

An Assessment on the Roles of Nigerian Police Force in Detecting and Preventing Crime in Fagge LGA

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Abstract

With the recent upsurge of crime creating state of insecurity in the society, there is need for a study to find out what is responsible for and who are competent to combat crime in the society. In any existing society, there are rules and regulations that are enacted to check the behavior of those living in such society. Existing along, there are specialized agents, who are charged with the responsibilities of ensuring that law and order is maintained. The research is set to assess the roles of Nigerian police force in detecting and preventing crime, and determine the process and method used in detecting and prevention of crime, it also to assess the problems facing Nigeria police force when discharging their duty. This study adopted quantitative research method, while questionnaire was used to gathered information (data) from the respondents. The findings of the research shown that crime prevail in the area as a result of inability of the police force to discharge their duty effectively as such it recommended that the provision of adequate sophisticated facilities is needed to combat crime in the area which the majority of the research findings shown that lack of adequate facilities were the reasons of their ineffectiveness in the process of crime operation, the work covered the period of three years (2015-2018).

Keywords: Police, Crime, Fagge, Detecting, Preventing,

Introduction

With the recent increase of crime and criminality creating state of insecurity in many state in Nigeria, there is an urgent need for a study to find out the major factors responsible for and those who are competent to handle it. In any existing society, there are rules and regulations that are enacted to check the behavior of those living in such society. Existing along, there are specialized agents with the responsibilities of ensuring that law and order are maintained. Among such specialized agencies is the police force. When an individual or group of individuals disobeyed these rules and regulations they are sanctioned or brought to the court by this agency of law enforcement (Police Force).

The numerous duties of the police includes the protection of lives and properties of the people, as well as the maintenance of law and order in the society. It is also part of their duties to detect, prevent and control crime from occurrence in the society and apprehend non-conformist. Looking at these functions of the police, it is relevant to know that the training required for effective performance of these different functions and duties varies and are complex. According to Wilson (1975), the

average citizen thinks of the police as an organization, primarily concerned with the prevention of crime and arresting criminals. All these are to show the need for maintaining law and order, as well as rules and regulations in the society.

According to National Police Force Organization (NPFO), the police are a constituted body of persons empowered by a state to enforce the law, to protect the lives, liberty, and possessions of citizens, and to prevent crime and civil disorder. Their powers include the power of arrest and the legitimized use of force. The term is most commonly associated with the police forces of a sovereign state that are authorized to exercise the police power of that state within a defined legal or territorial area of responsibility. Police forces are often defined as being separate from the military and other organizations involved in the defense of the state against foreign aggressors; however, Police forces are usually public-sector services, funded through taxes. Police forces include both preventive (uniformed) police and detectives. Terminology varies from country to country. Police functions include protecting life and property, enforcing criminal law, criminal investigations, regulating traffic, crowd control,

and other public safety duties. Regardless of size, police forces are generally organized as a hierarchy with multiple ranks. The exact structures and the names of rank vary considerably by country.

Therefore, it is still believed that the numbers of criminals were increasing and new ways and method/strategies of committing crime had been innovated by the available criminals in the Fagge L.G.A of Kano. Such problems include; theft, stealing of people property in the area, house breaking, etc. And these affect the socio economic, and social welfare of the people of Fagge Local government area. This research work tried assess the role of police force in detecting and preventing crime

Conceptual Framework

The Nigerian police force

The Pre-Colonial era in the West Coast of Africa witnessed a policing arrangement that was purely indigenous to the community of people involved. Emphasis was however on service, as traditional rulers used well able-bodied men for the administration of justice. Although, no semblance of official organization characterized the policing arrangement on ground before the annexation of Lagos as a British Colony in 1861. The Colonialist however introduced warrant Chief through the Emirs in the North and Obas in the West to protect colonial trade and commerce. The economic constraint experienced by the British official between 1840 and 1861 then led to the emergence of the Lagos Consular Guard that comprise a 30-man guard to enforce law and order, and to maintain sanitary regulations, Igbo (1999).

In 1863, the 30-member Consular Guard was renamed Hausa Guard, So-named after ethnicity of the men recruited into the unit. It was further regularized in 1879 by an ordinance creating a constabulary for the Colony of Lagos. Thus, the Hausa Guard became known as Hausa Constabulary. On January 1, 1896, the Lagos Police Force was created and armed like the "Hausa Constabulary" While the South-South which includes the states of Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers states were declared the oil River Protectorate in 1891 with Headquarters at Calabar where an armed Constabulary was formed. (Obaro 2014). In 1900, the Royal Niger Constabulary was later divided into the Northern Nigerian Police and

the Northern Nigeria Regiment. In the Southern Region, the Lagos Police Force and part of the Niger Coast Constabulary collapsed into the Southern Nigeria Regiments. Although Nigeria amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorate took place in 1914, it was not until 1930 that the Southern and Northern Regional Police forces were brought together to form the Nigeria Police Force. Their Headquarters was to be in Lagos. (Ehindero, 1986).

