



An Assessment of the Nigeria Police Force by Yorùbá Female Novelists: A Sociological Approach

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Abstract: The Nigeria Police Force whose duty is to protect the citizens and also enforce law and order in the society has unfortunately become tainted by corruption and other vices. It is common for police officers to accept bribes, often in form of money, in the course of their duties. For example, if an offender cooperates by bribing the officers, they will escape punishment while an innocent person may be unjustly arrested and subjected to legal actions. Furthermore, Police officers betray one another, extort motorists on highways, supply weapons to criminals and act as godfathers to criminals in a bid to make more money. These among other corrupt practices of the Nigerian Police are well depicted in Yorùbá female novels. While there have been several literary works focused on crime and the Nigeria Police in Yorùbá written literature (poem, drama and prose), none has adequately explored this subject as portrayed by Yorùbá female novelists, hence, the need for this study. Using the Sociological Approach with a focus on seven female authored novels (Ikú Jàre, Kò Jé Jé Bèè, Kò Sí Láte, Fúnminiyi, Awofélé Bonú, Òtafàsókè 1 and Òtafàsókè 2), this study examines how female Yorùbá novelists portray the Nigerian Police and their handling of criminal cases in their novels. Findings from this research reveal that Yorùbá female novelists portray the Nigeria Police Force as a rotten agency where majority of the officers are unrepentantly corrupt, with only a few of them exhibiting good character.

Keywords: Nigeria Police, Crime, Sociological Approach, Corruption, Female Novelists.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of law enforcement agencies especially the police is essential in maintaining law and order and providing security for the society. The police ensure protection of lives and properties of the people. However, it is observed that despite their efforts, crime rate keeps increasing in the society. This has led female Yorùbá authors in their writings to express their concerns and draw attention to issues concerning the Nigeria police such as investigation of criminal cases and the behaviour of perpetrators. Because of the different ways in which men and women view issues in the Yorùbá society, both genders tend to present their ideas and beliefs in different forms. Against this backdrop, this study

aims at highlighting and discussing the perception of Yorùbá female novelists in terms of how they portray the activities of the Nigeria Police in their novels.

2. Previous Studies on the Nigeria Police Force

Many scholars have written on the Nigeria Police Force. They include Àrè mú (2009, 2014), Adégòkè (2014), Adékòlá (2018) and Adams (2021). Most of the studies focus on issues concerning the establishment of the force and its programs. Their major concern is the attitude of the police officers and how this brings about failure in ensuring orderliness in the society. Adams (2021) examines factors that inhibit the operation of the police as evident in the selected poems, plays and novels that he surveyed. He

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submits that the police officers face five challenges. The first challenge is the issue of gender where he explained that the police force in the early stage did not recruit women, and when they were later recruited, they were not given important positions; the duties of those female officers did not transcend sitting in offices, attending to visitors, picking of phone calls and monitoring female offenders. This symbolizes that the police force did not regard women as people who could work effectively. Our observation about this challenge is the police force is not the only body that does not regard women as effective workers as almost all other institutions have the same notion due to the patrilineal culture that operates in Africa which disregards women. Observations now show that The Nigerian Police Force has employed many women, and some of them have excelled becoming senior officers in the force. Threats to women in any work of choice has reduced and this applies also to The Police Force. Women are now aware of their rights and fight for them on daily basis. The second challenge being confronted by The Police Force as indicated by Adams (2021) is lack of effective work outline and standard tools. We observe that this is possible not because of the failure of the government to disburse money for purchasing the necessary equipment and weapons but many at times because the senior officers divert such allocated funds for their personal use. There is also no proper maintenance for the available tools. Investigation shows that corrupt police officers lend their weapons to criminals for operations. This fact was also corroborated by Adams. The third challenge according to Adam (2021) is lack of sufficient basic amenities. It is important that there should be programs that bring comfort to the police officers as almost all Nigerian citizens except politicians cannot thrive on their salaries and in fact some salaries are always delayed without any incentives for the workers. This is to explain that this challenge is not only faced by the Police Force however, other institutions discharge their duties as expected. Research shows that even with an increment in the salary of the Police officers, there was no visible change in their attitude towards their duties. Adams (2021) also explained that the government and the leaders of the Police Force constitute the biggest challenges to the effective discharge of duties by Police officers. Most times when there is a change of government in a country or leadership of an organization, there will be an end to all existing structures. The last challenge is corruption among the Police officers. The findings of Adams (2021) include taking bribes in the office and on the highways, being godfathers to criminals, replacing criminals with innocent citizens, betrayal of one another, drunkenness, lack of responsibilities to wife, children and the family among other vices. Although Adams (2021) suggests ways that The Police Force

could overcome these challenges, we opine that if the government provides amenities, purchase modern equipment and pay their salaries on regular basis; there won't be any improvement except the corrupt Police officers repent. This study is different from the previous studies as it focuses on the perspectives of Yoruba female novelists of the Nigeria Police with a focus on their vices.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs qualitative research method. Texts for analysis are extracted from selected female novels. The theoretical framework used is the Sociological Approach. The basic assumption of this approach is that a literature reflects the society in which the literary work is created. This implies that authors and their societies are reflected in their works. The imaginations of an author creatively put together to produce a literary work are drawn from the happenings in the society.

4. Crime and the Nigeria Police in the Works of Yorùbá Female Novelists

While female Yorùbá novelists may not deliberately focus on crime and criminal investigation like their male counterparts, they still draw attention in their writings to criminal cases and the way they are handled by the Nigeria Police. In this research. These female novelists have observed that bribery hinders the operation of the Police. They have also observed that the inability of Police officers to refrain from accepting bribes has tarnishes their profession.

