



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
Center for Research & Fellowships

Lights, Camera and Real Life: The Influence of 'Y2K' Nollywood on Nigerian Women (1990s-Early 2000s)

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Introduction

Nigeria is home to the second-largest film industry in the world by production volume. 'Y2K' Nollywood characterizes the period between the 1990s and early 2000s that marked the nascent stage of what would later become a mega industry. At the time, most of its viewers were women.

- How did this initial phase redefine Nigerian storytelling, and what did this mean for the women who both watched and contributed to it?



Photo Credit: Oye Diran as seen on Zikoko Life

Methodology

- 12 Nigerian women, including 2 actresses and 3 women who lived in the diaspora.
- Diversity to reflect Nigeria's religious and multi-ethnic landscape.
- Semi-structured interviews between 45 and 90 minutes, using a previously prepared set of questionnaires.
- Questionnaires were general in scope but tailored to each interviewee.
- Oral history interviews, thus prioritizing lived experiences.

Prevalent Themes

- Ownership of 'home video' as a form of luxury and status quo.
- Apt representation of the audience's realities and models for navigating sociocultural challenges.
- Standard for the modern Nigerian woman in terms of beauty choices, diction, female independence, self-determination, and earning one's place in society.
- Medium of cultural exposure to understand other parts of the country and people from such regions.
- Form of cultural connection to home and sense of community for women based abroad.

Key Findings

- All 12 women interviewed, who were from different age groups during the 'Y2K' era of Nollywood, insisted that this period was more than just entertainment and that they were actively learning from such shows.
- 'Y2K' Nollywood was foundational in shaping Nigeria's cultural soft power, and a representation of Nigerians across the continent and eventually around the globe.



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