

An Examination of the Syndrome of Corruption in the Nigeria Police: Prospects

Adedeji Akeem.Z.Okemuyiwa Ph.D,*Ibrahim Ohinoyi Akeem,**& Tijani Onimisi Akeem***

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ABSTRACT: One recurring negative stereotype by which the Nigeria Police is labeled is that the institution represents “corruption” in its entire ramification. Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force has been defined to mean a type of prescribed behavior in which the officer becomes involved in an operation in return for some actual or potentially unauthorized material gain as a recompense for misusing his official status¹. The

Nigeria Police by virtue of its constitutional and statutory powers and functions, unlike other law enforcement agencies, is closer to the populace; as such any deficiencies, inadequate or unethical practices of the organisation are easily exposed. This study attempts to evaluate the unatated claim that the Nigeria Police Force is infested with corruption. It discusses the factors that reinforce this claim. This study is premised on the argument that the larger Nigerian society and therefore stands to reflect the values cherished by the society, as a whole besides, other institutional factors and shortcomings account for the problem of corruption in the Nigeria Police. This research is founded on primary and un-biased outlook. Consequently, it discovers that much of the causes of corruption in the police i.e. outside the police. The study advocates measure to tackle the problem.

Keywords: The Nigeria Police, Corruption, Corrupt practices, Syndrome of corruption.

*** ACII, ACIB, Ph.D (Law), LLM (International Law), and a Nigerian Police Officer, Chief Superintendent of Police (‘CSP’), Senior Staff Officer, Nigeria Police Force, ‘A’ Department, Force Headquarters, F.C.T Abuja. G.S.M NO-- +234-80-3454-1744, E-mail addresses – (I) dejitwo2004@yahoo.com (II) dejitwo2010@gmail.com.**

**** Bola Ajibola College of Law, Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun- State, Nigeria, 1998@gmail.com E-mail addresses addresses – (I) ibrolekan685@gmail.com (II) ibrolekan, G.S.M NO-- +234-80—5878-144 .**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Concept of Corruption:

Corruption is without any doubt, one of the most harmful social diseases in contemporary

***** Faculty of Engineering, Lead City University, Ibadan Oyo State, E-mail address-----**

Akeemtijani990@gmail.com.

G.S.M NO--+234-81—0053-1341.

¹ Onwueme, S. (1982) “Corruption in the Nigerian Police” being the paper presented during the proceedings of the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Association held in Zaria, 2002.

times². In Nigeria, corruption is a notorious phenomenon. It is endemic, prevalent and pervasive in all strata of the Nigeria polity³. According to a commentator, "Nigeria continues to astound the world by its amazing waste of opportunities, the barefaced graft of its leaders and the low-grade output of its policy decisions"⁴. Accordingly, the effects of corruption on the country's image are disturbing, quite enormous, and also embarrassing. It is potentially a great disincentive to the nation's economic, social and political developments⁵.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

To attempt a universally acceptable definition of the word "corruption" is a difficult task. This is because varying circumstances of an environment may result into determining whether a particular act was done with a corrupt intentor not⁶ :

The World Bank and Transparency International⁷ have defined corruption as the abuse of public office for private gains. This happens when a public official accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe.

It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for-competitive advantage and profit. Corruption has equally been said to imply undue advantage, abuse of office, undeserved favour obtained through manipulation of rules or status, or any untoward conduct occasioned by graft or promise of same⁸.

Corruption has also been defined as "efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means, private gain at public expense or a misuse of public power for private benefit"⁹. Furthermore, corruption has been defined as "a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role, because of private (gains) regarding (personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary or status gains. It is a behavior which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of (duties) for private (gains) regarding influence"¹⁰.

