

SOCIAL POLICY AND PLANNING

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Abstract

The delivery of internal security is the exclusive role of the government and should be done with all urgency, seriousness and sincerity. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) presently lacks: adequate personnel, adequate funds, adequate infrastructure, up-to-date equipment, intelligence training, specialized departments, freedom from political interference cum manipulation, discipline, and technology, all of which is essential for effectiveness and efficiency. It is based on this provision that this paper attempts to remedy the inadequacies of the Nigeria Police Force arguing that in spite of the socio-economic, ecological and socio-cultural impediments of the institution and the objections against decentralizing the institution, having a state police is the most effectual way to go for it will have a far reaching positive effect in curbing security, crime, armed robbery, kidnappings, and extortion currently bedeviling the Nigerian state especially at the rural level, after all, most of the groups start by organizing themselves at this level.

Introduction

The need for safety and security is not only inherent but is also an instinctual need. Man craves the need to be safe, sound and free from attacks of any kind. Man as a social animal feels obligated to constantly interact, and in this course of this intermingling, man is bound to offend and be offended, man is bound to launch and suffer spasm, hence the need to secure and save man from man, for man first of all is the enemy of man. One would not blame the creator for giving man the task of dominating and subduing the earth since man has misconstrued this divine assignment to mean subjugating his fellow man. In view of this, there is no gainsaying that safety is not just a requisite but is a necessity. Little wonder in his theory of human needs, Abraham Maslow gave the safety and security need a favorable position in his five-tiered hierarchy of needs. It is based on this premise that one begins to look at how man came to be in dire need of safety and security and how well this grim desire has been met. The society is now in a state of one-eyed slumber where one does not sleep with two eyes closed for fear of attack and reprisal attack.

Police refers to the socio-political and quasi-legal institution with the responsibility of enforcing criminal law and the maintenance of law and order (Akuul, 2011).

Police can also be defined as a civil organization whose members are given specific legal powers by the government to carry arm and ammunitions for the task of maintaining public order, solving and preventing crimes and supporting other sister security agencies to achieve internal security in the country.

Policing on the other hand, refers to measures and actions taken by a variety of institutions and groups (both formal and non-informal) in the society (led by the Nigeria Police Force) to regulate social relations and practice in order to secure the safety of members of the society as well as compel them to conform to the norms and values the society expects of them.

The Nigerian police force (NPF) is the principal law enforcement agency in Nigeria with staff strength of about 371,800 and plans to increase the force to 650,000. The agency is currently headed by IGP Ibrahim Kpotun Idris. The history of policing in Nigeria can be traced to three epochs;

1. Pre-colonial era
2. Colonial era
3. Post-colonial era

Crime prevention in the pre-colonial era was the duty of indigenous institutions responsible for crime control such as age groups, traditional cult groups, palace guards, among others.

In the colonial epoch, policing was operated based on the provisions of the British law, there was a paradigm shift from the traditional pattern of policing where much emphasis was placed on traditions, customs and unwritten law to an era where policing was institutionalized and criminal codes and different pieces of legislation guided the custom.

NPF was established in 1820, in the post-colonial era, the NPF performs conventional police functions and is responsible for internal security generally, it supports the prison, immigration, and custom services and performs military duties within or outside Nigeria as directed.

THE ROLES NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE PLAY

1. Prevention of crime
2. Protection of lives and properties
3. Enforcement of law
4. Maintenance of peace and public order
5. Providing a wide range of services to the citizens

Using the structural functionalism theory which explains that the social structure as a whole needs its constituent elements to function properly. A common analogy by Herbert Spenser that norms and institutions are organs that work toward the proper functioning of the body of the society. The police are found in this category to maintain order for the smooth functioning of the society. Nowadays the police work in opposite of what they are meant to do due to corruption and other challenges discussed below.

Challenges of the Nigeria Police Force

The Nigeria Police force (2008) in its annual report submitted that the police is plagued by a myriad of factors such as:

1. Lack of resources, poor condition of service
 2. Lack of appropriate and adequate training,
 3. Poor government support and ill-equipped workforce, Coupled with these are the:
 - i. Police extortion
 - ii. Bribery
 - iii. Electoral fraud
 - iv. Harassment
 - v. Corruption and other vices common among the police system which culminates to lack of efficiency.
- The challenges faced by the Nigerian Police Force can be collapsed under socio-economic, Ecological and socio-cultural factors.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Corruption

An average Nigerian without the full knowledge of how the NPF operates, its structures, its leaders, or even its budget, can easily relate to a common sensation that the Nigerian policeman is corrupt. This does not arise from tales or mere thoughts but from practical experiences in the forms of extortion, employment patronage, Bribery, nepotism, misappropriation and kickbacks. Adedayo and Ojo (2009) put it aptly when they aver that without doubt, the Nigeria police is really enmeshed in corruption like several other state institutions. If personnel of other institutions engage in corruption at all, they do it perhaps with caution while that of the police is done more in the full glare of the public. This manifestation of corrupt practices in the Nigerian police has really gone too far to mar the image of the police in the eyes of the public. If anything, the Nigeria police is an institution that no Nigerian loves to come in contact with despite the fact that it is supposed to be a friend of the society.