In *Kò Jé Jé Bẹ̀ẹ̀*, a novel by "Dele Adegbemi" the writer shows the corrupt practice of the Nigeria Police through the action of iyá Tóókẹ who sent hired killers to murder her husband's mistress. However, this plot was exposed as the hired killers were apprehended. Although the Police arrested iyá Tóókẹ and the hired killers, the writer made it known that the Police did not handle the case as expected due to the bribe collected and this made the criminal to escape the due penalty. This is shown in the extract below:

“Àwọn ọ̀lọ̀páá mú iyáálé rẹ̀ lórí ọ̀rọ̀ yìí, wọn gbé e lọ sílé ejọ̀ fún èsùn ìgbìyànjú láti pa ẹ̀lòmíràn sùgbón nígba tí ọ̀wọ̀ dunlẹ̀, àkọ̀sílẹ̀ iwádíí àwọn ọ̀tẹ̀lẹ̀múyẹ̀ di àwátí nínú fáìlì ní ọ̀fíísì àwọn ọ̀lọ̀páá. Wọn dá ẹ̀lẹ́gírí iyáálé sílé kó máa lọ sílé nítorí kò sí ẹ̀rì kan pátó tó tọ̀ka sí pé ó gbìyànjú láti pa iyàwó àfẹ̀sónà ọ̀kọ̀ rẹ̀ toyúntoyún. Hùn ún ún? Owó ti bayé jẹ̀” (o.i 42)

(The Police arrested her rival (the husband's first wife) on this issue, they charged her to court on attempted murder but as soon as bribes were paid, the file that contained the

record of investigation got missing in the police station. They released the ruthless wife since there was no evidence that indicated that she attempted to kill the pregnant lady that her husband was having an affair with. Really? Money has corrupted the society)

Also, as shown in *Ọtafàsókè 1* by “Sèyí Akínbóyè” the novelist indicates that in most cases, criminals that are to be charged to court are set free after the Police officers collect bribe from them. She equally asserts that in many cases the Police replace criminals with innocent people as they attempted to replace the criminals that killed Bántéfé with Ìbíyemí in *Ọtafàsókè 1* after the perpetrators had bribed them with money. Ìbíyemí thought he could get help from Alàgbà Eniafé to pay his school fees without knowing that a trap had been set for him; and the Police arrested him as a criminal. The writer observes that:

“ Ọgágán ibi tí wọn ju òkú sí ni Alàgbà Eniafé ti ní kí Ìbíyemí ó pàdé òun. Ìbíyemí ti súnmó òkú náà tán, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni ọ̀kò ọ̀lọ̀páá kan kọ́já ... wọn sẹ̀wọ́ sí Ìbíyemí, òun náà sì ní rìn lọ bá wọn... Àwọn ọ̀lọ̀páá sáré sòkalẹ̀ nínú ọ̀kò wọn, wọn lé Ìbíyemí mú...” (o.i. 18)

(Alàgbà Eniafé instructed Ìbíyemí to meet him at the point where the corpse was placed... Ìbíyemí was very close to the corpse when a Police vehicle passed by; the Police signalled to Ìbíyemí and he went to meet them...the police rushed down from their vehicle and arrested Ìbíyemí...pg. 18

Another phenomenon noted in *Ọtafàsókè 1* by “Sèyí Akínbóyè” is that the police are notorious for compelling innocent suspects to write false statement indicating that they committed an offence. In the novel, Ìbíyemí wrote his statement eight times but the Police tore them because he refused to accept responsibility for the crime he did not commit. The perpetrators had bribed the Police and the Police needed an innocent person to implicate for the murder. The extract below shows this:

“È ẹ̀ ráyé lóde! Bí àwọn ọ̀lọ̀páá ... Owó ti bà wọn jẹ. Wọn a gbébi f’áláre, wọn a sì gbé àre fún ẹ̀lẹ̀bi nítorí owó. Báwo ni ẹ̀ ó ẹ̀ mú èniyàn tí ẹ̀ kò ní ka ọ̀rọ̀ tí ẹ̀ gbà sílẹ̀ lẹ̀nu rẹ̀ sí? A wí tǎiwí wọn ní kí ń kọ̀ òmíràn lẹ̀yin bí i méjọ̀ tí mo ti kọ̀ tí wọn sì ti ya! Kí ni àwọn ọ̀lọ̀páá yìí ń fẹ̀ gan-an? Ẹ̀ kí ń wá sọ̀ ohun tí kò ẹ̀lẹ̀ ni?...” (o.i. 18)

(Can’t you see! As the police... money has corrupted them. They pervert justice because of money. How can you arrest someone and pay no regard to his statements? They now wanted me to write

another one after they tore eight statements that I wrote! What do these police officers want? Should I report what did not happen?..pg. 18)

The writer made it known in *Ọtafàsókè 1* that one of the offenders implored Ìbíyemí to confess what he knew nothing about; the perpetrators even brought him a huge sum of money and the Police officers cooperated with them. This is revealed in the extract below:

‘Àwọn ọ̀lọ̀páá mú Ìbíyemí jáde fún Alàgbà Eniafé láti bá a sòrò. Eniafé sọ̀ fún Ìbíyemí pé; kí tirẹ̀ má báa bàjẹ̀ ni mo ẹ̀ ẹ̀tò mílìọ̀nù kan fún ọ. Ohun ti mo ń fẹ̀ ni pé, kí o tún àkòsílẹ̀ rẹ̀ kọ̀ kí o kà bá yìí pé: Èmí Eniafé kọ̀ ni o wá pàdẹ̀ o, àti pé o kò tilẹ̀ mò mí rárá” (o.i. 19)

(The Police brought out Ìbíyemí to Alàgbà Eniafé for a dialogue. Eniafé told Ìbíyemí that in order to prevent any damage, he had prepared a million naira for him. What he wants is for him rewrite his statement to read thus: You did not come to meet me, Eniafé; and that you don’t even know me at all)

Furthermore, and still emphasizing the corrupt level of the Nigeria Police as depicted in *Ọtafàsókè 1*, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of *Ìrọ̀lẹ̀ Ayé* bribed the Police so that they could ensure that Ìbíyemí did not reveal his secret that he knew about what caused him to meet Eniafé at the point where a corpse was dumped. The message being passed across by the Yorùbá female novelist in this context is that the Police know their duties but bribery inhibits their effective operation.

If we observe our society today, in most cases, criminals are granted freedom while innocent people are being penalized. Yorùbá female novelist make it known that only fortune can save someone if he falls into the trap of the Police but such a person must have suffered a lot before being set free.

