



Research Paper

The Impact and Challenges of the Nigeria Police Force in the Maintenance of Internal Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

The security challenges in Nigeria is gradually becoming one of the defining characteristics of the Nigerian state since her return to democratic rule in May, 1999. The problem of armed robbery, kidnappings for ransom, ritual killings, Fulani herdsmen attacks, assassinations, terrorism, insurgency, internet fraud and Ponzi schemes or investment swindle, among others have created the greatest challenges to the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). Most critical is that the security operatives are finding it difficult to maintain peace, detect and prevent these forms of crimes. It is on this premise that this study examined the impact and challenges of the Nigeria police force in the maintenance of internal security in the country. The study adopted historical research design and relied extensively on secondary source of data such as books, journal articles, newspaper articles, periodicals, internet materials, among others. The Study indicated that the police has been playing vital role in the fight against crimes and other forms of security challenges, but its efforts have not yielded the much needed peace and security because of weak cooperation that exists between the force and the public. The study suggested amongst others an intensive collaboration among the officers of the Nigeria Police Force and the general public in the fight against crimes and other forms of security challenges in the country.

Keywords: *Security challenges, Nigerian Police Force, Democracy, Development, Internal*

Received 25 Jan., 2023; Revised 07 Feb., 2023; Accepted 09 Feb., 2023 © The author(s) 2023.

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I. Introduction

Prior to the British conquest, colonial rule and the period of the amalgamation of the protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria, the diverse and autonomous nations that made up the present day Nigeria had their ways of securing lives and properties. In 1861, the Nigeria Police Force, NPF as it stands today came into existence as the instrument of oppression, and to effectively impose the rules of the British colonial authority and its control over the resources of the colonised people of Nigeria under what was known as the “30 men Consular Guards” (Agwanwo, 2014). In a related manner Pike (1998) averred that the NPF as it stands today began with a thirty-member (30) consular guard formed in Lagos colony in 1861. Furthermore, he averred that in 1879, a 1,200 member armed paramilitary Hausa Constabulary was created, and in 1896, the Lagos police was created. Likewise, in 1894, under the newly proclaimed protectorate of the Niger Coast with headquarter in Calabar in the present day Cross River State, similar force was created. And in the North, the Royal Niger Company created the Royal Niger Company Constabulary in 1888 with its Headquarter located in Lokoja found in the present day’s Kogi State of the North-Central region of Nigeria (Pike, 1998).

Aleyomi (2013) as cited in Nnaji and Ojiego (2019:367) asserts that after the establishment of the British Consular Guards the pattern of operation and administration in the protectorates of the Southern and Northern Nigeria were distinct. On April 1, 1930 these separate units were unified under the command of an Inspector-General whose administrative headquarters was located in Lagos, he opined. Bakare (2021) asserts that what is known today as the Nigeria Police Force, NPF was first established in 1820 but has gone through several stages, restructuring, reformation and reorganisation during and after the British colonial administration in Nigeria. During the colonial era, most of the police formations were associated with the Native Authorities (Local governments). The amalgamation of the defunct Southern Nigeria Police, SNP and Northern Nigeria Police, NNP led to the establishment of the present day's NPF which its foundation was traced to 1930 (Bakare, 2021). Chapter VI, Part III, Section 214, Sub Sections 1& 2(a, b & c) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) specifically provides for the establishment of the NPF. Sub Section 1 specifically states 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". Like the other security agencies, the NPF derives its powers, functions and responsibilities from the 1999 Constitution (As Amended) (see The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, CFRN 1999 with Amendment 2011).

Similarly, the Nigeria Police Act charged the force with the general duties of protection of life and property; detection and prevention of crime; apprehension of offenders; preservation of law and order; enforcement of law; and performance of such other military functions within the country as may be required of the force (see Cap.19 of the Police Act, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The provision of the police Act and the Constitution of the FRN have clothed the force with enviable powers in the sphere of administration of justice, preservation of law and order, and maintenance of national security and tranquillity. Iheriohanma, Opara and Raimi (2020:89) summarised the duties of the NPF to include accountability, professionalism and responsibility. However, the police force which is nearest to the people has onerous duty not only to secure lives and properties but to also ensure there is environment conducive for the citizens of the state to pursue their socio-economic activities. This is what Thomas Hobbes (1588-16790 and John Locke (1632-1704) social contract theory connotes (Sikiru, 2013).

