



COMMUNITY POLICING AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF COASTER COMMUNITY IN IKORODU AND BADAGRY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

The level of crime and insecurity in the nation call for urgent attention of policy makers and security agents in taken urgent measure to avert the ugly situation. The protection of life and properties is a collective responsibility of the government and the citizen in tackling crime and social disorder in our society. The objective of this study is to examine community Policing and Insecurity in Nigeria with reference to Ikorodu and Badagry Local government areas in Lagos State. The study made use of interview and cases of criminal activity reported by the community vigilante group in Ikorodu and Badagry local government area to the Nigeria Police force. The obstacles responsible for the abysmal performance of Nigeria Police are inefficient, corruption, extrajudicial killings, intimidation, poor welfare, inadequate personnel just to mention a few. The study adopts Spearman's Rank Correlation Co-efficient to analysis the cases of criminal activity reported by the community vigilante groups to Nigeria Police. The study reveals that there is co-efficient correlation between Community policing and the Nigeria Police in protection of life and properties in Nigeria. The study concludes that grass root security, neighbourhood watch, neighbourhood town meetings, vigilante group and other security strategies to make the police common structured less central and continue engagement of public in security operation. The study recommends among other that, community participation should involve joint working relationship and cross partnership, in close collaboration at state and local government levels through the state security council's whose members should include the state Police Commissioner as its practice in Lagos state, to replicated across the 36 local government areas in Nigeria and complement by various organized private sectors in a concerted action through police community forum to enhance successful community policing in Nigeria.

Keywords: Participation, Nigeria Police, Neighbourhood, Collective Responsibility

Introduction

Policing worldwide had adopted various strategies for efficient and effective service to their citizenry. However the contribution of the police to the control of crime and maintenance of order today is available as studies of police effectiveness imply (Zumve, 2012). From the onset, it is imperative at this juncture we make a clear distinction between “police” and “policing”. The police are a particular kind of institution whilst, “policing” implies a set of processes with specific social function. Community policing is anchored on a systematic relationship between the police and the entire citizenry. Police roles and functions are not simply law enforcement rather systematic tackling an enormous range of community problems. The application of traditional policing to modern policing (community policing) is a global strategy which the Nigeria police cannot be exempted. Indeed, community policing as a philosophy and practice is a veritable tool for administrative reform in the Nigeria Police (Okiro, 2007).

The aim of community policing is to engage the unofficial indigenous Nigerian social control systems be integrated into the activities of the Nigeria police to combat the variety of crimes that characterized the contemporary Nigerian society. A central theme is that addressing the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria both in terms of crime detection, prevention and control needs to be conceptualized as a community task (Zumve, 2012). The community includes a wide diversity of people and institutions with varying perceptions, interests and safety concerns. The local neighbourhood proves the security of their community to avert crimes and disorder. As a palliative measure to the security challenges in the country, many communities and neighbourhoods in the coaster area have made increasing recourse to community policing in a bid to improve their safety and security as a way to curtail the menace of crime in their communities. The emergence of community policing in Nigeria is thus a derivative of the general air of insecurity and the low performance of the Nigeria police.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent rate of insecurity and the inability of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in ensuring security and safety of life and property in the country especially in coaster communities are worrisome. The sources of security challenges in the country are numerous and cannot be blamed on one part of the system alone. They vary from the government to the police down to the people in the community. On the part of the police, there are many inadequacies and challenges which stand as obstacles responsible for its abysmal performance of Nigeria Police. Most Nigerians describe police as a motley crowd of lazy, inefficient, corrupt contributing to the perpetrating of crimes such as mass killing, intimidation, rape, extrajudicial killings/summary execution and other heinous crimes against citizens they are to guide and protect (Uhunmwangho & Aluforo, 2011). Ojo (2016) described the escalation of violence in the coaster area in Ikorodu Local Government in Lagos State was linked with the insincerity of the police colluding with the perpetrating of criminal on oil (Bunkery) whose engaged in illegal of oil (theft). After the arrest of this oil theft by the community vigilante groups and handed the culprits to the Nigeria police later released by the Nigerian police without proper investigation.

