

**ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES OF THE
NDLEA IN CURBING DRUG ISSUES IN NIGERIA,
FROM 1989-2015**

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Abstract

The illicit drug and its challenges has become a major problem of concern to the general public, public affairs commentators and scholars. This has led to some form of policy formation response to finding lasting solutions to the challenges posed by drug related issues. It is against this backdrop that a suitable and relatively lasting solution was put in place by the Federal Military Government in order to demonstrate its awareness of the dangers posed by drug problem in society through the promulgation of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Decree No 48. of 1989 by the government of federal Republic of Nigeria in 1989. The study highlights, while making assessment of various achievement and failures of the NDLEA in curbing drug in Nigeria, with a view to analysing if the various reasons for setting up the organisation has yielded the desirable effort in tackling the menace of illicit drug relation issues in Nigeria. In order to get an in-depth analysis of the situation, the study, has adopted both the quantitative and qualitative approaches of research methodology. This leads to the discovery of various factors that has contributed for both failures and achievement of NDLEA in curbing drug issues in Nigeria. Finally, the research concluded by introducing measures through its recommendation, which suggests various ways through which drug scourge could be managed.

Introduction

In furtherance of the expectations of the federal government and the public on the National Drug Law Enforcement agency to formulate a lasting strategy to fight against the trafficking, production and consumption of hard drugs in Nigeria, the government deemed it important to demonstrate its awareness of the dangers posed by drug-related issues in the society. The demonstration was made possible through the promulgation and establishment of the NDLEA in 1989. The promulgation and establishment created a single authority for the coordination of effort aimed at tackling illicit-drug challenges in Nigeria.

However, from the period of the establishment of this organisation, as the studies is about to unfold, there has been some level of achievements and shortcomings of the agency in curbing drug trafficking, production and consumption in the country.

Therefore, having provided the basic objective for effective law enforcement in the area of achievements, the study has witnessed some NDLEA's mapped out strategies, which were meant for the accomplishment of the task set before it. These strategies are found to be implemented simultaneously because the drug war requires a multi pronged attack since its demand and supply must be tackled at the same time, otherwise the neglect of one would adversely affect the success in the halting of the other.¹ However, the achievements and failures of the NDLEA in curbing drug issues in Nigeria, from 1989 - 2015 is our main point of focus. The study is important because it does not seem that there have been a painstaking efforts aimed at documenting the achievement and failures of NDLEA in curbing illicit activities in Nigeria, from a historical point of view. This gap, however, is what this study intends to cover.

Secondly, the socio-economic, physical, and psychological consequences of drug abuse are too ugly to be imagined, especially their effects on the demography of the youth population, which comprises the entire labour force of the country. Therefore, adequate awareness and information is needed through research effort of this nature to enlighten the public on the activities of NDLEA in Nigeria. Additionally, apart from policies of prohibiting the sales and consumption of Illicit Drugs as means of prosecuting drug war in Nigeria. Much other alternative policy, like sociological concept, which advocates a philosophy that maintains moral bond between the individual and the society, through effective socialisation, should be drafted in as considerable and meaningful alternative to encourage the progress of NDLEA in curbing illicit in the society.

The study, therefore, is to examine the achievement and failures of NDLEA in curbing drug related issues in Nigeria. The study will help to proffer solutions through its recommendations to enlighten policy-makers to rise up to the challenges for a quick response in producing proactive measures on how to handle drug-related issues in the society. In analysing the information, the thematic, chronological analytical approach of historical methodology was adopted in the presentation of collected data.

The primary importance behind the adoption of personal observations, government document and other primary information was to provide adequate information on areas not captured by the written sources. These will be used to bridge the wide gap and deficiencies observed in documented secondary sources on the subject matter of the study. In analysing the study under examination, theories of Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi sociological concept, seems an ideal measure or standard on crime control management, since their theory is pointing toward the fact that a well-articulated human resource management, environmental management, character moulding philosophy, policing and punishing by legal authorities can deter people from getting involved in crime, especially drug-related offences in Nigeria, which is the study area. This will naturally abrogate the issues of illicit drug and demand in Nigeria.