The Nigeria society as it stands today has been experiencing different forms of crimes, insurgency and terrorism which have eaten deep into the social fabrics of the society such that their effects are multifaceted, thus, bringing the concept of social contract between the Nigeria state and of the citizenries into ridicule with the NPF as the agency of the government responsible for maintenance of law and order, and security of life and property blamed for this situation. Durkheim (1958) and Haralambos and Holborn (2008) as cited in Chijioke (2012) argued that "crime is inevitable and now a normal aspect of social life, but has in various instances caused social and psychological problems to the victims of crime". In the 1980s and 1990s, popular crimes prevalent in Nigeria include armed robbery, petty crimes or stealing, assaults, burglary and rape, but in recent years, crimes like terrorism, kidnappings for ransom, child trafficking, drug trafficking, money laundry, assassinations, ritual killings, terrorism, among others have become common place in the Nigeria society. Brownson (2012) opines that the upsurge in violent crimes in the country has created enormous uncertainty in security of lives and properties of the citizens and social stability in general. The incidents of the traditional crimes such as armed robbery, arson, drug trafficking and abuse, hired assassinations, murder, ritual killings and rape are examples of the most serious and violent crimes which have been in the increase in the recent past coupled with white collar crimes such as advance Free Fraud, popularly known as 419, contract deals, embezzlement and mismanagement of public funds (Brownson, 2012:2).

In recent years, these types of crimes are also in the increase and sophisticated in nature, and have been complicated by white collar crimes and corruption. As Alemike (1993) puts it, Nigeria is prone to criminal activities which the society created and the individuals are involved, hence, preventing these crimes in a crime infested society like Nigeria becomes the constitutional responsibility of the police that finds it as enormous task to handle. Again, very little should be expected from the police under the prevailing and limited situations such as poor collaboration between the police, other security agencies and the general public, and as well as lack of funding and equipments. Criminals are also getting more organised, sophisticated and brutal in the manners they carry out their dastardly acts. Equally worrisome in recent times is the inability of the government and its security agency of the NPF to cope with the sophistication and new dimension in organised crimes involving terrorism, insurgency and sabotage against civilian population, government and military installations in the Northern part of the country. The threats from the Fulani herders' attacks, kidnapping syndicates, armed robbery, banditry and terrorism have created the greatest threats to lives and properties as well as socio-economic development of the people and the unity and existence of the nation. All of these no doubt have created the greatest challenges to the Nigerian police personnel and are now more worrisome as the security operatives are finding it difficult to maintain peace, detect and prevent these forms of crimes which in turn impacted negatively on Nigeria's national security.

Statement of the Problem

Since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in May 1999 to date there has been one form of security challenges to another. Inarguably, the increasing trend of insecurity challenges in recent time has assumed disturbing dimensions because of the emergence of the radical Islamic jihadist movement of the al-Qaeda transnational terrorist organisation which gave birth to the Boko Haram sect and Islamic State in West African Province, ISWAP in Northern part of the country. There are also the emerging threats from banditry and Fulani herdsmen marauders in the North-East and North-Central regions of the country, and now in other geopolitical zones. The unimaginable social consequences created by the activities of these new variants or dimensions from the traditional security challenges to the new forms of challenges in the country have not only impacted on the socio-economic sphere of the country but individuals' security. The intensity of the activities of the insurgent and criminal groups in contemporary Nigeria society has impacted on every facet of the country's national security including socio-economic development with no end in sight. As Sikiru (2013) as cited in Okereka, Efebeh and Oluka (2020:16310) puts it; the concept of security which evolved as the state evolved and has always been one of the fundamental functions of the government has been eroded in the Nigeria context. Nwolise (2006) opines that the security of any nation-state is all encompassing and holistic concept which must be secured by a network of armed forces or the military and the police force, as well as the people themselves; and the sovereignty of the state must also be guaranteed by the government. Again, the people must be protected from external aggressions and devastating consequences of internal upheavals, homelessness, environmental degradation and pollution, and socio-economic injustices (Nwolise, 2006).

