

Appraising the Images of Girl Child Sexual Abuse in Kannywood Films: Dijangala as Paradigm

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Abstract

This research intends to interrogate the extent images of girl child sexual abuse has been explored in Kannywood films. Obviously, girl child sexual abuse has been one of the most serious child abuse cases across the globe. It has been prevalent and dangerous too. Its impacts on the victims are many including psychological, health and emotional. Thus, many means have been used over the decades to address the menace, one such approaches is film production. It is based on this backdrop that this research is undertaken. However, to achieve its aim and objectives, the researcher adopted mixed research method; in other words, the work adopted a survey research approach of the quantitative methodology which is rooted in using first-hand observation to acquire data, explain, predict, and determine events under study, and content analysis of the qualitative methodology. The population of this study comprises Kano Metropolis; a population of about 2.8million. However, a sample of 400 respondents was used for the study. This sample was randomly drawn from a population of 4,348,000 people. The sample of the study consists of selected Kannywood 80 films directors/producers, 120 actors/actresses, 200 Kannywood audiences. Thus, the primary data consisted of 400 validated copies of a questionnaire were administered to the aforementioned respondents. The respondents were purposively selected based on gender, age, and wealth of knowledge about the topic in context. Similarly, the researcher also purposively selected one Kannywood film produced between 2021 and 2022 which themes revolve

around issues of girl child sexual abuses. Among other things, the result revealed that Kannywood has portrayed images of girl child sexual abuse cases over the years. Hence, conclusion and recommendations were made based on the findings.

Key words: Appraising; Images; Girl child; Sexual abuse; Kannywood films

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1. INTRODUCTION

This work is undertaken to investigate the extent image of child sexual abuse has been portrayed in Kannywood films. Social issues such as man inhumanity to man, human right violation, prejudice, corruption, nepotism amongst others have been facing the world for many decades. The negative impacts of the aforementioned on the society can never be over emphasized. Hence, many means have been designed social ills; movie production has been one of such means. Films are effective tools to change societal perceptions on certain issues that affect every day living. They are vehicles for social change because pictorial depictions do a lot to the mind. Perhaps, this is why it has been argued that,

Most times, audiences respond to film stories due to the sequential visual projection of the story which replicates the happenings identifiable in their environment. Thus, they get emotionally charged with what they see on screen, due to the careful manipulation of images with aid of scenic elements to give convincing representations. As a result, certain expressive measures are used to convey messages in film which can be termed as codes, signs, and so on. (Uchechukwu and Samuel, 2015, p.15)

Like the counterpart across the globe, filming industries have made significant efforts to address the avalanche of issues facing Nigeria. One of such industries is Kannywood. Kannywood is the sobriquet for Hausa-language cinema. It is a part of the larger Nigerian cinema, known as Nollywood, which includes other production centres producing films in many other Nigerian languages. The name “Kannywood” is a portmanteau derived from Kano and Hollywood, the center of the American film industry. “Kannywood” has origins in the late 1990s, when Sunusi Shehu Daneji of Tauraruwa Magazine created the term Kannywood and then it became the popular reference term for the industry in the Northern Nigeria. The term “Kannywood” was coined in 1999, three years before the term Nollywood came about. (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa-language_cinema). The industry has produced several movies portraying different themes over the decades. Hence, this work seeks examine the image of girl child sexual abuses portrayed in Kannywood using a movie entitled *Dijangala* as paradigm.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to appraise the extent image of child sexual abused has been explored by Kannywood Films. It’s objectives include:

- i. To find out negative impacts on child sexual abuse on the victims
- ii. To examine the impacts of child sexual abuse on the society
- iii. To assess the potential of films production in addressing issues of child sexual abuse