A review of the literature shows various interests in analysing drug matters. For instance, Mark Thornton independently reviews the policy of prohibiting the sale and consumption of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana as great public interest, with much debate about the effectiveness of the "war on drugs" and alternative policies such as legalisation, decriminalisation, drug treatment, and medical marijuana. In his words, economists have been in the forefront of the debate, criticising the effectiveness of the war on drugs, and drawing attention to its "unintended consequences," such as violent crime and the corruption of police and public officials, and proposing alternative policies such as drug legalisation and decriminalisation.²⁸

In Obot's analysis of Nigeria's drug policies, the fight against drugs in Nigeria during the military era was based on the perceived need to achieve the United States of America (US) certification benchmarks, which consequently led to a failure to evolve a home-grown solution to the problems of drug. In fact, as his argument implies, the war on drugs resulted in significant economic, social and psychological consequences for Nigeria and Nigerians. So, even when it is became obvious that the war was failing to achieve its aim of getting these drugs out of the Nigerian society, the Nigerian authority, like its counterparts, showed a disinterest in looking at the other side of handling the drug problems. The paper draws from the basic arguments of the extant analyses, and takes a step in the direction of the analysis by and similar others. However, the paper also notes that there is a gap with regards to the full impacts of this war on the Nigerian people.²⁹

Craig Reinerman, in his part, dwelt on data from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), published documents, relevant periodical

literature, research and media reports to examine the nature, extent, modus operandi and a whole lot of complex issues and implications of the current drug policy,²⁸ and concluded that drug related challenges are causing nightmare to our society as it is consuming Nigerians in great numbers.³⁰

In an attempt to have an in-depth investigation into the situation, the study has been divided in three sections, representing clearly the issues concerning the Achievement and Failures of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), in curbing Illicit Drug issues in Nigeria. The first section serves as the introduction, which comprises the background to the study, statement of problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, methodology and sources of data, theoretical frameworks, literature review, and organisation of the study. The next section will highlight the Achievement of NDLEA in Curbing Drug issues in Nigeria, the second section will discuss, the failure of NDLEA, the subsequent will cover the finds, recommendation and conclusion.

Highlight of Achievements of NDLEA

One of these strategies employed by the agency in executing its giant strides was through the implementation of drug supply and demand reduction activities, known to be well acknowledged all over the world, especially by other African countries. This is informed by the fact that Nigeria is a party to all the UN international drug conventions and has also entered into bilateral agreements on mutual legal assistance with a number of drugs consuming and production countries. For instance, Nigeria is known to have made progress and achieved some commendable successes in the area of drug control delivery system. The NDLEA achieved these successes in collaboration with some friendly countries. Such countries include the USA, Great Britain, South Africa and Thailand.²

On the international scene, as mentioned elsewhere in the study, the untiring efforts and unprecedented enthusiasm exhibited by the agency in fighting the drug challenge are known to have given consent to the various United Nations Conventions, which set out to fight drug abuse and trafficking in parts of the world. Not only this, the NDLEA is considered to redeem the image of Nigeria abroad, arising from a lot of agreements it caused Nigeria to enter into, to formalise cooperation, information dissemination and exchange of technical assistance where necessary. Since findings have shown that drug danger is more prevalent amongst Nigerian youth, the agency is known to have taken bold steps by carrying the drug war to the doorsteps of this group which the society looks up to as the future leaders of the country, by strengthening the

activities of the life clubs formed in the secondary schools in the country to help to check the cancerous tendencies of the youth. The club is a replica of Boy Scout, Boys Brigade and the likes in functions. Also, in the universities across the country, Drug Free Clubs (DFC) have been introduced.³

Apart from issues concerning image laundering, the NDLEA, since its inception, has embarked on the training and manpower development. The agency's training and manpower responsibility is said to be central to the achievement of its vision of an efficient agency with evident intelligence gathering capability, operational effectiveness and administrative proficiency, which is set to be able to tackle the drug war in its totality. What are also fundamental here is its manpower development programmes which are said to be centred on its philosophy of capacity building through training and re-training of staff. This training, in turn, enables the officials of the agency to understand the magnanimity of the danger ahead.⁴

To achieve the foregoing objective, the agency's officials are, therefore, exposed to both local and international trainings to ensure that their skills are properly honed for the sensitive drug war, which is said to demand delicate handling, and the application of modern methods. To buttress the application of these modern methods, therefore, the agency was said to have embarked on providing an academy for training of NDLEA officials in their Jos academy. This academy is adopted as the regional academy for drug control by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to achieve the sole purpose of providing limitless training opportunities for the officials and men of the agency.⁵ These academy was said to have become a veritable ground for the training of other sister security organisations, as a clear indication that the manpower development policy of the agency is not an idle proposition.