Corruption has traditionally been considered a problem involving public officials and the private interests they serve, be it their own interests or those of others. More recently, it has been increasingly considered a problem that undermines the rule of law, democratic governance and sustainable development¹¹. Widespread corruption also leads to systemic human rights violations, and for a society to exist under the rule of law, uphold democratic institutions and promote development, human rights must be protected. The current framework available in this country on the issue of corruption does not fully encompass the magnitude of the problem. The legal framework is too narrow in its focus on the criminalization of corrupt acts and lacks any consideration for third parties whose rights are violated by acts of corruption; particularly by those officials in authority having the apparatuses of the state under their control¹². The legal framework should address the reality that individuals who have no part in corrupt deals are nonetheless directly affected. Furthermore, the legal framework should provide for effective remedy to those whose human rights have been violated.¹³ Corruption both results from

² Adeleke, F.A.R and Olayanju, O.F. (2014) "The Role of the Judiciary in combating Corruption: Aiding and Inhibiting Factors in Nigeria: Commonwealth Law Bulletin, p1

³ Osipitan and Oyewo, O. (1999) 'Legal and Institutional Framework for combating Corruption in Nigeria" E.O Akanki (ed) Unilag Readings in Law, Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, Akoka, pp. 250

⁴ Olukestun, A (2013) "Frozen in mediocrity: A Nation's Dithering Work Habits" The Punch, Friday April 5, p.60

⁵ Agbaje, O (2012) "The Devastating Effects of Corruption in Nigeria" Business Day, Friday March 29th p7

⁶ Osipitan, T and Oyewo, O. op cit at p.252

⁷ Ribadu, N (2007) "Corruption and the Survival of the Nigerian Nation" Being the paper presented at the 2007 3rd Chief Gani Fawehinmi Annual Lecture organized by NBA, Ikeja, Branch

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Lipset, S.M. and Lenz, G.S. (200) "Corruption, Culture and Markets, Harrison and Huntington (eds) culture matters: how values shapes Human Progress (Basic Books, New York) p112

¹⁰ Nye, J.S. (1967) 'Corruption and Political Development: A case Benefit Analysis" The America Political Science Review, pp417-41

¹¹ Kumar, H.O, (2003) 'Corruption, Human Rights and Development: Sovereignty and State Capacity to Promote Good Governance" in American Society of International Law Proceedings, Vol 99, pp. 416-419

¹² Kauffmann, D (2006), "Human Rights, Governance and Development: An Empirical Perspective" Port Moresby Publisher, Durban, pp 43-54

¹³ Ibid at p55

a failure of governance and is a cause of its continued failure. A system of good governance is one that encompasses transparency and accountability. Where these characteristics are present, decision making by the state will take into consideration the views of the most vulnerable minorities in the society¹⁴. The state will act in the interest of protecting its citizenry rather than in the interest of an elite few. Where there is a failure of governance, the state does not provide its people with the tools that are necessary to empower themselves against an abusive state, such as allowing them to exercise their freedom of expression, freedom to information and other civil liberties. These rights provide a society with the necessary checks and balances to influence or change government policy, and of course check the growth and pervasiveness of corruption. Without this power in the hands of the people, a state can act without being called to account, including for the benefit of corporate interests at the expense of the general public. An absence of accountability and transparency allows corruption to flourish and the result is further impoverishment of the people¹⁵.

Experts have contended that there is a strong link between the existence of corruption and slow development, stagnated economic growth and lack of civil and political rights in a society¹⁶. This is because the successful implementation of socio-economic development policies relies on civil and political rights; corruption is therefore also an obstacle to the fulfillment of social and economic rights which is manifested in various forms of social ills; one of which is disturbing prevalent trend of bribery and corruption in the Nigeria Police Force.