The new Police Forces were in addition to normal civil police duties, responsible for dealing with internal disturbance and external aggression. In 1960 under the first Republic, these forces were first regionalized and then nationalized. In 1943 the Northern and Western Regions of Nigeria established their arm regional police. There existed a local government police. They were all merged into the Nigeria Police Force in 1968. The Nigerian Police Force graduated from Colonial policing machinery to a national security outfit (Olong and Agbonika 2013).

The concept of Policing

According to Reid (1997), the history of policing begins with informal policing when all members of a community were responsible for maintaining order. Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) also asserted that traditionally, policing was the responsibility of all adults in community. To them in medieval society all adult males were obliged to contribute towards protection, prevention, and control of crimes and disorder. But the emergence of the state with its vast bureaucracies and centralization of hierarchical authority, structure, and professional staff, Weber 1968 changed the traditional policing philosophy rooted in the idea of policing as everybody's business. The emergence of the state as a human community that successfully claim the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Weber 1948, 78) resulted in to the creation of specialized agencies such as the police and the armed force for controlling the use of violence in the society.

Reiner (1993) stresses this point, that the concrete roles played by the police is defined by law and conception of order in accordance with the political and economic interests of the dominant or ruling class in the society.

According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2003), modern police force is assigned with the primary duty of law enforcement, and order

maintenance. But the content of law and what constitute order is vary widely across time and nations, and are determined by the political and economy of state.

The task of police is dictated by the contradictions and conflict of interests among groups and classes in society which if not regulated can threaten the preservation of the prevailing social order. In every substantive way, the police mirror the contradictions and conflicts as well as human cooperation in society Coat man (1959:8).

Functions of the Police

It is problematic to define contemporary police mainly in terms of their supposed role and function (Kurian, 2006). According to Sullivan (2005), the uniting feature of police work is not a social function, whether it is crime, control, social service, order maintenance or political repression. Rather, it is that all demands on the police involve something that ought not to be happening and about which someone had better do something now.

White (2007) asserts that police officers have the legal authority to use force in certain situations including protecting themselves, to make an arrest, to overcome resistance, and to gain control of a potentially dangerous situation. Nigeria Police Force performed conventional police functions and responsible for internal security generally; for supporting the Prison, Immigration, and Customs Services and for performing Military duties, within or outside as directed. (Nigeria Police Watch, 2011). The police Act (1964) assigned the following functions to the Nigeria police force:

- * Detect, prevent, and control of crime
 - * Apprehension of offenders
 - * Protection of life and property
 - * Preservation of law and orders
 - * Due enforcement of law and regulations?
- With which they are directly charge
- * Performance of such military duties within and outside Nigeria as may be required of them under the authority of the police act or any other relevant laws.

In addition to the above, the Nigeria police force is involved in:

Providing “escort services” to individual, banks, and other finance houses, transferring large sums of money from one location to another, and maintaining surveillance in banks and office housing sensitive equipment, as well

as the residential houses of notable public figures such as judge’s and top politicians, (Alemika and Chukwuma 2000).

The Impediments to Effective Policing in Nigeria

Nigeria police performance is unsatisfactory; the police are ineffective and inefficient in their job of detecting and control crime, criminal investigation, and response to distress calls by citizens. The poor performance is due to several factors. The challenge is that an ineffective police force cannot command the respect of the public. (Adeyemi, 2001).

Shortage of Manpower, one of the obvious glitches of the Nigerian police force is lack of manpower. The force is the principal law enforcement agency in Nigeria with staff strength of about 371,800 consisting of 36 commands grouped in 12 zones and 7 administrative organs (Wikipedia, 2015). The strength of the manpower is too meager to cope with the policing of the population of Nigeria which is estimated to about 150 million.

The reportage about Nigerian Police might not be complete without relating to some forms of corruption. Corruption is a problem since the practice is increasing and not reducing in the police force. Policing in the country has been characterized by a culture of corruption and lack of accountability. Police men engage in various forms of extortion of money from the public i.e. money is demanded from suspect to secure bail at the police stations.

Inadequate Funding by the Government, Many Nigerians don’t know that the only thing the Nigeria Police officers don’t acquire for themselves is perhaps their guns and bullets. Most of the times they requisite commercial buses to convey them to their destination. Furthermore, if they are lucky to be provided with living quarters in barracks, the environment is so disgraceful that only pigs can live in such places without being disheartened or even contacting diseases. They have no meaningful insurance cover that will make them rest assured that their family will not suffer in case they die in service. When a colleague is killed in service, his living colleagues are the ones who contribute money to bury their dead colleague and support his family (Onwuka, 2011).