It has become paramount to know that the illicit drugs situation in the country has become worrisome to the extent that a reasonable quality of imported narcotic drugs, which were either imported through the West African borders, or imported through the airport or seaport, are distributed within for local consumption. For this reason, it becomes necessary for the Law enforcement agents to dispatch into the streets where narcotic drug are sold, such as the hotels, clubs and dark alleys, where they are used and wherever they are stored, as part of the measure to eradicate illicit distribution in Nigeria.⁶

Similarly, in Nigeria the agency was said to have collaborated with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in drug demand reduction

activities in the country with a view to achieving the agency's goals. The agency was said to have collaborated with other government establishments to achieve the broad goals of drug demand reduction in Nigeria.⁷

As part of its achievement in the area of collaboration, in October 1990, for instance, the government of United Kingdom (UK) sponsored a three-man group of Her Majesty's (HM) Customs and Excise training team, which came to Lagos from London, to conduct a drug identification and investigation course for agents of the NDLEA. This was immediately followed by a trainer's course for selected candidates that took part in the drug identification course. The HM's Customs and Excise team gave the NDLEA training materials which included maps, training modules, video cassettes on drug identification and investigation. On the exportation front, drug enforcement agents in cooperation and coordination with other law enforcement agencies like customs, the police, air and sea ports security units, the armed forces and even officials of the airlines and sea-going liners which since then have been halting the movement of hard drugs out of the country and apprehending the drug traders.⁸ These very important giant strides have contributed immensely in drug control management in the country, this is believed to have made some progress in the area of law enforcement and drug demand reduction in Nigeria.

Similarly, from the time of the establishment of the NDLEA and the subsequent training of officials of the agency under the leadership of the first chairman/ chief executive, Mr. Fidelis Oyakhilome, the agency is said to have mounted an unprecedented battle against drug traffickers in the country, adopting in the process, various strategies aimed not only at checking the procurement of notorious narcotics like cocaine and heroin, but also halting the local distribution and re-exportation of drugs that had before now found their ways into the country. Some of the measures adopted towards the realisation of these drug policy objective by the agency at that time, were the introduction of visa clearance screening exercise in collaboration with some foreign embassies in Nigeria. Under this arrangement, however, intending Nigeria travelers to the known drug producing countries located mostly in Far East Asia and South America, were said to have been subjected to intense scrutiny at which the genuine reasons of their desired trip is ascertained, before they are recommended to the embassies of the affected countries to be considered for the issuance of their entry permits.⁹

A. A. Anivbassa pointed out that through this measure the NDLEA has been able to reduce drastically the number of Nigerians wishing to travel to drug

source countries and invariably a reduction in the importation of hard drugs in the society.¹⁰ In 1991 alone, it was estimated that a total of 2,483 persons applied for visa clearance, while only 1,268 were cleared and the rest never showed up.¹¹ The introduction of the screening measures, according to the 1992 NDLEA report, was as a result of the tactics adopted by the drug merchants, who then travelled to drug producing countries and lifted drugs from there, travelled straight to the user nations in Europe and America without transiting through Nigeria, thereby, circumventing the NDLEA's well- policed entry points at home. This particular strategy was said to have proved very effective by drastically reducing the incident of Nigerians arrested abroad for trafficking in dangerous drugs which were not routed through this country. The figures of Nigerians arrested attest to this.¹² For instance, between year 1994 and 2011, according to the NDLEA report for 2012, a total number of 47,028 males and 4,437 females were arrested for trafficking hard drugs out of Nigeria as shown in Table one in chapter 3.¹³

Other strategies adopted to increase the achievements of the NDLEA included procurement and installation of X-ray machines at all entry points and publication of photographs, and names of persons arrested and convicted for drug offences both at home and abroad in some major newspapers in the country. This particular strategy as mentioned before was adopted in recognition of the traditional abhorrence by Nigerians for persons involved in criminal activities such as drug trafficking, the situation which exposed traffickers and family members to a lot of public odium and ridicule.¹⁴

The intensified activities of the drug law enforcement agents here at home equally led to a dramatic reduction in the number of Nigerians and foreigners caught at various airports and other entry points and within the country in 1990 and 1991.¹⁵ For instance, *The Telegram Newspaper* of 2011 reported that a total of 475 persons were arrested in 1990 alone and 329,756 kilograms of illicit drugs seized, while in 1991, 290 persons were arrested with hard drugs, weighting 2173,547 kilograms. In the subsequent years, the number of persons arrested were said to have risen to 421 persons, with about 3,089,935kilograms of illicit drugs were seized in 1992, and in 1993 about 454 persons were apprehended with drugs weighing about 9,059.800 kilograms.¹⁶