GENERAL AND CONVENTIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS IN NIGERIA

The endemic scourge of corruption has not, at anytime escaped the attention of the successive administrations in Nigeria. Corruption has been a recurring issue in the social, political and economic history of Nigeria. Some have even argued that the problem of corruption in Nigeria pre-dated the Independence of the country on 1st October, 1960; but these claims are not a verifiable fact. What is certain however is that Corruption

assumed a national culture in Nigeria with the advent of Independence; with the departure of the colonialist British upon the nation's independence, politicians who took over the leadership of the country exhibited a rapacious proclivity for corruption; and this has not only escalated in its proportions over the years, but it has become a way of life. Little wonder why the Nigeria Police has become the notorious poster boy for official corruption in Nigeria.

Accordingly, laws have been enacted and institutions have been established to tackle the menace of corruption. Although, the scope of this paper is necessary restricted to corruption as it affects the Nigeria Police, it is apposite to examine, at this point, the laws and institutions already positioned to curb the menace of corruption in Nigeria. This approach is necessary, since the paper is considering the problem of corruption in the Nigeria Police from a legal perspective.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Successive administration in Nigeria have enacted laws and established institution with the view to combating corruption. Attempt will be made hereunder to examine the laws and institutions that have been put in place to curb the menace of corruption in Nigeria. Chukkol¹⁷ broadly classified the anti-corruption laws into two viz;

- i. General and Conventional Anti-corruption Laws and
- ii. Specific and Contemporary Anti- corruption Laws.

General and Conventional Anti-Corruption Laws, these include Criminal Code Act,¹⁸ applicable to the states in Southern part of Nigeria and the Penal Code Law applicable to the states in Northern part of Nigeria¹⁹.

The Criminal Code(CC) Act

The Criminal Code (CC) Act²⁰ has made provisions to deal with corruption and abuse of

¹⁴Kauffmann, D op.cit at p88

¹⁵Hussman, K(2007) "Anti-Corruption Policy Making in Practice: Lessons for Developing Countries" Anti-Corruption Resource Centre Report, pp 11-12

¹⁶ibid

¹⁷ Chukkol, K.S., "Enforcement Institutions Power Procedure and Penalties under the various Anti-corruption laws in Nigeria; in Ladan, M.T., (ed) Law, Human Rights and the Administration of Justice in Nigeria A.B.U Press, Zaria, Nigeria, (2001), p.329

¹⁸ Cap p3 LFN 2004

¹⁹ Note that some state particularly in the north have Sharia Penal Codes, See for example, Shaira Penal and Criminal Procedure Laws of Kaduna State 2002.

²⁰ Cap C38 LFN 2004

office mainly under sections 98, 99 and 104 which provide for the offences of official corruption, extortion by public officers and abuse of office respectively. Nevertheless, the court encounters difficulties in making convictions under the Criminal Code Act and even where a conviction is made, they are usually quashed on appeal.

These may not be unconnected with the problems of the wordings of some provisions of the Code, the inexperience of the police prosecutors, difficulty in defining correctly the duty to be performed by the official under the enactment of the Code and the judicial interpretation of the Codes among others. For example, in *Biobaku v. Police*²¹ where the accused a booking clerk at the railway terminus from which a bus was to take railway passengers a further distance, was paid a shilling (to which he was not entitled) by a passenger to assist him get a place on the bus. He was convicted under section 98(1) of the Criminal Code. In quashing the conviction on appeal, the appellate court held that the word "corruption" does not simply mean "improperly". That more is required than that²².

The Penal Code Law

The Penal Code Law²³ also make provisions dealing with corrupt practices. The offences under the Penal Code (PC) are provided under sections 115-133 of the Code. These cover offences by or relating to public servants, which include public servants taking gratification in respect of official act;²⁴ taking gratification in order to influence public servant;²⁵ abetment by public servant of offence mentioned in section 116;²⁶ offering or giving gratification to public servant;²⁷ public servant obtaining valuable thing without consideration from person concerned in proceeding or business transacted by such public servant²⁸ third

person profiting by gratification;²⁹ public servant dishonestly, receiving money or property not due;³⁰ public servant framing incorrect document with intent to cause injury³¹ public servant in judicial proceedings acting contrary to law;³² abandonment of duty by public servant;³³ unlawfully purchasing property³⁴.

