

**POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION**

**GENDER POLICY**

**FOR**

**THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE**

## Chapter One

### (a) INTRODUCTION:

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) like any other Police Organization in the world plays an important role in the society. The Police are principally responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in the Society, upholding the rule of law and the protection of lives and property of the citizens.

Most Societies in the world are essentially patriarchal, although the level may differ from one Country to another. However, all modern public and private Institutions including the Nigeria Police Force are infused with this patriarchal culture. This has been the result of both the Traditional System and the Colonial experience. Gender discrimination, sexual exploitation and denials of life's opportunities to women are being presented as part of this culture that should be preserved. Gender inequality is the result of unjust economic, political and social relations.

Women are educated to believe and accept inferior social status in our society. In most Nigerian Communities, they have no rights to land, inheritance of family property and equal opportunity to education.

In the Nigeria Police Force, women are perceived to be marginalized and unofficially made to understand that they cannot attain certain leadership positions.

In summary, there are social cultural and religious beliefs and certain laws in the Police Act/Regulations that inhibit women from realizing their full potentials in the Nigeria Police Force which this Policy seeks to address.

(b) **SITUATION ANALYSIS (THE PROBLEM)**

There is a general consensus from within and outside the Nigeria Police Force that women are grossly under-represented and discriminated against in the NPF. According to E. O. Alemika and A. O. Aagugua's book on Gender relations and Discriminations in the Nigeria Police Force, women constitute only 4% of the force and about 8% of the officer cadre. The under-representation arose from the views expressed by some that women are not suitable for Police work, characterized by paramilitary duties such as fighting dangerous men in the Society with guns. However research has shown that less than half of Police work involves crime fighting.

The Police Act and Regulations 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2009 contains discriminatory recruitment laws against women aspiring to enlist into the NPF which makes for the low percentage of women in the force. Some of these laws which are founded in Section 42(3), Section 118(g) and Section 124 are discriminatory and they include:

- (i) Married women are disqualified from enlistment into the NPF
- (ii) Women are compelled to stay 2 years on the job after enlistment before marriage and are required to apply for approval to marry and the fiancé subjected to investigation and approval.
- (iii) Discrimination against female officers by prescribing limited training and restricted sphere of posting for Police women.

Section 128 of the Police Act also over regulated the dressing of Police Women to the extent that they are prohibited from wearing earrings, face powder or lipstick.

Other forms of Gender issues and discriminations apparent in the Nigeria Police Force are manifested in the following forms:

- Police Women are sometimes "appointed" into soliciting money from motorists on behalf of their male counterpart while on 'stop and search' duties.
- Sexual harassment from Senior Police Officers, especially unauthorized indecent touching of Police Women
- Making of uncomplimentary remarks against Police Women.
- Punitive posting of Police Women
- Police Women mandated to inscribe the alphabet 'W' before their Rank and Name to indicate that they are women. For example **W ASP Mary Ojoma**
- Police Women given special kind of A/P numbers to easily identify them as women.

(c) **JUSTIFICATION**

There is a growing awareness in the World about Women's Rights and the need for affirmative action. Consequently, Gender discrimination is now widely unacceptable in most societies of the World. There are Gender Policies in almost all public and private institutions in Nigeria duly approved and put in place to checkmate all forms of gender discriminations.

This Gender Policy for the Nigeria Police Force therefore seeks to create awareness about Gender issues and create Policies to safeguard the rights of women working in the Nigeria Police Force.

The Policy at the long run will make the Nigeria Police Force to a large extent devoid of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment

which ultimately will enhance efficiency, accountability and respect for all officers.

## Chapter Two

(a) **POLICY FRAMEWORK:**

The Gender Policy is formulated within the framework of the Nigeria Constitution which guarantees equality and right to freedom from discrimination. The Police Service Commission Establishment Act 2001 also enjoins the Commission to formulate and implement Policies aimed at the efficiency and discipline in the Nigeria Police Force.

(b) **POLICY DECLARATION:**

The Police Service Commission and other Oversight Bodies realize the need to stop all forms of Gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the Nigeria Police Force and accordingly, the NPF/PSC shall:

- (i) Recruit women into the Force in the same manner as their male counterparts irrespective of marital status.
- (ii) Stop Police Women from applying for approval to marry and presenting their fiancé for character investigation
- (iii) Post Police Women alongside their male counterpart to head State Police Commands and other Formations.
- (iv) Ensure that at least the two most senior female Police officers are in the top management team of the NPF irrespective of ranking.
- (v) Allow police women who so desire to wear uniform stud earrings

- (vi) Desist from placing the alphabet 'W' against a Police women's name /rank.
- (vii) Ensure that the Force numbering of Policewomen is in the same serial as those of their male counterparts.