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Girl Child Sexual Abuse

Girl child sexual abuse involves the act of harassing a girl child sexually. This form of violence against children is mainly perpetrated by men on vulnerable girl children than by women on vulnerable boy children and traditional leaders in some cases and traditional healers in case of HIV/AIDS. Main causes are largely attributed to cultural beliefs and myths as is the case for sexual cleansing, spouse inheritance widowers and widows, and the assumption that sleeping with a minor could cure HIV and AIDS, early child marriage practices under customary law and poverty. The key actors in reversing such forms of child rights violations are the civil society organisations such as Women for Change, FAWEZA, YWCA, and international non-governmental organisations such as Plan International, UNICEF, Children in Need, Child Fund and World Vision and government’s Ministries of Gender, Education, Community Development and Social Welfare, Home Affairs and the Office of the First Lady in recent years. The police’s VSU and the judiciary have also

played a significant role as actors in an effort to reduce child sexual abuse and defilement. Traditional leaders have also joined other stakeholders in denouncing this form of child rights violation, but to a lesser extent.

Girl child sexual abuse can also come inform of child marriage. This form of violence against children is perpetrated mainly by family members whose desire is to make economic gain out of dowry and other related endowments arising there from. Parents and guardians are the key drivers of this form of violence against children and are supported by traditional community settings and practices. It is very prevalent in eastern province where earlier studies have shown that the prevalence rate is about 60% compared to other regions in Zambia. The main causes for this form of violence against children are poverty, coupled with traditional cultural practices of Chinamwali, Nyau and Ngoni male chauvinism. In Ngoni culture, dowry is in form of cattle which is a symbol of wealth hence girl children are traditionally perceived as investment products that translate into wealth creation for families and households. Civil society organisations and government as well as the church have acted consistently and concertedly to reduce this form of violence against children, but more efforts need to be done by all stakeholders especially at grassroots level where these incidents occur.

As noted in the programme analysis, there are both immediate causes and underlying causes of violence against children. These causes mainly appear in form of poverty, traditions, norms, discrimination, values and power structures, socio-cultural, economic and political context whereby children are not included in decision-making structures and processes until the age of 18 when they can exercise their right to universal suffrage. In addition, the absence of a comprehensive National Child Protection System makes it difficult for the development of a holistic and sustainable intervention child protection strategy by stakeholders. Inter-linkages between various causes are also affirmed. Impunity, which makes duty bearers to feel not obliged to respect and fulfil the rights of children, is one of the drivers of the rights violations against children.

3.2 Film as an Effective Channel of Communication

Apparently, film is one of the viable means of communication. Most times, audiences respond to film stories due to the sequential visual projection of the story which replicates the happenings identifiable in their environment. Thus, they get emotionally charged with what they see on screen, due to the careful manipulation of images with aid of scenic elements to give convincing representations. As a result, certain expressive measures are used to convey messages in film which can be termed as codes, signs, and so on. The challenge of the filmmaker is to make use of scenic elements and appropriate visual

elements. Thus, costumes, sets, shots, sound effects, music are at the disposal of the filmmaker.

Thus, Ekwuazi (2019), opines that: “visual image is made of all or some of the following nine intra-structure: persons, object ideas, filmic space, filmic time, visual composition, audio composition editing; and conflict and resolution”. This implies that visual elements and other intra-structures are vital to the credit of the filmmaker. On this note, the filmmaker makes use of appropriate materials and visual techniques for the story. Communication is effective with the use of appropriate visual elements harnessed with sound effects, actors and shots. It is based on the total ensemble elements of film that given meaning or message is gotten. To this effect film is an arbitrary or an abstract usage of sign which Metz (2013), and other scholars describe as a language. According to Stam’s analysis of Bordwell and Carroll’s view; “connoticism cannot be seen as a theory but as a stance which tends to relate human thoughts, emotion and an action to the human environment is a mental representation”. This implies that film is a representation of reality which informs the viewers about their environment, which the filmmaker does from a semiotic eye. Thus, film is a medium through which filmmakers tend to express the views and ideas of what their environment is or their view about the world.