Their contribution is an attestation of what an average Nigerian perceives of the Force and why they so much loathe of the "men in black". Alemika (1999) postulated that the police corruption is a serious

issue because they are expected to be moral as law enforcement agency. The issue of police corruption is an undeniable fact with several evidence of their involvement. These among many others are; police connivance with some individuals to help offenders out of police custody after obtaining money from suspects, closure of case files, escorting vehicles loaded with contraband goods and stolen items, stealing from crime scenes, supply of police arms and ammunition with police uniforms to criminals for monetary gain etc. Notably and most demeaning of the forms of corruption exhibited by the NPF is extortion from motorists on highways. They do this without regard for the law or respect for their uniform. As put by Newswatch Magazine (2003), “more often than not, Nigeria Police personnel are seen unashamedly with guns tucked under their arms or pointing at motorists demanding and collecting N20,000 from each passing commercial vehicle they come in contact with”. The Inspector General of Police (IGP), is waging serious war against public extortion and so far he has admitted arresting no fewer than 250 officers and men of the Police with the sum of close to N100,000.00 recovered from them”.

Funding

To effectively discharge their duties, the Nigerian Police Force needs to be adequately funded even though this seems to be far off in reality considering the total amount budgeted for security in the budget. The truth however remains that without proper funding, the NPF cannot deliver on its primary assignment. The funds accruing to the Force is not enough to cater for their necessities considering the rising manpower (though low compared to the entire population), machineries, training, hi-tech gadgets, modern tools et., as experienced in stalled promotions, delayed salaries etc. We therefore should not expect a transformed Force without a transmuted remuneration. It is clear that without the uprooting of the vestiges of corruption from the NPF, there would not be any meaningful development or rebranding as demanded by the populace. A lot is expected from the NPF but they seem to be falling of standards and expectation due to lack of funds and poor remuneration which has been worsened by entrenched corruption in the institution, which means that even if there allocation is increased, there is the tendency that it will be looted and re-looted. Hence, there is the need for a total overhauling of the structure in such a way it is broken down and placed under various governments who will properly monitor the activities of the police and be held accountable for their actions or inactions.

Ecological Training

The policeman is supposed to be a friend of the citizenry and not otherwise so also the policeman has to be trained in a friendly environment so as to be friendly not to be trained like a criminal who is gearing up to be the enemy of the state. At present the NPF lacks proper training especially in line with modern day practices. The use of hi-tech gadgets, interrogation tactics, subduing tactics etc. are missing elements in the NPF. With such important missing elements, one wonders the chunk of police officers we have. The use of guns should be the last option when Tasers can be deployed to subduing a non-cooperative suspect in such a way that casualties are minimized especially when they are not yet proven guilty.

Similar to this issue of education and minimum entry requirement into the NPF which needs to be revisited to be at least Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE). There is the need for the Nigerian Policeman to be able to communicate effectively in English language since they will be dealing with various sets of people with different levels of education.

Manipulation

The NPF has been accused of subject to manipulation by the ruling or dominant class so much that people have lost confidence in the Nigerian police. In a plural state such as Nigeria where religion and ethnic affiliations are sensitive elements, we cannot afford to have the “guardians” of the society in the pocket of one or few people as this spells doom and perversion of the force. As noted by Olong and Agbonika (2013), the ultimate power of control over the police in Nigeria resides with the President. The Commissioner of Police in charge of a State command is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining security within the State and in carrying out such duty, the Government of the State may

give to the Commissioner of Police of that State such lawful directions for that purpose. The Commissioner of Police has discretion either to carry out the instruction immediately or seek the permission of the President or the Minister-in-charge of Police Affairs in the country. The provision ensures that the ultimate control of the Police remain with the Federal Government. This is very dangerous in a democratic setting as too much power is placed in these individuals who can manipulate the force for realization of their selfish interest. According to Olong and Agbonika (2013), one sad aspect of the Nigerian Police under the present dispensation is that the Police have become a tool for the perpetration of electoral malpractice and an instrument in the hand of the ruling Government to frustrate popular democracy.

