



A History and Evolution of Nollywood in the last Two Decades

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Introduction

Film encompasses individual motion pictures, the field of film as an art form, and the motion picture industry. Films are produced by recording images from the world with cameras, or by creating images using animation techniques or special effects. The word **film** means a story, etc recorded as set of moving pictures to be shown on television or at the cinema (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 1998). Films are cultural artifacts created by specific cultures, which reflect those cultures, and, in turn, affect them. Film is considered to be an important art form, a source of popular entertainment and a powerful method for educating — or indoctrinating — citizens. The visual elements of cinema give motion pictures a universal power of communication. Some films have become popular worldwide attractions by using dubbing or subtitles that translate the dialogue. Traditional films are made up of a series of individual images called frames. When these images are shown rapidly in succession, a viewer has the illusion that motion is occurring. The viewer cannot see the flickering between frames due to an effect known as persistence of vision, whereby the eye retains a visual image for a fraction of a second after the source has been removed. Viewers perceive motion due to a psychological effect called beta movement. The origin of the name "film" comes from the fact that photographic film (also called film stock) had historically been the primary medium for recording and displaying motion pictures. Many other terms exist for an individual motion picture, including *picture*, *picture show*, *photo-play*, *flick*, and most commonly, *movie*. (Wikipedia, 2009)

Filmmaking is the process of making a film, from an initial story idea or commission through scriptwriting, shooting, editing and finally distribution to an audience. Typically it involves a large number of people and can take anywhere between a few months to several years to complete. Filmmaking takes place all over the world in a huge range of economic, social and political contexts, using a variety of technologies and techniques. (wikipedia, 2009)

The film industry consists of the technological and commercial institutions of filmmaking: i.e. film production companies, film studios, cinematography, film production, screenwriting, pre-production, post production, film festivals, distribution; and actors, film directors and other film personnel. Though the expense involved in making movies almost immediately led film production to concentrate under the auspices of standing production companies, advances in affordable film making equipment, and expansion of opportunities to acquire investment capital from outside the film industry itself, have allowed independent film production to evolve. (wikipedia, 2009)

Filmmaking also takes place outside of the studio system and is commonly called independent filmmaking. Since the introduction of DV technology, the means of production have become more democratized. Filmmakers can conceivably shoot and edit a movie, create and edit the sound and music, and mix the final cut on a home computer. However, while the means of production may be democratized, financing, distribution, and marketing remain difficult to accomplish outside the traditional system. Most independent filmmakers rely on film festivals to get their films noticed and sold for distribution. However, the Internet has allowed for relatively inexpensive distribution of independent films; many filmmakers post their films online for critique and recognition. Although there is little profitability in this, a filmmaker can still gain exposure via the web (wikipedia, 2009). The art of filmmaking is over 200 years old and countries where films are made have been able to protect, project and promote their cultural values as well as affect the culture of other countries. Today, we talk of major film tradition such as Hollywood (USA), Bollywood (India) and Nollywood (Nigeria) film cultures today. Oladele A., 2007

The Beginning of the Film Industry (1830-1909)

The movies, like photography, have no single inventor....The motion picture emerged by the 1890's as the product of several developments: the creation of the photographic process; the invention of celluloid roll film; and the realization that successive still pictures of anything in motion, when viewed consecutively, produced the illusion of motion- the phenomenon known as "persistence of vision".

Within a few years of Edison's 1889 development of the kinescope, motion picture peep shows- the basic technology of making and showing films that would be used for the next forty years was in place. But movies as a technological achievement were one thing; the art of filmmaking- all the techniques that seamlessly result in the finished film- and the organization of

film production, distribution, and exhibition, would take many more years to evolve. Early movies were mostly slices of life. Nonfiction films constituted more than half of all titles produced until about 1908. The novelty of the new medium was itself enough to carry the day. When people could be amazed and thrilled by a shot of an approaching train or a passing or a passing parade, a story did not seem that necessary. At its most elaborate, this non-fiction filmmaking could record in motion a current event. In 1897, for instance, the Veriscope Company filmed the heavy weight fight between James Corbett and Bob Fitzsimmons.

