

African Feminism for or Against African Women: Literary Portrayals Versus Real Life Experiences

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Abstract: African feminism, in its diverse expressions, provides a culturally rooted framework for interrogating the lived experiences of women on the Africa continent. This paper critically examines the implications of African feminist theories such as STIWANISM, Ubuntu, Motherism, Nego-Feminism, and Snail-Sense Feminism on the realities of Nigerian married women, with particular reference to the tragic case of gospel singer Osinachi Nwachukwu. Drawing on published academic literature and feminist theory, this work explores how these frameworks shed light on women's negotiations of rights, silence, endurance, and cultural obligations within the institution of marriage in literary contexts and real life. The paper argues that while African feminisms offer alternative, context-sensitive approaches to global feminist discourses, the systemic patriarchy embedded in religious, legal, and social structures continues to undermine the dignity and autonomy and by extension the sanity of married African women. Through this analytical lens, the paper reveals the critical gaps between theory and practice and proposes ways to restructure African feminist strategies to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by married Nigerian women and African women in General.

Keywords: African Feminism, STIWANISM, Ubuntu, Motherism, Nego-Feminism

I. Introduction

The lived experiences of married women in Nigeria continue to reflect a complex interplay of cultural expectations, religious teachings, legal systems, and deeply embedded patriarchal ideologies. While marriage is traditionally viewed as a sacred institution, it often functions as a site where power, control, and silence intersect, disproportionately affecting women. In recent decades, African feminist theories have emerged as counter-hegemonic frameworks to critique and respond to the Western feminist tradition that often overlooks the peculiar socio-cultural realities of African women. African feminists argued that western feminism did not favour African women because what is obtainable in the west is not same in the African terrain hence the birth of African feminist theoretical frameworks. Among these theoretical models are STIWANISM which means Social Transformation Including Women in Africa propounded by Lesley Ogundipe, Ubuntu (an African philosophy emphasizing community and relational identity), Motherism which centers motherhood, nurturing roles and love over hate propounded by Catherine Acholonu, Nego-Feminism which suggests negotiation and compromise feminism instead of confrontation propounded by Obioma Nnaemeka and Snail-Sense Feminism which is an approach advocating for slow, context-sensitive progress. These theories collectively offer tools for interrogating the unique struggles faced by married women in Africa, while also critiquing the complicity of cultural and religious ideologies in sustaining gendered oppression (Mikell, 1997; Arndt, 2002).

The death of Nigerian gospel singer Osinachi Nwachukwu in 2022 brought global attention to the silent suffering endured by many women within marriage. Reports suggested she had suffered sustained domestic abuse, yet remained silent, presumably due to religious commitment, societal expectations, and fear of stigma (BBC News, 2022). Her case becomes a lens through which to explore the contradictions, possibilities, and limitations inherent in African feminist approaches to marriage.

This paper therefore investigates the implications of African feminist ideologies on the real-life experiences of Nigerian married women. Specifically, it interrogates how African feminism can address the enduring issues of violence, silence, emotional labour, and gendered sacrifice within marital relationships. Through a focused theoretical and case-based analysis, this study aims to expose the tensions between feminist theory and lived realities, ultimately advocating for a more actionable, justice-oriented application of African feminism.

II. Theoretical Frameworks

This study is grounded in five major African feminist theories: STIWANISM, Ubuntu, Motherism, Nego-Feminism, and Snail-Sense Feminism. These frameworks have emerged in response to the inadequacy of Western feminist models in capturing the unique socio-cultural and political realities of African women. Each theory contributes distinct insights into how married Nigerian women navigate marriage, power, and gender roles within a patriarchal context.