Interference

Political intimidation and politicking is becoming a popular instrument of governance in the Nigerian space. The police have been constantly used by the ruling class to oppress, suppress, intimidate and shut up opposition by interfering with the structure and operations of the force thus making the police force a personal property of power accumulation by the political elites either directly or indirectly. This form of interference however is detriment to the development of the institutions whose leaders are mere puppets and stooges of the ruling class thus fastening their initiative, innovations and discretionary tendencies to the mercy of the “master”.

Rotimi (1999) (cited by Adebayo and Ojo, 2009) opine that the NPF can be used to perpetuate anti-democratic practices which is antithetical to sustenance of democratic values is electoral fraud. At all elections, the Nigerian Police is never left out. Thus, politicians have always been finding good allies in them. Members of the opposition parties are harassed at will by policemen to ensure that election results are tilted to the advantage of the highest bidder. It is difficult for elections to be rigged out without the active connivance of policemen, going by the past experience.

There is no gainsaying that the NPF needs to be rescued from the hands of ruling class where it has been subjected to manipulation, intimidation and interference and become totally independent so as to effectively discharge its duties to the Nigerian citizenry. However, this is difficult if not impossible considering the present mode of operation where the police force is centralized and under the control of few individuals. To fully realize its potentials, bringing innovation and creativity to bear, the NPF needs to be decentralized and allowed to grow at different levels under different governments with healthy competition.

Socio-cultural Bad image

The Nigerian Police Force is suffering from great distrust from the general populace who is at disparity with the ways and methods of the “black uniform”. Nigerians feel more threatened by a policeman than by an armed robber. After all, an armed robber hardly robs in daylight or with impunity unlike the policeman who does it with confidence. This bad image as known to both young and old has weakened the connection between the policeman and the common man where in the latter ascribes bribery, corruption, extortion, embezzlement and forcing victims to pay for bail and investigation, with the policeman. In the words of Adebayo and Ojo (2009) “the police have always been found wanting and incapable of stemming the crises most especially because of the disdain for them by members of the public”. With such a stark distrust, disdain and disconnect with the NPF, it is not surprising that the common man does not rely on the institution for provision of safety and security and such a relationship is injurious to the Nigerian state.

Lack of equipment and facilities

Armed robbers and kidnapers have adopted some more sophisticated medium and tools in carrying out their attacks. The use of waterways to escape robbery was formerly alien to the Nigerian space until recently when robbers after an attack in Ikorodu, Festac, and Lekki environs of Lagos State, not also forgetting to mention that of Agbara, Ogun State. These are pointers that Western forms of attacks are

beginning to be imported into the country and the NPF cannot afford to be lagging behind in nipping it in the bud before it becomes another industry. The NPF is presently deficient in the supply of facilities such as speed boats, surveillance systems, drones, helicopter, horses, Satellite tracking system, Tasers, high speed vehicles and motorbikes, national database, technology, communication gadgets, spy gadgets, computers and other sophisticated devices needed for crime detection and crime rate reduction.

Inadequate personnel

It is totally appalling to learn that the most populous black nation with a population of over 170 million people is manned or guarded by a paltry police force of a little over 370,000 men giving a horrendous fraction of one policeman to 469 citizens as against the recommendations of one policeman to 400 citizens by the United Nations. The recruitment effort of the present administration into the NPF should be lauded (even though relatively low). The federal government announced recently that 10,000 police officers should be recruited into the police force, even though over 800,000 people applied. Not until there is a revamping of the institution by way of massive recruitment and re-structuring into state-arms, the NPF might have to battle with its present despairs for a longer period than anticipated.

Lack of intelligence training and specialized unit

Gathering information for investigation is crucial in ensuring the safety on the citizenry, and has made advanced countries invest heavily in training sleeper and special agents who operate clandestinely in different capacities. The NPF is sure deficient in training. Countries in the world have been able to solve major crimes through the help of their intelligence units, they have made spying a craft and an art essential to national security and have created units of Special Forces whose information gathering methods have been remarkable. There is the need for the NPF to create, equip and sustain more specialized units for patrol, transportation, information technology, organized crime, homicide, drugs, emergency, special victims, strategic response, crime scene, evidence collection and processing, school safety, and more importantly counter terrorism. The NPF is definitely far away from where it should be an will have to work hard to get there. Having being riddled with bad image, lack of trust and disdain, the NPF cannot effectively carry out its responsibilities with people who are not willing to cooperate, not even considering that the NPF itself lacks the requisite facilities and equipment needed and more devastatingly, the personnel to man these equipment and facilities while the few ones available are not properly trained or lack intelligence skills and are not properly placed in specialized units. Consequently, the NPF has to be decentralized for proper management, though some have argued that decentralizing the NPF will further subject it to manipulation, intimidation by political opponents and might be too expensive to run. Well said, but they did not consider that by decentralizing the NPF, it will be under scrutiny and microscopic check as it becomes easier to keep track of their progress under specific governments or in specific states. More so, there will be room for competition and comparison which will keep governments on their toes (after all, no state actor wants to be seen as joking with the security of its citizens). Meanwhile, on the issue of funding, it is ridiculous to accept that state actors can allot funds to white elephant and bogus projects, yet doubt that they can do the same for security.

