

## **Study of Domestic Injustices and Solutions to Marital Unfaithfulness in Selected Nollywood Films of Yoruba Expression**

**Basiru Adeyemi Adebisi**

Department of Performing Arts and Film  
Production,  
Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria  
[basiruadebisi@yahoo.com](mailto:basiruadebisi@yahoo.com),  
[basyemoo3@gmail.com](mailto:basyemoo3@gmail.com)

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**Adedoyin Folashade Adelowo**

Department of Performing Arts,  
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

nature, yet it becomes a workable and sustainable antidote to stopping marital infidelity. While we agree that the employment of gun (force) to instill decorum into the men's senses is violent in nature, it is our conclusive belief that nothing good comes easy. All concerned stakeholders especially those that cater for women's rights in the socio-political space, should register as women police outfit with appropriate authorities to enable them to protect the rights of women, challenge the chauvinism of male dishonesty and disband women from matrimonial prisons.

**Keywords: Injustices, Marriage, Gender, Domestic, Hegemony**

### **Abstract**

This paper, understudies the degree of marital unfaithfulness and domestic injustices meted out against women by men in Olanrewaju Abiodun's *Awa Okunrin*, written by Funke Akindele and produced by Gbadebo Osunmo, and Taiwo Aromokun's *Si Gbogbo Okunrin* respectively. Through descriptive and content analysis methods, it is discovered that the degree of psychological, physical and emotional trauma womenfolk is subjected to prompts few ladies to challenge the menace of violence against the female gender by adopting self-defense stance. The paper argues that the ten commandments in Taiwo Aromokun's *Si Gbogbo Okunrin* serve as golden rule for reasonable men. The Commandments are issued to save women from seemingly unending marital injustices. Although the process seems violent in

### **Introduction**

The struggles and campaigns to attain gender justice and fair treatment of women in the society, have heavily been rested on the social, political, cultural and economic commitments of the elites to correct the perceived injustices in gender relations especially at home. This is a reason for feminist ideologies across the globe regardless of their cultural background or the contents of their operations. Over the years, the campaign centres on the abolition, eradication and/or reduction of the perceived cultural sentiments that stand as barriers to gender equality in the society especially in Africa.

In Western context, the dynamics of political and socio-economic factors that shape gender relationship usually influence the campaign for freedom in domestic and sexual subjugations. Various women groups have moved beyond struggling for social recognitions as they fight for self-

determination and absolute control (rights) over their body without fear of intimidation. This is supported by Idegu (2009, p.77) that women quest for and against:

Individual autonomy, rights, freedom, independence, tolerance, cooperation, nonviolence and diversity, domestic violence, gender, sexuality, discrimination, sexism, non-objectification, freedom from patriarchy, right to an abortion, reproductive rights, control of the female body... prostitution and education. For political reason, they radicalize the mentality of seeing men as superior and only mentally and intellectual fit for political operation and governance in the western world.

Importantly, while some Africans parade themselves as the mouth-organ for all African women especially in scholarship, many other of the urban illiterate and educational marginalized women are ignorant of the ideology. Yet, they, within their cultural conditions, strive to challenge all factors that attempt to silence their urge for social recognition and receiving needed love and care from their spouse.

Without necessarily cloning the western approach of gender balance, African women still believe in the peaceful co-existence of genders as one cannot do without the other. This is why the focus of gender questions in Africa mostly centres on challenging male insensitivity and injustices towards basic needs of women in marital affairs. As a result, this paper examines the marital injustices and proffered solutions by women in *Awa Okunrin* and *Si Gbogbo Okunrin* video-films. Also, this study will unravel whether or not non-violent based advocacies can address different shades of injustices and concretely achieve needed

marital faithfulness particularly from men to their wives.