Inevitably, creative individuals began to see how movies could offer unique ways to tell a story, using methods that could be employed on the stage only with great difficulty or not at all. As early as 1895, for example, the Edison's Studio, in *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots*, was already using trick photography. The camera was stopped during the beheading scene so that the actress playing Mary could be replaced by a dummy. Films made in these early years ran between fifteen and ninety seconds. This one lasted less than thirty (Brown, 1995)

History of Film in Nigeria

The first film shown in Nigeria was in August of 1903, when Nigerian nationalist Herbert Macaulay, in association with the Balboa film company of Spain, introduced the new medium to an audience assembled in Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos. Ebewo, Patrick J., 2007

The success of the Balboa venture paved the way for an influx of European film exhibitors to Nigeria (Ekwuazi, 1984: 9). Shortly the colonial government took interest and brought in a lot of films (Itam, 2000:32). According to Ekwuazi (1984) film production, distribution and exhibition was restricted to Lagos where they compete with concerts and drama shows and the contents of such movies were highly censored. Gradually, however it fanned out to towns in the immediate hinterland of Lagos and beyond it. As the country became more industrialised and urbanised, there was a need to establish distribution or exhibition centres in these new areas and in no time, the branches of the distribution and exhibition companies had spread all over the country(Nweke,1995).

.....the first film shot in Nigeria was in Jos, Plateau State, in 1904. The film was titled *Palaver*. Thereafter, the Colonial Film Unit came into existence and popularized film-showing through mobile cinema vans. The cinema-going culture was sustained with British and American exploits. (Nigerian Film Corporation, 2007)

With the springing up of the Colonial film production units, gadgets had to be imported to produce local documentaries and newsreels about the achievement of the rulers for record, report and local propaganda as well as for public enlightenment and educational purposes. The indigenes had to be trained to handle some of the production, post-production and projection equipment. This threw open new door of opportunity for Nigerians to acquire knowledge, skills and know-how in new areas of occupational engagements never before known in the land. These acquired knowledge soon manifested through locally produced musical orchestras, bands and famous traveling theatre groups especially in the western and other parts of the country (Ademola, 2007)

Television Incursion

Perhaps the most significant date in the chronology of the growth of the movie industry and business in Nigeria was 1959 when the first TV station in Africa South of the Sahara commenced operation in Ibadan, then Nigeria's most populous urban settlement. Since then the remarkable progress and development of the TV and film industries in Nigeria have become closely interwoven as continuous growth and development in the television medium fed on the rich cultures of the nation as its regular fare and also helped to lay the foundation for the manpower requirements and technical and technological backbone of the spirited attempt to build an indigenous commercial celluloid film industry in the country (Ademola, 2007)

Death of Celluloid Film Industry

Celluloid [from cellulose], transparent, colorless synthetic plastic made by treating cellulose nitrate with camphor and alcohol. Celluloid was the first important synthetic plastic and was widely used as a substitute for more expensive substances, such as ivory, amber, horn, and tortoiseshell. It is highly flammable and has been largely superseded by newer plastics with more desirable properties. It has been used for combs, brush handles, billiard balls, knife handles, buttons, and other useful objects. The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition.

In Nigeria, celluloid died a premature death in the early 1990s. Like a shooting star, it burned itself out because it could not survive in a market determined by the golden rule of supply and demand (Adesanya 15). The film industry was still in its formative years when celluloid bade us farewell and

was replaced by the video film. There are many reasons for the unexpected extinction of the silver screen in Nigeria. The primary reason is the "oil doom" that engulfed the nation in the 1980s and set in motion a host of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) Jonathan Haynes. From the 50s and 60s through the 70s there was a lot of popularity for, not the home videos of today, but celluloid films. Then film lovers had to go to the cinema to satisfy their passions. By the early 90s, Kenneth Nnebue again keeping faith with the potentials of the Nigerian movie industry produced "Living in Bondage": it was a soaring success and changed the face of the Nigerian Home video market (What, with the glamour, the story line, the ethical questions and the ease with which it pervaded every home). With more films like "Glamour Girls", "True Confessions", "Rituals", "Circle of Doom", "Rattle Snake", "Nneka, the pretty serpent" etc he had single handedly nailed the coffin of the Celluloid film industry, and then entered the home video.

