

Nigeria Police Force and the Quest for Community Policing

¹OJO, Paul Jimoh

¹Department of International Relations

McPherson University

Seriki Sotayo, Ogun State

&

²ALADE, Adebola (PH.D.) and ³AKANDE Olubunmi (PH.D.)

^{2&3}Department of Politics & International Relations

Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State

Abstract

The Nigeria Police Force is constitutionally responsible for the internal security of the country. Section 214 of 1999 constitution(as amended) and Part 2 of 2020 Police Act provide that the police shall be responsible for the internal security of the country, and no other police force shall be established. However, the police have not been able to live up to the expectations of protecting lives and properties of the citizens. Factors that militate against effective performance of these functions include, lack of training, poor infrastructure, shortage of personnel, poor remuneration, obsolete operational equipments, corruption, among others. Previous administrations have set up presidential committees on police reforms. The main objective of the study is to interrogate the factors that necessitate calls for police reform and why it has led to the introduction of community policing. The population of study is the Nigeria police. The study is anchored on democratic policing theory as theoretical framework. The study uses secondary source and employs descriptive method of analysis. Findings revealed citizens quest for community policing was due to inadequate police personnel and poor knowledge of the geography of host communities which has impacted negatively on the efforts of the police to tackle crimes. The conclusion from the findings was that police relationship with the public is at its lowest ebb due to corruption, lack of trust and human rights abuse which has deepened negative perceptions of the force. The study recommends that police should be strengthened through training, provision of modern equipment, and deployment of police to their local government, and government should fund community policing through which collaboration between the citizens and police could be strengthened.

Keywords: Nigeria Police Force, Police Reform, Community Policing, Democratic Policing, Legitimacy, Trust.

Introduction

According to Momoh, Police is a branch of the government, which is charged with the preservation of public order and tranquility, the promotion of the public health, safety, and morals, and the prevention, detection and punishment of crimes. Police clients cut across all classes of the society, the big and the small; it also includes the good and the bad ones. (Tony Momoh, 2010) Nigeria Police is constitutionally assigned with the responsibility of overseeing internal security of the country. Therefore, Nigeria Police can be described as part of the executive arm of government that is constitutionally assigned to enforce law and order in the country. This responsibility is grounded in the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. Section 214 of 1999 Nigeria constitution (as amended) conferred the monopoly of internal security on the police, as the constitution is unequivocal on the provision that “no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof. Also, the 2020 Police Act, part 2, (a) provides for the establishment of Nigeria Police Force and section 4 states the functions of Police Force. (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 constitution (as amended)).

In recent times, Nigeria Police Force has been stretched to its limit with the series of security challenges the country is facing. From the Northeast, the activities of terrorist groups, Boko Haram and ISWAP have brought socio-economic activities to a halt with the attendant loss of lives and closure of schools. Also, the Northwest and North central are not spared from the security challenges as bandits, kidnappers, and other criminal elements have taken over these regions, thereby grounding socio-economic activities, thus halting citizens' means of livelihood as farmers could not do their businesses. In the Southwest, the activities of Fulani herdsmen that have resorted to damage of agricultural products, kidnappings along major roads, Oodua separatist agitators, and cultism have characterized the security situation while Southeast is battling with IPOB separatist movement, attack on critical public infrastructures, politically motivated killings, among others. The South-south has had its own share of the national malady with reported cases of kidnapping, oil theft, agitation for resource control, farmers/fulani herders' clashes, and the unabated attack on critical public infrastructural facilities and cultism. These security challenges have, in no small way, overwhelmed the police that is ill-equipped, poorly remunerated couple with shortage of personnel. It has also led to food scarcity with its attendant hunger and biting inflation. The Nigeria Police Force personnel strength is estimated to be less than four hundred thousand (400,000). About one hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) are attached to politically exposed persons and other VIPs. With a population of about 220 million, there is no doubt Nigeria is under-policed. (Special Summit on National Security, 2021).