As regards the penalties, the Penal Code provides punishment such as imprisonment for terms which ranges from one to fourteen years or with fine or with both. In *Sanni and Sanni v. the State*³⁵ the accused persons were convicted in the High Court of Kano State on charges of conspiracy and offering of gratification to a public servant contrary to sections 97 (.1) and 118 PC. The Federal Court of Appeal held that in order to convict the appellants of the offence of offering gratification under section 118, it had to be shown that they "had offered money to the auditor either to get him to do" or forbear from doing an official act.

The trial court was wrong to reject a report regarding the non-existence of fraud as what was in issue was the existence of one of the motives necessary for a conviction under section 118 PC. The conviction for conspiracy under section 97 (1) PC was also set aside as the failure to prove that the appellants had acted illegally meant that it could also not be shown that any agreement between them was for an illegal purpose. See also *Odiai v. Commissioner of Police*³⁶.

The Criminal and Penal Codes were enacted with the principal purpose of regulating conventional crime. The provisions of the Criminal and Penal Codes did not envisage circumstances where these offences could assume or attain sophistication which they presently are. Today, the offence of corruption involves large scale fraud in public and private institutions. Thus, the defects in the law have created adverse effects on the procedure and enforcement machinery of the state.

The punishment of imprisonment for terms of one to fourteen years with fine or with both as provided in the codes are in the opinion of this writer inadequate to curb the menace of corruption in Nigeria. This is because the

²¹ (1951) 20 NLR 30

²² See also *Peter Ajaegbu v. Inspector General of Police* (1956) WRNLR 104 R v. *Eka* (1945) 11 WACA 39 R v. *Minimah*, (1960) 6 WACA 192 *Ameh v. Inspector General of Police* (1957) N.R.L.R. 28 and *Queen v. Thomas Ijoa* (1960) WRNLR 130

²³ Cap. 89 Laws of Northern Nigeria, 1963 (now Cap. P3 LFN 2004)

²⁴ *Ibid*, S. 115

²⁵ *Ibid*, S. 116

²⁶ *Ibid* S. 117

²⁷ *Ibid* S. 118

²⁸ *Ibid* S. 119

²⁹ *Ibid* S. 121

³⁰ *Ibid* S. 122

³¹ *Ibid* S. 124

³² *Ibid* S. 125

³³ *Ibid* S. 130

³⁴ *Ibid* S. 131

³⁵ (1981) N.C.R. 91

³⁶ (1962) N.R.N.L.R. 9

punishments do not seem to deter people from committing the offence of graft in Nigeria. The law on corrupt practices and abuse of office as contained in the Criminal and Penal Codes has become incapable of keeping pace with the growing rate or the manifestation of the crimes in Nigeria.

Public officer is ordered by the Code of Conduct Tribunal, to vacate his office for corruption, he can also be sent to jail because corruption is a criminal offence.... The Tribunal is not a civil court nor is it a criminal court it is a special Tribunal established to enforce the Code of Conduct for public officers and no public officer enjoys any immunity from such process irrespective of how the processes are titled³⁷.

The Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences (ICPC) Act 2000

The Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act contains penal provisions prohibiting graft and related offences. It also establishes the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission which duty is dedicated to combating grafts³⁸. It is however pertinent to note from the onset that since the passage of ICPC Act and the establishment of the Commission, the Commission is yet to make any meaningful headway respecting the prosecution of accused persons under the Act.

Apart from the cases decided by the Superior Courts on the constitutionality and/or jurisdiction of the courts to try offences under the Act,³⁹ most of the cases being prosecuted by the Commission are still pending before the various courts. In some cases, the accused, persons were successfully discharged and acquitted. In Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Prince Okoro & Anor,⁴⁰ the accused persons (Immigration officers) were charged before the High Court of Ebonyi State Holden at Abakiliki for extorting money from foreigners. The accused persons were discharged and acquitted. However, the Commission has appealed against the decision which matter is still pending at the Court of Appeal.

In Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Dr. Rahmatu Yahaya Hassan,⁴¹ the accused person, the Chief Medical Director of the Federal Medical Centre, Birnin Kebbi, was charged for making false statement in a letter addressed to the Honourable Minister of Health requesting the sum of twenty million naira (N20,000,000) to be provided to offset the outstanding debt purportedly owed Landlords by the hospital in Birnin Kebbi. The accused was also discharged and acquitted on the ground that the prosecution has not proved its case.

Another typical example that readily come to mind is a case In Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Honourable Justice Garba Abdullahi,⁴² The accused person, a serving Judge of the High Court of Kano State was charged for demanding and receiving bribe. The prosecution failed to establish the case against the accused and he was discharged and acquitted⁴³.

It should be noted that this statute has been amended twice since it was enacted and its leadership has been re-invigorated with greater official powers in order to make it more effective and efficient. Nevertheless, the body (ICPC) meant to administer the law has been bedeviled by institutional and related challenges that have made the effective enforcement of the law difficult. This however is not to say that the statute has not helped immensely in tackling the scourge of corruption.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act 2004

The EFCC Act provides for the establishment of the EFCC charged with the responsibility for the enforcement of all economic and financial crime laws among other things. In terms of structure and contents the EFCC Act is divided into seven parts of 47 Sections and has a schedule that is also divided into forms A on confidential report and B on freezing order. As regards the contents, part one of the Act deals with the establishment of the EFCC, its composition, tenure of office, vacancy in membership and standing orders⁴⁴.

With respect to the function of the Commission as specified under section 6(a-q) of the Act, the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the recent case of Amaechi v. Independent National Electoral

³⁷ Umar, A., Musing from the Bar: A Lawyer and His Burden, Nigerian Defence Academy Press, Kaduna, Nigeria 2005, pp. 174 & 176

³⁸ Ss. 3 & 6 ICPC Act

³⁹ See A.G. Ondo v. A.G. Federation *Supra*); FRN v. Shiddali (2008) All FWLR (pt. 421)889

⁴⁰ Unreported, charge No. HAB/ICPC/I/2001

⁴¹ Charge No. KB/HC/ICPC/IC/05

⁴² Unreported, charge No. HAB/ICPC/I/2001

⁴³ Charge No. KB/HC/ICPC/IC/05

⁴⁴ Charge No. KN/ANTI/CR.3

Commission (INEC) & 2 Ors,⁴⁵ held per Oguntade J.S.C. thus;

The duties of the EFCC include the investigation and prosecution of a class of criminal offences. Once its investigation has shown prima facie that a person has committed a criminal offence, the duty of the EFCC is to have such offender prosecuted in the Court of law. No provision of the law enables EFCC upon the conclusion of investigation in a criminal case to send the report or case to either the Federal or State Government.

The above case is no doubt a landmark decision that restates the correct position of the law respecting the duties of the EFCC thereby putting to rest the contention as to whether or not the anti-graft agency should report to anybody or person its findings following an investigation before prosecution. The offences and penalties created under the Act are provided under sections 14-18. They include offences relating to financial malpractices, offences in relation to terrorism, retention of proceeds of criminal conduct and offences in relation to economic and financial crimes and penalties.

Like its sister-statute, the EFCC law designed to check the trend of corruption in the country has also been amended on few occasions in order to strengthen the body charged with its administration and also make its enforcement more effective and realistic. However, like the ICPC law, the EFCC law had also always been bedeviled by so many problems, the most significant of which is political influence on the part of the political leaders.

More often than not, the law has become a willing tool in the hands of successive political administration to oppress, intimidate, vilify and witch hunt its real and imagined enemies. This has resulted in the loss of confidence in the law and the operatives of the law by the citizens. This is not the only significant problem; another is the poor logistical provisions for the body which has seriously hampered its effective functions and thereby defeating the laudable objectives of the law.