It is also common with the police to falsely label innocent people as armed robbers, while the real criminals are working freely in the society doing what they know to do best. They falsified post mortem result and to worsen the matter, people either criminals or none criminal disappear

from their custody without good explanations and families of the innocent victims are faced with extortion.

The Nigerian Police Force (2015) in their annual report noted that the police is handicapped because of combination of factors that plagued them, among which are; lack of resources, poor government support, poor condition of service, lack of appropriate and adequate training and ill-equipped workforce. Coped with this are the issue of police extortion and corruption and other vices common among the police system which contributes to their lack of efficiency. The various security strategies such as vigilante, security neighbourhood watch and other indigenous communities in the present day Nigeria practiced law enforcement for social order through self arranged primordial efforts. The notion behind this is what refers to as community policing. In the light of the above, the study examine the community policing as a remedies for insecurity in Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine community policing and insecurity in coaster community in Nigeria with reference to Ikorodu and Badagry Local government areas in Lagos State. Other specific objective includes;

1. To investigate the extent at which community policing curtails the level of kidnapping, pipe line vandalism and insurgency in the coaster community in Nigeria.
2. To examine the coefficient correlation between the community policing and Nigeria Police in protection of life and properties in Nigeria.
3. To proffer suitable remedies facing insecurity in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does community policing curtails the level of pipe line vandalism, kidnapping and insurgency in the coaster community in Nigeria?
2. Is there any coefficient correlation between the community policing and Nigeria Police in protection of life and property in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

HO: Community policing does not curtails the level of kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping and insurgency in the coaster community in Nigeria.

Hi: Community policing curtails the level of kidnapping, pipeline vandalism and insurgency in the coaster community in Nigeria.

HO: There is not any coefficient correlation between community policing and Nigeria Police in protection of life and properties in Nigeria.

Hi: There is co-efficient correlation between community policing and Nigeria Police in protection of life and properties in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Community policing emerged as a contemporary approach that connects police closer to the local people and developing mutual relation to the entire citizens. This approach aims at restoring understanding and cordial relations between citizens and the police at gaining community participation in crime control and social disorder. It is also a term used by various scholars, writers and speaker to replace other terms such as foot patrol, crime prevention, problem-oriented policing, community-oriented policing, police-community relations and more (Aiya,2012). Community policing is a security arrangement that exist between police and local

citizens which pave community interaction and their inputs in crime control, social disorder and reduce fear, with community support in identifying suspects, detain vandals and alert police in trouble areas (Adejubi, 2013).

In the same vein community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies with the use of partnership and problem solving technique, which proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder and fear of crime (Alemika, 2012). Stipak (1994) see, community policing as a security strategy that promotes the joint responsibility of citizens and the police for community safety, through working partnerships and interpersonal contact. This philosophy and strategy is based on partnership between the community and the police to find creative solutions for contemporary community problems, crime and other related matters. Okonkwo (1996) described community policing as a strategy that guides police community partnerships and a problem-solving approach responsive to the needs of the community people. Okeke (2014) opined that paradigm shift from traditional policing to model policing which require the effort of the community and Nigeria Police. The shift is the collaboration of efforts between the police and the residence in combating crime and social menace. This does not imply that the police are no longer in authority or that the primary duty of preserving law and order is subordinated, rather community policing entails community partnership in creating a safe and secure environment for citizens.

Community policing entails exclusive focus on constructive engagement with community people who are the consumers of the police service and re-negotiate relationship between the people and the police thereby making the community co-producers of justice and a quality police service (Folashade & Patience, 2013). One of the strategies for effective and efficient improvement of the performance of Nigeria police is to embark on policing relation. This will change policing to a modern and professional policing capable of proving maximum security of lives and property in Nigeria (Fashola, 2015). Community oriented policing is a proactive philosophy that promotes solving problems that are either criminal, affect the quality of life, or increase citizens fear of crime. It involves identifying, analyzing and addressing community problems at their source (Okeke, 2013).

