



POLICING AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION IN NIGERIA: A PARADIGM SHIFT

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Abstract

Policing in recent times has recorded remarkable changes arising from Socio-political and economic waves blowing across the globe especially in Nigeria. New roles or added responsibility has been included to the existing ones thereby making policing cumbersome. Nigeria witnessed monumental increase in rise of crime and criminal activities. Subsequently, insecurity among groups and communities has been rapidly increased on hourly and daily basis. Policing and Police system is unable to effectively manage crime. Hence, non-state actors who are not trained are profusely engaging in controlling crime. The Police system in Nigeria developed apathy by ignoring some cases. The Police system is overloaded with web of issues preoccupied by blame game from various stakeholders. Effective synergy is key in policing and community protection in Nigeria, especially during the COVID19 pandemic.

Keywords: Policing, Community Protection, COVID19 and Paradigm Shift

INTRODUCTION

Policing both as a process and art of governance and professional practice has over the years continued to suffer setbacks of various magnitude. It is a common knowledge that the way and manner in which policing is carried out have considerable impact on development profile of the Country in question. However, these changes in both the Police operation and development processes are not in any way disconnected to organizational capacity of the stakeholders in institutions of governance. Invariably, there is a direct simulation between socio economic and political practices and the Policing processes. The scenario is a common feature of Nigeria and indeed the Police Force. Broadly, Police elsewhere and that of Nigeria is an agency of government responsible for maintaining Public order and preventing and detecting crime (Arase, Iwufor, 2007). It is in view of this backdrop therefore, this article examines Policing and community protection therein.

By and large, historical antecedents in life of Nigeria as a nation and people could be closely linked to birth of Lagos Police Force in 1861 with the annexation of Lagos and Calabar, by the then British colonial government. The Force was first established by the first British Acting Governor, McCosky. This aimed at creating an enabling

environment for the anticipated violence that may emerge from harsh colonial policies. This perception was held by the Obeyes and their chiefs who without any reservation opposed the British colonial rule. Since then, the Nigeria Police Force is still reckoned with these inherent tendencies. However, in spite the evolution of the force, there are still operational similarities between how it was and how it is today. In historical terms, the Nigeria Police Force metamorphosed through the precolonial, colonial and indeed the post-colonial era.

With little moderations, the Nigeria Police Force still operates within the radius of colonial cleavages and the interest of the elites. These problems only added on top it the challenges of modern trends in population increased, volumes and dimensions of crime and above all the curbing of internal security. It is in view of the above therefore that this paper examines the various paradigm shifts in the functions including operations of the Nigeria Police Force.

NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF NIGERIA POLICE

Widespread historical evidences have shown that the Nigeria Police Force is a replica of its original colonial tenants. Like any Police Force across civilizations and cultures, Police has been an



organized body of men later women who are selected by their physical outlook in order to protect the interest of powerful members of the society including their properties and families. From the hunting and gathering societies and hence the domestication of plants and animals marked a turning point in the life of man from wild nomadism to cementation, the idea of policing was conceived to safeguard the plants and the domesticated animals including the owners.

When states were later established with territorial interests and cleavages, Policing became more intensified. Standing armies including Police Forces were established with the same intent of protection and safeguarding human and material resources. In an event of trespass on territorial interests' wars were fought. The conquered communities were annexed, war benefits ranging from gold, ornaments, beautiful women and other pleasantries were for the emperor or the ruler as the case may be. Although, the manifest motive of the establishment of empires and kingdoms were for the purpose of collective security and interest. However, the were latent or hidden agenda of the rulers of all the privileges and perquisites power may bring. Mansions were constructed for the emperor of the King, decorations and display of articles of ostentation's including luxuries were common features of Palaces.

Apart from establishment of political enclaves, the Kings and Emperor including their collaborators have vested interest in the political enclaves. However, when there is a clash between the interest of the few and powerful patriots and the subjects, the interests of the few powerful and indeed influential have the day. The subjects were subjected to institutional mechanisms to work harder for them to pay royalties and taxes. The opened mandate was for the general purpose and interest while the hidden was for the benefits of the powerful. The subjects were ordered to show total allegiance to the ruler ship. Failure to do such, subjects were made to face the law squarely. The Police therefore has the mandate to enforce the law for the benefit of all.

Furtherance, to the Traditional rulers and their respective Police systems, was the colonial Police who propagated and enacted Laws to suit the purpose of the colonialists especially in cash crop production and payment of taxes by the natives. The colonialists established different sort of administrative machinery with a well-coordinated police system in order to achieved the agenda of their home government. However, the entrenched interest of the colonialists yet opened a window and to a wide door for a new dawn.