Still in *Ọtafàsókè 1*, Sèyí Akínbóyè notes that the populace must be suspicious about happenings around them and make effective use of their modern mobile phones to record every strange happening around them as such could be of help in the future. This kind of recording done by Mr. Babajidé which exposed how the criminals killed Bántéfé was among the evidences that revealed the truth about the case of murder brought against Ìbíyemí, the defendant that eventually granted him freedom from the false allegation levelled against him. The female novelist portrayed the experience of Babajidé and the step he took on the event thus:

Ó rántí àṣáálé ọjọ tí ó lọ pàdé Bínúyọ ní ilẹ ìtura ... nínú òkùnkùn lóṣòkán ló rí àwòrán àwọn ènìyàn bí i mēwáá tí wọn n ló kítìpá ọ̀rò mọ ara wọn lówọ. ‘O gò gan-an ṣá o, bí kí í bá ṣe pé o gò, ó fẹnu hōra! Mílìfònú lónà igba náira ṣe ma di ohun tó rá? Ó pòórà àbí kínnlā? Àà, baba olóyè, ẹ má ṣe bēyēn...mó ṣàà ti sọ fún yín, mo rìn díẹ síwájú báyií ni àwọn ẹrú ikú kan bēyìn yọ...Bí ó ti sòrò débí ni ọkùnrin kan sún mọ ọn, ó fún un ní ìgbátí àti ìgbánu papọ, mo gbọ gbòlà!...Báyií ni ẹnikan bērè ti í, ó mi Bántéfa jìgìjìgì, ó tarí rẹ ọ sì fi igbe bọnu pé, Àà! Bántéfa kò mà mí mọ: Oníya, ó fẹ gbé owó mi lọ sí ọrun...Olóyè Oríbòròde, ẹ lọ gbé kin ní burúkú yi jù sínú igbó...Báyií ni sinimá ọfẹ ti mò n wò parí. Kò sí ẹni tí ó rí mi...” (o.i. 10-12)

(He remembered the day he went to meet Bínúyọ in a hotel... far away in the darkness he saw the pictures of ten people that were arguing. ‘You are stupid, if not, how will 200 million Naira disappear? Ah! Baba olóyè, don’t do like that... I had already told you, a gang came from behind immediately I walked a little bit ahead... As he said this, a man approached him and gave him dirty slaps..... a person stopped and shook Bántéfa; he pushed him and shouted, ah! Bántéfa is not breathing again: Poor one, he wants to take my money to heaven... Olóyè Oríbòròde, throw this bad thing inside the bush... This is how the free movie I was watching ended. Nobody saw me. pg. 10-12)

In the novel, Babájídé recorded everything he heard on his phone and this was employed as evidence in the court. This reveals that that criminals flee from cells and prison yards (jail break) many times and the Police are unable to recapture them just as Bántéfa escaped from the police in Ekiti State and went to perpetrate another crime before he met his sudden death.

In in *Kò sí Látẹ* a novel by Folúkẹ Adékéyè, the female Yorùbá novelist asserts that the police not only collect bribe from criminals; they also take bribe on the highways and several techniques are used by them to ensure that they ensnare the drivers. Adékéyè exposes the consequences of bribe that the Police take on the highways in *Kò sí Látẹ*. She made it known that the police block the road with woods and planks to prevent drivers from escaping in order to extort them. This female writer shows that this action by the Police often leads to road accident on the highways; she added that if any vehicle hits the woods placed on the road, the Police may shoot such a vehicle and stray bullets could hit the driver or passengers which could lead to sudden death like just

it happened to Mọyẹni who was hit by a stray bullet fired by the Police in *Kò Sí Látẹ*. She summarizes the issue as shown below:

“... Àwọn ọlọpáà ilẹ wa di alágbẹ tí wọn ko igi sọnà nítorí ogún náira tí wọn n gbà lówọ awakọ ni wọn kò tiwọn bá Mọyẹni. Ọjà aṣọ ọmọdé tí ó n tà ló jáde nílẹ pé ọ̀n n lọ rà ní Èkó. Bí awakọ rẹ ti ṣẹṣẹ pẹwọ fún kòtò kan tan ní ààrín ọ̀nà, kọ̀nà tí ó yí wò báyií, igi nílánlá tí àwọn ọlọpáà tò sí ààrín ọ̀nà ló yọ sí. Ijánu ọkọ tí ó gbésè lé báyií dípò kí ọkọ dúró, n ṣe ló tàkítì... kí ó tó fẹyìn lélẹ. Ẹ wá wo bí ọmọ adárfhunrun ti já lápá-nítan bí alápàta gé málúù...”(pg. 4)

(Our Police officers have turned to beggars that block roads. They implicated Mọyẹni because of the twenty naira bribe they collect from the drivers. She went to purchase children’s clothes that she sells in Lagos. Immediately her driver dogged a pothole in the middle of the road, he hit the wood placed on the road as he drove ahead. Instead of the vehicle to stop once, it somersaulted... before it stopped. Come and see how human bodies go dismembered like a butchered cow.”

In this context, the female writer portrays the image of innocent passengers who met their untimely death due to the actions of corrupt Police officers who dug holes in the middle of the road while covering the other parts with wood.

An important observation about the overbearing attitude of the Nigeria Police is the unnecessary delay of commuters which they do by asking several vehicles for their particulars on the highway especially when the driver decides not bribe the Police is demonstrated in *Ikú Jàre* by ‘Délé Adégbémí’. In one instance, The Police stopped the vehicle that Moṣé was driving when he wanted to invite the fire fighter to extinguish the fire that gutted a particular company in their area in the middle of the night. When they asked for the particulars of the vehicle, (an indirect way of asking for bribe) and Moṣé refused to give them, they accused him of stealing the vehicle. The female novelist captures this scenario with the extract below:

Bí wọn ti yí ikòrita kin ín ní ni àwọn ọlọpáà tí ó wà nìbẹ dá wọn dúró tí ọkan nínú wọn sì ní bèrè iwé mọtò ...Ọlọpáà nàà dáhùn ó ní ‘Ègbọn, a kò le sọ pé ki ẹ má lo pe panápaná, ṣùgbọn ẹ bá àwa nàà wá nńkan kan, a á ṣàà jeun.’... ‘Ègbọn, àpónlé ni mo ṣe fún un yín... Ó dára bí ẹ kò bá ní iwé ọkọ a jẹ pé ẹ jí i gbé nìyẹn’. ... Ẹ máa bínú, ara ajé ni ó n ta ọrẹ mi, ẹ gba ṣílẹ mārùn-ún yi, ẹ máa bínú’. Ó ṣa ṣílẹ kòkọkan mārùn-ún tí ó wà nínú kóló tí ó wà

níwàjú ọkò, ó sì kó o lé ọlópàá nàà lówó. Ọlópàá da owó yí sá pò rẹ, ó sì ní kí wọn máa lọ. (*Ikú Jàre* 99-100)

As they drove through the first junctions, the Police officers on duty stopped them demanding for the particulars of the vehicle....the officer answered and said 'Elder we cannot stop you from inviting the fire-fighters but give us something, we need to eat...'Elder, I have respected you...Evidently, if you do not have particulars, it means that you stole the vehicle'... Don't be offended, my friend is so concerned with money, take these five shillings, don't be annoyed. He then counted five shillings from the safe of the vehicle and gave to the police officer. The police officer put the money inside his pocket and ordered them to go. (*Ikú Jàre* 99-100)

The fact being emphasized by the female novelist here is that although the Police understand the laws, they are more concerned with money than enforcement of these laws.

Another important misdemeanour of the Nigeria Police was explicated in *Ọtafàsókè 2* a novel by "Oláníyì Fọlášadé". This was depicted when a hired killer that testified in court explained that a person who reports the truth about an incident to the Police will be tortured an act which discourages people from reporting crimes to Police. She sums it up with the extract below:

Olúwa mi, ọ̀bàlújé lásán ni àwọn tí a ní pè ní agbófinró, arúfin paraku sì ni wọn pèlú... ọkan ti sele beje ti mo fi to awon agbófinró létí níse ni wọn fi ete sílè, tí wọn ní pa làpàlàpà. Ọ̀dìndì ọ̀dún kan gbáko ni mo lò ní ogbà ẹ̀wọ̀n, wọn fi ẹ̀sùn ibánílórúkọ jẹ kàn mí, ìdì nìyí tí mo se fi ọ̀rọ̀ síkùn olúwa mi (o.i 105)

My lord, the Police are nation destroyers, they are also lawbreakers. I reported an incident to them and they failed to do the needful. I spent a whole year in prison as I was convicted of defamation of character. This is why I did not voice out.

The message passed across by this female writer is that many people suffer unnecessarily while some die because they provide confidential information to the Police which is eventually leaked to the criminals who normally bribe them. The criminal begins to haunt such spies. If the Police do not inform the criminal, they may hold such spies responsible for the crime.

This particular behaviour of the Police scares people and discourages people from exposing criminals in their environment and this is why it seems that people in the society are not cooperating with the Police. This female novelist asserts that many times, the Police usually lock up innocent persons when there is a problem in a particular environment. This was exemplified in *Ọtafàsókè 2* when Àkàndé died and the Police arrested some people especially those that had one issue or another with Àkàndé before his death. Eventually, none of those arrested killed Àkàndé; Àkàndé's wife assisted the Police to discover that Olamiwa was the one who killed her husband. If we observe our society in present times, we will realise that the Police would arrest many people because of a crime or disturbance in a particular area. When investigating an incident, the Police usually request for a huge amount of money from the family of the innocent people arrested before they are set free. However, all Police stations have the inscription "Bail is free."

Furthermore, as shown in *Ọtafàsókè 2*, the Yorùbá female novelist reveals that the Police always rely on the report of the complainant rather than to investigate the case and establish the truth. This was exemplified when Àkàndé's wife told the Police about what transpired between her husband and Múritálá Músá (MM Fakosi), the DPO made it known that MM was a deadly criminal when he said:

Şé ẹ rí orúkọ tí ẹ dá lẹ̀kàn, Muritala Músá MM Fakosi, ọ̀pọ̀lọ̀pọ̀ igbà ni ó ti sá ní àgọ̀ wa níbí, kòdà, ó ti şẹ̀wọ̀n rí, tí ó sì jẹ̀ wí pé kò lo ọ̀jọ̀ rẹ̀ pé tí ó fi sálọ... (o.i 62-63)

The name you earlier mentioned, Múritálá Músá (MM Fakosi) is someone that has escaped many times in this station, infact, he is an ex-convict who didn't complete his years before jail break...(o.i 62-63)

Although the DPO vowed to capture MM by all means, however, when they went to his house, it was a surprise that they couldn't arrest MM Fakosi because of their mediocrity in investigation. "Oláníyì Fọlášadé" presents it this way:

Àwọn ọ̀lópàá pín ara wọn káàkiri ilé nàà, iyá àgbàlagbà kan jáde sí wọn, ó wọ̀ ìrọ̀ àti bùbá, ó sì tún lo ìborùn...È káásán, se dáadáa ni, èdèdè ò dáa bí? Ìyá dáhùn, şùgbọ̀n bí ó se ní sọ̀rọ̀ ló ní gbọ̀n... Dáadáa ni iyá wa, ẹ̀ dákun Muritala Músá tí inagijẹ̀ rẹ̀ ní jẹ̀ MM Fakosi la béèrè ... Şé ọ̀mọ̀ olórí burúkú yẹn lẹ̀ n béèrè, ọ̀fò ni ó se. Ó tiẹ̀ dára, bí ẹ̀ bá rí i mú, ẹ̀ dákun ẹ̀ má jẹ̀ ó bọ̀ o... ayálégbé mi ni Múrí jẹ̀ şùgbọ̀n láti ọ̀jọ̀ tó ti kó dé inú ilé yí, kò fún mi ní kọ̀bọ̀ rí, ...È wò ó, yàrá rẹ̀ ló gbèyìn ni apá ọ̀tún... mà má bá tiẹ̀ lọ, iyálẹ̀nu ní lá ló jẹ̀ fún wọn nígbà tí wọn dé inú yàrá nàà, wọn ò bá a níbè,