Police are organized to defend and preserve the interests of the dominant groups and classes in the society, consequently, the significance role of the police as either facilitators or inhibitors of change initiatives will depend on the character portray to society (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2001). In totalitarian and economically inequitable specie, the police role will be more to defend the status quo of political oppression and economic injustice. In contrast in a democratic society the police are more likely to provide service that will enhance social economic development and democratic dividend (Aiya, 2012). The challenge of insecurity in Nigeria has assumed formidable dimensions forcing the country's political and economic status and indeed the entire nation to the rue, the loss of their loves ones, investment and absence of safety in most parts of the country (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim, 2013). The rate at which innocent blood is wasted on a daily basis and the display of bottled-up frustration by the local citizens remains a cause for concern. Nwaze (2011) counted his experience that the rate of bloodshed during the Nigerian civil war is a Child's play compared to the terrorist attacks and Fulani headsmen in various plat of local communities recently.

Insecurity in Nigeria has grown beyond official police and other security agents capacity in securing the citizenry. Achamba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro (2013) noted that the efforts of the government to prevent crime and insurgency have not yielded enough positive result. In the

light of the above, Onifade, Imhonopi and Urim (2013) noted that there is significance relationship between increasing ethnic hate, religious bigotry, political rivalry and disgruntled inheritance in the Nigeria society. The primordial tendencies of various eruptions of various ethnic militants and the pre-ponderant religious fundamentalism in places, given expression to by some sections of the dominant religious establishments in Nigeria have inevitably aggravated the scale and propensity of insecurity and widened its scope in various dimensions (Egwu,2001).

Ajibade, Olapade and Erinosh, (2011) pointed out some salient factors that are responsible for the spate of insecurity in the country. They observed that the response of the Nigerian state to the incessant crisis of the mass unemployment and fuel crisis have led to the worsening of the crime situation in Nigeria. The rate of unemployment, poor income and low savings, which has led many retrenched workers into scramble for survival, high rate of inflation, political intolerance have contributed in a large measure to the rate of insecurity in the country especially at grass root level (Adegoke, 2013). The major responsibilities of government in any nation are the provision of security. The role is clearly stated in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that “the security and welfare of the citizen shall be the major aim of the government” (1999, constitution). In performing this role, the government delegates the duty of maintenance of internal security to the Nigerian police. The Nigeria police are saddled with the responsibility of preventing and detecting crime, preserving peace and order and enforcing all laws and regulations. They are expected to perform these duties efficiently and effectively without pitfall (Egwu, 1990). With the high rate of insecurity in the country, the question that borders every mind of Nigerians is whether the police performed these roles as stated in constitution? Majority of the people’s opinion revealed that the Nigeria police falls below expectation.

Odekunle, (2014) argued that there is no need to prove the poor performance of the Nigeria police in the present situation at local level as the identification of the major inadequacies, problems and obstacles that are responsible for the situation. Meanwhile apart from other numerous challenges incapacitate their performance over the years, they are confronted with human problems that not only aggravate its material insufficiencies, but are also of tremendous adverse to its general performance today (Odekunle, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

A number of theories have been advanced by scholars in an attempt to offer explanation in principle that pave the way for a point of reference in academic discussion as well as a point of departure to insecurity and community policing in Nigeria (Onesmus, 2014). This study is anchored on social disorganization theory. This theory proffer solutions which serve as a basic principles and theoretical background for almost all community based crime prevention programs. High residential mobility, heterogeneity of the population, poverty, and constant social change weaken neighborhood residents’ social control and allow value system nurtured by crime to emerge. Moreover, this value system transferred to the next generation through interactions among residents in a community (Wilson 2005). As a result, neighborhood loses their collective efficacy to fight against disorder and crime (Palmiotto, 2000). Wilson explains that police agencies should work with the community residents in order to build a sense of community that takes care of its own problems and provides social control. This indicates that social disorganization theory can be linked to community policing, they do share common elements such as collaboration and the shared responsibility with the community to maintain law and order. Therefore, social disorganization as theoretical framework for community policing has some merit. According to international Association of Chiefs of Police Crime Prevention

Committee, “Community safety is the responsibility of everybody; and crime prevention is everyone’s business” (Okeke, 2013).