In 1994, about 693 were arrested with drugs weighing 20,009.376 kilograms. Aside from these seizures, ¹⁷ a large consignment of 12,000,000 tablets of Permoline (a synthetic drug made from opium) were also seized in 1994, and in 1995, a total of 798 persons were arrested while 15, 515, 3138 kilogram of

drugs were seized. In continuation of all these achievements and relentless efforts made by the NDLEA, further 1187 suspects were apprehended in 1996 with 19,834.2686 kilograms of drug seizures recorded.¹⁸

In curbing trafficking by sea, the Marine Arm of the organisation was created. This was made possible with the acquisition of speed boats and the training of the NDLEA agents to man this all-important facet of the agency's operation. The facilities were said to be functional in all the riverine areas of the country from 1989. From that year, about 1,846 suspects were apprehended, while 15,026,437 kilograms of different types of illicit drugs were confiscated.¹⁹ According to *The Evening Times* of July 5, 1995. In analysing the agency's achievements, the newspaper had observed that of all these figures of drugs seizures, Indian hemp topped the list, perhaps, as a result of its indigenous nature.²⁰ Cannabis sativa (Indian hemp) is the only locally produced drug in Nigeria and the bulk of it is destined for export to other countries). It is Nigeria's most problematic drug, having reached all nooks and crannies.²¹ Following that analysis, the UNDCP report had observed that: "The cultivation of cannabis, hitherto a phenomenon believe to be more prevalent in the southern states of Nigeria, is spreading to almost all the states in the country".²²

Through the directives of the Marine Arm, an all - out assault was launched through the Operation Burn the Weeds (OBW) of those involved in the cultivation/trafficking of Indian hemp within the country either through land, sea or air.²³ According to OBW, 40,000 kilograms of cannabis was discovered in cannabis farms and destroyed in 1994. A breakdown shows 47,000 kilograms for 1995; 250,000 kilograms for 1996; 1,327, 7,282 kilograms for 1997; and 17,125 kilograms for 1998. The total estimated weight of Indian hemp harvested and destroyed on various farm lands across the country through OBW operation continued unabatedly to rise between 1990 and 1998, which stood at 3,477,308.2 kilograms.²⁴ *Newswatch Magazine of 1998*²⁵ has asserted that OBW, as introduced by the agency, was believed to have reduced the production and consumption of India hemp, which was said to be Nigeria's most problematic drug, probably due to its local presence and proliferation.

Additionally, in the area of legal operation, the agency's operation and the prosecution unit between 1990 and 1993 successfully won 345 cases, while 174 were lost. Between 1994 and 1998 a period described as turn-around years, 3205 cases were won while 73 lost. However, with the advent of democratic regime in the country in May 1999, the Federal High Court (FHC) assumed the responsibility of handling drug cases hitherto performed by the Miscellaneous

Offence Tribunals (MOT). Before the MOTs wound up in May, 1999, 929 convictions were secured by the agency.²⁶

Since the FHCs started handling drug related cases, the Agency has been successful in convicting 231 suspects. On the whole 1160 persons were convicted between Januarys and October 1999, while 15 others acquitted.²⁷ Similarly, the agency's prosecution unit also won 1,690 in 2015. This achievement can be said to have made Nigeria's vanguard of the global crusade against illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse, a successful one, even though the drug war has not been totally won. The agency was said to have been committed to its obligations under the United Nations Drug Control Conventions and was playing a leading role in regional counter narcotics programmes, in order to eradicate this menace.

Below is a table of illustration showing the prosecution of drug offenders by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) between 1990 and 2011:

TABLE 3. Prosecution of Drug Offenders in Nigeria by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Between 1990 and 2011

Source: NDLEA *Annual Report for 2011*.