### **Domestic Injustices and Marital Unfaithfulness of Men against Women**

In this study, we classify domestic injustices and marital unfaithfulness as violence, oppressions, victimization, and harassment against the female folk by the male in the society. Borrowing from section 46 of Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act of 2015, domestic injustices and marital unfaithfulness include “those acts which cause or could cause physical, sexual, psychological and economic harm, including the threat...” Most of the cases of marital abuses usually put women as victims and men as perpetrator in the society. It is imperative to state that women become victims not on the account of being wrong but because of men’s thirst for unnecessary domineering. In fact, often time, violence is caused as a result of men’s unapologetic unfaithfulness towards their spouse. All acts of dishonesty engaged in by married men usually have untold consequences on their women’s psychological health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) conducted a research in 2018 to examine the spate of injustices against women in marriages. Accordingly, the report estimates that “1 in 3 women would be subjected to either physical or sexual intimate partner violence, or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.” The situation of marital abuse or violence has not rested, rather increasing daily. In a recent UN survey (2020, p.4), “incidents of GBV cases in Nigeria based on preliminary information from 24 states shows that in March, the total number of GBV incidents reported were 346, while in the first part of April, incident reports spiked to 794.”

To break away from the undue subjugations, there is need for women to be

audible and liberated not by becoming a man or by envying what the men have, but by appreciating femalehood. Collaborating this view, Ojediran equally suggests a workable way to advance the identity and raise the voice of womanhood in the society. Ojediran is of the opinion that;

Women need to appreciate their positions not in a passive way, but as a way of creating a variety of recognizable identities for themselves. However, when women express themselves through such an avenue, it depicts their self-articulation and self-determination through aesthetics of assertiveness (Ojediran, 2012, p.17).

This assertiveness requires some active and conscious strategic plans and actions to finally address the *maleocrazy* in marriages. Moreso, women must defile possible barriers to device and experiment uncommon means to challenging and controlling man's insensitivities in marriage. This is why Sue Marrow (cited in Mathy, 2003, p.7) claims "feminism is a call to action. It can never be singly a belief system. Without action, feminism is merely empty rhetoric which cancels itself out."

In this case, there ought to be active ways for the society to collectively addressed, and if need be through a legislative act pressurize males to desist from marital unfaithfulness, dishonesty and slavery of women. Sensitization of the society can be should be sustained through popular medium of socialization such as video-film. This becomes necessary so as to curtail the increasing rates of broken homes for consequential stable society.

### **Domestic injustices against women in Funke Akindele's *Awa Okunrin***

*Awa Okunrin* dramatizes a flagrant hegemonic exercise of men against the loving but fragile women in marital affairs with consequences that consume not only the perpetrators (men) but adversely on the innocent wives. The marital adventure of Faderera and Adekolapo is a signboard that shows the level of men's insincerity/deception as substitute to the absolute loyalty of women. Adekolapo is blessed with a dutiful, lovely and caring wife, Faderera. But instead of reciprocating the affections from his wife, he engages in extra-marital affairs with a young girl, Tejumola whom he lied to being single. Instead of being supportive and caring to his pregnant wife at home, Adekolapo always keeps the company of Tejumola and hunts for more girls hiding under office work. He saves his girlfriends' number with pseudo name like; Chairman. This name usually makes the obedient Faderera to encourage her husband to always be loyal and dedicated to the callings of his "boss" whenever "Chairman" called or texted. This shows the insensitivity of men in marital affairs. Unfortunately, Faderera loses her 7-month-old and first pregnancy, and even gets infected with Gonorrhoea, all to the cause of her husband's infidelity.

It is demoralizing to see helpless women, who are committed to the success of a peaceful marriage, suffering great disappointment. In fact, this is disastrous because this can hinder such women's chances of being impregnated. Even at a worse scenario, if she decides to seek divorce, she is limited to see a responsible man because of the marital dents on her psychophysical status. This is why Tsaku (2009, p.305) says, "women in modern society are oppressed, marginalized and subdued to an ignoble position" and remain in perpetual silence.