ìwé pelébé kan sì wà ní ègbé rẹ̀. Ọ́gá ọ̀lọ̀pàá mú ìwé nàá ó sì kà á sí etí ìgbọ̀ àwọn tí ó kù:

The Police officers surrounded the house, an old woman putting on wrapper, blouse and a scarf came out to them....Good Afternoon, is everything alright? The woman said with a shaky voice...We are fine mother, please we are looking for Múrítàlá Músá whose nickname is MM Fakosi...Are you looking for that unfortunate child? He shall be wasted. That's good, if you are able to capture him, please don't let him escape...Muri is my tenant but since he packed into this house, he has not given me any money...His room is the last one by the right...The woman left, they were amazed when they got to the room and did not meet him there; there was a leaflet beside him. The DPO took the book and read it to the hearing of other officers:

ÒPÒNÚ NI GBOGBO YÍN, Ẹ Ọ LẸYÉ Ẹ RÍ, ÌYÉ LẸ Ó MÁA WÒ LÉYÌN ẸYẸ, ẸMI MM FAKOSI LẸ PÀDÉ LẸNU ỌNÀ TÍ MO MÚRA BÍ ARÚGBÓ, Ẹ SINMI AGBAJA; IRÚNMỌLÈ TÓ N Ẹ FRIED RICE LÈMI. Ó DÌGBÀ KAN NÁ.

MM FAKOSI

YOU ARE ALL FOOLS, I AM INVISIBLE, IT WAS ME MM FAKOSI THAT YOU MET DRESSED LIKE AN AGED PERSON. STOP WORRYING, CALM DOWN; I AM A MONSTER THAT EATS FRIED RICE. BYE FOR NOW

MM FAKOSI

The DPO put his hands on his head, while the other officers stamped their feet against the floor. They left the house embarrassed.

If a criminal could deceive the Police in this manner, it is obvious that such Police officers are not competent especially when there was more than one officer in charge of such investigation.

As depicted in *Awofélé Bonú*, written by "Adéolá Mobólájí", This female novelist attempts to establish the fact that the Nigeria Police has a huge task before it to proffer solutions to the issue of criminals in the society because there are many criminals among the Police officers, In *Awofélé Bonú*, 'Adéolá Mobólájí' asserts that the presence of too many criminals among the Police officers makes the job too difficult for a handful of them that want to do their job with sincerity. As depicted by this female writer in the novel, Inspector Díípò Ọ̀ládẹ̀hìndé who was a faithful and committed officer was transferred from Aşúbíaró to Ajámojú-Ọ̀dẹ̀ that was full of crimes such as kidnapping, corruption in the civil service, wives snatching, fraud, armed robbery and some other vices to restore normalcy to the town. This writer made it known that these vices were rampant in Ajámojú-Ọ̀dẹ̀ and its surroundings because the Police officers there took huge money as bribes from

criminals, diverted money allotted for purchasing weapons for personal gain and constant failure to fuel Police vehicles this presentation is similar to the happenings in our society today to the extent that this female writer deliberately portrayed societal incidents. This female writer demonstrated that D.P.O Gbádégeşin who was the leader of the Police Force in the local government is also the godfather of the armed robbers there, while Délé his subject worked as a spy for the armed robbers. Inspector Díípò discharged his duties effectively but when the criminals discovered that he hindered their operations, they wrote a letter to warn him. Below is the content of the letter:

...A mọ pé àjòjì ni yín nílúú yí, sùgbọ̀n báylì ni wón n ẹ̀ nílúú wa, èwọ̀ ibòmíràn ni, Èyàn tó bá loun ó fọ̀ ibàjẹ̀ ayé mọ̀ pátá, onítòhún ó kan ìdin náyò, á á sí tika àbámọ̀ bonu... àfàimọ̀ kó má jẹ̀ pé èlòmíràn ni yòò bá a jeun omọ̀ rẹ̀. Nítórí nàá, a rọ̀ yín, ẹ̀ jáwọ̀ nínú à n fòtítọ̀ ẹ̀ ilú, à n fojoojúmọ̀ tún ni láyẹ̀ ẹ̀... (o.i.39-40)

We know that you are a non-indigene in this land but what is allowed somewhere is disallowed elsewhere, he that wants to take corruption out of the society will definitely pay dearly for it and regret...It seems another person will eat the fruit of your labour. Therefore, we implore you, desist from being faithful in your service to the society...(o.i.39-40).

The Criminals also devised different strategies to incapacitate Inspector Díípò. An example was when "Atta", one of the criminals disguised as a mad man and came to the Police station, although other officers fled from the mad man, Inspector Díípò confronted the mad man and gave him the beating of his life till he ran away. This enraged the leader of the gang and he ordered that Inspector Díípò be brought to him alive, he said:

Ẹ̀ lọ̀ gbáradì, iná ti jó dórí kókó ... Mo fẹ̀ fojú gan-an-ni ẹ̀ja kékeré tí n dààmú ibú, mo fẹ̀ ... rí Díípò tí ò jẹ̀ n rówò tẹ̀mi ẹ̀, mo fẹ̀ rólórí burúkú tó n dí mi lówọ̀ isẹ̀ òòjọ̀ mi... (o.i. 51)

Go and be prepared, it is getting out of hands...I want to see that small fish that disturbs the sea, I want to see Díípò that disallows me to prosper, I want to see the unfortunate being that disturbs me in in my daily job.

When all efforts by the criminals to capture Inspector Díípò failed, they kidnapped his only child at the school he attends in Aşúbíaró. Despite this, Inspector Díípò was not deterred as he continued to carry out his legitimate job faithfully, he confronted

the criminals and conquered them. Eventually, it was discovered that one of the Police officers was a spy for the criminals.