Obarisiagbon and Akintoye (2019) have however relate the insecurity situation in Nigeria to the seemingly absence of resistance to/or protection from harm, peaceful co-existence and development at large. Furthermore, they described the security challenges in the Nigeria's context as "a state of being subject to fear, threat, danger, molestation, intimidation, harassment and so on, in all aspect". It therefore means that the threat to the lives of Nigeria citizens have socio-economic implications. With the leading threats from the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist organisation, ISWAP, Fulani herdsmen, banditry, kidnappings for ransom, armed robbery, ritual killings and other forms of threats emanating from the marginalised groups like the South-East Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDC) and other militant groups in the Niger Delta, the country undeniably is sitting on a gun powder. Omede (2011) as cited in Odeh and Umoh (2015:413) argued that the internal security of any nation is critical to its survival, and it forestalls lawlessness, chaos and disintegration in the system, thus, it is considered a dynamic condition which must involve the relative ability of the government of the state to counter threats to its core national values and interests. Premised on this expectation from the citizens the concept of Thomas Hobbes' Social Contract becomes relevant, therefore the police force is expected to provide security and protect lives and properties in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, this has been neutralised by several factors in the Nigeria context such as poor training of the police force, under-motivation, ill-equipped to tackle crimes and insecurity, and most critical, corruption among the ranks and files of the personnel of the NPF. According to Nwanguma (2012) the security forces in Nigeria, including the men of the NPF have failed in several occasions to tackle crimes and insurgencies because they suffer neglect and are poorly trained and equipped, as well as corrupt. Again, the personnel of the NPF in particular are often times confronted with other challenges such as poor remunerations and benefits making it difficult for them to perform to the expectations of the general public which in turn endangers national security. It is on the premise that this study examines the impact as well as the challenges of the NPF in the maintenance of Nigeria's internal security since the country returned to transitional democratic rule.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact and challenges of the NPF in the maintenance of internal security in Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the extent to which the NPF has contributed to the maintenance of internal security in Nigeria,
- ii. Examine the challenges of the NPF in the maintenance of internal security in the country, and
- iii. Proffer solutions to the challenges of the NPF in the maintenance of internal security in the country.

Research Questions

- i. What is the role of the Nigeria Police force in the maintenance of internal security in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the challenges that confront the Nigeria Police in the discharge of their duty in Nigeria?
- iii. What are the solutions to the challenges of the NPF in the maintenance of internal security in the country?

Research Method

The research method of this study is historical research design. This research design is chosen because of its exigency and consistency. It implies that the study relied extensively on secondary source of data.

Secondary data are research material, or data obtained from extant or already existing literature in the research area. It means that secondary data are not originally from the researcher but from extant literature such as journals, articles, gazettes, correspondence, newspapers, books, and internet sources.

II. Review of Related Literature

The Concept of Security and Internal Security

The reason for the emergence of the Leviathan (the Sovereign, State or Government) according to Thomas Hobbes in his "Social Contract theory" is to maintain social order, as well as ensure there is security of life and property within the state. To this very reason, the concept of security has been the priority of every modern society. It has also attracted divergence of definitions from scholars and security experts. Oyeyemi and Alao (2020:48) opine that because of the pertinence of ensuring that there is internal security to a people which is the sole responsibility of the government, it has been defined in so many ways by many scholars, security experts, security managers, government officials and security analysts depending on their intellectual predilection and/or ideological orientations.

Buzan (1991) cited in Naakiel & Ayokhai (2016:3) argued that "security, first and foremost, must be holistic in order to achieve the needed peace and security a nation desires". It implies that security must involve all spheres of human activities that can promote internal security in a society. Again, it means that all the indices that guarantee absolute peace and security must be tackled by the government in order to avoid insecurity in the society. A state that wants to maintain absolute peace and security must maintain peace and security of lives and properties. Idowu (2014) sees it as that which encompasses phenomenon that is paramount to the individual citizens of a community and the community or nation itself. In addition, he sees it to mean freedom from risk, danger and fear but for safety, confidence and the ability of a nation to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its citizens. Pogoson (2013) cited in Idowu (2014:66) argued that security, first, has to do with self preservation which is the first law of existence. It has to do with self-preservation, stable and relatively predictable environment in which an individual or group may pursue his ends or objectives without disruption, harm, danger, and without fear of disturbance or injury.