Lack of Public Confidence, A lot of people are seeing the police as an enemy and as such cannot report crime to them. Policing in any

nation is by the consent of the people and the police must win back their consent. People are scared to giving information of hoodlums, kidnappers, armed robbers within their street to the police for the fear of being sold out.

Lack of effective Community Policing, According to Oyegoke (2003), a well-integrated community based policing could be a veritable source of security information to the police and other ancillary security agencies, to counter various acts of criminality. The grass roots people have distrust for Nigeria police and as such giving vital information becomes an onerous task.

Research Methodology

This study adopted quantitative method. Random sampling techniques was used to select wards on the basis of clusters, as well as the uses of questionnaire as the means/method of data collection. The population for this study consists of all the inhabitants of Fagge Local Government of Kano state. The area also consists of ten (10) political wards i.e. Sabon Gari, Nomansland, Kwakwaci, Gama - Kwari and Kurna (Rijiyar Lemo). Others are Dan - Rimi, Kwacirin Dikko, Kwacirin Jobe and Alfa. Apart from members of the public residing in the area of study, some police personnel

working in the area are also part of the study population for the research work.

Due to the large size of the population, the researcher used the Taro Yamani formula to come out with the sample population of 133.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

However, cluster sampling techniques was used on the basis of the 10 wards and unequal representation was given to the three clusters (A, B and C). Cluster A consists of four wards (Sabon Gari, Nomanslands, Kwakwaci, Gama), 43 questionnaires were administered to four wards, because of the large number of populations, and also it is the area that mostly affected with the problems. Cluster B consists of three wards (Kwari and Kurna, Rijiyar Lemo, Dan-Rimi), and 35 questionnaires were also administered. Cluster C consists of other remaining three wards (Kwacirin Dikko, Kwacirin Jobe, and Alfa), and also 35 questionnaires were administered. Cluster B and C have the same questionnaires because of their low population and less affected by the problems compare to the former. 20 questionnaires were also provided to Nigeria police force in Fagge LGA Police division "Nomansland". Out of the 113 questionnaires administered only 98 were recovered.

Discussion of the Major Findings

Public View on Police Effectiveness

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Effective	25	25.5
2	Not effective	73	74.5
	Total	98	100%

Source: Field work 2019.

The table above showed that 25.5% of the respondent from members of the public perceived that police are effective in fighting criminality in the area while 74.5% believed that they are not effective. Majority of the sampled members of the public attributed it to lack of adequate equipment such as motor

vehicles, motor cycles, walkie-talkie and this could mean that the policemen will perform well if their facilities are adequately provided for them. Also, their ineffectiveness is also attributed to lack of finance, lack of legal or security knowledge etc.

Public View on Police Mobilization during Criminal Act

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	33	33.7
2	No	65	66.3
	Total	98	100%

Source: Field work 2019.

The above table shows that respondents from members of the public with lowest number of 33 with 33.7% said yes and agreed that police

mobilization during criminal activities in the study area is commendable, while 65 with 66.3% answered no that it is not commendable.

Public View on the Types of Crime Mostly Committed In the Area

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Theft	38	38.7
2	Robbery	30	30.7
3	Rape	13	13.3
4	House breaking	17	17.3
	Total	98	100%

Source: Field work 2019.

The above table shows that respondents from members of the public are with opinion of theft as crime mostly committed in the area constitute 38 with the highest percentage of 38.7%. This

group is followed by respondents with robbery 30 with 30.7%, while rape scored 13 with the 13.3%. The least is that of house breaking which constitutes 17 with 17.3%.

Public View on the Problems Facing Nigerian Police Force While on Duty

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Finance	20	20.4
2	Lack of legal/security Knowledge	21	21.4
3	Poor working facilities	22	22.4
4	All the above	35	35.8
	Total	98	100%

Source: Field work 2019.

The above table shows that 20 respondents from members of the public with 20.4% are with the opinion that finance is the problem facing the Police Force while on duty. While 21 with 21.4% believed that lack of legal security

knowledge, which is followed by 22 with 22.4%, with the opinion of poor working facilities. The least is that of all of the above which constitutes 35 with 35.8%.

Police Responses on the Type of Crime Mostly Committed In the Area

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Theft	9	45
2	Robbery	7	35
3	Rape	4	20
	Total	20	100%

Source: Field work 2019.

The table above indicates that 9 of the Nigerian Police Force respondents constituting 45% are of the opinion that theft is the most committed crime in the area, while 7 of the respondents

constituting 35% believes that robbery are mostly committed in the area. Lastly respondents with 4 (20%) are of the opinion that rapes is the crime most ly committed in the area.

Police Responses on the Population Involves in Criminal Activities

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Teenagers	4	20
2	Youth	9	45
3	Aged	7	35
	Total	20	100%

Source: Field work 2019.