Factors That Led to the Death of Celluloid Films

1. Economic Recession

The political under-development of Nigeria as a result of military dictatorship from about the mid-1960's gradually resulted in its slow economic growth and eventual economic recession. One of the most notable victims of the nation's economic downturn was its booming celluloid film industry of the 70's and 80's. While film making in the celluloid format was rather an expensive undertaking, especially because of the post-production laboratory requirements which had to be completed abroad in foreign currency, the video format, though less durable, was found cheaper by many a budding filmmakers and required no foreign currency inputs other than the imported equipment and some accessories, a few of which could be locally sourced. Hence the inevitable and convenient switch which commenced from the early 80's. The appetite for home made movies aroused by the celluloid boom of the 70's was virtually completely taken over by the home video in the 80's, especially in the Nigerian languages. Such movies today would probably constitute the local 'classics' in that group, badly finished and packaged and technically deficient as they might be.

2. The Impact of Television

In 1959, barely a year before the nation's independence, the first TV broadcasting station in black Africa (Western Nigeria Television, WNTV) was set up in Ibadan, the then capital of Western Region of the country (Ademola, 2007)

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the then Premier of the defunct Western Region and coincidentally the brain behind the land mark history made the following declaration during the commissioning ceremony in Ibadan on October 31, 1959; he asserts “Television will serve as teacher, entertainer and a stimulus to us all to transform Nigeria into a modern and prosperous nation”.

True to this declaration, television soon began to appear in homes during the post-independence era and soon provided alternative entertainment to Nigerians in their homes as opposed to cinema that had enjoyed years of monopoly in audio-visual entertainment. Though initially an elite possession, television achieved a mass media status in the late 1960’s and early seventies as more and more people in the middle class began to afford it.

3. Proliferation of Foreign Programmes on Television

The proliferation of the Nigerian entertainment sector with foreign movies and television programmes is another notable factor that aided the demise of the cinema culture in Nigeria. In the 1980s, 1990s and even now an integral percentage of broadcast programming in Nigeria are foreign. It is apparent that televisions in Nigeria find it easier and cost effective to beam foreign programmes than to produce local programmes and homegrown content.

4. Emergence of Video Machines

The coming of television may have affected the number of cinema going population, but what gave a final blow was the emergence of video playback machines which made it possible for movie lovers to buy their favorite films in cassettes and enjoy same on television in the comfort of their homes either with their family, friends or lovers. Privacy was one thing lacking in cinemas and a lot of private people felt that their privacy should not be sacrificed in the alter of entertainment and the best way to have fun and still maintain their privacy was to acquire such movies, relax and watch same in their homes. Another fascinating thing about the video machine technology was the opportunity of multiple repeat playbacks and its ability to rewind, forward and pause at any point in the movie. This is contrary to the cinema which can do neither of those. It afforded especially the women the opportunity to stop or pause their favorite movies, attend to some domestic activities and continue without missing anything. For the men it was the best development, because it helped to keep their wives and children at home as against the

cinema days when women under the pretext of going to the cinema, engage in multiple sexual escapades with their adulterous partners.

5. Technical Limitation

Technical limitation is another factor that lead to the decline of cinema in Nigeria. In the cinema era , filmmakers shoot in Lagos and developed the pictures in London, there was not a single celluloid film development laboratory in Nigeria until 1991 as a result, the cost of filmmaking was too expensive , only a few can afford it also there was the risk of piracy. In the cinema era, piracy was so high that no sooner has a work being completed that it is pirated. Moses Olaiya (BabaSala) went bankrupt because his films, *Mosebolatan* and *Orun Morun* were pirated before they could be shown at the cinemas.