Akinyemi (2013) argued that the divergences of the conceptual definitions of security are either focused on the traditional or non-traditional conceptions of security. To him, while the traditional school of thought focuses on the use of military force in ensuring there is security of life and property in a state, the non-traditional school expanded the scope of security to include issues of socio-economic development in a state. Aliyu (2012) conceived the term security to mean a state of reduced or contained threats and tension in which stability of the state is not in any imminent danger of disruption either from internal and external state or non-state actors. Stability here connotes the order, regularity and pattern which characterised the state's condition over an extended period. For Otto and Ukpere (2012) security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or in the larger society; and must be related to the presence of peace, safety, happiness and protection of human and physical resources or the absence of crisis, threats to human injury, among others. Ekpo (2016) sees security as "liberation from uneasiness or a peaceful situation without no threat or risk of threat of any kind". Danmadi (2010) defines it as "the protection of life and property so that the daily business of life may continue without hindrance". Efeovbokhan (2009) sees it as "the absence of threat and/or fear in a social system". From the plethora definitions of security above, it means that the concept of security involves not just the security of life and property alone but ensuring that human security in all endeavours are strictly observed and maintained by the government. It implies that national security must be prioritised in order to maintain social order and tranquillity in the society.

The Concept of Internal Security

The concept of internal security which is interchangeable used to mean this same thing as national security has been considered from different perspectives, perhaps, because of its national outlook, unending spread and threat, and sophistication in recent time. Like other contested concepts in political science and intelligence studies, the term contains an ideological element which has rendered it difficult to comprehend and resolved. The feeling of being safe and protected has eluded the people of the global system, particularly in Africa where there are a lot of threats to security of life and property emanating from ethno-religious crisis, communal crisis, land disputes, post-election violence, insurgencies and terrorism. According to Pogoson (2013) Nigeria's internal or national interest rests on its national defence policy which is targeted at achieving its goal of protecting the country's national interest. In the same vein, Oyeyele (2020:49) averred that the content of Nigeria's national defence policy includes the promotion of her sovereignty, national values, culture and prestige, as well as keeping the state safe from disasters. In a related manner Adishi and Oluka (2018) argued

that climate change which is associated with seasonal changes in the weather pattern resulting to flooding, desertification, heat wave, melting of ice, depletion of ozone layer, and by extension, Fulani herders/Farmers conflict portend a great danger and challenge to sustainable development in the Nigeria's society. The Singapore Government Security Department, SCDS (2019) sees national security as the art of keeping peace within the territory of a state which is the responsibility of the government of the state and its security agencies, particularly the police force .

For Satish and Rahul (2015) as cited in Nte, Oluka and Arifin (2021:338) internal security has often times taken to mean the preservation of a state's sovereignty, territorial integrity and internal stability with emphasise on the coercive power of the state. Considering the complex and interdependent of global system, with a lot of non-traditional threats such as the outbreak of pandemic or epidemic, threats from climate change and other forms of natural disasters, internal security is more than the protection and preservation of state's sovereignty and territorial integrity as the definition connotes, hence, this definition is criticised for this reason. Odeh and Umoh (2015:414) opined that people must be protected by the armed forces of the state from external aggressions but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals, unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation and pollution, and socio-economic injustices, and this is what it means to have national security. It means that national security is beyond the protection of state's sovereignty and territorial integrity but also involves all aspects on ensuring there is sufficiency of human security in a state.

The Police and Policing: Conceptual Clarifications

The police plays important role in any modern society without which the sustenance of law and order, and security of life and property would have been difficult to sustain. The primary objective of the police in any civilised society is policing and securing of compliance with the existing laws and regulating social order in the state. Usoh (2015:2) sees the police as a particular social institution of the state setup by the government to perform specific social functions, securing of life and property, and maintenance of law and order in the state. The term "Politian" a French word has come to mean the "police" which was derived from the Greek word "polis" or "city". Etymologically, the police are seen as those involved in the administration of a city. In a civil society, the police force represents the civil power of government as opposed to military power (Usoh, 2015). According to George (2021) police is a body of officers representing the civil authority of government. Typically, officers of the police force are responsible for maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law, and preventing, detecting, and investigating criminal activities in a state, and all of these functions are known as policing. He avers that scholars and researchers alike have criticised this notion or definition of the word police as member a public organisation that have the legal competence to maintain law for two reasons. First, is that it defines police by their ends rather than by the specific means that they use to achieve their goals. Second, the variety of situations in which police are asked to intervene is much greater than law enforcement and order maintenance (George, 2021).

