideas of the less than six minutes short film are as male dominance, slavery, female subjugation, male ego and regret.

Lesson There are men who unduly derive pleasure in mistreating women, especially, their wives. In cases like this, the walk should run for the dear life. This action does not just only save their lives, it most times sparks off sense of loss and regret in the man, which can probably help them adjust their maniac treatment.

Domestic Violence

Another wonderful short film that x-rayed the causes and effect of emotional abuse against woman is a Christopher King Films and 14 Sticks Entertainment's twenty-two minutes short film, written and directed by lyke J. Anthony, *Domestic Violence*. In the film work, Ifeoma, the main character played by Prisca Iwuoha is a renowned Gynecologist but is yet to conceive after five years of marriage. As a result of this, the husband, Wale played by lyke Anthony become violent towards her. He beats her and makes her go through emotional pain as he does all things to blame her for his woes; he would have had at least three children if not for his barren gynecologist wife. The play reaches its climax when the husband proudly tells her how useless she is as someone else is pregnant for him. With a sense of pain, disappointment, frustration and betrayal of trust, the wife immediately goes off to pack her things. Just by the front door, before final exits, Ifeoma tells her betrayal husband the secret she has kept for the throughout their five of marital life. lyke'a sperm is not able to fertilize female eggs! The problem is with him! She had kept it away from him but applying necessary drugs with the belief that the problem will soon disappear. She had been beaten and battered by the same husband she had saved from shame for good five years. Betrayal of trust and love at highest order as same husband she had protected so much because of deep love is having affairs.

Theme

The predominant underline ideas in this particular film are violence, emotional pain, unconditional love and the betrayal of the love and trust.

Lessons

This film teaches us a great deal of lessons. Most important among them is that when there is an issue of barrenness, the men are swift to point accusing finger to the women and is often supported by the patriarchal society. Many women have suffered a lot for this reason, whereas, the fault may not be from them. In cases like this, women are advised to encourage their

husbands for the two to go for testing and possible treatment. Another major lesson is that more than often, women keep unnecessary secrets and they thereby suffer what they should not suffer most times silently. When there is abuse of any form, the best thing is to speak up.

Caged In

The last but not the least short film that will be x-rayed is a foreign short film titled *Caged In*. The film produced by Aaron Kamp is based on a true-life story. The Heroine, Sarah suffers brutally from her violent and possessive husband. At the beginning of the fourteen minutes and twenty seconds film, Sarah's husband hosted his friends. They enjoy drinks together as they watch the football match while Sarah cooks in the kitchen. After they finish the bottles of drinks, Sarah's husband called to her from the sitting room to bring more bottles of drink. A called that came in to Sarah's mobile phone at that time delayed her for few minutes. Within these few minutes, the husband had run out of patience. He went into the kitchen and verbally harassed his wife. A friend who noticed the reaction on his face when he left saved Sarah. But not in the night when they were alone in the house. Sarah's husband revisited the issue. He dealt her a serious slap across the cheek which leaves an indelible mark on her face. He then went ahead to rape her, claiming she is his wife, and he can do whatever he likes to her, anytime he likes.

Sarah continues to suffer in silence as this treatment goes on unabated. Meanwhile, one of her husband's friends who notice what she goes through but Sarah refuses the help. Even when her daughter encourages her to let them leave. Sarah said God will protect her and the daughter. Even her own very close friend gives the same advice, she didn't agree. It was obvious she does not have strong determination to get out of her suffering world, perhaps, for the thought of what people will say and the outcome of such action. The film reaches its climax when one day Sarah wanted to go pick her daughter from the school and the car wouldn't start. The same man, her husband's friend who had offered to help comes to the rescue.

The husband sees what happens is enraged. He awaits both mother and daughter with great and anxious anger. Immediately they are back, he begins to assaults Sarah. As he grips her by the neck out of anger and jealousy, Sarah asks the daughter to go inside of her room and lock it instead of sending her to go seek for help. The grip begins to gradually stifle life out of her as the grip gets tighter by every second. Sarah seems to have resigned to fate. Oh God! She is dying! Meanwhile, she had forgotten to take her phone from the rear seat of the car of the friend that takes her to her daughter's school, and miraculously, the phone rings at that moment and calls the attention of the man who is already going. The man decides to immediately return Sarah's phone,

which turns out to be Sarah's saving grace as the man arrives on the scene to save Sarah's life. After the rescue, Sarah and the daughter leave. They celebrated their freedom symbolically by setting free their favorite pet, a parrot that had been kept in a cage for so long. Hence, the title, Caged in.