6. Lack of Manpower

Another component to the fall of film in Nigeria was insufficient skill and technical know-how in celluloid filmmaking. In the 1970s and up till now there are very few people who are skilled in the art of cinematography and the manipulation of the celluloid machine for capturing striking and sublime artistic expressions. Most of the film crews that produced Nigeria's epic films were foreigners; check out the end credits of Mr Johnson (Hubert Ogunde), Kongi's Harvest, Orun Morun to mention a few for confirmation.

7. Decline in Education

The decline in education due to poor funding and a faulty education policy is another issue. By the mid 80s and early 1990s, there was a slump in the literacy level in the country; students were dropping out of school en masse and many of them were taking to drugs, vices and decadence, one of the reasons for this is because the free education policy of the Late Obafemi Awolowo had fizzled out. Cinema buildings became the secretariat of these new school of NFAs (No Future Ambition(s) and Wanna-Be Urchins, thus cinemas became a centre of ills- rape, drug peddling and abuse, torture, extortion, theft etc. Cinema goers were attacked, raped, extorted and all of these were happening simultaneously in different parts of the country and gradually people become weary of going to the cinema. Cinema owners could not expunge this growing scourge of Agbero/Area boys because of the inadequate security personnel on ground and the organized nature of these touts. Cinema proprietors were not making as much returns as previously,

slowly the business became unprofitable coupled with the fact that fewer films were being produced for exhibition and harsh economic conditions, facility owners resulted to leasing their cinemas out for parties, church services etc.

8. Insecurity in the Nation

Immediately after the civil war that took place between 1967 and 1970, security became a critical issue in the country. Vices like armed robbery, kidnapping, raping, assassination, stealing which was strange became common place. With these, night life which was the pride of Lagos began to die. Safety of life could no more be guaranteed especially at nights when these men of depraved mind prefer to operate for their own security. This became the major factor that nailed cinema culture finally in the coffin.

9. Government Neglect/Inadequate Funding

Previous administration in Nigeria did not understand the place of film in national development and those that realized it did very little to facilitate its growth, nonetheless there was one regime that created a framework to aid its development was the Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) government. IBB's administration convened the first ever National Film Conference in Nigeria in 1991 to promote film and the profession, established the National Film Censors Board, the National Film Institute (NFI), Jos, Nigeria, but all of these activities did not have much impact on the development of industry in Nigeria as filmmakers still had to raise funds by themselves and put in place the structures that makes the industry today. The above scenario also learned support to the non-existence of a valid and appropriate film policy, film laws, a film fund and an organized industry structure. It was basically of case of a lost course; a journey that failed ever before the first step was taken. In countries where the film industry is developed such as India, the government support, funds, and facilitate the production, distribution and exhibition of films.

10. Growth of Churches and Mosques

The growth of churches and mosques also contributed to the decline of the cinema in Nigeria. Pastors and Imams preached against cinema going. They made people believe that film is evil, that going to the cinema is sinful and a hindrance to the worship of God.

11. Digital Revolution

The digital revolution in the film industry started at the beginning of the 90s, when digital camcorders substituted 35mm motion film cameras, and digital supports replaced celluloid as recording and distributing devices. The film production industry went into turmoil worldwide and rapidly adapted to the new technology. Nigeria had an abundant supply of digital technology coming from Asian countries eager to quickly renew their own stocks of technological devices. As a result, in the 90s Nigeria had an ample supply of cheap blank VHS tapes, Video CDs and DVDs, and VHS players reached a household penetration rate of approximately 57 million (Miridul Chowdhury Et Al, 2008)

The Transition Era

Following the developments mentioned above, cinema business dwindled and eventually went moribund. Most of the investors diverted their investments. The foreigners among them left the country and that marked the death of cinema in Nigeria. The existing cinema halls got converted to warehouses and churches. All through this period, a vacuum existed as most film practitioners lost their source of livelihood. A lot of them like Dr Ola Balogun left the scene and consolidated in his music career with his band. As we know, nature abhors vacuum and to occupy this vacuum, Alade Aromire, a budding film producer and actor, in 1984 made an attempt and shot his film - Ekun - on video format (VHS). This opened a new chapter in the movie industry and attracted the likes of Kenneth Nnebue to shoot "Aje Ni Iya Mi" late 80s.