In another home, the reign of sexual

intimidation, oppression, irresponsibility, slavery and male chauvinism are displayed in the way, and manner Bolaji treats his devoted and loving wife, Wumi. Wumi becomes a full housewife on Bolaji's order. She loves and is dutiful to him but receives hatred in return, especially whenever she attempts to show being caring. For example,

**Wumi:** Ibi ti mo ti n pe ago re ni mo ti sun lo

**Bolaji:** (Bullying) Wobi, emi ni mo laago, toba wunmi magbe.

**Wunmi:** But bawo lo se n soro bayi, nigba ti ko n sepe emi ati re nija ti tele

**Bolaji:** (looks back with fierce eyes) Mo n soro bi eni ti koni laakaye niyen o

**Wunmi:** (surprise) ha, Olohun ko ni je, Oko mi o ni ya were. Sugbon o mo wipe wo a binu tobaje pemi ni ko ba gbe ago re bayan..

**Bolaji:** Won o bi iyalaya e daa. Koda won bi baba nla baba e da. Ki n pe o koma gbe?. Wo won o bi e da ko gbagbe ago si palour ko losi toilet ko ma gbe ago mi. Odaran ni yen, maa lu e baje!

**Wunmi:** (Trepid) emi naa?

**Bolaji:** E.. emi ni mo ni e! abo ti gbagbe pe owo mi ni mo fi ra isu ati awon nkan meremere lati fe o ni?.. emi ni mo fe o. bob a se wumi ni mo le treat e!!!!

#### Translation by the Researcher

**Wumi:** I slept off when I was dialling your number

**Bolaji:** (Bullying) Yes. I reserve the absolute right to pick up or ignore your call.

**Wunmi:** But how do you talk as if I offended you before

**Bolaji:** (looks back with fierce eyes) So, I am senseless in my utterances, right?

**Wunmi:** (surprise) ha, God forbid! My husband will not go mad. (Jealously) But you know you will be angry if I was the one that didn't pick your phone call...

**Bolaji:** You dare not!!! Hmmn You dare not pick my call even if you are in the toilet and your phone is in the sitting room. I will beat you to a pulp!!!.

**Wunmi:** (Trepid) like seriously?

**Bolaji:** Yes... I own everything about you. Or have you forgotten the money and other materials I paid for your bride price to marry you. See, I married you and I can treat you the way I like!!!!

The above conversations portend undue hegemony of men in marriages. Unfortunately, this mentality is encouraged by the social construct on the issue of marriage rites. Men are expected to be the only doer or who must propose and offer bride price in order to get a woman as wife. No wonder the confirmation that in patriarchal society, this reveals the "vulnerability, powerlessness, and self-expressionlessness in a male-dominated society that silences woman's emotional communication", (Ojediran, 2011, p.40). This is what Bolaji capitalizes on and why he insists that he has absolute right to silence

the wife and treat her like a doll without choice since women are seen as "mere property to be owned and discarded anytime..." (Ojediran, 2011, p.41). As a result, she lives in fear of Bolaji's intimidation, recklessness, tongue-lashing bullying, starving and even becoming a punching bag to her husband. While the girlfriend collects thousands of money with all sense of fake-generosity, the wife and two kids are suffering at home.

From another angle, the male folk is equally portrayed as a species with inordinate jealousy. Laide's hyper jealousy and obsession for girls contradict his sense of responsibility at home. He treats his wife well, shows love and care to her. Nevertheless, he is a womanizer who jumps from one skirt to another, even in his office. Despite this unholy acts, he monitors his wife around. A special instance is when Tilewa, his wife, is secretly reported to have entered a hotel and Laide comes with the mindset to disgrace and embarrass the "who-be-the-man" that brings his wife to the hotel. He is disappointed to discover that Tilewa comes to use the hotel saloon. As if this was not enough, he wrongly accuses, threatens and intimidates an innocent soul; his wife's boss, for having extra-marital affairs with Tilewa. Arrogantly he calls HRD, the wife's boss;

**HRD:** Hello Ekaaro sir o

**Laide:** Emi ni oko tilewato'man pe. Wo duro, ki lo de to'fe le omobirin yi nile oko re na? Je kin so fun e o, to ba tun ba iyawo mi sun, iku lo fi sere yen.

**HRD:** E bati e je kin ..

**Laide:** Gbenu e so hun...

#### Translation by the Researchers

**HRD:** Hello good morning sir

**Laide:** I am Tilewa's husband. Why are you interested in ruining this woman's marriage? Listen to this warning, your life is at risk if you do not desist from sleeping with my wife.