With the quest for independence, and subsequent attainment of being a sovereign nation in 1960 marked a turning point in a dramatic shift in the Police system and indeed a processes of governance.

The new democratic window was short-lived by Military intervention. Under the Military regime, the Police system was grossly underdeveloped. The Military wings took over most of the police role and responsibility. Nigeria State particularly the Police Force was submerged by the powers and Decrees in the entire processes of governance. Thus, it was a major setback to the growth, expansion and utility of the Police Force. There was a massive gross suppression of the Police as a profession. The schedule of the Police Force was turned to be a job instead of been a profession that required training and growth as a branch of governance.

Interestingly, after the returned of Democracy from 1999 to date, the Police Force as a profession witnessed a remarkable improvement. It was the time when a new Inspector General Tafa Balogun was appointed as the Police Boss. With the daunting force of globalization and indeed the Communication Revolution ushered in a new world order. New Vista for services such as email, V sat, GSM, and above all, the internet connectivity. The entire globe was faced with diseases of progress and development. The crime scene experienced a sparking in crime dimension and frequency. Crime waves shifted from physical to nonphysical. There were emerging cases of sophisticated crime with international direction. The crime rate shifted from local to



global levels. Chain and series of crime such as Human trafficking, organ trafficking, cybercrime and all sorts of heinous crime like terrorism and new epidemics marked by HIV pandemic, Ebola and most recent Corona virus widely known as COVID19.

METHODOLOGY OF THE POLICE FORCE UNDER GLOBALIZATION

Mode of operation has been a changing feature of professions including the Police Force. As earlier stressed, the returned of democracy in 1999 in Nigeria, the Police Force witnessed a turnaround processes (Arase, Iwufor 2007). Democratic regime of President Obasanjo witnessed reaction and re-echoed of suppressed citizenry. The entire populace of Nigeria agitated for exercising the cardinal principles of democracy. Issues related to Human Rights as contained in the 1999 Constitution gave rise to public views been over expressed. Suppressed interest groups under the Military stated manifesting their cleavages of tribe, region and religion. These and the related tendencies were catapult by rapid increase in population growth, widely opened and porous border, increased in identity politics of about two Hundred and Fifty, Wide spread poverty and despondency, youth restiveness among violent extremism related of drug abuse were brought to bear. The Nigeria Police Force decided review Reform agenda to enable it to meet their professional responsibility to be efficient and effective.

One of the outstanding feature of the Force was the collaborating approach. It was circumvented by the over stressed and over loaded roles of the force. Police Public Cooperation was on the top list. All stakeholders in crime professions ranging from the Military, Customs and Excise, Immigration, Courts, Economic and Financial Crime Commission EFCC, Independent Crime Prevention Commission ICPC among other agencies. Considering the fact that that was emerging organized crimes, corruption, intolerance of both politics and religion, student protests, and gross income and social inequalities.

Operational Strategies of Nigeria Police.

Preventive Mechanism

Notion of prevention has been a considerable stand in all profession including the Nigeria Police. One aspect of prevention has to do with laid down administrative machinery put in place to avoid the occurrence of a possible phenomenon that could be dangerous to the set objectives of a given socio political and economic institutions. On the other hand, it may connote the identified strategies developed to stop the upshot of the intended variable that could hamper the set objectives. In a broader sense, it may a guide line for practitioners to follow in a systematic way considering professional ethics. With the case in hand, preventive method refers to the laid down procedures and processes aimed at preventive crime for the Police Force to be efficient and effective. At times, it may connote the principles and practices earmarked by a given profession in order to achieve the desirable goals. This approach has to critical dimensions. Sources of this information sometimes requires the use of spies who may be hired to carry out a specific function. Books, Journals, Radio, Television and sort of namely, the intelligence gathering and counter intelligence approach. The intelligence gathering approach refers to the measures, mostly administrative in nature with the intent of stopping individuals, groups or even governments of another country to tap information to their own advantage.

Firstly, Constant patrol on land, Sea, and Air. The Nigeria Police has designated vehicles such as Motor cars, Ships, and Airlines or Helicopter mainly to embark on constant physical observation of people and goods. The intent is to provide quick response in case of any default. The Nigeria Police system have proved to be weak in that direction. Vehicles may be available but constant supply of the consumables like fueling and servicing of these vehicles become an issue of great concern in the Nigeria Police. The Police heavily embarks on extortion of the citizens in order to fuel these vehicles. These gestures to a large extent aggravates police corruption.