Therefore, video-film uses carefully selected shots to generate tension, manipulate emotion with the synchronization of appropriate sound. As a result, all technicalities (sound) and visual features used connote or denote meaning in relation to the story. Danesi (2021), Metz (2013), in defining what semiotics does notes that “its central aim is to investigate, decipher, document, and explain the what, how, and why of signs, no matter how simple or complex they are”. Thus, Semiotics is a theoretical tool dedicated to the study of the production of meaning in society. As such, it is equally concerned with process of signification and with those of communication; that is, the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged. Nevertheless, Harman (2022), narrowed the definition of semiotics in relation to film by stating that, “the semiotics of the cinema is, similarly, the theory of film-as-a-system-of signs. The idea is that we are to think of film as a kind of language and are to try to develop linguistics of this language of film. Conversely, however, Christian Metz argues that film is not a language system but it has a language of its own in which it uses arbitrary meaning in relating issues of communication. The significant understanding to draw from the foregoing is the fact that the two schools of thought see film as a language. Therefore, it has its own modes of communication, eliciting random choice of meanings through visual and auditory elements. Since film makes use of visual and sound to stimulate human emotion, the poor application of the visual and sound interpretation creates a disconnection of the viewer’s understanding and

flow of the film story. Thus, Visual and auditory elements are carefully placed as subjects on screen largely through the manipulation of space with the lens of the camera This implies that every object used for signification in film which includes sound enhancing the visual world has been deliberately placed to amplify the power moving image.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research design

In order to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, the researcher adopted mixed research method; in other words, the work adopted a survey research approach of the quantitative methodology which is rooted in using first-hand observation to acquire data, explain, predict, and determine events under study, and content analysis of the qualitative methodology.

4.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises Kano Metropolis. Kano metropolis is the second largest industrial and commercial centre in Nigeria after Lagos and it is experience rapid population growth rate, the population of metropolis at (year 2000) is 1.6 million (Maiwada 2000). In 2003 the population raised to 2.3 million (approximately) and in 2006 to 2.8million.

4.3 Sample size and Sampling Techniques

A sample of 400 respondents was used for the study. This sample was randomly drawn from a population of 4,348,000 people. The sample of the study consists of selected Kannywood 80 films directors/producers, 120 actors/actresses, 200 Kannywood audiences. Thus, the primary data consisted of 400 validated copies of a questionnaire were administered to the aforementioned respondents. The respondents were purposively selected based on gender, age, and wealth of knowledge about the topic in context. Similarly, the researcher also purposively selected one Kannywood film produced between 2021 and 2022 which themes revolve around issues of girl child sexual abuses.

5. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1
Distribution of the Respondents According to Sex

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Male	200	50%
Female	200	50%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 1 represents the distribution of the respondents according to sex. From the table 200 (50%) of the repondents were male while 200 (50%) were female.

The research centre around sexual abuse which is by implication a gender issue. Hence, this distribution was made to give equal chances to the respondents inline with the ideology of gender equality; as both sexes seems to have different opinions on the issues under discuss in the society.

Table 2
Distribution of the Respondents According to Age

Options	Frequency	Percentage
18-20 Years	200	50%
20-39 Years	200	50%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 2 represents the distribution of the repondents according to age. From the table, 200 (50%) of the respondents represented the age of 18-20 years, while 200 (50%) of the respondents represented the of of 20-35 years.

Table 3
Distribution of the Respondents' Knowledge About Kannywood Films

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Averagely	53	13.25
Deep knowledge	184	47.17%
Much knowledge	121	31.02%
Just little knowledge	42	10.76%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 3 represents the distribution of the respondents by level of education. According to the table, a total number of 53 (13.25) possess average knowledge about Kannywood films, 184 (47.17%) deep knowldge about Kannywood films, 121 (31.02) claimed to have much knowledge about Kannywood films 42 (10.76%) have just little knowledge about Kannywood films. Thus, the set of respondents can be said to be appropriate for the study.

Table 4
Distribution of the extent images of child's right abuse are portrayed in Kannywood films?