Emergence of Community Policing in local Community in Nigeria

Community policing has been described as one of the effective strategy of combining crime in the coaster community in Nigeria. This is done as the security agents collaborated with the members of the communities in the area of intelligent information gathering to assist police. During the regional system in Nigeria the impact of community policing which entails community partnership that naturally bridged the unfriendly relationship between the police and members of the public that usually hinders effective policing in Nigeria (Nwakkama, 2012). In the Southwest region for instance, there was unprecedented recruitment into the local council’s police by the politicians. The professionalization of local council’s police became so significant for the maintenance of peace, stability and progress. The local police were ineffective as a result of unqualified personnel, poorly trained, behaved badly; and possessed instruments of oppression, extortion and brutalization of opponents in the hands of traditional rulers, local government officials and politicians (Arase & Iwuofor, 2007). There were widespread misuse of local councils and native authority police officers in the coaster community by politicians, traditional rulers and colonial officers. It is on record that Native Authority police earned very bad reputation by using undue coercion and intimidation to enlist support for the ruling party in Nigeria and denied opposition parties permit for rallies, disrupted their meetings and poorly enforced the unlawful assembly laws against politicians of the opposition parties. The experience of brutality, oppressive character, extortive ambition, inhuman treatment and general misuse of the local police forces by the ruling parties, politicians, government officials, traditional rulers and other personalities resulted to the current critical clamour for state police by most politicians and other stakeholders in Nigeria (Hills, 2008). Southwest Nigeria has a history of political crises especially during the first and second republics. The region has a history of political crisis.

Community Policing in Nigeria

In the Nigerian traditional setting, community policing has been existing prior to colonial era. This structure of policing is not new to Nigeria, for instance, pre-colonial Nigeria had its own form of community policing long before the advent of Colonia rule and trending even after Nigeria independence in 1960 (Inyang & Abraham, 2013). Community policing enhances cooperation between formal policing and informal policing and problem solving approaches aimed at improving the relations between the security agencies and the community and to subsequently improve quality of police services, notably reduced crime levels. The Nigeria police in 2004 embraced community policing as a pragmatic approach to police reforms. The stage was indeed set for a clear departure from traditional policing, that was reactive and incident based, to a problem – solving oriented policing that is proactive with the community as the cornerstone of policing objectives (Alemika & Chukuma, 2007).

Numerous studies conducted on the police-public relations in Nigeria had revealed that the public had no confidence in the Nigeria Police Force, which was perceived as brutal, corrupt and ineffective by the community (Zumve, 2013). The community policing programme has been accompanied by massive awareness raising and sensitization campaigns targeting both the public and the police force as well as intensive training programmes aimed at creating new skills, a change in attitudes and behaviours.

Community policing activities such as citizen advisory boards, landlord security administration, community meetings, foot patrol, neighborhood watch, and door-to-door visits aim to increase the satisfaction of citizens with police, to encourage people to share information about offenses, offenders, and public safety problems, as well as to increase a feeling that police care about the problems of the citizens and to build mutual trust. These activities also let people feel more comfortable contacting police to tell about problems and share information about crimes and criminals (Eck Maguire, 2000).

