

# Analysing Gender Disparity in Nollywood: Utilizing Four Criteria for Evaluation.

A captivating exploration using data analysis techniques to visualize and uncover insights into gender inequality in Nollywood.



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My friends and I went to the cinema to watch one of the most anticipated movies we had been eagerly awaiting. While enjoying the film with a group of friends, some of the women in our group expressed their frustration with how Nollywood (the Nigerian film industry) tends to objectify female actors, portraying them primarily as sex symbols. They pointed out that in many Nollywood movies, a female actor is often expected to have an appealing body shape, with well-defined curves, large buttocks if possible, and an attractive breast size that commands attention.

After the movie, we continued our conversation, and my female friends posed some meaningful and critical questions to the men in our group:

1. Why are female actors stereotyped?
2. Are female actors and filmmakers objectified because the industry is dominated by men?
3. Why does Nollywood infuse elements of romance into its movies?
4. Why are females underrepresented in Nollywood?

They concluded that women should not be seen as objects but as creative individuals full of talent, capable of significantly contributing to the industry's development. These questions and conclusions ignited a spark within me, prompting me to delve into data analytics to answer my friends' questions and determine if gender inequalities exist in Nollywood and to what extent.

With these questions on my mind, I set out to use Netflix Nigeria's data between 2013 and 2023 to uncover answers. Over a period of three weeks, I watched over 90% of the movies and TV shows available on Netflix Nigeria, having already seen 50% of the content. This thorough examination allowed me to substantiate my discoveries with concrete examples and observations.

**To answer these questions, I focused on four criteria:**

- Analysing the Movies and TV Shows Directors:
- Analysing the Movies and TV Shows Producers:
- Applying the Bechdel Test:
- Analysing the Total Count and Proportion of Male against Female Lead and Co-lead Roles.

## **Act 1: Introduction**

Nollywood, Nigeria's film industry, plays a crucial role in the economy by offering numerous employment opportunities. It is the world's second-largest film producer, with UNESCO reporting around 2,500 movies and TV shows produced annually. Since its inception in the early 1990s, Nollywood has grown exponentially, becoming a significant cultural and economic force in Nigeria and beyond. From 2017 to 2020, the industry saw an impressive 477.6% increase in annual production, reaching 2,599 productions in 2020.

Over the past two decades, Nollywood's steady growth has led to its contribution of approximately 1.3% to Nigeria's GDP in 2021. According to PwC, this contribution was 2.3% of the GDP, equivalent to around \$600 million. Future projections suggest that Nollywood is on track to achieve an annual value of approximately \$1 billion. Nollywood is a powerhouse in the Nigerian economy, driving employment, revenue generation, technological advancements, cultural export, and economic diversification. Its impact extends beyond the film industry, influencing various sectors and contributing significantly to Nigeria's economic development.

## **Act 2: Analysing the Movies and TV Shows Directors**

**Scene 1: Evaluating the total counts and proportion of male against female directors.**

Despite a modest increase in 2022, female directors continue to be underrepresented in the movie industry. **Over the span of a decade, male directors showcased their prowess, male directed 77.9% films while female directed 22.1%.**

**Scene 2: Top 5 highly skilled female and male directors. Remarkable Disparity:**

The striking dominance of the Top 5 male directors over their female counterparts in the film industry. **The top 5 male directors** (Kunle Afolayan, Kayode Kasum, Niyi Akinmolayan,

Walter Taylaur and Moses Inwang) **sum up to 26.6%, while that of the female** (Omoni Oboli, Biodun Stephen, Tope Oshin, Kemi Adetiba and Bolanle Austen – Peters) **is 14.4%.**

### **Act 3: Analysing the Movies and TV Shows Producers**

#### **Scene 1: Evaluating the total counts and proportion of male against female producers.**

Male producers continue to dominate, despite females constituting 42.2% of industry producers, showcasing a significant, noteworthy, and substantial presence.

#### **Scene 2: Top 5 highly skilled female and male producers.**

Significant Imbalance: The marked prominence of the top five male producers in comparison to their female counterparts within the movie industry. **The top 5 male producers sum up to 25.8%, while that of the female is 17.5%**

### **Act 4: Applying the Bechdel Test**

#### **Scene 1: Evaluating the rate of success and failure of the Bechdel Test.**

Over the past decade, 111 movies and TV shows (72.1%) failed the Bechdel test, while only 43 (27.9%) passed. This indicates that most of these films and series do not meet the criteria of the Bechdel test, with the failure rate significantly exceeding the success rate.

#### **Scene 2: Analysing how many female-directed movies or TV shows passed the test.**

Over the past decade, only 15.15% of movies and TV shows directed by females passed the Bechdel test, while 84.85% failed. This shows that most films and series directed by women do not meet the Bechdel test criteria, with the failure rate far exceeding the success rate.

#### **Scene 3: Analysing how many female-produced movies or TV shows passed the test.**

Over the past decade, only 17.19% of movies and TV shows produced by females passed the Bechdel test, while 82.81% failed. This indicates that most films and series produced by women do not meet the Bechdel test criteria, with the failure rate significantly higher than the success rate.

### **Bechdel Test Observations**

- **Widespread Imbalance:** A considerable number of movies and TV shows fail to meet the Bechdel test criteria, which assesses the representation of women in the film Industry.

- **Comparative Rates:** The proportion of productions that do not satisfy the Bechdel test notably exceeds those that do, highlighting an area for improvement in gender representation.

**This crucial reminder underscores that while the Bechdel test provides a valuable starting point for discussing gender representation in film, it's essential not to rely solely on it when assessing a movie's quality or the depth of its characters. Genuine diversity and complex female characters are vital for achieving a truly equitable portrayal of genders in the film industry.**

## **Act 5: Analysing the Total Count and Proportion of Male versus Female Lead and Co-lead Roles.**

### **Scene 1: The percentage breakdown of Lead and Co-lead roles.**

Female lead roles have seen a significant decline in the past 3 years. However, over the decade, the total count of female lead roles remains equal to that of male.

## **Call for Action**

### **6 Strategic Foci to Address Gender Disparity and Promote Gender Equality in Nollywood.**

1. Enhancing Representation, Visibility, and Embracing Diversity
2. Empowering Networks and Mentorship Initiatives
3. Advancing Industry Advocacy and Awareness
4. Crafting Stories with Gender Sensitivity
5. Empowering Financial Assistance
6. Commendable Accomplishments, Distribution and Promotion

## **Conclusion**

This report provides a thorough examination of Netflix Nigeria's data concerning Gender Disparity in Nollywood, empowering stakeholders to make well-informed decisions and implement strategies aimed at enhancing gender equality within the industry. Through the cultivation of an inclusive atmosphere, the acknowledgment and celebration of females' achievements, and the active challenge of stereotypes, we can cultivate a film industry that is not only more equitable but also more vibrant and enriching for all involved.