**HRD:** Kindly allow me to expl...

**Laide:** Shut your dirty mouth!!!

This is frustrating because it is only women's freedom to associate that is highly restricted, and this is why many wicked men, stop their wives from social engagements. They make them to become full housewives without full responsibilities. Laide, therefore, comes back to his senses when the wife is about to lose her job. To guarantee a woman's loyalty is not by threat, but by mutual trust, love and care.

#### Proposed Solution to Marital injustices and unfaithfulness of men in Taiwo Aromokun *Si Gbogbo Okunrin*

In this paper, Taiwo Aromokun's *Si Gbogbo Okunrin* is considered a revolutionary or a counter-reactions to marital injustices and other related issues treated by *Awa Okunrin*. The title of the film is suggestive to warning all categories of men involved in one form of marital unfaithfulness or the other. It is a warning intended to practically checkmate the extra-marital professionals. In the video, women profer solutions to the problem of domestic injustices against women in marriages. The issue of marital unfaithfulness is deeply addressed by a gang of frustrated ladies who have suffered from men's callousness in relationships.

The activism to save womenfolk in the film starts with the collaboration of Dabira, Omolewa and Seyifunmi, who have

been the victims, but have also experienced the psychological trauma of being jilted by men. To achieve this, they formulate some law clauses that can promote respect between spouses in marriage. The law is named the Ojuse Okunrin Re (This is the Responsibility of Men), tagged as Ten commandments. These commandments are sincerely designed to re-form the deformed and unfaithful men, who engage in extra-marital affairs with impunity. The laws are;

### **Ojuse Okunrin Re**

1. Feran Aya re gegebi Christi se feran ijo re.
2. Ohun elo elege ni obinrin, maa ke aya re nigba gbogbo. Ma se gbero lati lu tabi soro si, toripe okan niyin.
3. Ni itelorun pelu aya re, mase gba obirnn ajeji laye ninu aye re.
4. Fi emi imore han si aya re nigba ti o base ohun ti o dara, pe akiyesi re nigba ti o se ohun ti ko dara.
5. Mase fi omo, ara ,ore tabi ebi re se asoju ohun ini re ayafi iyawo re.
6. Je ki gbogbo irin ese re di mimo fun aya re, ki won o le mo ibi ti won le wa si
7. Mase fi aya re we aya ore re tabi aya aladugbo re nitoirpe aya re yato si elomiran.
8. Mase so ipo re nu ininu ile nipa aipese fun aya re
9. Mase so ara re di apase ninu ile, fi aaye gba aya re.
10. Aya re se pataki ju eniken lo, feran aya re ju awon omo ati obi re lo.

**(06:02-8:12min)**

### **Translation by the Researchers**

1. Man, love your wife as Christ loves the church
  2. Husband, pamper your wife always. Don't think of beating her. Do not to be saucy to her because you are one
  3. Be comfortable with your wife, don't allow any strange woman in your life.
  4. Show gratitude to your wife when she does something good and draw her attention to what she does that is not good.
  5. Don't use your child, relatives, friends or family as your next of kin to your properties but your wife.
  6. Let your wife know all your whereabouts so as to know where to find you
  7. Don't compare your wife with your friends' and neighbors' wives because she is different from another person 's wife.
  8. Don't lose your position in the house by not providing for your family.
  9. Don't turn to commander in the house, create space for your wife's advice.
  10. Your wife is more important to you than anybody, love your wife than your children and parents.
- (06:02-8:12min)**

The above-listed laws are administered to selected men randomly picked from different professions in the society. Mr. Bode in the business sector; Doctor from Medical profession; the The Manager in the Banking industry; and The Director in the Theatre Industry, are the representatives of married men with perceptions of social records of marital infidelity. The self-appointed justice fighters or woman activists engage in a messianic mission to salvage all women from the shackles of male hegemony domestically.