Nevertheless, the agency has recognised the need for tackling the supply of illicit drugs side by side with reducing demand, in order to have an effective drug control policy which will stand the test of time, through public awareness campaign programmes in the print and electronic media-using both the English and major Nigerian languages. Jingles and anti-drug drama are produced in some major local languages and are distributed to television and radio stations

nationwide for transmission and broadcast. In addition, the *Newswatch*

	CASES	WON	LOST
1990	16	13	3
1991	78	42	36
1992	271	165	106
1993	154	125	29
1994	87	67	20
1995	343	333	10
1996	550	537	13
1997	1,104	1,088	16
1998	1,194	1,180	14
1999	1,474	1,545	20
2000	1,626	1,624	2
2001	1,172	1,172	0
2002	870	870	0
2003	817	817	0
2004	853	853	0
2005	779	779	0
2006	1,363	1,363	0
2007	1,508	1,459	49
2008	1,720	1,712	8
2009	1,506	1,497	9
2010	1,526	1,509	17
2011	1,501	1,491	10
Total	20,512	20,151	362

magazine of April 1998, quoting 1992 NDLEA report, asserted that the agency built five community-based drug rehabilitation centres in Rivers State, Lagos and Edo State as part of its drug demand reduction programme. The centres were said to be designed to encourage relations of drug addicts to seek appropriate medical attention for them outside the normal hospital settings.²⁸

Furthermore, the agency was able to enlist the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) to approve the inculcation of drug abuse education into the Nigerian school

curricula. Apart from getting all the states of the federation involved in the drug crusade, all arms of government and relevant ministries and parastatals like Information, Foreign Affairs, Justice as well as Customs and Immigration Services as well as the Presidency are said to be active and prepared to always support and complement the efforts of the agency.²⁹

Unfortunately, it may be observed from the available evident that despite well-articulated measures against the Indian hemp cultivation and production, the OBW, with its combative programmes, has not made a breakthrough in curbing Indian hemp cultivation, production and distribution. The possible question therefore could be: Have illicit drugs, like cocaine, heroin and their derivatives been eliminated completely in the country? if perhaps they have not, what are the probable constraints associated with these shortcomings or failures by the NDLEA in bringing the drugs to a halt since its establishment in 1989? The *Evening Times* of July, 1995 made an assertion that despite the provisions of the decree, drug peddling had continued to be on the increase as statistics showed in subsequent years that the figures of arrested persons, seizures of substances and convicted persons were still on the increase year in and out. In other words, there have been a continuous participation in illicit drug trading and consumption in Nigeria.³⁰

Failures of the NDLEA

Regrettably, the production of Indian hemp in Nigeria, for instance, is yet to be eradicated by the NDLEA, even though it was said to have been reduced, due to the activities of the agency. Apart from the problems of Indian hemp proliferation, one other major challenges that seem to give the NDLEA a sleepless night since its establishment, has been the issue of West African sub-region becoming a major transit and re-packaging hub for cocaine and heroin originating from the Latin American and Asian producing areas to European markets, the United States, the Middle East and South Africa, as well as being a final destination for this hard drug. This phenomenon indeed has become a major challenge for the agency, in view of the inflow of hard drug into Nigeria through the country's porous borders. This infiltration is said to have continued unabatedly until 2001, because at the time there were no well established narcotic coordinating units among the West African countries. It was observed that drug law enforcement departments in West Africa did not have appreciable collaboration with one another. Apparently, drug traffickers were said to have taken the advantage of this communication gap among them to establish cells across the region and move along the West African corridor with relative impunity. Indeed, where intelligence is to be shared with neighbouring

countries, one agency would find it difficult to release the information because of the uncertainty of the preservation of confidentiality of the information in the destination country.³¹

This situation led to the founding of the West African Joint Operations initiative (WAJO) in 2001. The WAJO initiative commenced as a collaborative effort between Nigeria's National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) regional office in Lagos. The focus of WAJO was to contain the exploding illicit drug trafficking problem across the region. This, in turn, was believed to create the opportunity for harmonization of the core activities of policing agencies within the region, and to help to expand the collective drug law enforcement scope, capacity and effectiveness for improved social security and well-being of the people of the region.³²

However, this initiative remains weak. More recently, it was believed that the situation had taken a dramatic turn for the worse, especially in some specific countries. For instance, persons transporting cocaine have been arrested in Nigeria, The Gambia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger and other countries on a regular basis, indicating a very worrying trend, since it is widely estimated that only about 10 to 12 per cent of the product is, in fact, intercepted worldwide (probably less than five per cent in Africa). This means that industrial quantities of hard drugs are making their way through the region with almost total impunity.³³ Similarly, European law enforcement records also show that Nigeria and other West Africans account for 90 per cent of all Africans arrested for drug trafficking. Local consumption has grown rapidly with up to 2.5 million drug users, India hemp comprising the largest number of illicit drug users.³⁴

Then, what are the causes of illicit drug circulation within Nigeria, even at the pick of the NDLEA achievements in Nigeria? From all indications, the study tries to look at the following factors as being responsible for these challenges:

1. tightening of border controls in some EU countries;
2. the reinforcement of security measures in the US after September 11 attack by terrorist organisation;
3. growing success against traffickers by law enforce agencies in Europe and the Caribbean's; and
4. best route found through West Africa sub-region and the advantageous location of this route; and
5. relative short distance between South Africa and West Africa and Europe. The factors were responsible for the inflow and circulation of cocaine into Nigeria and other West Africa countries.