(c) **GUIDING PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES:**

This policy is formulated in recognition and affirmation of the principles that "Every human being is born free and equal in dignity and right". There is also the need to comply with obligations under International Laws and Instruments such as:

- (i) The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. (CEDAW)
- (ii) The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
- (iii) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

### Chapter Three

(a) **GOALS OF THE POLICY:**

The overall goal of the Gender Policy is to put in place a Nigeria Police Force with appreciable percentage of women representation, with improved gender relationship devoid of Gender discriminations and sexual harassment.

(b) **OBJECTIVES:**

The specific objectives and targets include the following:

**Objective 1:** Incorporate the principle of CEDAW and other global and regional frameworks that support gender equality and women empowerment in the Police Act/Regulations and other laws.

**Targets:**

- (i) Recruit women into the Nigeria Police Force to reflect the Beijing Platform (30%) representation.
- (ii) Achieve equity and equality in employment opportunities and eliminate all discriminating and abusive practices on the grounds of sex, age or marital status against the employment of women in the Police Force.
- (iii) Repeal all discriminatory recruitment laws as contained in the Police Acts and Regulations 2004
- (iv) Institute the culture of respect for the human rights of women including freedom of expression.

- (v) Entrench a culture of gender sensitivity and equality principles in the Nigeria Police Force.

**Objective 2:** Educate and sensitize all stakeholders on the centrality of gender equality, women empowerment and sexual harassment.

- Targets:**
- (i) Training and workshops in the Police Institute on what constitute sexual harassment and the consequences.
  - (ii) All sexual harassment complaints to be forwarded to the Police Service Commission and complaint dealt with expeditiously within three months.
  - (iii) Offenders of sexual harassment will be held accountable for acts of sexual harassment and disciplined appropriately.
  - (iv) All acts of victimization against officers who complain about sexual harassment shall be considered as additional acts of misconduct and investigated and disciplined accordingly.

## Chapter Four

(a) **STRATEGIES:**

The strategic approach to the implementation of the Gender Policy shall constitute:

(i) Awareness Creation and Sensitization

There should be Gender Awareness Training for all Police Officers because many of them do not understand what constitute discrimination or sexual harassment or understand their rights. Sensitization would also focus on the enabling laws prohibiting sexual harassment and discrimination in the work place.

(ii) Training, Retraining and Re-orientation

Aside from training on Police practices and institutional procedures, there is need for training on institutional reforms and skill development for addressing specific issues like domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment.

Gender and human rights issues should be mainstreamed into all aspect of Police entire work and not considered a separate subject.

(iii) Research and Advocacy

There should be continuous research on the activities of the NPF and the findings of such research made available to the General Public through the electronic and print media. This would keep the Police in check and make them more accountable. Staff associations

such as Association of Female Staff should be encouraged to offer support to victims.

(iv) Sanctions

Sanctions for violators of the Policy should be clearly stated. Violator shall to be disciplined to serve as deterrent to others. There should be a description of the level of discipline that may be imposed for violations of the Gender policy

(b) **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

(i) The Nigeria Police Force (NPF)

The Inspector General of Police shall issue a zero tolerance statement to demonstrate total commitment to the Gender Policy.

The NPF to re-produce, distribute and post the Gender policy throughout the Police Stations in the Country and a copy given to every serving Police officer.

Provisions of the Gender Policy should be incorporated into the training programmes for serving Police Officers. A full course on gender issues should also be part of the training for new entrants into the Police Force.

The NPF shall also establish mechanism to monitor or report violator of the policy.

(ii) Police Service Commission (PSC)

The PSC as the Civilian Oversight Body should put in place a system to ensure implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Gender Policy.

The Public Complaint Division of the Discipline Department shall be made more functional with E-mail address and hot lines so that reported cases of discrimination and sexual harassment will be dealt with more expeditiously.

(iii) The Ministry of Police Affairs (MoPA)

The MOPA as one of the Institutions created to ensure Police accountability shall also play the role of policy implementation and monitoring.

(iv) Civil Society Organizations and Development Partners

The Civil Society Groups and Development Partners have responsibilities in the following area:

- a) Provide joint training sessions/workshops for the Police and all the relevant stakeholders to increase knowledge, understanding and respect.
- b) Assist in Policy formulation and implementation
- c) Raise awareness in the Police Force and the Society on the legal and Human Rights issues.
- d) Conduct research on the Police force and publicly distribute findings.