Against this background, various groups and ethnic nationalities have called for deregulation of the security architecture of the country so that each region can take ownership of its security. In addition, regional efforts at strengthening their security are being put in place. This has culminated in the launching of Amotekun in Southwest, Ebubeagu in southeast while

Benue State in North central has launched its own security outfit code named Community Volunteer Guard. Also, inter-agency cooperation has led to the establishment of joint operational patrol between police and the Nigeria Army and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) (Obado-Joel,2020).

In the face of all these challenges, the Nigeria police has become an orphan with many enemies. While the public and successive governments, particularly the military, had not done much to better the lots of the personnel and its operational capacity, the police has suffered credibility problem from the public. However, the advent of democracy has brought about new concerns to the lots of the force in terms of improved condition of service, training and provision of operational equipment, both from government, NGOs and international and local donors like British Council, Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN) and HEDAYAH, multinational organizations, bilateral and multilateral supports from friendly countries.

This work will review relevant literature with regard to the Nigeria police, historical development of Nigeria police, a conceptual review of community policing and how community policing began in Nigeria and its impact on national security. It will also examine the circumstances that have warranted citizens' call for participation in their security. And appropriate recommendations will be made.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigeria Police Force is responsible for internal security of Nigeria. As the only organization recognized by law to provide this onerous task, the force is confronted with many challenges. These challenges include negative public perception of the force, which has created social distancing between the force and the public, inability of the force to live up to the expectations of the citizens in crime detection and prevention, poor training and service delivery, inability of the force to manage its relationship with the public, human rights abuse, among others. All these have called for paradigm shift. And to create this paradigm shift, new narratives for the force have to be created, hence the need for the reform.

While the police are battling with various issues like corruption, human rights abuses, among other problems that have created negative impressions about it before the public, the police as an organization has not been able to resolve its internal contradictions. These contradictions are grounded in the personnel complaints about the corruption in the management of police resources that are meant for the welfare of its officers and men and for the purchase of operational equipment. These anomalies have further called for the reform of the force if the force is to be relevant in the committee of police of the 21st century. (The News,21/10/2003)

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of reform on community policing. Other objectives are:

1. Examine the factors that necessitate calls for reforms of the Nigeria Police force.
2. Interrogate impact of Reform on Nigeria Police.
3. Assess the circumstances that trigger citizens quest for community policing.

The followings are the research questions:

1. What are the factors that necessitate the reforms of the Nigeria Police Force.
2. What are the impacts of reform on the Nigeria Police Force.
3. What are the circumstances that trigger citizens quest for community policing.

Review of Relevant Literature

The traditional role of the police is the protection of lives and properties of the citizens and non citizens residing within the territory of Nigeria. Also, part of police duty is to apprehend and prosecute offenders. According to Alemika, police primary duty is to promote harmony, the preservation of law and order in the society. Police exist to ensure peace and tranquility prevail among citizens. Police saddled with the task of ensuring citizens conform with the laws of the land as laid down by government and communities. (Alemika, 1993)

By virtue of the law that established the Nigeria police force, is responsible for the internal security. This power is derived from the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Police Act. According to section 214 of 1999 constitution, as amended, establishment of any other police force is prohibited. This provision is further strengthened by part 2 of the 2020 Police Act. These laws outline the functions of the Nigeria Police. Accordingly, the 2020 Police Act outlines the functions of the police as follows:

- a. Prevent and detect crimes.
- b. Maintain public safety, law and order.
- c. Protect the lives and properties of all persons in Nigeria;
- d. Enforce all laws and regulations without any prejudice to the enabling Acts of other security agencies; and collaborate with other agencies to take any necessary action and provide the required assistance or support to persons in distress, including victims of road accidents, fire disasters, earth quake and floods.

Even though these functions are exhaustive, Hills submitted that police functions are as defined by the president political calculations. Police duty can not be carried out without considering, in substantial ways, the interest of the political party in power. Whilst police gives impression that is serving public interest, it is actually serving the interests of political elites, hence police is often caught in the web of political manipulation (Hills, 2012)

The above description has further alluded to the submission that the character of police of any country often reflects the historical development, nature and characters of the political elites.