The table above shows that 4 of the Nigerian Police Force respondents that constituting 20% believed that teenagers are involves in criminal activities, while 9 of the respondents with 45%

believed that acts are committed mainly by youth. Lastly 7 of the respondents constituting 35% are of the opinion that criminal act are committed by the aged.

Police Force Suggestion on Provision of Adequate Transportation and Communication Equipment

S/N	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	15	75%
2	No	5	25%
	Total	20	100%

Source: Field work 2019.

The table above present that respondents from the Nigeria Police Force with the highest percentage of 75% said yes and agreed that police suggestion on the provision of adequate transportation and communication equipment will improve the work of police force in detecting and controlling crime. While the 5 respondents constituting 25% said no.

This indicate that suggestions put forward by members of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) towards the improvement of their work in detecting and control crime suggested that the government should provide the police force with adequate transportation and communication equipment such as motor vehicles, motor cycles, and walkie-talkie and radio message. Majority of the policemen precisely suggested that, the government should also provide modern equipment to fight and combat crime and organize seminar for training the policemen and motivation which may likely increase police effectiveness on duty as well as the increase of manpower. But police are ineffective in performing their role of fighting crime and criminality as presents in the analysis. On how they think the government can improve the police work, majority of the respondent emphasized the provision of adequate equipment especially transport and communication facilities. This therefore, means that the provision of adequate sophisticated equipment for the police is likely to improve their efficiently in detecting and preventing crime.

Conclusions

In conclusion, majority members of the public support and encourage that the police force has proved too worth of itself since they contributed a lot in the maintenance of law and order in the society. Provision of adequate sophisticated

equipment's for the police is likely to improve their duties in detecting and preventing crime. As indicated by the data collected. At the end of the research work it become clear that, the police force in Fagge Local Government Area as well as in other parts of Nigeria are not efficient in combating crimes. Even though all these questions claimed that they conduct their duties with utmost efficiency. This fact became clearer when the lager admitted that there are some reasons which hinder or reduced the efficiency of their duties. It further become more pronounced when they listed the various crimes that are more prevalent and their reasons of occurrence and how they should be combat.

Recommendation

Based on the outcome of the study, the following recommendations were made;-

1. From the data collected in this research, majority of the police respondents attributed their ineffectiveness to lack of adequate crime fighting equipment. To solve these problems, the government should provide the police with sophisticated facilities to enable them combat crime and criminality. However, up to date transport and communication equipment which can helps to detect and prevent crime are not sufficient for the police force to work effectively. The existence of strong communication system should be provided to the police because it enables them to apprehend criminals in short notice.
2. Welfare and accommodation matters are quite a handicap to the police face. Most of the police men live in rented houses and some of them live about two three kilometres away from their place of work. Fine solution to this problem is for the government to ensure that, all the police men and women in this country are accommodated comfortably in the barracks. It

will be very easy to them in case of emergency operation. 3. Members of the Nigeria police force should be given proper training especially in legal matters. This will enable them to prosecute cases in the law court properly thereby minimizing delays in trials resulting from want of prosecution. They should also be trained on how to deal with members of the society in which they lived. If the police understand the public very well, it will certainly improve their relationship with them.

3. The government should motivate the police force intrinsically and extrinsically by marking more funds for the police and increase their salaries especially those of the rank and file members. This will go a long way in raising police moral thereby improving their efforts in the discharging of their duties.

4. One persistence allegation against the police force is their involvement in bribery and corruption. This makes members of the public to disrespect the police and refuse the police the necessarily help in fighting criminality. In order to check the habit of taking bribe among the policemen and women, member of the police force should be given ethical value of their acts. Police men who take bribe and those who give should be punished publicly to act as deterrent to others. In order to improve the police in their role of crime combating, hardworking and well-disciplined policemen and women be promoted at the appropriate time. This will encourage them to perform well.

5. Ancillary materials such as uniforms, shoes, belts, etc. should be provided to the policemen whenever they are in need of them. However, the above-mentioned solutions can only work well if the social structure of the society capitalist economy we are operating. To eradicate criminality, the government should provide the unemployed with jobs and try to bridge the gap between the "skills" and the "un-skills" not only in others public governmental services also from the police institution in particular, and others security institution. It is only when the system is changed on that way we can be free from crime.

6. It is the malfunctions of the social system that cause the prevalence of crime in Nigeria and the only solutions to such phenomena is by government to adopt the actual meaning of social stratification policy in the process of employment in all of its organization and institutions, therefore everybody should be

employed according to his specialization as well as his educational skills. It is expected that if this suggestion will be taken into consideration, there will be an appreciable reduction in the rate of crime being committed in our society and people will become much more at ease either in their homes or when travelling.

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