Secondly, the Surveillance on people or groups of questionable character and buildings in Nigeria is a country where data on buildings and occupants of such buildings are not available to the Law enforcement agents. In very recent times unregistered homes who harbour criminals and the likes to perpetuate violence to the citizens. There have been cases of baby making factories without the knowledge of authorities. Nigeria recorded many incidences of buildings to be involved in human trafficking and related crimes. There have been cases of buildings where explosives and local guns and ammunitions were locally manufactured. Information collation and subsequent data on housing and people is very weak. Hence, this scenario made the Nigeria Police Force very ineffective and inefficient.

Thirdly, the Informants method is administratively put in place. However, manpower and personnel to man such units are very weak in operations. Giving schedule to the personnel become an issue of great concern. The Police Civilian ratio becomes a major obstacle to the attainment of this goal. Thirdly, the Detection of crime related areas and operations. The method is administratively put in place. However, it is one of the most neglected aspects of crime preventive mechanism of the Nigeria Police Force.

Intelligence is indeed a major aspect of security profession. Broadly, there are two mechanisms employed in the understanding and practising of intelligence gathering. For instance, the Technical intelligence involves the use of signal where information is generated through interception or seizing of electric gadgets of communication. While image intelligence gathering deals with use of satellite images or snapshots to provide avenue for refining and analysis. There is yet another aspect known as Measurement and signature intelligence. This process requires scrutiny and evaluation of signatures for effective security usage.

Similarly, there is an aspect known as non-technical intelligence. This aspect examines critical information of national interest and

concerns records from Academic publications, Books, Journals and professional records in order to put in use when the need arises

Widely, there are popular means for intelligence gathering. For example, Exponage where information is secretly or covertly obtained through the use of human resources. For instance, Spies are employed as agents to embark on a given mission for information gathering. The agents are sometimes described as case officers. In addition, there is Black Bag Operation. This is a most secret way of information generation through Lock picking, safe cracking, finger printing, electronic surveillance mail manipulation, forgery etc.

However, another method is also stenography where hidden Camera could be fixed at strategic locations for the purpose of generating data or required information to be used by the security operatives. Added to the above is, suggestibility is a form of deprivation is employed to make the target reveal information. Sleep deprivation or at times very loud sound that could enter the ear for information generation even seeing. Reid watching is also a situation where body Language of the persons could be interpreted for information generation. Similarly, Deception or misrepresentation is adopted to make suspects vomit information that ordinarily wouldn't have been provided torture, where physical objects inserted or direct whipping could be employed through the pain, suspects reveal all levels and parties involved at an operation.

At times stations where media like Radio, Television, Newspapers, Magazine could be used in tapping information. Concealment Devices or even Diversion of Safe could equally be used in intelligent gathering

Biometric Surveillance is indeed another way of information collation. This aspect involves the use of thumb print. At times, the Physique or an individual could be used in gathering information.

Eavesdropping this method connotes hiding secretly and listening to a conversation. There is



also sex and Hotspot where mostly, commercial sex workers could be hired for the purpose of gathering data for refinement. Walk in and out could be another mechanism used in intelligence gathering.

Covert Operations

This refers to activities undertaken by the Police to forestall criminal acts that oblivious until when the culprits are apprehended.

Raiding is yet another method aimed at eliminating hideouts and making sure they are apprehended including arms and ammunitions.

Simulation of crime situations. In this case the Police creates scenario by engaging in some activities by sell dummies to criminals who mistakenly view such acts as genuine or real life situations and unwittingly expose their identities.

Police- Public Cooperation

It effort involve a kind mutual relationship between the Police and the members of the Public for the purpose of information dissemination and sharing. It could also include all forms of volunteering services provided to safe guard life and property. Formation of Vigilante groups to complements the Police and creating awareness among neighbourhoods

Detective Mechanism

This is a form of step taken to rapidly understand criminal intent or activity through intelligence gathering. It is so significant due to its role in providing clues through the use of professional skills. At times, these procedures are referred to as criminal Justice procedures. This method will greatly enhance efficiency in the institutions vested with the responsibility of handling all matters relating to the criminal activities. This process is not an action rather steps are undertaken in the following ways:

- Ensuring that all investigations are thoroughly carried out Ensure that facts are properly sorted, collated and verified
- Making sure that suspects are meticulously questioned

- Ensure that witnesses are properly recorded
- Ensuring that all exhibits are well labelled, recorded and safely kept
- Ensuring that all case files are neatly kept for prosecution of suspects in competent courts
- Ensure that Legal advice are sought when necessary
- Ensuring that everything is diligently followed

In furtherance to that scenario therefore, Policing as core value for good governance, requires framework that would guide and direct Security Operators. In advanced economies, Law and Law enforcement radiate around Human life and property protection. As such, widespread compromise is tantamount National security challenges.