What is today known as Nigeria police is the colonial creation. Its operations and attitudes were shaped by the interests of its colonial master. Attitudes of alienation, and brutality have been heightened by many years of military rules. This has created a bad image and distrust between the police and the civil society. According to Ikechukwu, the Nigeria Police is losing on all fronts. While little or no attention is paid to his welfare by the government, the attitudes of the public is that of mistrust and denigration (Ikechukwu,1997).

Arase posited that the use/ involvement of non-state actors in the security architecture of the country could be attributed to the inability of police to deal with various security challenges in the country due to shortage of manpower and lack of resources, which has affected operational efficiency of the force. Towards this end, regional efforts have been activated in supporting the police to address these security challenges, which has led to the establishment of Amotekun, Ebube Agwu, among others.

The Nigeria police has played central role in conferring legitimacy in government. Even in the colonial era. In a bid to sustain the government in power, police have been politician allies in the manipulation of election results and suppression of opposition politicians. The Nigeria police has been described as spies, agent provocateurs and terrorists (Rotimi, 2001).

Momoh (2010) posited that police greatest challenge is image management due to its attitudes to the public and the protection they give to government officials and corrupt politicians. Another issue that has impeded the police is the dressing and carriage of its officers and men, which has drawn public anger against the force.

Democratic culture has affected the police, particularly in its mode of operations and relationship with the public. The social characteristics of isolation, loyalty and secrecy of the police has further created a wide gap between the force and the public. These characters of the police contradict what police represent in a representative democracy. This characterization also contradicts police institution as an agent of the state that should provide services to the people. Unfortunately, police is not driven by the philosophy of services to the people, rather, its attitudes to bark, growl and abuse people indiscriminately has been the driving force behind its actions and relationship with the public (Farkas et al,2020).

Conceptual Review

History of Nigeria Police

The Police Bill was passed in 1829 in the United Kingdom and this bill gave birth to modern policing. and Sir Robert Peel was instrumental in this development. According to Peel, police is

community, and community is police. This was how the philosophy of community policing began with the people as the centre of its activities. The philosophy of Peel police was that police and citizens are key to the fight against crime and the fear of crime.

The Nigeria police was a creation of the colonial masters whose main objective was to protect its political and commercial interests. In 1861, a 30-man Consular Guard was created. With the recruitment of more people, the Hausa police, which was later called Hausa Constabulary was increased to 600 were enlisted. With the recruitment of more Hausa slaves, the Constabulary was increased to 1200. The force served the colonial officials. In 1896, Lagos police force was established and it consisted of one Commissioner of Police, two Assistant Commissioners, one Superintendent, a pay Master, Quarter Master, Master Tailor and 250 other ranks. Before then, the Niger Coast Constabulary was formed in Calabar in 1894. The force was formed mainly to protect coastal areas.

The historical development of the Nigeria police took new turn in 1900 following the proclamation of Northern and Southern protectorates, with each protectorate managing its own police force (Alemika). (Alemika). Nigeria police has witnessed transformations due to constitutional and political developments. The local police's and the Nigeria police co-existed between 1930 and 1966. It should be noted that the colonial police's main responsibility was to defend colonial economic interests and to arrest, detain and enforce unpopular policies of colonial government. By the disposition of the police, it became the symbol of colonial hegemony. Therefore, citizens preferred to obey the police in order to avoid their trouble.

The Post Colonial Police

With the attainment of independence in 1960, no effort was made to reform the police force. Rather, what local politicians inherited and sustained was the vestiges of oppression and human rights abuses which the colonial police represented. With political and economic transformation, the political elites could have seized the opportunity to create a friendly police force, but reverse was the case.

Before 1966 military coup, the local police force in the Southwest and the North co-existed with the federal police. The local police was disbanded following the recommendation of the panel known as "The Committee" or otherwise known as Gobir Panel. Gobir was the chairman of the panel that recommended the abolition of local police forces and the prisons. This marked the beginning of unified police force that is antithetical to federal arrangement. This was under the military administration of Aguiyi Ironsi, but it was the administration of General Yakubu Gowon that implemented it.