S/N	Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	To some extent images of child sexual abuse are portrayed in Kannywood films	SA	65	60%
		A	25	23%
		SD	6	6%
		D	12	11%
2	To very much extent images of child sexual abuse are portrayed in Kannywood films	SA	64	59%
		A	30	28%
		SD	6	6%
		D	8	7%
3	To a great extent images of child sexual abuse are portrayed in Kannywood films	SA	78	72%
		A	26	24%
		SD	0	0%
		D	4	4%

Source: This Researcher, 2024

From the above table, 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that to some extent images of child sexual abuse are portrayed in Kannywood films, 23% agreed, 6% strongly disagreed while 11% disagreed.

In the second question, 59% of the respondents strongly agreed that to a very much extent images of child sexual abuse are portrayed in Kannywood films, 28% agreed, 6% strongly disagreed while 7% disagreed.

In the third question, 72% strongly agreed that to a great extent images of child sexual abuse are portrayed in Kannywood films, 24% agreed, 0% strongly disagreed while 4% disagreed.

However, from the results of quantitative data presented in Table 4, Kannywood films have to some extent portrayed the images of girl child sexual abuse. This was equally supported by the quanlitative data which were generated in the course of this research. The qualitative data of this research constitutes the content of a selected Kannywood film entitled Danjigala. The entire themes of this movie centered on the negative experience of the girl child in Northern Nigeria's cultural environment. The major character in the movie is Dije.

The movie started from the death of Dije's father, to her experiences in the house of her uncle to her enconter with the young that raped her. In other words, in the movie, despite the fact that Dije was betrothed to her lover, Sule before the death of her father, her uncle collected money from another man and forces her to marry the young man. However, the man raped Dije and dumped her leaving the poor girl to suffer untold hardship. After she was raped, she was abandoned on the street.



Source: Captured from Danjigala., 2023



Figure 1
Dije Abandoned and Walking on the Street
 Source: Captured from Danjigala, 2023

By this time she was already pregnant as a result of the rape. Hungry and tired, Dije had a miscarriage. She was lying down beside the road groaning in pains before one man helped and took her to his house. The man rehabilitated Dije and she became very beautiful thereafter.

Dije After Rehabilitation

Like it has been captured in the above photograph, Dije became beautiful beyond recognition after she was taken care of by the man. Thus, the young man who raped and abused her who has been on the run since then came across her and asked for her hand in marriage. Dije accepted his proposal with the intention to take revenge. He took Dije to his father's house and there flashback technique was used to remind the young man about what he did to Dije in the past. Thereafter, the young man was beating and arrested. Thus, it is clearly shown that film captures themes of sexual abuse, rape, teenage pregnancy and its consequences as experienced by young girls in a typical African society like it is reflected in the first selected film. Therefore, it is apparent to say that a careful study of the film can make one to agree with the analysis of data on Table 4 that images of girl child sexual abuses in the film are portrayed largely in terms of child marriage, sexual abuse and child rape.

6. SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Movies in Nigeria, Kannywood films in this context, could serve the purpose of child rights advancement as exemplified by the focus of this research. Apart from the quantitative data of this work, the selected film was able to project the issues of child abuse cases especially girl child sexual abuse. Against this backdrop, it veritable tool for realization of the rights of the child which stands out as one of the leading human rights issues in the contemporary world. This agrees with the postulations of the development media theory that view the media as a partner in development to society as media become a source of communications that advocate change in society.

Furthermore, the above impact may be felt even more since films now serve as a major source of entertainment for Nigerians; they can go a long way in helping with the country's social transformation, especially as it relates to child's rights. This is in line with the media system dependency theory which holds that the more people depend on the media for information, education and entertainment, the more likely the media would exert its influence on them.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations were made by the researcher:

- i. Filmmakers in Nigeria should produce more films projecting the right of girl child especially girl child sexual abuse as the problem seems to be on the increase in the country.
- ii. There is need for television stations and cinema houses to constantly feature films focusing on child's rights as a way of enhancing the societal impact of such films.
- iii. Continuous exhibition of such films would help create awareness and educate people on issues of child's rights, their abuses and the need and how to reverse the trend.
- iv. Future studies should expand the scope of this study through enlarging the sampl of the study.

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