STIWANISM (Social Transformation Including Women in Africa)

Coined by Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie (1994), STIWANISM rejects the term "feminism" as imported and alienating to African contexts, advocating instead for social transformation that includes women in culturally grounded and politically relevant ways. STIWANISM promotes equity without the antagonism often associated with radical Western feminism. It calls for inclusive development that acknowledges the contributions and rights of African women in both public and private spheres. In the Nigerian marital context, STIWANISM challenges the traditional subordination of women, particularly the ideology that women must endure all forms of hardship; including violence, for the sake of family preservation. The society does not care about the toll this violence may be taking on the woman. What is important to 'them' is the fact that she endures because it is her 'duty' to endure and make her marriage work. As Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) emphasizes, the transformation of African societies must include a re-evaluation of gendered roles in the domestic sphere. STIWANISM demands a cultural shift that allows women not only to speak out but to act decisively without fear of ostracism.

Ubuntu Feminism

Ubuntu, derived from the Nguni Bantu phrase *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* which means a person is a person through other people, emphasizes interaction, empathy, and communal identity. Ubuntu feminism applies this ethic to gender relations, advocating harmony, respect, and mutual responsibility between men and women (Mkhize, 2008). It does not advocate for individualistic liberation but instead encourages collective liberation; redefining gendered roles through compassion, mutual care, and communal values. In theory, such an approach offers a humane and culturally respectful model for addressing gender inequality within marriage. However, Ubuntu's emphasis on collective identity can also become a double-edged sword. In practice, it has sometimes been used to justify the silencing of women to maintain family unity. Ubuntu feminism would critique the misuse of communal values to silence victims and would advocate for a redefinition of harmony that includes women's dignity and bodily autonomy.

Motherism

Motherism, as developed by Catherine Acholonu (1995), places the African woman at the center of cultural and moral regeneration. It celebrates motherhood, nurturing, and love even when hated. Rather than antagonizing men, Motherism promotes complementarity between genders and emphasizes the woman's role as a life-giver, peace-builder, home maker and lover. While Motherism valorizes nurturing and family, its practical implications for Nigerian married women are ambivalent. On one hand, it reinforces the value of women within family systems; on the other, it can legitimize women's self-sacrifice and submission in the name of motherhood. In patriarchal societies like Nigeria, it can inadvertently encourage women to remain in abusive marriages "for the sake of the children" or "to preserve the home." It appears the 'mother' attached to this theory is doing more harm than good. No wonder Okafor (2021) writes

The limitation of this theory is mainly its support for women to stay in relationships irrespective of the fact that their lives may be in danger. Since it preaches love over hate, women who find themselves in toxic marriage or relationships help the men ruin their lives because they believe that if they show love to them, they would eventually change. In most cases, this is not the case as these men exploit these women's soft hearts and oppress them the more. Sometimes these women lose their lives in the process and the few ones who survive the ordeal, may end up building eternal hatred for men which may make them hate relationships and marriage. This means that while majority of women conquer the oppression by men, some women do not. Whatever, the implication, motherism preaches love regardless.

As has been established earlier, Motherism puts women in positions that make them believe they are the problem. It makes them feel they owe the society and their children the obligation to put the burden on the home on them. It creates the mentality of 'it is your job' to do this or that for the family to be at peace while forgetting that it takes two to tango. This is the very reason that keeps women silent in abusive marriages. Throwing more light on this, Okafor (2022) writes;

Nkwenye a bu ihe na-eme na otutu umu nwaanyi anaghi achọ enyemaka mgbe a na-emekpa ha ahụ n'ezinaulo ha di iche iche, n'ihu na ha na-ahuta ya na o bu oru ha izu nwa ha n'onodu obula. Ha kwenyekwara na ha zuchaa nwa ha ahụ, ha erie uru ya n'odinihu mana mgbe ufodu, umu nwaanyi anaghi anọ ndu eri uru ahuhu ha tara n'izu nwa ha... O bu n'ihu ngwa oru modarizim nke bu, ihunanya, oru, nnagide na ezimekorita di n'etiti na ha umu ha mere na ha ga-anọ n'ezinaulo a na-emekpa ha ahụ zuwa umu ha.