It should be noted that the unification was a fall out of the activities of the police who were used as agents by politicians and traditional rulers for partisan political purposes, like oppression of opposition parties, electoral fraud among others (Alemika and Amusan et al.).

The fortune of the police did not fare better under successive military administrations as the police relegated to the background, even in the matter of internal security, which the constitution assigned to the police. The creation of joint security task force has assigned the supervisory role of internal security to the police.

The advent of democracy has not altered the constitutional role of the police on paper and the political control of the police by the central authority has not changed. Section 214 to 216 of the 1999 constitution (as amended) provides that “There shall be a Police Force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section, no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof. Section 4 of the Police Act also provides that “the Police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which are directly charged”(npf.ng.com). These provisions have shut out the establishment of any form of regional security outfit like Amotekun or Ebubeagu whose purpose was to complement the police effort in the internal security of Nigeria and in the face of obvious inability to adequately police the country.

Under successive military administrations, the fortune of the police did not fair better due to the negligence it suffered. This negligence manifested in the failure of military to provide necessary operational equipment, training and recruitment. The military negligence of the police force was a deliberate action as the military was not disposed to a strong police force that could challenge its legitimacy. Other institutions of the state like the Police Service Commission (PSC) were abolished. Many years of military rule affected human resource management and operational capacity of the police. The effect of the long negligence is still being felt by the police.

Community Policing in Nigeria

Prior to modern community policing, communities in Nigeria used an informal form of community policing that was founded on age groups. The activities of these groups are carried out with the support of traditional institutions. Communities' mode of punishment is through fine and banishment. According to Ikuteyijo (2012), age-grade informal policing was strengthened by the use of charms and other occult practices. However, the most popular form of community policing in Nigeria is the Vigilante Group of Nigeria. The group's main objective is to ensure the protection of lives and properties.

After several years of military rule, Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999. The new democratic dispensation has come with its socio-political challenges, and one of such challenges is an increase in crimes, and this has made the traditional method of policing inappropriate for the fight against crimes. Therefore, community policing was necessitated by the need to proactively address crimes and fear of crimes. However, in 2010, the Security Justice and Growth, in

conjunction with UK-Department for International Development and the Nigeria police, carried out training programme. The administration of President Olusegun gave meaning to community policing on 27th of April, 2004, with the formal launching of the pilot project in some states of the federation.

The introduction of community policing in Nigeria has its philosophical base on the principles of democratic policing of transparency, fairness, accountability and responsiveness. Globally, community policing has three essential concepts, viz: shared responsibility, prevention and a problem- solving orientation and the ability of the officer to apply his discretion. (Rohe, Metal) In Nigeria, community policing became a viable option due to the failure of the police to adequately address multidimensional security challenges confronting the country. Ibrahim Idris, the former Inspector General of Police (IGP), posited that the main goal of community policing in Nigeria was to encourage citizens' participation in their security and also form an active partnership with the police.

For the Nigeria police, a working relationship with the public through community policing was regarded as a veritable tool of redeeming its poor image with the public, it is another means of addressing the personnel inadequacy of the police. While the United Nations recommendation is 1:400, the reverse is the case in Nigeria, with an estimated population of 230 million, Nigeria is grossly under-policed, with about 400,000 police personnel. Out of this number, 150,000 of its personnel are attached to VIPs and politically exposed persons. The larger population is left with about 350,000. This population is no doubt grossly inadequate, couple with poor conditions of service, lack of operational equipment, including vehicles and communication gadgets and other modern weapons that are needed to fight modern crimes (Ibrahim, 2017).

The state of national security, which has thrown up security challenges in all the geo-political has necessitated the need to have a paradigm shift from the traditional method of security management to a system that will engage all stakeholders, the traditional institution, religious leaders, youths and women.