It is necessary to point out that these anti-graft bodies are peopled by security operatives,

particularly the Nigeria policemen who form the nucleus of the institution.

THE NIGERIA POLICE AND THE MENACE OF CORRUPTION

In Nigeria, the Police are vested with the duty of maintaining law and order⁴⁶.

These could be conveniently classified as: ----

- (a) Prevention and detection of crime
- (b) Apprehension of offenders
- (c) Protection of lives and property
- (d) Maintenance of law and order and
- (e) enforcement of laws, among others.

However, the police have been unable to effectively discharge their duties on account of their being compromised by corruption. It should be emphasized though, that the same factors behind corrupt practices in every facet of the society equally apply to the Nigeria Police⁴². However, the Police are more prone to corruption on account of the nature of their job, as they, unlike other law enforcement agencies, have the greatest scope of interaction with the public⁴⁷.

Analysis of the symbiotic relationship between the Nigeria police and the syndrome of corruption

Since corruption is not an exclusive preoccupation of any jurisdiction but rather a global phenomenon, it would indisputably be a wishful thinking to expect the institution of the Nigeria Police to stay isolated as a blissful island of probity and incorruptibility in our sapped cesspool of corruption we all now frighteningly find ourselves as a human species. This however does not suggest that we should completely throw our hands into the air and resign ourselves to fate by accepting hook, line and sinker and sheepishly and submissively accept corruption as an inescapable reality of life. Already, there is growing consensus of opinion that, in Nigeria, if we do not kill corruption, corruption will kill us. This is particularly relevant under the current national leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari who has made the tackling corruption as one of the mission statements of his administration.

It is needful to clarify the point here that the epidemic of corruption afflicts the Nigeria Police Force with no higher degree and magnitude than the other segment of the Nigerian society. The difference is only in the recurring manner and style with which the Nigeria police perpetuate this evil that has not only assumed a monstrous proportion in

⁴⁵ See the cases of *Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Alhaji Mika Anache & 3 Ors*, *Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Dr. Demiloye Akerejola & Anor*, Charge No. CR/2/2002; and *Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Andrew Tyem & 4 Ors* Charge No. CR/1/2001

⁴⁶ Ladan, M.T., Op. Cit p.13

⁴⁷ Ibid

the country but has misshapen so many other values, culture and noble traditions the country had been known for in the past.

The most significant of the functions of the police in Nigeria is the maintenance of law and order. Against this background, the primary duty of the police may be properly categorized to include crime prevention and detection, apprehension of offenders, protection of lives and property, and enforcement of laws; among others. Expectedly therefore, the police is ordinarily supposed to serve the people of Nigeria and should endeavor to protect their best interests within the ambit of the law. Unfortunately however, the reverse is the case here. The police have been in the breach more than in the performance of their avowed responsibilities due to various reasons, of which corruption a primary status. This fact leads to the most poignant question: Why is corruption so pervasive within the Nigeria Police?

To start with, in analyzing the answer to the above question, it is noteworthy to state it here clearly that the Nigerian society is the first culprit, in the sense that they, either willfully or inadvertently encourage corruption in the police.

The propensity for acquiring illegitimate wealth and the fawning public admiration and adulation of the wealthy-regardless of their source of wealth- make it almost impossible for any Nigerian not to be a practitioner of corruption; thus, the police which essentially is an extension of the large society can hardly be expected to be immune to this vice.

Nigeria is a country where the people prefer to “settle” the police rather than doing the right thing in the right way; therefore it would amount to grand self-delusion to assume that corruption will not flourish blossomly andwithout unfettered latitude within the Nigeria police. There is already a unanimity of opinion that corruption could not flourish unless there is a giver and a taker.