Theme

Violence, male ego, fears of the unknown, indecision, narrow escape and so on.

Lessons

Women should speak out when suffering violent acts and abuse from their partners, their refusal to speak up has led to deaths of many women. Women suffering from violence from their partners should also seek for help and accept one when it comes. Resigning to fate in a violence ridden relationship will lead to further assaults that can lead to permanent and temporary physical injury as well as emotional pains and trauma that can lead to mental disorder, depression, low self-esteem, fear, anxiety and suicide.

X-raying the four short films above, one discovers that they all have lessons for different people, especially, those women who presently undergo the demeaning acts of violence against them by their partners. The short films examined here in this paper, like many hundreds of films with similar themes and conflicts on domestic violence, have the prospects and the ability to create awareness, sensitization, information and education about the scourge which domestic violence is. We believe that film is one of the best medium to educate people about the scourge of domestic violence. Film productions, through its various distribution networks, popularity, viewership and audience appeal, can become a veritable tool in the fight against domestic violence. When viewers watch these many films on domestic violence, hopefully, it would lead to attitudinal change and an end to domestic violence.

Conclusion

The scourge of domestic violence has become a serious issue of international concern, as its attending effects are not what can be ignored, if our society will not turn into a jungle, where the fittest of animal survive. The rate at which women suffer various forms of violence is becoming alarming. Meanwhile, the acts affect the family, the smallest component of any society, for the kinds of families in a society determine the kind of society we have. Children most of the time witness the violence against their mothers which invoke in them negative feelings that breeds negative behavior. Domestic violence is gender-based violence. This means either woman or the man can fall victim of domestic violence, however indications from all indices attests that,

women are more vulnerable to the scourge. Domestic violence against women is endemic in nature. There must be concerted efforts then to contain it before it does more havoc than can be repaired. Film as a media has been identified as capable of being a veritable tool for helping to discourage the scourge, thereby reducing the rate of domestic violence against women in our families and the society at large. The various solutions proffered by the films treated here and many other ones can help the victims out of the predicament. This has shown that film can be used to reduce the rate of the scourge.

Recommendations

That domestic violence is a cruelty, and an action against a person's rights that should be eradicated has been established in the course of this paper, therefore, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The Federal and State governments in Nigeria must, as matter of urgency, puss and enforce laws that will guide against domestic violence. Some State governments must be commended in this regard, having passed such laws. Ogunkorede O (2017) identified some of these State Governments. "In a bid to eradicate the rate of domestic violence against women some States enacted laws prohibiting domestic violence against women such as the Ekiti State Gender Based Violence (Prohibition) Law 2011, Ekiti State Widowhood Law 2002, the Oyo State Widows Empowerment Law, 2002, the Anambra State Malpractices against Widows and Widowers (Prohibition) Law 2005, Edo State Inhuman Treatment of Widows (Prohibition) Law 2004.
- Government, through its many enlightenments and mass mobilization programmes and agencies should educate the citizenry against the evils of domestic violence. Film producers should also encourage the writing and production of scripts that speak out against domestic violence.

Grants and soft loans from banks, with very minimal interest rates, should be made available to film producers to produce these films. Script and screen writers should be gender sensitive in their film scripts. They should stop portraying women only as sex objects, domestic slaves and the weaker sex, but equal partners in progress in a home and society.

- In educational institutions, research works should be encouraged which look into the cause and effects of domestic violence on the home and society at large, and posture solutions that mitigate against domestic violence. Local and international conferences, workshops, and symposia can be organized on themes based on domestic violence.

Debates and essay writing competitions can also be organized amongst various levels of our educational institutions in the country, where they can speak on domestic violence, and become more aware to its evils.

- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) should also be involved in the mass orientation of people against domestic violence, as well as standing up for victims of domestic violence while corporate companies which sponsor private/public events and activities on domestic violence, or make financial contributions to government in its fight against domestic violence, should be granted special tax waivers by government to encourage others to do same.

Finally, when domestic violence offenders are apprehended, they should be diligently prosecuted, and deservingly punished, so as to serve as deterrent to others.

Article Publication Details
This article is published in the **International Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Studies**, ISSN XXXX-XXXX (Online). In Volume 1 Issue 2 (Sep – Oct) 2026.
The journal is published and managed by **IRPG**.

Acknowledgements
We sincerely thank the editors and the reviewers for their valuable suggestions on this paper.

Funding
The authors declare that no funding was received for this work.

Data availability
No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate
The author(s) declare that it is not applicable.

Consent for publication
The author(s) declare that this is not applicable.

Competing interests
The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests.

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