Community Policing as a Panacea of Insecurity in Nigeria

Various strategies for community policing in fighting crime and other social vices have been adopted distinct from the formal policing method. These measures were identified by Okeshola and Midiare (2013). In the first place: Community Partnership which requires the establishment and maintenance of mutual trust between coaster community and the police is the main trust of the first component of community policing. Police have always recognized the need for cooperation with the community and encouraged members of the community to come forward with crime fighting information. The police no longer view community as a passive presence connected to the police by an isolated incident or series of incidents. The community's concerns with crime and disorder they knows individuals in their domain and the kinds of acts performed this become the target efforts by the community and the police working together (Aiya, 2010). The second measure is problem solving strategy which requires a lot more thought, energy, and action than traditional incidents-based police responses to crime and disorder. In full partnership, the police and a community's people identify core problems, propose solutions, and implement solution (Akinyele, 2013).

The final measure is change management and this involves assigning new responsibilities and adopting a flexible style of management. Traditionally, patrol officers have been accorded lower status in police organizations and have been dominated by the agency's command structure. Community policing, in contrast, emphasizes the value of the patrol function and the patrol officer as an individual in the same community. It requires the shifting of initiative, decision making, and responsibility downward within the police organization. The officer must become responsible for managing the delivery of police service to the community. Patrol officers are the most familiar with the needs and concern of the communities and are in the best position to forge the close ties with the community that lead to effective solutions to local problems. Under community policing, police management must guide, rather than dominate, the actions of the patrol officer must ensure that they have the necessary resources to solve the problems in their communities (Aiya, 2012).

Research Method

This research work adopted survey research method and made use of primary and secondary data as the main source of data collection through the use of interview and newspaper, magazines, journal, internet etc. respectively. The study interviewed some respondents from two local government area of Lagos state, namely Ikorodu and Badagry. These local government areas are commonly known as the hot bed of various criminal activities like Kidnapping, bombing of oil pipes, Arm robbery etc. carried out by the Militants in the states. The interview sought information on questions that were relevant to the community policing and the challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. The data collected were statistically analysed through the use of percentage method and parametric techniques i.e. rank ordering correlation method.

Cases of criminal activity reported by the Community vigilante group in Badagry and Ikorodu of Lagos to the Nigeria Police Force in the year 2012 to 2015

S/N	Year	Criminal Activities	Nigeria Police Force	Neighborhood Watch
1.	2012-2015	Pipeline Vandalization	10 (11.2%)	18 (10.9%)
2.	2012-2015	Smuggling	12 (13.3%)	38 (23.0%)
3.	2012-2015	Rubbery and Theft	8 (8.9%)	12 (7.3%)
4.	2012-2015	Killing	11 (12.2%)	23 (14%)
5.	2012-2015	Cultist	3 (3.3%)	8 (4.9%)
6.	2012-2015	Kidnapping	13 (14.4%)	25 (15.2%)
7.	2012-2015	Rapping	18 (20.0%)	6 (3.6%)
8.	2012-2015	Land dispute	9 (10.1%)	32 (19.4%)
9.	2012-2015	Others	6 (6.7%)	3 (1.8%)
		TOTAL	90	165

Source: Researcher’s Visitation to Neighborhood Security watch in Ikorou and Badagry Local government Areas of Lagos State, May 2016.

Data Analysis

The percentage analysis shows the criminals activities taken place in Ikorodu and Badagry Local government Area of Lagos state. The analysis indicated high rates of pipeline vandalism, smuggling, killing, kidnapping and land dispute by the community vigilante group, while Nigeria Police recorded high rate on Pipeline vandalization, smuggling, Rubbery, kidnapping and raping respectively.

The analysis of Nigeria Police recorded two major crimes smuggling 12(13.3%) and Kidnapping 13(14.4%) while community vigilante group recorded smuggling 38(23%) and Land dispute 32(19.4%).

Ho: There is no any co-efficient correlation between the community policing and Nigeria Police in protection of life and properties in Nigeria.

Hi: There is coefficient correlation between the community policing and Nigeria Police in protection of life and properties in Nigeria.