An American sociologist, Egon Bittner, as cited in George (2021) opines that there is a common feature among all the agencies engaged in the act of policing which is the sharing of common legal competence to enforce coercive nonnegotiable measures to resolve problematic situation which are characterised by two features: their potential for harm and the need to solve them urgently before they develop that potential. In essence, the actual use of coercion or the threat of using it allows the police to put a quick, non negotiated and conclusive end to problematic situations, for example, keeping people away from the scene of fire for their own safety and ensure men of the fire service do their jobs effectively without distractions. This provides a consensus to the definitions of the concept of police among scholars.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Contract Theory is used as a theoretical framework in this discourse because it explains how society evolves, and the roles, rights and responsibilities between members of the society and the sovereign (i.e. government). Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704) are the major proponents of this theory. Although, they differ in their views, but Rousseau's influential treatise of 1762, popularised the theory (Mazi Mbah, 2007:127). The theory is relevant in this study because the focus of the study is the nexus between the NPF and the Nigeria citizens. Because one of the major duties of the government is maintenance of internal security through its security agencies, especially the police force, the theory becomes relevant in this discourse. In general terms, Social Contract Theory states that members of a society give up some of their basic rights to enjoy certain rights in the interest of the society. The rights given up therefore empower the Leviathan to make binding laws for the society. Laws made by the Leviathan, protect the society from the life lived in primordial times, where life was seen as nasty, brutish and short. For Hobbes, the absence of a recognised government functioning as referee over members of the society implies that such society exist in a state of nature where chaos and civil strife predominates (Sikiru, 2013:61).

Proponents of social contract theory assert that for societies to function effectively there should be an agreement among her members. This agreement explains the rights and responsibilities of the state (i.e. the government) and the individuals (i.e. the citizens). For the contract to be effective, every member or party to the contract, therefore, must concur to its terms. Relating this theoretical framework to this study, it should be noted that focus of the study is the impact of the NPF in the maintenance of internal security in Nigeria. It should also be noted that the concept of internal security is all embracing and its pertinence to a nation cannot be neglected especially now that some states of the global system, especially the states of Africa are moving towards a failed state. Recognised government therefore, appears to be a panacea from the state of nature. In other words, a government is expected to perform its constitutional responsibilities or obligations to the people likewise the people back to the state by maintaining peace and order, as well as respect for constituted authorities. Since national security is targeted at achieving certain goals which include protecting state's national interest, sovereignty, values, culture and prestige, cum keeping the state safe from disasters, epidemics, as well as crimes, violent conflict, insurgency and terrorism (Pogson, 2013; Oyeyele, 2020), the theory becomes relevant.

It should be noted that the increasing cases of crimes, violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria, as well as human right violations, environmental degradation and under-development have questions the essence of the government and its security agencies in recent times. The end product of failure of government and its security agency, the NPF (Social Contract) to uphold internal security has raised a lot of concern to the citizens of the country (Joab-Peterside, Okodudu, Ekekwe and Obipi, 2011). Hence, the Nigerian State and the NPF have to update her modalities in the fight against crimes and insecurity situations, human right abuses as well as equipped the force with modern or sophistications to enable the force to continue with its fight against these challenges. This alone can revitalize and rejuvenate the existing social contract in the country.

Data Presentation and Discussion

NPF and the Maintenance of Internal Security in Nigeria

The Nigeria Police Act 2020 which repeals the Police Act Cap. P19 Laws of the Federation, 2004 to provide for more effective and well organised police force driven by the principle of transparency and accountability, specifically emphasises:

- a. Enhancement of professionalism through the provision of increased training opportunities for police officers and persons employed by the police force, and
- b. Create an enduring cooperation and partnership between the force and communities in maintaining peace and combating crimes nationwide (see Nigeria Police Act 2020).