This female writer is trying to inform her readers that corruption is becoming rampant in the society because of the cooperation that exists between the evil perpetrators such as armed robbers, kidnappers, hired killers and the police like officer Dèjì and D.P.O Gbadégesin. This female writer also depicts that only few Police officers are faithful to the oath of office and for them to succeed, they must be focused and skilful like Inspector Díípò. The unholy acts of some Police officers was also exposed when the Police had agreed to meet with the criminals that kidnapped Inspector Díípò's child, the corrupt Police officer "Èrúukú" met with the criminals to inform them of their plans and how to evade arrest. He said:

Mo fẹ́ kí ẹ múra gidigidi o ... Ó ní kí á pàdẹ láago mífà òní lófíísì, mo sì mò pé nítorí ọmọ ẹ tí a gbé pamọ ni, yóò sì fẹ́ mú àwọn ọmọ bíí méléó kan léyìn. N ó dá a lábàá kí ó jẹ ka gba ọ̀nà Ahóyaya lọ sí ojú Ọlọmọ. Ọ̀un àti àwọn méléó kan ni yóò wà nínú ọ̀kọ kan, tí èmi àti Dèjì yóò sì sọ pé a ó di ilé mú, èyí yóò fún wa ní ànfààní láti pè yín pé wọn ti gbéra o. Ẹ gbé ọmọ rẹ lówọ́ kí ẹ sì má pè ẹ tí ẹ ó fi débẹ ... (o.i. 67).

I want you to be well prepared... He said we should meet in the office by 6pm today and I know it is because of his child that you kidnapped and he might want to come with some officers. I would suggest that you let us take Ahóyaya road to Ojú Ọlọmọ. He would be in a vehicle with some officers while Dèjì and I will plead to stay at the station and this will enable us to inform you about their departure. Bring his child along and do not arrive late (p.67)

Another information sent across to the criminals by officer Dèjì about the movement of his boss shows that there are betrayers in the police force. This is shown in the extract below:

Ẹ wò ó, agogo méje ku iṣéjú márùn ún, wọn yóò ti máa wònà tòtò, kí wọn má bà á wá máa fura si mi. Èyin mífà péré ni kí ẹ wà ní ldi igi irókò, kí àwọn méréin wà ní orí igi. Èmi a wà níwájú ilé kan ládúgbò yí, ó dawo o, ó dimùlẹ̀ bàbá. Bójú bá yẹjú, kóhùn ó má yẹ o. Ẹ ẹ se bí mo ti wí o, n ó tún máa kàn sí i yín. (o.i. 67)

Take note, it is five minutes to 7'oclock, they would be watching out now and so that I am not suspected. Six of you should be under Irókò tree while four should stay on the tree. I will be at the front of a house around here.

It is a deal. Do not disappoint. Do as I said; I will be updating you. (p. 67)

As soon as they left, DPO Gbadégesin started giving out information about his men's movement to the criminals as presented below:

Wọn ti gbéra o, ... ọ̀nà ahóyaya... Iṣé yóò fi yá ni... Ọ̀un náà yóò fi mọ ẹni tí wọn ní pè ní Ọládípúpọ ni... ẹ má pè ẹ mọ o.. ó dígbà (o.i. 71)

They have started the journey... Ahóyaya road... It will make the operation faster... He will by this know who they call Ọládípúpọ... don't come late... bye (p.71)

Inspector Díípò was mindful of the case, he investigated the case wisely. Not only did he refrain from confronting the criminals in their home, he also avoided the road on which they had set up an ambush without informing anyone. This female writer also portrays that corrupt officers are exposed through the cautiousness and meticulousness of Police officers like Kásálí who carry out their duties effectively. When he overheard the conversation of Gbadégesin and the armed robbers about the movement of the Police, he recorded everything with the phone given to him by Inspector Díípò, he also took pictures. This served as evidence in court as without this, it is possible that the court would have discarded the case because Àgbákò, the leader of the gang who was arrested by Inspector Díípò and who may have stated the names of other members of the gang and the Police officers involved died in the cell before daybreak. This is not different from the situation in our society today. Most times, criminals in the custody of the Police or prisons die in the cells to avoid exposing secrets that can implicate their co-criminal and their godfathers. The writer is trying to tell the public that the Police aid such deaths. This was shown in the action of officer Dèjì who became frightened when Àgbákò was arrested. He informed the DPO about the danger that looms ahead as they will be exposed. The extract below shows this;

Bí wọn se gbé Àgbákò dé àgọ-ọlópáá tí Dèjì rí i ni ó ti sáré lọ sọ fún ọ̀gá wọn (DPO). Adìe ti bà lókùn bá yí, ara kò rọ Dèjì, ara kò rọ Gbadégesin. "Ọ̀gá, kín ni a máa se bá yí? ...sùgbọ́n ohun tó wà lókàn mi ni pé kí Àgbákò tó máa kà bọ̀ròbòrò, a gbọ̀dọ yẹjú rẹ. (o.i. 77)

As soon as Àgbákò was brought to the Police station and Dèjì saw him, he reported to the DPO about the impending doom. Boss, what do we do now? ... but what I have in mind now is that we must kill Àgbákò before he starts to confess (p. 77).

As shown in this novel, it is not only criminals that are killed in this manner, diligent Police officers who may stand as witnesses against the corrupt officers are also killed. This is why DPO Gbádégesin sent an idol to kill Inspector Diípò in his office on the day the matter was to come up in court.

...Gbádé, ó ní lọ sókè lọ sísalè bí ilèkè ìdí atiro, sé mo ti wá dé ipèkun mi niyí? ... Iró! O sèwò ... ó sí ibùsùn rẹ sókè, ó mú ère kan tí wọn wé láṣọ pupa pèlú owó ẹyọ lára ...ó tutọ sí ère yí lèmèta túhò! Túhò! Túhò! ... Ọrò wá dorí iwọ Diípò bá yí o, iwọ fẹ gba ije lenu ùn mi, o ò ní ẹ bẹẹ mó ...iwọ sigidi yí, mo fẹ kí o gbéra páá, kó o lọ dúró de Diípò ni àbáwo-òfíísì rẹ, bí ó bá ti fẹ wọlé, kí o bá mi ẹ é bí oṣe ẹ í sójú ... (o.i)

...Gbádé, you are moving to and fro, are you going to end like this?

... No! abomination ... he opened his mattress, he took a graven image wrapped with red linen and cowry shells... he spits at the idol three times... This case is about you, now Diípò, you want to hinder my prosperity, you won't do it again... You this idol, I want you to take-off and wait for Diípò at the entrance of his office and destroy him as he enters the office... (p.)