Emergence of Nollywood Industry

In 1992, Kenneth Nnebue, an electrical equipment salesman in Lagos, needed to dispose thousands of blank VHS tapes that were unsold in his store. Armed with a cheap digital camera and a number of good-hearted friends, he shot a movie along the tradition of the Yoruba traveling theater and dubbed all the unsold tapes with the film, with the hope of making his tapes more palatable to costumers. "Living in Bondage," a movie about human sacrifices became an instant hit and gave birth to the modern Nollywood. It was a soaring success and changed the face of the Nigerian Home video market (What, with the glamour, the story line, the ethical questions and the ease with which it pervaded every home).

The introduction of home video as an alternative to cinema stalled the development of cinema. No sooner had Super VHS Cameras and VHS Camera became popular that it became widespread, with this development more people could engage in film production. The M9000 and M3500 Video Cameras were cheaper to buy, easier to handle and does not require developing , printing and or cutting like celluloid thus it became an important key to making films when cinema finally died. (Oladele, 2007)

These videos, therefore, respond to local market forces and in fact pander to local tastes in very specific ways. And as much as any other factor, the economic success of this industry is a result of a production and distribution system that completely bypasses the movie theatre distribution system. At the time Nigerian video film began to emerge, movie theatres had become dangerous and disreputable, typically a place for conducting illicit business. Families shunned them, and tickets were expensive by Nigerian standards. The Nigerian video film offered an attractive alternative. The video films were not very expensive to purchase; they could be watched in a home environment; friends and extended family could be invited to watch as a group. And typically the movies are morality tales. (Mark NeuCollins, 2007)

The name Nollywood was invented by a non-Nigerian, first appearing in an article by Matt Steinglass in the New York Times in 2002. To be fair to Dr Ayo Coker, a friend of mine and owner of Wazobia Internet Radio operating in London, I personally know that he was the first person to use and refer to Nigeria film industry as Nollywood. Back then between 1999 and year 2000, I am aware he operated a company known then as Nollywood Entertainment with serious online presence. I believe Matt Steinglass must have lifted the name from there.

Growth of Nollywood

“The ability to picture oneself is a vital need. In fact, if a man were to live without the capacity of forging a picture of himself, he would have no aspirations, no desires, and no dreams of his own. The same applies to a community, a society, and a people. A society daily subjected to foreign images eventually loses its identity and its capacity to forge its own identity. The development of Africa implies, among other things, the production of its own images.” (NeuCollins, 2007)

The above quotation by NeuCollins in his paper titled ‘the emergence of independent cinema in Nigeria’ captured what Nollywood has come to represent in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. For the first time,

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authentic African stories are told from the perspective of real Africans. NeuCollins went further in his paper to say the following;

“Americans, of which I am one, tend to paint Africa in extremely broad strokes, imagining a cultural homogeneity where it does not exist. In reality, the arbitrary boundaries imposed by the recent colonial past overlay a land where more than a thousand languages are spoken, and where exist just as many complex cultural, social, and political systems. In pre-colonial Africa, the most prevalent form of social organization was the small group with a central ruler or king”.

The beauty of the video revolution which Nollywood pioneered is the democratisation of film production. Owing to the low cost of the video equipment, the ease of use, and the flexibility, it was easy for everybody to access the technology and express their views freely without any restriction.

In those old days of celluloid film making, Film makers depended entirely on the west for the equipment, raw stock, technical crew, post-production and lab facilities, meaning that they were under some influence and not fully independent. And the situation was compounded by the high cost of making movies on the celluloid format. NeuCollins described the situation further;

“The Nigerian video film phenomenon has nothing of the technical polish of African Cinema. It does not play by any of the Western cinematic rules, in fact it ignores them completely. It does not take its imaginative or ideological direction from West, and it is not tied by the structures of foreign capital investment. It is this fact that allows Nigerian video film to maintain its authentic African voice. Paradoxically ignored or denigrated by most cinema theorists, Nigerian video film signals the emergence of a unique and autonomous African cultural form - an exciting cultural moment”.