In the face of the widespread security challenges in the country including financial crimes, corruption and religious extremism, oil related conflict, IPOB, Fulani/Farmer conflict and other traditional security threats or problems related to political and socio-economic issues such as tribalism, lack of patriotism, social injustice, mediocrity, indiscipline, communal clashes and corruption, what are the efforts of the NPF in the fight against these forms of problems. It is on this footing that Part VII, Sections 31-70 of the Nigeria Police Act 2020 provided for the powers of the officers of the NPF to perform certain functions which among others include: investigating allegations, arrest, mode of arrest, no unnecessary restraint, notification of cause of arrest and rights of suspect, arrest in lieu prohibited, humane treatment of arrested suspect, arrest by police officer without warrant, arrest without warrant by private person, and handing over of an arrested suspect by private person (Nigeria Police Act, 2020).

Also for the officers of the force to perform their constitutional duties to the state and citizenry optimally, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Nigeria Police Trust Fund, NPTF (Establishment) Bill into law on 24 June, 2019. As a special intervention fund, its main objective is to improve on the training of the personnel of the force in the discharge of their duties, purchase of equipments, machinery and books, and construction of police stations and living facilities for officers of the NPF. Section 4 of the Act specifically lists the sources of funds for the Police Trust Fund, PTF to include: 0.5% of the total revenue accruing to the Federation Account; a levy of 0.005% of the net profit of companies operating business in Nigeria; monies appropriated by the National Assembly in the budget; and aids, grants and assistance from international agencies, non-governmental organisations, NGOs and private sectors.

Also, the power of the NPF in the fight against all manners of offences or crimes is strictly determined by the frameworks of the laws. Criminal justice system begins with the police and end in the court of law which comprises of Federal and State courts, appeal courts, and the supreme court of justice sitting above the other lower courts and the Sharia Courts located only in the Northern part of the country. By the nature of Nigeria's criminal justice system, the NPF has a lot of roles to play and the involvement of the personnel or officers of the force cannot be overemphasised. While the officers of the NPF play pertinent role in criminal justice system in the country, it is the constitutional responsibility of the state governments to prosecute a number of criminal

offences, including armed robbery, kidnapping and murder or culpable homicide. The Commissioner of Police (CP) and heads of other security agencies in a state are also members of the Security Council that deliberates on the security concerns within their jurisdiction. Notably too, is the role played by the states' Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice as required by law of the state. The main role of the Attorney-General is to provide legal advice, particularly in respect of criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and cases filed against suspects when there is prima facie evidence crimes have been committed by the suspect (s). It simply means that the NPF as security agency of the state or country has over the years involved in the fight against all forms of crime within the jurisdiction of the state command of the police force. According to Home Office Vision 2.0 Programme (2021) the NPF is the primary law enforcement agency of the government of Nigeria with hundreds of thousands of officers in all the nooks and crannies across the country. Although, the military sometimes assist the NPF in the maintenance of law and order in areas where there are ongoing conflict or violence that are beyond capabilities of the NPF as in the case in the North-East, the Middle Belt and South-East regions of the country. But this does not mean the officers of the NPF are not in control of their constitutional duties of preventing crime and gathering of intelligence reports that would help them to detect threats against the state and its citizens.

There is therefore no doubt that the officers of the NPF are charged with the responsibility of managing security of life and property, and law enforcement in Nigeria but for specific purposes, the government utilises the joint efforts or collaboration of the Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF), Department of State Services, (DSS), as well as groups created for specific purposes such as the Civilian Joint Task Force, CJTF to support security operations, particularly against violent conflicts, insurgent and terrorist groups across the country. In apparent, the NPF is the primary law enforcement agency of the federal government, while men of the NAF are responsible for external security and sometimes domestic security which they share with the NPF, and officers of the DSS responsible for internal security and reports to the presidency through the national security adviser (NSA) respectively (see Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, DFAT Country Information Report, 2020). According to the U.S. State Department, USSD Human Rights Country Report (2020) cite in Home Office Version 2.0 (2021) the NPF is the primary law enforcement agency but with consistency with the constitution of the federal republic, 1999 the government continued to depend on the armed forces in some circumstances to address internal security concerns due to insufficient capacity and staffing of the NPF which is the domestic law enforcement agency. Section 4 of the Nigerian Police ACT 1943 specifically states 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 enforcement of laws and regulations with which the force is directly charged, and shall perform such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of the force by, or under the authority of this or any other ACT" (see USSD Human Rights Country Report, 2020). The Constitution of the Federal Republic 1999 (as amended) prohibits state and local governments from forming their own police force and empowered the NPF to maintain law and order in each state of the federation, and engage in border security, maritime and counter-terrorism operations. This has made the duties of the NPF very cumbersome and difficult to execute in time of conflict and threats to national security.