(This belief is the reason most women do not like help when they are being oppressed in their different homes, because they see it as their jobs to raise their child in all circumstances. They believe that after raising that their child, they enjoy the benefits in future but most times, women do not stay alive to enjoy the benefits of the pain they encountered while raising their child...they raise their children in homes where they are maltreated because

of the features of Motherism which are love, service, perseverance and good relationship that exist between them and their children-Translation is all mine)

Nego-Feminism

Nego-feminism, developed by Obioma Nnaemeka (2004), is the feminism of negotiation, give and take, and compromise. It recognizes that African women often operate within communal and patriarchal structures, and as such, must strategize rather than confront directly. Nego-feminism focuses on achieving goals through dialogue and subtle resistance rather than pure rebellion. This theory is deeply relevant to Nigerian married women who often deploy indirect strategies to assert autonomy. These include controlling household finances discreetly, influencing decisions behind the scenes, or using religious influence strategically. However, Nego-feminism also faces limits. Nego-feminism has to advocate not only for negotiation but for protective exit strategies that prioritize women's safety, well-being and freedom. Freedom here, may not necessarily be to leave their marriages but freedom to express themselves as freely as they would want to. This is because as Okafor (2025) puts it, 'In such narratives, women do not necessarily seek power for its own sake; instead, they leverage cultural expectations, familial roles, and relational dynamics to secure economic freedom'. This is assuming they also want to venture into business.

Snail-Sense Feminism

Snail-Sense Feminism, a term introduced by Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo (2012), is inspired by the behavior of snails—slow, careful, strategic, and always aware of their environment. This approach suggests that African women must adapt to and manoeuvre within oppressive systems, progressing cautiously but persistently. Snail-Sense advocates for change that is necessary and culturally embedded. For married Nigerian women, this often translates to subtle resistance and gradual empowerment over time. It avoids direct confrontation, instead favouring long-term strategies for liberation. However, the slow pace and avoidance of confrontation can be dangerous when immediate action is required. Snail-Sense must be adapted to include moments when swift, assertive action is necessary for survival.

III. Discussions

Societal Expectations of Marriage in Nigeria

Marriage in Nigeria is not merely a private union between two individuals rather it is a socio-cultural institution embedded with expectations from extended families, religious bodies, and broader society. Within this institution, women are often perceived as the moral anchors of the home, tasked with ensuring harmony, obedience, and sacrifice (Amadiume, 1987). The woman's identity, particularly in Igbo, is frequently judged based on her marital status, fertility, and ability to endure challenges. This expectation has profound implications. For instance, a woman who leaves a marriage, even due to violence of any form, faces intense stigma. She may be labelled a failure, a bad mother, or even cursed. These social consequences explain why many Nigerian women, like Osinachi Nwachukwu the renowned gospel singer who dies due to domestic violence from her husband, choose silence over resistance. Religious institutions reinforce these ideas by interpreting scriptures to encourage submission and suffering, especially among Christian women (Okome, 2003). Feminist frameworks like STIWANISM and Nego-Feminism critique this paradigm by demanding a transformation of these socio-religious norms. They propose a reconfiguration of marriage as a partnership based on dignity and mutual respect, not hierarchy and sacrifice.

Gender Roles and Power Dynamics in Nigerian Marriages

Patriarchal structures in Nigeria privilege male authority within the family. Men are typically viewed as heads of households, decision-makers, and financial providers, while women are expected to serve, obey, and support their husbands (Izugbara & Ezech, 2010). These roles are not merely cultural but are enshrined in legal codes and religious doctrines. For instance, Section 55 of the Northern Nigerian Penal Code (prior to reform) permitted husbands to "correct" their wives physically, provided it did not amount to grievous harm (HRW, 2010). Even in contemporary contexts, this power imbalance manifests as economic dependency, sexual coercion, and emotional manipulation. Many women are denied access to family resources or pressured into silence through threats of divorce, societal shame, or spiritual punishment. Many women have been told by their husband's countless times to 'leave the house' over minor family issue as a way to threaten and coerce her to be silent and accept whatever pain is dished out to her. This imbalance limits women's autonomy and can escalate into systemic abuse, as seen in Osinachi's case. Ubuntu feminism and Motherism, though advocating relational balance and nurturance, may inadvertently reinforce these roles if not applied critically. For Ubuntu to serve women, it must redefine community not as uniform submission but as collective accountability. Motherism must evolve from self-sacrifice to self-empowerment, focusing on women's well-being as the core foundation to family stability. It must also be able to give women the choice to choose whether to continue loving even in the midst of hate or just to leave. African feminism must be able to give women the choice to life, sanity and