Further efforts at deepening community policing in Nigeria included the federal government allocation of more than thirteen billion naira to the funding of community policing and the recruitment and deployment of 9989 community policing constables across the country (The Guardian, 21/8/2020 & 7/7/2022). Additionally, through regular interactions, states and local governments have engaged traditional rulers and other stakeholders like religious leaders.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored in the democratic theory of policing. According to Bayley (2005), democratic policing is built around responsiveness and accountability which the adoption of community policing seeks to achieve. The purpose of democratic policing is that police service is disaggregated, which pre supposed that police is established to offer its services to all members

of the community regardless of the social and economic status. The democratic theory of policing must meet the basic criteria of accountability, the rule of law, just and fairness in its services to the people.

The democratic theory of community policing is built on the assumption that people need to be empowered, moving them to a new level of social engagement of inclusiveness. The inclusivity will include religious, business, civic and youths groups. This theory was derived from Poulantaz and Macpherson's theory of participatory democracy. The theorist posited that democratic theory of community policing will promote social cooperation and creativity.

However, the adoption of democratic policing into police operation is at variant with the strategy of policing that promote secrecy, isolation and group loyalty. While modern policing is a paradigm shift from reactionary policing to inclusive and proactive policing through citizens' participation to fight crime and fear of crime, yet police discretionary power in investigation and prosecution cannot be subject of debate as security is guided by self-interest. (Lukas, M.etal, 2021)

Nevertheless, the theory has helped us to appreciate the fact that modern security architecture is a product of citizen's constructive engagement with formal security sector, particularly the police, tasked with the responsibility of ensuring internal security.

Methodology

The method of data analysis adopted for this study is qualitative. The study adopts secondary data such as journal articles, magazines, newspaper publications, committee reports, such as the Presidential Committee on police reform, report of Civil Society Groups, books, the 1999 constitution, the 2020 Police Act, the report of the Centre for Law Enforcement (CLEEN) and report of National Human Commission among others. The study used thematic and content analysis of the data collected. The study also outlined the various efforts of government and the management of the police force at improving the image of the police and changing citizens' perspectives about the force.

Nigeria Police Force Reform and introduction of Community Policing in Nigeria

According to Alemika and Chukwuma, the incursion of military into politics has done more damages to the police as an institution, as the military government ignored it. The police were not equipped in terms of personnel, training and operational equipments, as the military believed it could survive and managed internal security without much input from the police. Also, from 1966, the political structural changes that took place also affected the operational command of the police force. The creation of more states under different military regimes from 1966 to 1997 affected the structure of the police with the creation of more zonal commands and departments.

Tony Momoh listed the misfortune of the Nigeria Police Force to include the followings:

- a. Police incessant killing of innocent citizens;
- b. Extortion and false accusations;

- c. Betrayal of public trust by liaising with culprits to ensure successful robbery/ assassination process; and
- d. Human rights abuse.

With the advent of democracy, which has compelled the military to go back to their barracks and perform the constitutional role of defending the territorial integrity of the country, more is expected from the police in the maintenance of internal security. Before 1999, the Nigeria Police suffered in all areas, but Sunday Ehindero, the former IGP acknowledged new lease with the support it received from the civilian administration under Olusegun Obasanjo. The support included the approval of recruitment of more personnel, supply of modern equipments among others. Nevertheless, the state of the police informed the setting up of presidential committees on police reform. This paper will examine briefly the various efforts made by previous civilian administrations to reform the Nigeria police.

Between 1999 and 2012, three committees were set up to look into how the fortune of the police could be better. The committees are:

- 1. The Muhammad Danmadami Presidential Committee set up in 2006 by Olusegun Obasanjo
- 2. M.D. Yusufu Presidential Committee set up in 2008 by Shehu Yar'Adua ; and
- 3. The Civil Society Panel on Police Reform.

The Muhammad Danmadami Presidential Committee

This committee was set up by the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo with eight terms of reference.