The Challenges of the NPF in the Maintenance of Internal Security

There is no doubt that personnel of the NPF perform their duties in their respective spheres but it seems that some of the NPF stations and posts located in various states, local government areas, towns and villages are sometimes handicapped when it comes to discharging their duties. Certain factors hinder and undermine service delivery on the part of the force which in most cases not directly the fault of the personnel of the force but of the government of the state. As Brownson (2012:7) puts it, the NPF is constitutionally saddled with the responsibility of maintaining law and order, and to protect, prevent and investigate crimes, but in discharging of these duties, the force has over the years failed by virtue of certain inherent problems and challenges that have militated against the force in the discharge of its constitutional powers. Most critical of these problems are the incessant abuses of human rights, collection of bribes and corruption in the force, flagrant shooting of innocent people or suspects and fellow officers of the force, illiteracy and incompetence of certain officers, mounting of illegal road blocks, among others (Brownson, 2012). Generally, a number of studies have revealed that the most critical of the challenges of the personnel of the NPF, especially in the stations and posts in towns and villages are lack of manpower, lack of scientific and technological equipments for service delivery and detection of crimes, inadequate transport and communication facilities, lack of sophisticated arms and ammunition to fight criminals and poor enumeration. In addition, the NPF generally has cultivated certain unaccepted behaviours while dealing with the civilian population which in turn affected police-public relations in the country. These forms of unaccepted behaviours of some of the personnel of the force across the country include: arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of detainees, collection of bribes and corruption and extortion at road checkpoints.

Anyanabia, Adishi and Oluka (2019) assert that one of the major challenges of the NPF is the failure of the government to provide the force with scientific sophistications in crime management and investigation. They argued that the absence of the scientific aspects of investigation of crimes because of the failure of the government to provide the force with modern equipment and the absence of functional database for criminal records and trained professionals in the force, as well as the use of outdated and manually kept crime record system by the Central Criminal Registry, CCR department of the police force makes it very difficult for the personnel of the NPF to assess finger prints in crime scenes and unravel the suspects of such crimes. Furthermore, they opine that the absence of Automated Finger Print System, AFPS and Live Scan Finger Print Capture Device, LSFPCD in some of the NPF headquarters located in state capital cities undermine the efficiency of the force in resolving such crimes (Anyanabia et al., 2019:44). Aremu (2012) as cited in Obasi (2020:71) argued that the provision of Section 215 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 which states that before a State Commissioner of Police (CP) carries out an order of his governor, he may request that the matter be referred to the president or such minister of the government to authorise on behalf of the President for direction has also constituted a challenge to efficiency and response of the police personnel on certain matters that required immediate response. In short, the police contingent in various states is strictly under the operational control of the Inspector-General of Police, IGP making its administration over centralised.

Oluka, Igwe and Ativie (2020) aver that the demand for forensic evidence in resolving crimes is in the increase in recent times all over the world, especially in Europe, America and Asia but on the contrary, in the case of Nigeria, it is underutilised which in turn undermine efficiency of the NPF in resolving crimes as well as makes it difficult for prosecutors of crimes in the NPF to prove some of their cases against suspected criminals or offenders beyond reasonable doubt. Again, when crimes of such magnitude have been committed, forensic technology helps the police investigating officers in fishing out suspects and charged them according while the innocent is exonerated as well (Oluka et al, 2020:509). Similarly, ThisDay Live (2021) argued that while nation-states all over the world are increasingly relying on technology to fight crime, the NPF is stuck in the past, dependent more on mounting of roadblocks, blaring of sirens and using of other antiquated method. It raises the question as to why is it that a nation like Nigeria under the vice grip of sundry cartels of violent criminals is yet to fully adopt modern sophistication in the fight against crimes, insurgency and terrorism? Omole (2020) sees effective policing in Nigeria as almost impossible unless there are fundamental changes and these changes can only be achieved if the constraints faced by the personnel of the NPF are no longer used as excuses for the various misconducts and unprofessional behaviours by many of the officers of the force.