The Nollywood industry today is the biggest film industry in Africa and one of the leading industries in the world with respect to the number of films produced per year. A Nollywood film costs between \$40,000 and \$210,000 to produce and sell up to 120,000 copies locally and more when exported on video or DVD. Although the economic contribution of the Nollywood

industry to the overall GDP of the country is not highly significant, it has notable value for the nation in terms of employing a large number of young people, spawning off or boosting related industries and decreasing inequality between the rich and the middle class. Looking at the industry today, it is hard to imagine that it started only 15 years ago with a modest beginning. This partly explains why the government has indicated its interest in promoting the industry, which has previously been self-financing. (Miridul Chowdhury et al, 2008)

The industry has also produced many “stars” as well as its own international events. Initially, when the video film came into existence some actors were not well remunerated but currently the appearance of actors like Pete Edochie, Fathia Balogun, Liz Benson, Omotola Jalade- Ekeinde, Racheal Oniga, Bukky Wright, Bukky Ajayi, Nkem Owoh, Ramsey Noah, Desmond Elliott, Genevieve Nnaji, Kayode Fash-Lanso, Patience and others; in a video film guarantees good box office success. (Oladele Adenugba, 2007)

Apart from the stars, the industry has also produced notable filmmakers that have attracted international recognition. The video format that was perceived as a negative development in the beginning has turned out to be a blessing in disguise, launching Nigeria back to the world map. Today, the industry seems to be facing a lot of lull occasioned by piracy, government neglect, illegal and indiscriminate broadcast of home movies on television and satellite stations, ill-timed/haphazard introduction of a new distribution framework by the Film and Video Censors Board and drop in production standards by some gate-crashers. Currently there is a drop in both film sales and film production and the stakeholders are presently meeting to find a lasting solution to the problems.

Technical Evolution

Nollywood has witnessed amazing technical evolution from 1992 when it started till date. The celebrated film *Living in Bondage* that has received serious commendation even till today was recorded on the lowest video quality conceivable. It was done on Super VHS. In that era, distributors stock thousands of video machines with which they duplicate and mass produce the films for distribution. Other films that followed like *Glamour Girls 1* was also shot on Super VHS.

In the mid-90s, there was a technical shift to U-MATIC cameras, a more powerful camera developed by SONY. It came with a much better picture and sound quality than the entry VHS format. From then, films were

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produced and mastered in U-matic but distributed in VHS. From U-matic, technological advancement created another format called Betacam SP with much better picture and sound quality and the industry quickly embraced it. Betacam SP reigned till the year 2000, when Kingsley Ogoro, of Klink Studios decided to move to DVCAM, a new digital format developed by SONY. DVCAM was a digital format that caused a movement from analogue editing to digital/non-linear editing. He experimented the camera with TECO BENSON's *Wasted Years* and it was a success, hence causing a dramatic movement to DVCAM and an unplanned death to Betacam cameras and studio equipment. Kingsley Ogoro's movement was not just done for advancement alone, but to maintain a lead in the studio and rental business where entrepreneurs like Ojiofor Ezeanyaeche of OJ Productions and Dozie Eriobu of Infinity Merchants have entered into Camera rentals and Analogue studio business creating serious competition to his hitherto monopoly. That movement to DVCAM wrecked their businesses and marked the end of Betacam and Analogue format, thus restoring Klink Studios monopoly. By later part of 2006, SONY Electronics came out with HDV cameras causing yet another shift to HDV formats. In 2007, Panasonic came up with their P2 tapeless cameras and it marked the end of tape medium. Today modern cameras record directly to memory cards.

By 2010, industry players began yet another movement to full HD Cameras. In this league you have different makes from different companies including SONY, CANNON, PANASONIC, JVC etc. Today names like RED, ARRI ELIXIR, BLACK MAGIC and so many have become big players in the market. The biggest earthquake in this era was caused by the production of DSLR Cameras by Canon where still Cameras are used to achieve amazing picture resolutions on full HD. Today industry players discuss in terms of Resolutions. They range from 2K, 4K, to 6K.