freedom. Freedom to choose when to love and when not to. Freedom to just be humans first without having to consult anyone. According to Okafor (2020) who feels that freedom is the ability to decide what to do with one's life without restrictions. It may be a career, a particular life pursuit, whatever it is, there should not be any form of holding back. Until African feminism gives women this type of freedom, it should be restructured.

The Culture of Silence and Endurance

One of the most devastating features of patriarchal marriage is the normalization of women's silence. Married women are trained from childhood to "endure" and "persevere," even in the face of emotional trauma or physical abuse. Elders, religious leaders, and even fellow women often encourage silence under the guise of wisdom or spiritual strength (Makama, 2013). This silence is not passive rather it is culturally curated. Songs, proverbs, religious texts, and initiation rites all emphasize endurance as virtue. Even popular media glorifies the archetype of the long-suffering wife who wins back her husband's love through submission. In Osinachi Nwachukwu's story, these cultural expectations are tragically evident. Despite being a successful gospel singer with the financial means to leave, she reportedly remained in her abusive marriage for years, influenced by religious teachings and societal fear of shame (BBC, 2022). Her family, church, and fans praised her "meekness" and spiritual dedication, not knowing it masked her pain which she poured in her craft as a singer. Here, Snail-Sense and Nego-Feminism are double-edged. While they provide strategies for navigating oppressive systems, they may also discourage urgency. In cases like Osinachi's, silence is fatal. A re-theorization is needed, one that dignifies and permits women to choose exit, not just endurance.

Literary Portrayal of African Feminism and Real Life Experiences

In literature, especially Igbo Literature, writers, male and female, have constantly portrayed women as people who endure abusive marriages. Their portrayal always shows the man as the one who begins to get selfish or stingy thereby throwing the woman into a state of choosing to save her marriage and leaving to maintain her sanity and stay alive. Often times, the literature always ends with the man reaping the bad fruits of his wickedness or not. For example, in *Nwata Rie Awọ* by Nwadike, the writer writes that the celebrity Wrestler in the play, Awọrọ, suddenly realises that he did not have a male child and then began to scheme ways of sending his wife Obioma out of the house even while she was nursing their daughter. He went as far as heaping allegations on her; alleging that she wanted to poison him and this led to him, eventually sending her sending/selling her off, with her their child. Years later, when he got himself a second wife and after years of living with no child, he set out to find the solution to their barrenness. At his consultation, he was told to find the woman he sold years ago who would later find her child. In the end, it turned out that his second wife was actually his child that left with his first wife. Knowing he has committed an abomination, he quickly killed himself. In *A karusja Ngene* by Ifeka (2011), she tells a story of Ucheoyibo, who has two children, Azubike and Ngozi with his wife Nwaife yet he felt he did not have enough children like he wished to. He then goes on to take a second wife, whom he believed would give him enough sons and daughters. The author writes:

Ucheoyibo: Mechie onu gi! N'otu mkpuru akwu nwaa anwa fuo n'oku, onye nwe ya agbara aka. Ngozi bu nwaanyi, o ga-ebichi obi? E nwere m ego nke ukwu, enwere m ala, nwekwaa otutu ulo ahia, anyi mutara naani otu nwa nwoke. M ga-akporo onye ozo aku? Biko nke taa nke echi leba anya onye ozo ga-abata mutopu umu ndi I mutaghi ka obi m buru ka obi ogaranya.