Spearman Rank correlation co-efficient method

	A	B	R _A	R _B	R _A – R _B = d	d ²
i.	10	18	5	5	0	0
ii.	12	38	3	1	2	4
iii.	8	12	7	6	1	1
iv.	11	23	4	4	0	0
v.	3	8	9	7	2	4
vi.	13	25	2	3	-1	1
vii.	18	6	1	8	-7	49

viii.		2			4	6
ix.					-1	
TOTAL						6

$$\begin{aligned}
 R &= 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} = \text{FORMULA} \\
 &= 1 - \frac{6 \times 76}{9(9^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{456}{n(81 - 1)} \\
 &= 1 - \frac{456}{9(80)} = 1 - \frac{456}{720} \\
 1 - 0.633 &= 0.37
 \end{aligned}$$

Result: POSITIVE AND STRONG

Interpretation of the Result

Decision Rule:

If $H_i > H_o$: Accept H_i and reject H_o . While $H_i < H_o$: Accept H_o and reject H_i .

The least Square rank Correlation indicates that Positive and strong result i.e. (0.37). This shows that we accept Alternative Hypothesis (H_i) and reject Null (H_o). It implies that there is coefficient correlation between the community policing and Nigeria Police in protection of life and properties in Nigeria.

Note: If it is Negative i.e. (weak) we accept H_o i.e. (Null Hypothesis) while positive i.e. (strong) we accept H_i i.e. (Alternative hypothesis).

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that community policing implementation model by the Nigeria police should give adequate attention to build up robust community engagement in Policing issues which will no longer allow hoodlums to commit crimes and vanished into the community without any possible trace and arrest.

Base on the research, it was observed that community policing has a great impact on the performance of Nigeria Police in the county. According to Okeke (2014), Fashola, (2016) the country has no choice than to embraced the ideas and principles of community Policing as practiced in developed countries to curtails the level of crimes. Lastly, the indebt interview revealed that poor funding, poor welfare and inadequate personnel are the dilemma facing Nigeria Police and no efforts has been made towards addressing the challenges facing the Nigeria Police in the cause of maintaining Peace and security in the county by the relevant Authority.

Conclusion

There has been agitation towards decentralization of policing in Nigeria. The buzz word is “community Policing” wherein policing becomes a joint effort between the police and the citizen to identify the challenges of crime and social disorder and to proffer solutions from within the community (Adejoh, 2013). The study shows that Community policing do appear to represent a

different mode of operation which encourages openness and flexibility, some of which include the grass root security, neighborhood watch, neighborhood town meetings, and vigilante group and so on. It is necessary that the current security strategies is sustained and improved upon so as to make the command structure less central and continuous engagement of the whole Nigeria Police force to participate in different ways of security operations to foster greater understanding among them (Onesmus, 2014). The need for Community Policing as a professional endeavour based on principles of policing and management ethics must be undertaken for a conducive political environment in policing the society.

Recommendation

Base on the research the study reveals that sustainable community policing in Nigeria is not only in tandem with the current security best practices globally but also in line with the operational values of democratic culture which promotes principles of civility, freedom rights and duties as necessary options for collective security. Community-Policing though not fully functional in all the states in Nigeria at the moment, however but can still be seriously invigorated to achieve overall security goals through various modalities which are anchored on effective public-police relations, joint or collaborative efforts such as funding and all inclusive professional reforms in the Nigeria police force.

In this regard, the government should provide system-capturing data at central, state and the local government levels to manage crime prevention more effectively through surveys of the public, victims and witness of crime. This system should include the process of sharing of knowledge between relevant parties and applying it in replicating new initiatives and proactive in envisaging the problems of crime and its prevention. The pattern of community engagement should involve joint working and cross partnership, in close collaboration at state levels through the state security council's whose members should include the state Police Commissioner, replicated across the local government areas and the input of the various organized private sectors in a concerted action through police community forum to enhance successful community policing. In order to enhance effective and efficient community policing, there must be mutual understanding between the police and the community People.

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