Resurrection of Cinemas Today

Today, there is a sudden reappearance of Cinemas in the elite neighborhoods of Lagos and Abuja but that does not mean a full return of the cinema culture that once existed in the past. The attempts to revive the cinema culture in Nigeria, however, go a lot to show that the culture may have died. But given a chance, people will still patronise the cinema. About five years ago, Ben Murray Bruce took a leap of faith when he introduced the SilverBird Cinema in Victoria Island area of Lagos. The Silverbird Galleria is a large shopping mall with various outlets where mercantile activities take

place. The place thus open to various activities, provides more reasons to visit the place beyond watching films. Before and after watching films, patrons have a chance to shop or at least, window shop. Going to the cinema thus becomes a social activity, a modified sort of entertainment beyond film watching itself. (Punch Newspapers, 2009)

To a large extent, the SilverBird experiment has been highly successful, giving rise to more outlets being opened in more parts of Lagos and other states of Nigeria as well. Recently, SilverBird got competitors - Genesis Deluxe and City Mall Cinema. They all seem to enjoy a high patronage from fun seekers. Cinema goers range from school kids to adults and whole families.

Taking a critical look at the situation, one can say that the elite culture of class segregation rather than communal culture of cinema-going is what this new wave of cinemas has succeeded in re-introducing. To start with, all the new cinemas are strategically cited in Island and Lekki axis which are exclusive reserve of the high and mighty in the society. The confirmation is the fact that these cinemas charge as high as N2000, per head, per viewing. Such amount can only be afforded by drug barons, contractors, looters of government treasuries, past leaders and fraudsters. Another disturbing dimension is the issue of content. Professionals worry that 100% foreign content, which these cinemas are screening right now is capable of eroding all the gains we've made in the past years. Attempts to screen local films in the elite cinemas in the past was shunned by the elites who see themselves more as westerners and therefore do not need to watch the local movies. The paragraph below is from a publication made by Punch newspapers of 18th February, 2009:

“To many Nigerians, N2, 000 is enough to prepare a pot of soup that can feed a family of four for three days. At the Silverbird Galleria, a movie house in Lagos, however, N2, 000 is what admits a single person to watch a movie that will run for, at most, two hours. In spite of the high gate fee, Lagosians still troop to the place to watch films daily. They also troop in similar numbers to Nu Metro, another Cinema Hall at the Shoprite Centre along Victoria Island-Lekki road”.

Conclusion

From the study, it could be seen that death of cinema culture in Nigeria was an inevitable episode. It opened a window for democratization using the affordable video format for expression. Truly as can be seen, Nollywood that came as a child of circumstance and a stop-gap medium has given Nigeria a voice through which its filmmakers tell the authentic African stories from the right perspective, as opposed to those days when Western media and Hollywood portray Africa as a country of poverty, disease, ignorance, darkness and people in caves and jungles.

Within this period, the industry grew to become the third largest in the world, after Hollywood and Bollywood, a feat that couldn't have been achieved had the cinema era survived. Nollywood has shifted the attention of the world to Nigeria. What made all these possible was the deviation from the norm. With the peculiar situation at the time, rather than cry over spilled milk, Nigerian enterprising filmmakers took the bull by the horns and started the video revolution that culminated in the direct-to-video release that introduced home video culture into the global dictionary of film making.

Recommendations

Having gone through the problem confronting the system the following recommendations are made;

Efforts should be concentrated on high production standard and not on format of production. Format is secondary, especially in Nigeria where home video culture has become a norm, more so cinemas where celluloid films are exhibited on the big screen have almost gone extinct. The few pockets of cinemas we see around the elite neighbourhoods of Lagos and Abuja are simply status symbols and a medium of showing foreign films and foreign culture.

Government should put measures to checkmate piracy and protect this emerging industry especially now that the oil revenue is dwindling. The distribution frame work should carry along stakeholders so as to be effective and long lasting.

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