He therefore argued that in spite of the several attempted efforts by the leadership of the NPF to enforce discipline and even sack a few of the bad eggs, improper conduct by some of the officers of the force continue to undermine the capability of the force to fight the pervasive insecurity and crimes across the country. Furthermore, he identified institutional, structural, operational, financial, environmental, capacity, historical, leadership, political and legal/establishment challenges as the bane of the effectiveness of the force in the fight against crimes and insecurity across the country (Omole, 2020). Nnaji and Ojiego (2019:367) summarises the major challenges of the efficiency of the NPF in the country to include misguided orientation, over centralisation, poor funding and management, corruption and problem of deployment of personnel of the force. There is misguided orientation because the force has always been seen as instrument of coercion from the time of its establishment during the colonial era to the independence and post-independence era. The unavailability of funds to purchase ammunitions and other security gadgets has always been one of the major challenges of the force. Also worrisome is the fact that men of the force face regular deployment or transfer to new areas after acclimatising with the old area of serving to the country. One may consider these as minor challenges but they have impacted negatively on efficient delivering on the part of the personnel of the NPF.

III. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the era of colonial rule to the present day's Nigeria, policing has always been necessary in the preservation of law and order. In essence, the constitutional duties or functions of the police force as always remained the same, although, the structure and organisation have undergone several changes and restructuring for the purposes of improved service delivery or efficiency in the performance of its duties or obligations to the state and its citizens. In Nigeria, the powers of the police force, NPF are have always been spelt out clearly under the Sections of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended) and the Nigeria Police Act of 2020 which repeals the Police Act Cap.P19 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004. The centralisation of the authority and commands of the NPF has always been associated with the challenges or problems of the force. There are also the problems of bribery and corruption in the force, cum lack of manpower, lack of scientific and technological equipments for detection of crimes. Again, there are the problems of inadequate transport and communication facilities, lack of sophisticated arms and ammunition to fight criminals, poor enumeration. The NPF generally has also cultivated certain unaccepted behaviours while dealing with the civilian population which in turn affected police-public relations in the country.

There is also the problem of under utilisation of forensic science criminal investigation as well as in the criminal justice system in the country which in turn rendered police investigations and admissibility of evidences in the courts of law worthless. In spite of these challenges of the NPF, the officers of the force, individually and collectively, have in so many occasions distinguished themselves while discharging their constitution obligations to the state and humanity, and in the areas of crime management. From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Police-public relations have always been associated with certain problems such as distrust and hatred on the part of the officers of the force. In other word, the public conception of the force has always been acrimonious especially in the feelings and manners in which the officers of the force conduct themselves in public places while discharging their duties. For this perception to change for good, the officers of the NPF should change their orientation and conduct themselves in a more internationally accepted manner. In other words, they should see themselves as friends of the public and not officers of the law as they always conceived.
2. Officers of the NPF should shun certain arts that are capable of discrediting the image of the force locally and international, such as bribery and corruption, extortions of money from road users including transporters, extrajudicial killings of innocent citizens, among others. When this is achieved the public image of the force may change for good and the public may also change their perceptions of the officers of the force which may also make the officer perform their duties effectively without rancour and distrust from the public.
3. Significantly, the government should fund the force adequately, increase the wages or salaries of the personnel, package efficient and secured pension scheme, safety and risk benefits for officers of the NPF. Apart from these necessities, the government should also provide the men and women of the police force with modern and technology driven equipments that will enable them fight crimes and discharge their other sundry constitutional functions or duties to states and citizen effectively. When this achieved, threats to internal or national security will be a thing of the pasts because a number of the root causes and sources of finances of some of the organised criminal gangs in the country will be unravelled; and culprits charged, arraigned and prosecuted and sentenced accordingly.

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