- 1. To review and recommend measures on the re-organisation, administration and control of the Nigeria Police with a view to enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in its operation and service delivery.
- 2. Re-appraise existing strategies and of crime prevention and control, including the intelligence and investigative capabilities of the Force and make recommendations towards improvement.
- 3. To examine force recruitment policy, equipment scope and standard of training and other personnel development activities and make recommendations for the modern Nigeria Police.
- 4. Examine ways and means for enhancing remuneration and welfare package of the Police, including provision of adequate office and housing accommodation with a view to boosting morale of officers and men.
- 5. To ascertain the general and specific causes of low public opinion and confidence in the police, particularly on corruption issue and proffer ways of restoring public trust in the institution

6. Provision of adequate logistics support for the force (including transportation, investigation, equipment information, and communication technology.
7. Examine the issue of community policing and recommend how best it can be adapted and adopted in Nigeria.
8. To make any other recommendations for the improvement of services of the Nigeria Police Force.

The M.D. Yusufu Presidential Committee on the Reform of Nigeria Police Force

The committee was set up by the administration of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. The Committee was given 4 terms of reference.

1. Examine the present state of the NPF and review previous efforts and government white papers on the re-organisation, restructuring, and repositioning of the Police.
2. Identify and recommend definitive measurable and practical measures for the enhancement of effective police service delivery, including possible areas of assistance from our development partners.
3. To examine and recommend measures needed for complete transformation of the Nigeria Police into an efficient and proficient agency for the maintenance of law and order in the country.
4. To make any other recommendation (s) deemed necessary by the committee.

Some of the recommendations of the presidential committees are:

1. Adequate funding of the police;
2. Address the manpower need and promotion of good accommodation and offices and upgrading of communication facilities;
3. Discipline of police officers involve in human rights abuse, reform the criminal judicial system and performance of oversight functions by the Senate and House of Representatives.
4. Introduction of community policing, need to re-orientate the officers and men of the Nigeria Police force;
5. Outlaw the ethnic and other militia groups; and
6. Provision of insurance policy for police officers.

Implementations of the Recommendations of Presidential Committees on Police Reform

Undoubtedly, the implementation of the recommendations of the presidential committees would have impacted and strengthened the operational and professional capacity of the police. However, the failure to implement key reforms in the police force was attributed not only to a

lack of funds but, as Naankilel asserted, also to the absence of political will and necessary support from bureaucrats and top echelon of the police. Nevertheless, the administration of Obasanjo gave approval to the recruitment of 40,000 personnel for five years period. This is with a view to improve on the strength of the police that was abysmally poor as at 1999 when the civilian took over. Also, more operational vehicles were purchased for the police (Waziri, 2011), the police college in Wudil, Kano State was upgraded into a degree awarding institution as part of efforts to improve on the education of its personnel; minimum entry into the police was reviewed among others.

The presidential committees was accused of lack of inclusiveness, as critical stakeholders like the civil society groups, student associations, media and victims of police brutality were not constructively engaged in the course of the work of these committees. The civil society groups felt the need to look into the issues from other perspectives and after wide consultations, the panel made a number of recommendations to the government of President Jonathan on how to create a new police force that is established around the people.

The panel has the following terms of reference:

1. To look into the mission of the police, adequacy of its legal framework, specialization of functionalities, performance appraisal systems, strength of oversight agencies, coordination of policing agencies, and corruption;
2. Examine the scope and standard of training and other personnel development issues in the NPF to determine their adequacy or otherwise and make recommendations on how to improve them.
3. Determine the general and specific causes of the collapse of public confidence in the police, and recommend ways of restoring public trust in the institution.
4. Address the issues of state police, community policing, local or regional police, police accommodation, communication and media technologies, and multiple agencies.

Some of its recommendations are:

1. Amendment of section 4 of the Police Act that incorporate police as a service organization.
2. Amendment of section 215 (3) of the constitution, section 9(4,5) and 10 (1,2) of the Police Act to restrict the presidential operational control on the police.
3. Amendment of sections 215(1) and 216 (2) to make the appointment of the IGP competitive so as to reduce political control or influence on the IGP.
4. Decentralization of the structure and powers of the police to zonal, State, Area and Divisional Commands.