However, to navigate between Human rights on one hand and enforcement of Law on the other hand has been a matter of great concern among stakeholders across the globe. In Nigeria for instance, various concerted efforts have been put in place to overcome this critical aspect of governance. These roll out plans are described as Reform agenda. A critical episode is the returned of Nigeria to a democratic regime 29th May, 1999, when Nigeria witnessed emerging security concerns arising from longed deprived citizenry under Military rule on one hand and renewed awareness on rights of as people and nationalities.

However, the change from Military regime to democratically elected government marked a radical departure in the quest for governance in Nigeria's body polity. Wind of change was also witnessed by the operation of the Police Force. Right on swearing in ceremony, the Inspector General of Police was seen deeply involved with the newly formed Executive Council. The event also marked the rejuvenation of Due Process in conduct of public affairs.

Nevertheless, with the incorporation of the Police Force into governance was faced with problems associated to the historical antecedents both in the Police Force and other stakeholders. The Police



Force was highly neglected in terms of funding, low level of training, and above all the saga of endemic corruption. Equally added to these scenario was gross compromised by men and officers of the Force.

However, to bring about transformation in the Force, specific Ministry unlike before was established. The mandate was mainly coordinate and oversee general operations of the Force, especially Professional guidelines. These giant strides were undertaken by the then President, Olusegun Obasanjo who assigned responsibility of Police Affairs to David Jemibeon, a retired army General. The retired General initiated for a new Reform Programme for the Force. He called for memoranda from different both serving and retired Police Officers, Spirited citizens around the country. At the end a single document was drafted with the following proposals:

Increased in total strength of the Force from 138,000 in July 2000 to 210,000 by 2004. Hence, about 46,000 officers were recruited into the Police Force with the intention to reduce the challenge of Civilian – Police ratio.

Provision was also made for expansion of Barracks to ease the challenge of accommodation in the Force. It was projected that about 165,000 Police men were to be recruited by 2004 against the earlier 46,000 in 1999. Strong move was made to rehabilitate the existing the then Four Police Colleges and upgrade all the training institutions across the Federation.

Similar effort was directed towards maintaining existing Police communication network and aggressive completion of Police projects

Transportation system rejuvenation was also a top priority, especially the reactivation of Police workshops for refurbishing Police vehicle. Police welfare schemes, especially salaries and allowances, Pension, gratuity including a Police Community Banks.

Attempt towards rehabilitating Medical facilities and recreational centres were established and enhanced. The challenge of Image crises facing the Police was given high attention through public enlightenment procedures. Police Trust Fund was established where stakeholders were to make mandatory contribution like the TETFUND, ETF

A remarkable and noticeable change was carried in the Police Force when Smith himself and the top echelon of the Force comprising of all Deputy Inspectors of Police (D I G) were compulsorily retired. According to the press briefings by the Kaduna then, mallam Ahmadu Makarfi and Chimoroke Nnami of Enugu State stressed that the aimed of exercise was to sanitized and revitalize the Nigeria Police Force. A new Inspector General of Police. Tafa Balogun was appointed. As Balogun assumed office in March, 2007, his vision was to streamline and reorganize the Force. However, there were problems such as low supplies of equipment, politicization of the force, indiscipline, wrong attitudinal problems among others More unmotivated and inefficient and ineffectiveness characterized the Force. Hence, combating crime as professional organ was very low and epileptic.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Policing in recent times has recorded remarkable changes arising from Socio-political and economic waves blowing across the globe especially in Nigeria. New roles or added responsibility has been added to the existing ones thereby making policing cumbersome in the Nigeria body polity. Nigeria witnessed monumental increase in rise of crime and criminal activities. Sense security and otherwise of it has become daily affairs. Policing and Police system is unable to effective manage crime thereby partnering with other state and non-state actors in controlling crime. The Police system in Nigeria developed apathy by ignoring some cases. The Police system is overloaded with web of issues preoccupied by blame game from various stakeholders

Recommendations

(1) Policing must continue to be a dynamic



Force that requires timely review and evaluation.

- (2) Basic civic education must be a priority to minimize the cases of human rights considerations and violations
- (3) Everyone shall be sensitized that it is an obligation to support and cooperate with the Police Force.
- (4) Attitudinal change is required towards the police and towards the citizens.
- (5) Community Policing should be strongly to be pursued.
- (6) Presidential Task Force (PTF) should be constituted for efficiency and effectiveness of Police Operation in the Federation

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