More interestingly, it is too settled to elicit any controversy that men of the Nigerian Police have yielded themselves as tools to the politicians in the country. It is needless to argue against the conclusion that average Nigerian politician is power hungry, desperate, greedy, self-centered, inordinately ambitious, vindictive and egregiously corrupt. As such, the politicians use the police for all forms of electoral vices ranging from rigging elections to intimidation, harassment and even killing of political opponents, all for some financial inducement. A clear example is the last general elections which held between February 23rd to March 23rd, during which some policemen offered

themselves to play ignoble roles, which cast thick shadows on the credibility of the election. Invariably, loss of confidence in the ballot box has done incalculable damage to the political evolution- and by extension, development in every facet-of the country, and the police have a fair share of the blame.

Moreover, another disturbing area where the citizens have promoted corruption in the Nigeria Police Force can be seen from the perspective of crime commission, investigation and prosecution. Oftentimes, the Police are corruptly influenced in their investigations by relations of accused persons or by some powerful individuals who have vested interests in the outcome of such investigation. Corrupt compromise on the part of the police in the administration of criminal justice usually starts at investigations level. A poorly investigated case is as good as lost in the courtroom. Commenting on poor investigation and the dangers it poses to the administration of criminal justice in Nigeria, the Supreme Court per Wali JSC in *Idowu v State*⁴⁸ observed that

I wish to comment on the way and manner the prosecution conducted

the investigation of this case. The method adopted left much to be

desired. With the number of police officers trained as lawyers in the police force, the quality of the police investigation particularly in this case is far below the quality and standard one would expect in this age of technology developments

Ogundare, JSC in the same case also stated thus:I cannot end this judgment without commenting on the poor

quality of investigation, if any, carried out by the police in this case.Had there been a more thorough investigation, the missing link wouldhave been obtained

Basically, corruption in the Nigeria Police often play out in such cases as the police check points where they extort money from the motorists every day. Many people have lost their lives at the various police check points scattered all over the country in the hands of the police, occasioned by attempts by motorists to resist extortion by the men of the Nigeria Police Force, who has attained unrivalled notoriety by opening gunfire against defenceless and harmless citizens who refuse to give them bribe. In such cases, the trigger happy police men often fabricate stories against the hapless victims of their needless that the victims were fleeing armed robbery suspects, or in some

⁴⁸(2000)FWLR (pt16) 2872 SC

other cases that the shootings were due to accidental discharge.

Another area of manifestation of corruption in the police which has assumed a recurring notoriety has to do with admission of criminal suspects to bail. It is a known parlance among Nigerian citizens that: "bail is free in principle, but not in practice". Statutorily, bail is free, but more often, police demand cash in exchange for admittance of suspects to bail, even if the offences in question were bail able. Nigerians however are used to this painful reality.

Another area where is corruption is pronounced among policemen is at the point of arrest. By law, a person arrested by the police is to be charged to within 12 hours or 24 hours (depending on the proximity of a court to the place where the suspect is detained after arrest) of such arrest⁴⁹. Police have however ingenuously devised a circumventing formula such as maintaining that investigation in the case of the suspect is still in progress in order to thwart the laudable provisions of the Constitution which guarantees the liberty and fair hearing of the suspects. The police usually demand for bribe in handsome sums before the suspect is released on bail

It is important to set out here that the catalogue of instances and manner of corruption in the Nigerian Police Force is by no means exhaustive.