(Shut up! Because if one palm nut gets lost in the fire, the owner has nothing. Ngozi is a girl, will she live here forever? I have money, I also have many shops, we have only one son. Am I acquiring wealth for another person? Please quickly find another person that will come in and finish giving birth to the children you did not give birth to so that my home will be like that of a rich man- translation is mine).

Ucheoyibo obviously speaks as if he has children strapped somewhere waiting for the woman he will bring in to birth and of course this is the mind set of many African men, especially Nigerians. Once there is an issue with fertility, the woman is the first suspect then comes the pressure on the man to send the 'man' he is living with away and marry a new woman who will give him sons and daughters. According to Nsolibe and Okafor (2021); One of the realities of man's situation in African (Igbo) culture that brings out the best or worst character in a man ... is the issue of procreation. In a family where there is no child, there is in most cases no joy and there are problems. An African (Igbo) man will go to any length to have a child particularly male child. This may lead him to marrying a new wife if the existing wife cannot give him a male child or any child at all. This kind of situation puts a man in serious predicament. When the marriage is young, for instance, within one or two years old, the man's family will start disturbing him to get a new wife...

It is almost impossible to see an Igbo man who stays calm when there is no child running around in his home. There will always be pressure from all angle on the man and his wife. In the text under review, Ucheoyibo has two children by his wife yet he is not satisfied. His wife also tried to discourage him from taking another wife but he already made up his wife. He eventually took a second wife and got more children. However, instead of having the peace he wanted, he threw his home into chaos. He also stopped taking care of his two children by

his first wife which automatically made Nwaife, his first wife, the sole carer of their two children. In the end, the children by the second wife all turned out bad while their two children by the first wife turned out very successful. When Ucheoyibo died, it was Azubike and Ngozi who took care of his burial while their step brothers and sisters declared they had nothing to contribute.

In *Onye Kpaa Nku Ahuhu*, by Nwadike (1989), the author writes about two young undergraduates, Ikechukwu and Amaka. Ikechukwu got Amaka pregnant and denied responsibility immediately. She bluntly told Amaka that he would not trade his academics for any pregnancy therefore; Amaka should do whatever she pleases with the pregnancy. Amaka bearing the pain of rejection and dejection and knowing the task ahead heaped curses on Ikechukwu. Her mother took her in, supported her and she eventually had her child. After many years, Ikechukwu got married and never had a child. A prophet would later tell him that a woman from his past had cursed him and until he finds the woman and apologise, he would never have a child. He eventually found Amaka and apologised.

In *Adaeze* by Nwadike, the author writes about Uchechukwu and his wife Uzumma. Uchechukwu was a civil servant who worked for and with white men. He earned a decent living but refused to provide for his family rather he spent his earnings on other women.. He never brought in money for food neither did he sponsor any of his children's education. His behaviour left the huge burden of family responsibilities on his wife Uzumma. She immediately became father and mother to her three children; feeding, clothing, education sponsorship, all on her shoulder. According to Okafor and Nwokoye (2022);

Ọtụtụ ụmụ nwoke nwere ụdị echiche a. Ha na-ahụta ịzụ nwa nwaanyị n'ụlọ akwụkwọ dị ka mmefu ego ebe ọtụtụ n'ime ha bodoro aka n'ihe ndị mmadụ kọrọ maka ụmụ nwaanyị... Uchechukwu so na ndị nwere ụdị echiche a tinyere na ọ chọghị iweputa ego, wee jụ na ụmụ ya agaghị eje akwụkwọ ...

(Most men have this mentality. They see training a girl child through school as waste of money while some of them think like that based on the stories people told about women...Uchechukwu is among people with this mind set coupled with the fact that he does not want to bring out money, so he refuse to take his children to school).