Although, the idol was targeted at Inspector Diípò, it was officer Dèjì who went to Inspector Diípò's office very early in morning to steal documents that would serve as evidence in the court that was killed by the idol. The killing of officer Deji by the idol instead of Inspector Diípò was a way in which the writer encourages Police officers who are diligent, courageous and to remind them that God is on the side of the righteous. Although, in real life, things don't always turn out this way as sometimes, diligent Police officers like Inspector Diípò do lose their lives due to the acts of the wicked officers among them. This shows that some policemen are part of the societal problems as they aid and abet criminals as well as frustrate legal actions against criminals.

Also in *Fúnminiyi*, written by 'Ọláníyì Fọlášadé,' the community is terrified with robberies and killings. A righteous man by name Funminiyi who just joined the Police Force was determined to fight against all criminal activities. However, he does not know that other officers were not happy with his decisions. Armed robbers and corrupt officers in the community fought and threatened him after he killed four of them. His fellow Police officers did not support him as the writer stated:

... nígbà tí irò ibon méjì dún ni ara rẹ... ó lé ní wákàtì méjì kí àwọn agbófinró tó kù tó dé, oníkálukù ní gbé ẹlédáá rẹ pamó, kò sí ẹni tí ó

šetán ikú...ó kù dèdè kí wọn ó gbé Fúnminiyi wọ ilé igbókupamọ nígbà tí onísègùn òyìnbó kan ẹ àkíyèsí wí pé Niyi ẹ ní mí diédíè, kíá wọn dá Niyi padà fún itòjú, wọn da itòjú bò ó ... (o.i.14-15)

... when he was shot twice ... it took the other Police officers two hours before showing up, they were all hiding as no one is ready to die... they almost took Fúnminiyi to the morgue when a medical doctor noticed that he was still breathing, quickly, they returned Niyi to the hospital for adequate and proper treatment... (p. 14-15)

What is derived from this excerpt is that many times, especially in cases of emergency, the Police, upon being called, fail to respond in time and this leads to loss of lives and property. Another thing observed is that the envy among Police officers impedes the peace of the society. Fúnminiyi's colleagues demonstrated that they were not happy about his stand on bribery as he was always seen begging their boss to put a stop to this unprofessional act. This is summed up below:

... ó sí bá mi sòrò lórí owó tí ẹ ní gbà lójú pópó, ẹ jòwó, mo rọ yín kí ẹ jé kí a ti owó omọ wa tí ó yọ síta bọ inú aṣọ". Sájéńtì Múkáílà pòṣé, "È ẹsun o omọ isẹ tí ògá yàn láàyò, a ti gbọ o" (o.i.17).

...and he spoke to me about the money you do collect on the highways, let us put a stop to that'. Sergeant Mukaila hissed, 'Thank you, our bosses' favourite, we heard you. (p.17)

In this novel, the female writer also talked about a criminal that wasted the lives of women by harvesting their eyes and wombs after killing them. The case was reported at the Police station and was moved to the table of the DPO when the case was getting out of hands. However, nothing changed as the criminal was not arrested and instead innocent victims were arrested. The criminal even murdered the daughter of the DPO and also attempted to murder Motúnrayò, Fúnminiyi's pregnant wife. In the process, Motúnrayò screamed and Fúnminiyi rushed down to engage the criminal. With the help of some men, Fúnminiyi was able to fight and overpower the criminal. In the process, it was revealed that the DPO Ọláníyì was the criminal responsible for the murder of women in the community.

In this instance, the female novelist depicts some senior officers as godfathers to armed robbers, kidnappers and other corrupt people in the society. Asides that, some are even criminals and very corrupt. For example, in the novel *Fúnminiyi*, Ọláníyì, a DPO (a very senior officer) started killing innocent

women to sustain the money ritual he performed. He desired to enjoy his money for a longer period. This reflects in his confession as stated below;

...Bàbá yìí ló wá ẹ̀ oògùn owó nàà fún mi, tí mo fi di ọ̀lọ́lá ... ẹ̀yẹ tí bàbá ní kí n máa fi bọ orí ni ọ̀sẹ̀ ọ̀sẹ̀ di ohun àwátì ... bàbá sì fi yé mi wí pé ikú n bọ wá pa mí, àfi tí mo bá lè máa ẹ̀ ẹ̀tùtù rẹ̀ ní ojoojúmọ̀ ... ìdí niyí ti mo fi n pa àwọn ọ̀dọ̀mọ̀binrin ...bàbá fi yé mi wí pé tí mo bá lè rọ́jú yọ ọ̀mọ̀ ní inú aboyún tí mo sì fi kásẹ̀ gbogbo rẹ̀ nílẹ̀, n ó ní ìfòkànbàlẹ̀ àti wí pé n ò ní máa lo àwọn ọ̀mọ̀binrin mọ̀... (o.i)

...This old man did the money ritual for me and I became rich. The bird that baba asked me to sacrifice every week as atonement to cleanse my head disappeared... the man said, I would die except I am able to perform a daily sacrifice... this is the reason behind my killing of women... the man told me that I should look for a foetus in a pregnant lady to round the sacrifice up, so I can have peace of mind and would not need to use ladies anymore... (p.)