Like security agencies before any operation, they usually carry out investigation to gather needed intelligence about their targets. Through the use of force and intimidation, they exert their commandments on men. For instance, Mr. Bode who is a businessman, engages in fornications with ladies at his workplace, he goes to club and return home late without the fear of his wife.

However, Seyifunmi, who runs a saloon gets to know and invites Dabira and Omolewa to the missions. Without the knowledge of the wife (Mrs. Bode), they arrest Mr. Bode, ask him to read the Ten Commandments and vow to drop the unholy extra-marital behaviour at gunpoint. With stern warning. Mr. Bode turns a new leaf and becomes not only a homely husband, but also a good and caring husband that now sees himself as a soul mate to the wife. Also, the high wave of women harassment in the banking sector is tactically frowned at and challenged by the trio. The corrupt bank manager sleeps with his marketing officers whenever they fail to meet their targets. This is ignoble, as women have been sexually objectified.

According to Ibukun (a marketer at the bank), the Manager pays them not because of their intelligence, but their beauty, hence they should learn how to use

it for company's advantage when sourcing for costumers. These are the issues that Dabira, who is also working in the bank, collectively fights with her friends, by applying the same treatments of Mr. Bode to the Manager; the artistic director, who fornicates with ladies in his acting group; and the doctor that takes the advantage of patients even aborting their pregnancies.

While the Director, Manager and Dotun are invited to an uncompleted building to issue out the ten commandments of good behaviour to their wives, the doctor is set up in a hotel with the poor wife of a patient in his hospital. With this, the doctor agrees to the conditions given to him that he must treat the patients without a penny and the other victims must ensure that they renew their love for their wives and not with any other woman.

Interestingly, all these tactics, though with pressure, yield positive results in the lives of the targets. According to Mr. Bode "if we look at it critically, since I have started listening to my wife's advice and we cogitate together, things have changed. It means all the things I am doing to her are for my own good". Equally bank Manager, who after his experience with the ladies, drops all the acts of marital infidelities and turns dutifully to the sanctity of the marriage, now enjoys a peaceful matrimony.

## Findings

Among others, it is discovered that the degree of psychological, physical and emotional trauma that women folk are subjected to, prompt few ladies to challenge the menace. To solve the lingering problem of marital injustices, volunteered women serve as police and tactically give men the Ten Commandments to save women from the claws of men's hegemony and reform men's behaviour for the better. Although, the process seems violent in nature, yet, it

becomes a workable and sustainable antidote to stopping marital infidelity.

In comparison however, the expositions of male hegemonic ideas of marital unfaithfulness in *Awa Okunrin*, is adequately and categorically addressed in *Si Gbogbo Okunrin*. Apart from the medical injuries that normally emanate from marital dishonesty celebrated in the *Awa Okunrin*, *Si Gbogbo Okunrin*, have the best suggestions to solve the lingering or rather ever-existing male insubordinate-marital infidelity in the society.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

While we agree that the employment of gun (force) as tool to instill decorum into men's senses is violent in nature, it is our conclusive belief that nothing good comes easy. This is because the incessant calls for men to reciprocate love from different fora of social discourse have not yielded the needed results. Rather, many of those advocacy has been reduced to mere rhetoric. It is on this note we believe that, there is the need to use any available means that is socially acceptable to achieve the desired results as far as marital infidelity is concerned.

*Si gbogbo Okunrin* shows alternative way to achieve gender balance, tolerance of opinion and entrench or sustain marital harmony. Yet this can only be achieved if all hands are on deck to collectively challenge the undue male rascality over the female in gender relations. Attention and concentration should be shifted from the pages of books and table discussions in seminars/conferences/workshops to the live performances with community approaches in propagating these ideologies. This will spread the messages faster than leaving it to the elitist-medium of video-film format for effective results. Various women rights group in the socio-political space should

register as women police outfit with appropriate authorities. This will enable them to protect the rights of women, challenge the chauvinism of male dishonesty and disband women from matrimonial prisons. By this approach, checkmating unmarried women, whose daily business is to hoodwink married men, is another area that must not be overlooked as well. Hence, the need to institutionalized the marital-police task force as NGO in Nigeria.

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