Still analysing the huge burden on Uzumma's shoulders, Nwoye, Okafor and Akpamgbo (2021) added that Uzumma at this point, knew it was time to act fast. She knew her daughter's education was important and that it required huge resources yet she was willing to give it a trial (p. 127). At this point it is safe to say that the society placed a huge burden on women especially as it concerns childrearing even after bearing the child. There is a popular saying in Igbo language that translates to 'when a child turns out good, he becomes his father's child but when he turns out bad, he becomes his mother's child'. Okafor (2022) while analysing the impact of women on child rearing using 'Enyi', the chief character in the text, *Mmiri Oku e ji egbu Mbe* goes further to add; ...the society failed in its duties to provide for the child. The extended family also failed to care for him. One significant thing in the text was the fact the Enyi's uncle was not mentioned again throughout the text. Raising his four daughters and Enyi was entirely left for his wife, Nneka, to do. This gives weight to the discussions earlier that women play more role in childrearing... if his uncle had taken part in the affairs of the children, it would have yielded a better result.

Parenting is no doubt a huge responsibility, even more so when it's left for one person. Women who find themselves in this type of situation often choose to die while trying than not trying at all.

African Feminism in Real Life Experiences

Literary writers do not just write for the sake of writing. It stems from their passion to teach, etertai and inspire. Igbo literary writers for instance, portrays their lives ad that of their people through their literature. This is why Okafor (2020) writes that ... Igbo literary writers make use of the values which the Igbo people are known for, in fact it is important that any Igbo literary work portrays one or two Igbo values and promotes the Igbo world view. Values and beliefs like respect for elders, folktale, traditions of the Igbo people, apprenticeship system and others (p.3). Moving further, Okafor (2024) adds that Literature is wholly a creative enterprise. A process that takes one beyond subconsciousness, both writers and readers. At the end, the reader ends up seeing the world through the eyes of the writer (p. 6215). This shows that literature is an art that represents reality therefore can be used to mirror reality. This paper shall then refer to the sudden death of Osiachi Nwachukwu, a well known Nigerian gospel singer due to domestic violence. Her death of is not an isolated event; it is a feminist crisis. Her case illuminates how deeply religious, cultural, and legal systems converge to sustain the oppression of married women in Nigeria. Reports after her death confirmed long-term physical and psychological abuse by her husband, which was known but unaddressed by those around her (Punch, 2022). The tragic death of Osiachi Nwachukwu reveals a disconnection between STIWANISM's ideals and practice. Despite being a prominent voice in gospel music and financially independent, Osiachi remained bound to a violent marriage. STIWANISM would critique the social structures—such as religious doctrines and patriarchal kinship systems—that silenced her and prevented her from escaping her abuser. Osiachi Nwachukwu's endurance could be interpreted as her internalizing Ubuntu values—to keep the family intact, avoid shame, and preserve

social harmony—even at the cost of her life. Reports suggested that her children were one of the reasons she remained silent (Punch, 2022). The ideal of the self-sacrificing mother, central to Motherism, may have shaped her decision to endure abuse. This raises critical questions about whether Motherism, while culturally affirming, sufficiently protects women from domestic violence and emotional exploitation. In cases of extreme violence, such as this, negotiation is insufficient. The structures of control; legal, spiritual, and social, are too rigid, and the costs of negotiation become fatal. Furthermore, a snail-sense approach may have delayed crucial intervention. Her situation reveals the limits of patience and strategy in the face of life-threatening violence.

IV. Summary

These African feminist theories which are very rich in cultural relevance, offer powerful frameworks for understanding the lives of Nigerian married women. However, when applied to extreme cases such as Osinachi's, they reveal significant gaps between theoretical ideals and real-life practice. The next section will engage these insights in dialogue with the broader social context of Nigerian marriage, exploring how these theories both illuminate and fall short in addressing the systemic challenges married women face. Each African feminist theory offers insight into Osinachi's Tragedy. STIWANISM would demand structural change: those churches, families, and the law protects women's rights as human rights, not subordinate them to patriarchal institutions. Ubuntu Feminism would reframe community not as oppressive conformity but as a support system that intervenes when its members are in pain. Motherism, if expanded, would challenge the notion that maternal sacrifice is noble when it leads to death. It would argue that the mother's life is essential to the children's well-being. Nego-Feminism recognizes Osinachi's likely internal negotiations, which is balancing faith, motherhood, career, and survival, but acknowledges that negotiation has its limits. Snail-Sense Feminism urges us to proceed with caution and cultural sensitivity, yet Osinachi's case warns that there are moments when slow movement becomes complicity. Her story is not only one of individual tragedy but systemic failure. It exposes the urgent need to reassess how African feminist frameworks are implemented—not just in academic discourse but in religious sermons, marriage counselling, law reform, and community education.