Conclusion

The flurries of crime, homicide, armed robbery, kidnappings and more disconcerting, insecurity across the Nigerian state requires prompt response from the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Boko Haram insurgency, MEND, Biafra, MASSOB, IPOB, Niger Delta Avengers, and the Fulani herdsmen are all evidences of the brittleness of the Nigerian state and the level of political instability currently rocking the state; it behooves the Nigerian state to secure the life and properties of its citizens against these "agitators" so as to ensure the continuity of the Nigerian state. It therefore becomes imperative to ask what the role of the Nigerian police is in guaranteeing internal security and how momentously the force has failed largely due to its centralized structure which has made management, control, performance, effectiveness and efficiency difficult (if not impossible) thus sparking the call for state police in Nigeria which at this moment is beyond necessity; Nigeria cannot afford to continually travel down this lane of

dissent. It is unfortunate that the NPF is a victim of the same reasons why local police was proscribed and what fate is assumed awaits state police if created. However, state police remains a logical solution to the insecurity issues in the country and is a right step in ensuring “true” federalism in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations

- **Re-branding**

The degree and extent of trust or lack of in the Nigerian police is alarming and needs to be cushioned before the common man is finally pitched against the guardian of the society. The Nigerian police as a matter of urgency should look inwards and purge its bad eggs, make examples of defaulters and make laws to discourage further occurrences. The force will also have to make a firm stand against corruption which has eatendep into the fabric of the institution. Corruption, kickbacks, bribery, extortion etc. have to be checked with harsh penalties imposed on erring officers regardless of the hierarchy. Restoring trust in the force starts with the officers in the force as Adebayo and Ojo (2009) puts it, for a better organization to be evolved; both the society and the Nigeria police itself need re-orientation. The mass media may assist here. The entire citizenry should be well educated as regards their basic human rights. That to offer bribe for a bail-able offence is wrong or to offer money to Policemen on the road even without soliciting for it is immoral. Above all, discipline is crucial to effective policing. If the officers are not self-disciplined, the corps becomes worse-off. It is only a well-disciplined police like the military that can serve as a catalyst to democratic sustenance.

The NPF should also make arrangements to reward hard work and achievements for outstanding performance(s). These rewards should be in monetary and other forms so as to dissuade police officers from engaging in corruption, bribery and extortion.

- **Specialized training and departments**

The absence of these units and other specialized units has made the work of the NPF somewhat difficult to detect. Little or no attention (in some cases) is paid to training and/or retraining in and establishment of more specialized departments or units such as homicide, information technology – using access to database and info-surveillance to check mate the “Yahoo-Yahoo” rampage and other “419” or fraud perpetuated over the internet, even hacking, patrol- both on highways and waterways, strategic response- theresponse time of the NPF deserves proper attention, accounts- to effectively traces monies illegally moved within and outside the banking sector, research- to collect data on crimes and accidents so as to find out the reasons, patterns and ways of reducing them, evidence collection and processing- with the ability to process evidence with technology using scanners, forensics, tweezers, and print readers, surveillance- the blowing up of pipelines especially as recently intensified by the Niger Delta Avengers can easily be monitored and the culprits brought to book, and to mention few, counter terrorism- present day realities reveals how dire this is to Nigeria considering the existence of Boko Haram insurgence, Fulani Herdsmen attacks, and Niger Delta Avenger agitation. There is also need to demarcate the jurisdiction of the police force from other security agencies such as Army, Civil Defence Corps, State Security Service and National Security to avoid overlapping and unnecessary duplication.

- **Increased funding**

Central to the provision of modern equipment and gadgets, facilities, creation of speacilized departments, training, increase in personnel, and increased remuneration is increased funding without which other infrastructure remains a fantasy. The NPF upon whom the internal security of the nation is dependent has to be adequately funded by the federal government to meet up with its aspirations.