The senior Police officer who should protect the citizens is the one responsible for the killings in the society. Furthermore, due to hypocrisy and murder by the police, the people are not willing to report criminals to the police due of fear of being maltreated. This was expressed by Bankole in *Fúnminiyi* as shown in the extract below:

Orúkọ mi ni Bánkólé Bámgbólá Ọ̀gúngbẹ̀mí. Ọ̀daràn ni arákùnrin Ọ̀láníyì, ní nńkan bí ogún ọ̀dún ó lé díẹ̀ ni ọ̀kùnrin burúkú yìí gbé ọ̀mọ̀ tuntun kan wá fún bàbá mi ... (awo ni bàbá mi n ẹ̀) ... láti fi ẹ̀ oògùn owó... Bàbá mi kì í ẹ̀ ikà, bàbá mi gbé ọ̀mọ̀ nàà fún mi...èmi ò wá mọ̀ bí Ọ̀gbẹ̀ni Ọ̀láníyì ẹ̀ mọ̀ wí pé Bàbá mi kò lo ọ̀mọ̀ nàà...èyà̀n méjì ni èmi wọn ẹ̀fò lórí ọ̀mọ̀ yìí, iyá rẹ̀ àti aya mi... “Kí ló dé tí iwọ̀ kò fi tó ìjọ̀ba létí nígbà nàà? Adájọ̀ béèrè” Ìjọ̀ba àbì kí lẹ̀ pè é? Olúwa mi... ọ̀jọ̀ tí mo sì fi tó àwọn agbófinró létí, èmi nì mo tún jẹ̀bi bọ̀, láti ìgbà nàà ni mo ti pinnu wí pé ẹ̀ni yóówù tí ó bá tún gbé irú isẹ̀ bẹ̀ẹ̀ fún mi, n ó máa gba owó wọn jẹ̀ ni, tí n ó sì sọ fún ẹ̀ni tí wọn bá ni kí n pa kí ó na pápá bora, èmi kì í ẹ̀ apàniyàn (o.i. 46-47).

My name is Bánkólé Bámgbólá Ọ̀gúngbẹ̀mí. Mr Ọ̀láníyì is a criminal. This wicked man brought a new born baby to my father about a year ago... (my father was a spiritualis) to be used for money ritual. My father was not wicked, he gave the child to me... I don't know how Mr Olaniyi discovered that my father did not use the child... Two persons lost their lives on the case of this child, his

mother and my wife... Why did you not inform the Police by that time? The judge asked' Police or who? My lord... I was found guilty the day I reported a case to the Police and since then, I decided that if I would not carry out a murder job, I will just take the money and order the victim to run for his/her life. I'm not a murderer (p. 46-47)

In Ọ̀tafàsókè 2 written by 'Ọ̀láníyì Fọ̀lášadé', the female novelist asserts that people do not trust the Police because of their evil acts as evident in Báýò's statement:

Orúkọ tẹ̀mi ni Báýò Bámigbádé, ... “Olúwa mi, ọ̀bàyẹ̀jẹ̀ lásán ni àwọn tí à n pè ni agbófinró, arúfin paraku sì ni wọn pẹ̀lú. Ohun tí ó bá ti ẹ̀ ni lẹ̀ẹ̀kan rí kò tún gbóddò ẹ̀ ni lẹ̀ẹ̀keji ...ọ̀kan ti ẹ̀lẹ̀ bẹ̀ẹ̀ tí mo fi tó àwọn agbófinró létí ní ẹ̀ ni wọn fi ẹ̀tẹ̀ sílẹ̀, wọn pa làpàlápà. Odindi ọ̀dún kan ni mo lò ní ọ̀gbà ẹ̀wọ̀n, wọn fi ẹ̀sùn ìbánílórúko jẹ̀ kàn mí... (o.i. 105)

My name is Báýò Bámigbádé... 'My Lord, the Police are nation destroyers, they are typical offenders. Once bitten, twice shy... a case had happened like this that I reported to the police and they failed to do the needful. I spent a whole year in prison as I was accused of defamation of character.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the opinion of the Yorùbá female novelists as expressed in the novels examined in this research, it is obvious that they paint the picture of the happenings in the society which is a feature of the Sociological Approach. If we observe our society carefully, we would discover that the Inspector General of the Nigeria Police Force sometimes direct his officers to leave the highways. However, this directive has never been effective as the Police Officers always return to the high ways after few days of complying with the directive. The senior officers of the Nigeria Police Force do not ensure strict compliance to this directive. Why is the order of the Inspector General of Police disobeyed and no step has been taken to deal with officers who flout this order? Are there no hidden agenda known only to officers of the Nigeria Police Force? These and many others related questions are what the Yorùbá female novelists have thrown to their readers in a bid to present a vivid image of the unholy activities of the Nigeria Police Force.

In line with assumptions of the Sociological Theory, it can be seen that the conducts of the Police in the Nigerian society is not different from what is portrayed by the Yorùbá female novelists whose works were examined in this study. Oftentimes, when there is a problem that requires the urgent

intervention of the Police, they give several ridiculous excuses. It is either the Police vehicles do not have tyres or there won't be fuel, and when there is fuel, tyres won't be available.

One fact that is evident about the Police as portrayed by Yorùbá female novelists is that majority of them are corrupt. There is also the lack of trust among them. Using their novels, the female novelists have succeeded in creating the awareness that individuals aspiring to become Police officers should be trustworthy, reliable and dutiful. They opine that a collaboration between the citizens and the Police is crucial in the course of combating crime and eliminating criminals in the society. The depiction of the Police in various characters by the Yorùbá female novelists in this research is a reflection of the Nigerian society in which the literary work is created. The personal experiences of that authors with reference to Police-related issues their societies are reflected in their works as basic features of the Sociological Approach.

6. CONCLUSION

With evidence in the cultural nuance of the society, the Nigeria Police Force has been depicted to have a long and prevailing history in committing atrocities in the society. These atrocities as reviewed in the article include receiving bribes, renting out of guns and ammunition to criminals, sabotaging the efforts of diligent officers, substituting innocent people to serve punishments in place of the actual criminals. In more extreme cases, becoming godfathers to criminal or venturing into criminal activities themselves.

The Yorùbá female novelists also attempted to explain the contributing factors to the collapse and pitiable state of the Nigeria Police Force, which includes the lack of required skills and training after joining the Police Force, with some officers not undergoing any additional training in twenty long years.

The Yorùbá female novelists establish that for the Nigeria Police Force to experience a positive turn around in the way it executes its responsibilities to the Nigerian people, there is a need to re-evaluate the standards put in place to review the performance of existing officers and terminate the employment

contracts of those found guilty of committing any of the atrocities discussed in this article in order not to corrupt other officers.

In addition, the government needs to upgrade the ammunitions needed in the Nigeria Police Force, provide additional training for officers at all levels so as to equip them with the latest knowledge and tactics needed to combat crimes in this era of digital technology. It is through these efforts that Nigeria can have a solid Police Force that will ensure that the crime rate in the country is significantly reduced.

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