SOME OF THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGH LEVEL OF CORRUPTION WITHIN THE NIGERIA POLICE

- **Improper, inefficient, and more significantly, corrupt: and nepotistic methods of recruitment into the police**

The method by which men and women are recruited into the Nigeria Police Force is one of the reasons why the "bad eggs" pollute and foul up the organization and desecrate its image in the sight of the public which they are meant to serve. Often applicants are recruited by nepotistic means, merit is often sidelined. Besides, some applicants are recruited after those in charge of recruitment have been compromised by financial inducements. More importantly, adequate screening in form of security check, assessment of mental status and natural aptitudes are not conducted at the point of recruitment. The consequences of these lapses

manifest themselves in for corruption and other malfeasances reigning supreme in the Nigerian police

- **Discouraging salary, poor conditions of service, delayed rank-mobility and stringent promotion criteria, especially for the rank and file.**

Poor conditions of service, low and irregular salary, delayed promotion and favouritism in the mechanisms for determining promotions. All these combined promote corruption in the police

- **Political interference and the feeling by the police that they owe a duty of accountability to the government of the day rather than to the rule of law.**

Nothing destroys an institution than needless political interference. The police should be semi- autonomous and be weaned off from too much political interference and control in order for it to be effective, efficient and goal-oriented

- **Poor funding of the Nigeria Police Force by the government.**

Poor funding is another problem of the police. Inadequate weapons, substandard ammunition, poor logistical provisions and poor welfare all combined dampen the morale of policemen and fuel their tendencies to be corrupt

- **A materialistic, greedy, corrupt and indiscipline socio-economic environment**

As stated earlier, the society also encourages corruption by its materialistic values, avarice, greed and dishonesty. All these tend to rub off on the police, and taint them with corruption

- **Institutionalized factors like ethnicism, nepotism, religious fanaticism and intolerance.**

All the factors mentioned above are not only threatening the peaceful and harmonious continued existence of the country but they also do serious damage to the corporate integrity of the Nigeria Police Force

The above are some but not all the factors responsible for corruption syndrome within the Nigeria Police.

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORM

- Develop "concurrent" and "predictive"⁷¹ validation tests for use in selection of "suitable" policemen both at recruitment and immediately for probationary period (i.e social-psychological aptitude tests in addition

⁴⁹See section 36 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. See also section 35 thereof

to the normal educational, physical and medical requirement);

- Use secondary schools and tertiary institutions for recruiting and grooming potential policemen when students are about three or two years away from ' graduation (advantageous for commitment and loyalty to policing as an occupation);
- Increase the length of training of recruits to a minimum period of 18 months;
- Training curricula should considerably emphasize (in addition to practical Police work) knowledge about our society; the importance of the Policeman's community-service role; the meaning and use of initiative and discretion; the position of citizens as consumers of police work; the supremacy of the rule of law; the type of ethics to be internalized by policeman and the cruciality of the observance of human rights;
- Intensive internal re-organisation of the police to revitalize and enforce, on a systematic and continuous basis, rules concerning police courtesy force, response to (and handling of) citizen reports or complaints, use of only necessary force, observance of the legal and other rights of citizens, including offenders;
- Establish a Police-Public Relation Corps (of experts in public-relations) whose members should be independent of their immediate State Commands but directly responsible to the I.G.P. The Corps should be responsible for investigating and resolving citizens' complaints against policemen and for publicizing the findings of same, among other responsibilities.

The salary, conditions of service, rank-mobility, promotion-criteria and procedure should be made more appropriate to the risk of the occupation and reviewed for considerable improvement e.g promotion should be based on performance and length of service whether in the area of crime-fighting, community-service or public-relations; and there should be horizontal progression of remuneration for the rank and file; The Federal Government should undertake a realistic survey in and outside Nigeria, to determine the actual material "routine" requirement (not including armoured vehicles) of a desirable, effective and efficient modern police force and provide the needed funding on a regular basis.

III. CONCLUSION

The trend of corruption in Nigeria is not exclusive to the police, but it reflects what is happening in the society. Nevertheless, the police are saddled with a great responsibility, the discharge of which determines the level of security, peace, safety and general well-being of the nation. Accordingly, the police should be insulated from corrupt practices and should help in tackling the scourge and check this monstrous syndrome, rather than aid and abet it. It is expected that the reforms suggested in this paper have provided a blueprint which if adopted would solve the syndrome of corruption in the police.