- **State Police**

The clamor for a state police is the theme of this paper and the author hereby argues that with state policing in Nigeria, the above issues can be adequately dealt with as state governors will be able to take charge of the running of the police to lessen the burden on the federal government and give room for efficiency, innovation, development and management arising from healthy competition between the various state police force(s). The author is not claiming to be oblivious of the concern for lack of funds to run such an institution at the state level, but avers that state governors who find it easy to award over bloated projects should not find it impossible to make state security a priority. Besides, writers have also suggested that principle of Asymmetry should be adopted such that states with the means to set up state police should do so without having to force another to do same. It should strictly be based on the ability and buoyancy of the state. The author hereby turns to advance the reasons for state policing in Nigeria. The above view was supported by Bamigbetan (2004) who noted that “even the burden of building or rehabilitation of Police Stations has been carried by some State Governors. Naturally, as Chief Security Officers/Chief Executives of the states, it would be foolhardy for them to take a hard stand not to release funds if it would avert a security breakdown in their states. This would only backfire against them as citizens of their states would only lose confidence in them, mostly not being privy to the logistics involved”.

- **State Police: The Edge(s)**

Ecological Edge

Due to the plurality of the Nigerian state, there are various ethnic groups with their own languages and culture. Language is an appealing element that brings people close and gives a sense of identity and belongingness. State policing will allow for people of a particular region to communicate effectively with indigenous residents of a state or ethnic group, making investigation easy since the investigator perfectly understands the witness and the investigator is able to properly interrogate a victim in his own language. In other words, communication will be easier and more effective for reporting incidences. On the other way, residents (especially those in rural areas) will have a feeling of safety arising from the confidence that they are protected by their kinsfolks who will never want to jeopardize the security of their respective states. More so, these police officers will have a perfect knowledge of the environment and terrain which will come handy in monitoring activities of illegal groups and associations, flush them out and bring them justice and in turn reducing crime rates. Armed robbers and insurgent groups are known to seek abode in woodlands and jungles, even forests, away from the eyes of the law but can be checkmated by a policeman who knows the territory and is able to track offenders.

This will also give room for rural safety wherein rural residents will have access law enforcement with ease and be shielded from the raging storm of insurgence gradually sweeping the country and will make it possible for militia and rebel groups to be addressed before they gain traction and threaten the security of the country as is currently experienced in Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen attack and Niger Delta Avengers. Before Boko Haram became this strong, they’ve had time to gather, plan, strategize and structure and could have easily been stopped before it came this far if there was a state police. So also, the Fulani herdsmen attack demands the attention of state police before it becomes another mutinous sect just the same way Niger Delta Avengers who have been rendered curbed at inception if there was a state police. Indeed, on the overall, there will be reduction in crime rate since most crimes and groups start small and can easily be detected by a state police, considering that indigenous residents have ease of access to report illegal gatherings. Ikuteyijo (2009) says community policing entails community partnership in creating a safe and secure environment for all. It is policing whereby the people take active part in their own affairs. With community policing, the police is not seen as a stranger whose presence stands for danger and imminent hazard, but as partners in development.

According to The Dawn Newspaper (2011), community policing in Nigeria does not replace all other policing styles and method but harness core policing functions such as traffic enforcement, crime prevention as well as public order management. These responsibilities remain essential and are entirely

compatible and complementary if they meet the performance standards and criteria demanded by the community policing.

- **Socio-Economic Edge**

Having mentioned that the present NPF is lacking adequate personnel needed to man the various departments and secure the teeming population, there is no doubt that when state police(s) are established, every state will have to employ into the various departments thereby creating employment opportunities in each of these states. Coupled with this is the fact that each of these states will require modern and computerized equipment which means that the services of consultants and experts will be sought while the needed equipment, facilities and infrastructures will be acquired thus creating investment opportunity for businessmen and government. In other words, there will be a multiplier effect of having a state police on the economy and such state will also allow for redistribution of income.

In the words of Adedeji (2012), security these days, in Nigeria, is seen as protection of Abuja the seat of power alone. It is the individual states that now spend heavily to subsidize the operation of policemen deployed to their domains to ensure that lives and properties are secured. For instance, Lagos State has in place a Security Trust Fund which is used to fund the operation of the state Rapid Response Squad. Arms and ammunitions are purchased from this fund while officers and men serving in the outfit are also paid special allowance. Ogun State and Oyo State to mention but few also have ad hoc security agencies funded from money in the States Security Fund. If a state spends heavily on matters relating to security, then it must be able to exert some form of control, after all he who pays the piper dictates the tune.

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