V. Conclusion

This paper has explored the implications of African feminism for the lived experiences of Nigerian married women, using the tragic case of Osinachi Nwachukwu as a critical lens. Drawing on five African feminist frameworks; STIWANISM, Ubuntu, Motherism, Nego-Feminism, and Snail-Sense Feminism, it has examined how these theories illuminate, and at times fall short of addressing, the systemic challenges that confront women within the institution of marriage in Nigeria. The analysis revealed that while African feminist theories offer culturally grounded alternatives to Western feminism, they are not immune to the structural and ideological traps of patriarchy. Societal expectations of endurance, religious glorification of submission, and communal silence around abuse continue to undermine women's autonomy, safety, and dignity. The slow-paced, negotiation-based, or nurturing-centric approaches advocated by these theories may be effective in non-violent circumstances but are insufficient when women face life-threatening domestic abuse. Osinachi Nwachukwu's story is a painful reminder that feminist theories must translate into praxis. Her silence, shaped by religious, cultural, and social conditioning, ultimately cost her life. If African feminism is to fulfil its transformative promise, it must not only critique patriarchal systems but also develop tools and interventions that center women's agency, protection, and justice in the most urgent and practical ways. The intersection of African feminist thoughts and the lived realities of married Nigerian women reveals both promise and peril. Feminism rooted in cultural values must also be courageous enough to disrupt those same values when they become instruments of harm. The goal of African feminism must be to preserve not just cultural identity, but human dignity, justice, and life itself. Osinachi's voice, silenced in life, now echoes as a call to action; a demand that African feminism speaks, acts, and intervenes with urgency.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the insights drawn from the theoretical framework and real-life analysis, the following recommendations are offered to scholars, religious leaders, policymakers, and communities:

Expand and Re-theorize African Feminisms

There is a need to further develop African feminist frameworks to explicitly include responses to gender-based violence. STIWANISM and Ubuntu must move from abstract ideals to embodied practices that center women's rights to life, safety, and choice. Motherism should be reframed to celebrate self-preserving motherhood rather than self-sacrificing motherhood.

Feminist Religious Reforms

Given the influence of religious institutions on marriage norms, faith-based leaders and theologians must engage with feminist theology. Sermons and marital counselling should be restructured to affirm women's right to safety and to denounce violence, not normalize it through misinterpretations of submission (Oduyoye, 1995). Churches must create safe, confidential reporting and support systems for abused members.

Legal and Policy Interventions

The Nigerian legal system must be more responsive to domestic violence. Laws protecting women should be harmonized across states and enforced uniformly. Protective shelters, legal aid, and fast-track family courts should be funded and expanded. Feminist NGOs and government agencies should collaborate to educate women about their legal rights.

Cultural Education and Community Sensitization

Programs aimed at transforming cultural attitudes around marriage, silence, and endurance should be implemented at grassroots levels. This includes re-educating community leaders, elders, and women's groups on the dangers of silence and glorified endurance. Ubuntu and Nego-Feminism can be leveraged to frame this re-education as a collective healing and transformation project.

Feminist Media and Arts Activism

Literature, film, gospel music, and social media must be used as tools for feminist awareness. Osinachi's death should not only evoke mourning but mobilize feminist storytelling and advocacy that reach both elite and rural audiences. African feminism must be made accessible and relatable across class, language, and educational boundaries.

Empowerment of Married Women

Programs that support the financial, emotional, and psychological independence of married women should be scaled up. This includes vocational training, access to property rights, health care, mental health support, and networks for solidarity. Snail-Sense Feminism's emphasis on strategic, steady progress can guide long-term empowerment efforts.

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