5. Abolition of general duty. Instead, the panel recommended that police force should recruit diverse professionals.
6. Lifting ban on the right of the police to form a union as guaranteed in section 40 of the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria;
7. To deepen the effectiveness of community policing, the panel recommended that police officers should be encouraged to live amongst the people. (Civil Society Panel, 2012)

Advent of Democracy and the Quest for Community Policing in Nigeria

The Military's incursion into Nigerian politics did damages to the fabrics of the Nigeria system, including the Nigeria police. The near two decades of military rules relegated the police force to the background. However, the advent of a democratically elected government in 1999 ushered in a new era, prompting a reevaluation of how to rejuvenate the police force through reforms, considering it an integral part of the democratic process. The involvement of donor agencies in Europe and America gave strength and vitality to the crave for reforms. For instance, during Obasanjo presidency, all police chiefs appointed often anchored their tenure on police reform that is built around fighting corruption and training of police officers. Ironically, the police chiefs were often consumed by the cankerworm of corruption they promised to fight. While Balogun, a former IGP was jailed for corrupt enrichment, Ehindero was also accused of collecting two hundred million naira from politicians after the 2007 elections. (Hills, 2012)

The advent of democracy has called for the review of existing security architecture of Nigeria. The new thinking in the security circle is that there is the need to have a radical departure from the traditional method of policing to people oriented policing, that focuses on building governance around the people, including community policing. Therefore, community policing can be described as part of efforts of to bring governance to the people at grass root. The philosophy of community policing is to shift focus from the state institutions as they have failed to address diverse interests of the citizens. Therefore, community policing is built around three institutional arrangements:

- a. Safety Centre through collaboration between the people and state actors. This approach offers opportunity to citizens to discuss and make inputs on security arrangement that will suit their peculiarities.
- b. Creation of forum that will involve all stakeholders working together to design policing methods that will benefit them (Shearing, 1997)
- c. As emerging democracy, there was need to transform the police from the state based with the monopoly of physical coercion to people based.

To give necessary legal strength to the implementation of Community Policing, Nigeria National Assembly repealed the 2004 Police Act and enacted 2020 Police Act. Under the 2020

Police Act, Part 11 provides for the establishment of Community Police Forums, and Community Police Boards at Divisional and State levels. These efforts is to promote continuous engagement between citizens and police, it is also to promote co-operation between Nigeria Police and community in fulfilling the needs of the regarding police, improve the rendering police service to the community and improve transparency and accountability in the provision of police services to the community (2020 Police Act)

The new law could be attributed to government response to the yearnings of people for their involvement in designing and implementing their own security in accordance to their needs, cultural orientation history and social setting.

The quest for community policing is part of strategy for managing internal security. Managers of Nigeria internal security found that the traditional method of approach to security has outlived its relevance as crime is driven by technology and socio-economic and political variables, which could allow be tackled through engagement between the police and community residents. Through this process, police and residents can holistically address common security concerns.

Besides the allegations of police poor performance and collaboration with criminals which has further deepened mistrust between the police and the public, there is high level of impunity which has become the order of the day, as criminals no longer fear the consequences of their actions. Criminals are more confident when their cases are reported to the police as they have ways of securing their release without facing the full weight of the law. (Amusan & Luqman).

Another factor that has encouraged the introduction of community policing is the understanding that engagement of citizens in their security is part of efforts at promoting environment security, which is one of the dimensions to national security. Such promotion will encourage economic development, remove impediments to foreign investment, reduce local crimes, improve food production and reduce third world expenditure on military expenditure.

For Nigeria, introduction of community policing is part of justice reform process and promotion of rule of law. Community Policing encourages traditional institutions and police authorities to work together in resolving minor issues that hitherto would have warranted legal process and detention of accused. The resolution of minor offences like stealing, fighting, among others will contribute to the decongestion of prisons. Some donor agencies often dedicate their donations to judicial reform and good governance, which community policing seeks to promote (Charles, 2002)

Community policing could also become one of the strategies for peace building as it has been argued by peace theorists. Development within security circle has shown that kinetic approach in solving insecurity problems in communities have not achieved the desired results, and as a models of sustaining peace, community policing requires continuous engagement

between members of community. Through this regular interactions, members of community could strike social bonds that could strengthen community peace and de-escalation mutual suspicion and community hostility. This approach will include the engagement of vigilante groups, religious leaders, corporate organisations and civil society groups.(Lengmang,2019)