Some of the answers to the NDLEA's failure in curbing illicit drug in Nigeria could be attributed to the under listed factors:

1. porous borders and difficulty in controlling them, as we have mentioned;
2. inefficiency and corruption in part of officials of the agency;
3. NDLEA sometimes lack resource and poorly equipment;
4. limited financial resources to man institutions and underpaid personnel of the agency;
5. inefficient justice system;
6. small quantities of drug are flown in small planes to West Africa and entries into Nigeria through its porous border; and
7. large quantities are put in ships that sail into West African and Nigerian waters where smaller vessels meet them to receive the drug and move them inland.³⁵

Also, gaps were identified resulting in insufficiencies within the system including inter- agency rivalry and distrust, and unprofessional and unethical practices amongst law enforcement operatives as part of the factors working against the brightness the of the agency. There was also poor inter-agency collaboration and cooperation at national, regional and international levels. For instance, there were this unethical attitude and lack of co-operation between the Nigerian security agents working on crime and anti-narcotics drug trafficking. These included the police, Customs and Excise authorities, the State Security Service (SSS) (now Department of Security Service DSS), Nigerian Immigration Services, National Intelligence Agency, among others. The duplication of their duties sometime resulted in confusion which tends to cause problem among them at the ports of entry. This challenge on entry ports was known to have created loopholes for drug trafficking to pass undetected. Records of arrest by one security agent may not be made available to the others. These tends to affect effectiveness in investigation, timely prosecution and inconsistent sentencing out comes.³⁶

Apart from the forgoing factors, there is a problem of human constraint, originating from lack of awareness by the general public about the harmfulness of hard drugs. There seems to be more yet to be done given the contagious nature of drug trafficking. The NDLEA's primary responsibility is to eliminate drug trafficking and consumption in the country. Therefore, when there is still the problem of inadequate awareness and cooperation from the Nigerian public, this means that the public is either ignorant of the harmful effects associated with illicit drug dealing or the important role their cooperation will play in protecting the country against the deadly drug scourge. Hence there, therefore, the need for public cooperation through the presentation of public

enlightenment programmes, to achieve one hundred per cent success is needed. The drug war requires the participation of all citizens. In Nigerian, the drug traffickers and drug peddlers live with the members of the public. Their illicit activities can only be uncovered if members of the public can pass information about them to the agency.³⁷

In another development, the war on drugs in Nigeria as currently being prosecuted is also discriminating. Its main targets as observed elsewhere in the study are targeted more on the poor and less-privileged; government officials are diplomatically exempted from intensive search in port of entry, unlike "ordinary citizen". Also in multiracial groups or society, discrimination is known to be characterized by racial tension and highly polarised ethnic divisions. In the U.S. for instance, David F. Musto,³⁸ J.A. Inciardi,³⁹ A. Thio,⁴⁰ all drew their conclusions when they explained that the poor and minorities, especially the Blacks and Hispanics, are the victims of this war. In South Africa, the majority of those arrested, or facing charges on drug offences are also mainly those at the bottom ladder of the distribution chains, and are black or "coloured". Many inmates are users or traffickers who are more or less privileged and expendable pawns in the game.⁴¹

In the area of corruption among agency officials, there are also incidents of drug trade fueling high level corruption, which sometimes include top government officials and drug law agency officials. This has also helped in weakening the drug control effort. For instance, the first Chairman of the NDLEA and former police boss, Mr. Fidelis Oyakhilome, was said to have left office in ignominious circumstances, due to an alleged complicity with some drug barons and one female socialite, Mrs. Jennifer Madike, in 1991.⁴² While the next chairman of the agency, Fulani Kwajafa, left office by ostensibly on health grounds, although, public speculations also remarked that he, too, was swept off by wholesome practices in the narcotics war. Similarly, Rappah Jamoare Mohammed took over the office, but got entangled in a Joe-Brown Akubueze drug case, which was reported to have imported 248.3 kilograms of heroin, valued at 651 million dollars at the time.⁴³ This and among other factors have contributed seriously to the weakness that has hampered the fight against drug trafficking and consumption in Nigeria.

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