In Nigeria, even though government officials and police chiefs acknowledged community policing as foreign import, yet they offered to support community policing philosophy because it comes with democratic contents in view of the support it received from western democratic countries like UK, USA, Japan and Germany. Also, the program came with fanfare because politicians want to be seen as promoting and strengthening internal security. Furthermore, the project was supported with huge foreign donations which political leaders, government officials and police chiefs see it as an opportunity to entrench their corrupt practices. (Hills,2012)

One of the fall outs of Police reform was government increase funding of community policing project. The sum of #13.3 billion by the federal government for the take off of the training and recruitment of community police constabulary. The IGP has deployed 9989 community police officers to state commands after they had received training in areas of human rights abuse, intelligence gatherings, among others. The officers were deployed to their local government to support police in intelligence gatherings and to assist police in fishing out criminals that live among them (The Guardia, 2022)

Conclusion

The Nigeria Police Force is an endangered specie. While it is derided by the public by his conduct in and out of uniform, the government has paid lip service to the welfare of the officers and men of the force. This can be deduced from the lack of political will of political officer holders to carry out total reform of the force as recommended by different Presidential Committees and the efforts of NGOs. However, the advent of democracy has necessitated the need to carry the out reform of the NPF as the institution is critical to the success of democracy in Nigeria.

In view of foreign partners' interest in police reforms and their financial and material commitment to it, the Nigerian government has no option than to demonstrate the political will in promoting community policing, which is one of the cardinal objectives of foreign development partners. No doubt, such a partnership opened a window of opportunity for the police to receive more financial support and training and for the citizens to collaborate with the police. Local NGOs and foreign development partners like HEDAYAH have engaged in joint training of police officers and citizens, with a view to developing good working relationship between the police and civil society that will eventually lead to improved information sharing and trust between the police and the public. This, no doubt, has implications on the success or otherwise of community policing in Nigeria (Hedayah, 2018).

Also, adoption of community policing is critical to promotion of community peace and development.

Recommendations

This paper has taken a holistic examination of the NPF in the context of its historical evolution and its impact on policing in Nigeria, particularly how various reform efforts have impacted on community policing, which is part of efforts at reforming the police force. Policing in Nigeria has taken various developmental stages from the colonial police to national police. The historical development of Nigeria cannot take away from it the fact that the force was not established to promote the interests of Nigerians; rather, it was part of colonial weapons to suppress the people so as to enable colonial masters to exploit their natural resources and promote their economic activities.

Therefore, the introduction of community policing is part of efforts to re-orientate the police and make them accommodate tenets of democracy that include human rights, fair hearing, and due process, which are crucial to the institutionalization of democracy and confidence building in the citizens. In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Government should revisit previous reports on Police Reform, study their recommendations and implement them accordingly. These recommendations, if implemented, would have positive impact on the police and the country at large.
- b. The Nigeria Police Force has not come to the reality of a new political dispensation. They still carry on the colonial legacy of brutality and suppression of citizens agitations. Unfortunately, this legacy has been improved upon by the political class, on whose hands the police have become tools of oppression, extrajudicial killings, extortion, poor justice system, among others. In view of this, human rights community must continue to rise to the occasion.
- c. More training for community police officers is advocated. The training should be conducted in conjunction with the citizens and NGOs, including school children and those in higher institutions of learning.
- d. Police need to be transparent in its dealings with the public, particularly on issues that affect them. This is another way of confidence building between the police and the public;
- e. For citizens to appreciate the roles of the police force under the present democratic dispensation, the police should form a partnership with the media. This can be done through opinion articles, editorial opinions and organizing village meetings in collaboration with political and community leaders like the CDAs, religious leaders, youth leaders and other stakeholders;
- f. The federal government should make more fund available for the implementation of community policing; and

- g. The police need to increase on the frontiers of its communication. It needs to interact more with CDA and CDC, student associations, NGOs, community and religious leaders.

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