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## ***Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi***

### **Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria**

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#### **Abstract**

High rate of crime in urban and rural communities call for a review of our approach to crimes fighting and its prevention. Some of the frequently reported crimes are kidnapping, robbery, murder, terrorism, tribal feud to mention but a few. Looking at the prevailing insecurity in Nigeria, adherence to the principles of community policing will help the Nigeria Police Force to overcome the security challenges. The paper reviewed some of the challenges the program faced amongst the Police Force, community, plus those emanating from the government. To overcome these challenges, the paper suggested an integrated effort from these three structures, such as reorientation programs for the police and the community, fighting corruption, and to ensure that the rule of law is obeyed by the police, community and the political leaders. Strategies involve in community policing include community partnership, problem solving and change management. However, in Nigeria, we are saddled with major challenges of policing. These are manpower shortage; inadequate funding, corruption, inadequate logistic support and infrastructure, lack of serviceable information and technological equipment to cover all the areas of the State are responsible for the current state of the police in Nigeria. Consequently, it is recommended that there should be serious retraining towards behavioural change and professional efficiency and proficiency among both the rank and file and other officer cadre of the police.

**Key words:** Community Policing, Socio-Political, Virtual Community, Community Relations, National Security, Nigeria Police

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## **1. Introduction**

The fundamental principles of community policing prescribe that there should evolve a platform whereby members of public are willing to cooperate and build partnerships with the appropriate authorities and this is achievable by allowing them access to security decisions that impact on them. In this connection, the police are expected to see themselves as part of the community and in similar manner community members are also expected to see themselves as part of the police which in turn results in pursuing crime reduction activities in the neighbourhoods (Okeke, 2006). Friedman (1992) has argued that many police forces throughout the world claim to practice community policing, but often the concept is misunderstood and misapplied. It is not untypical for community policing to be perceived as a single model or technical specification that can somehow be transplanted into any policing environment regardless of organizational or cultural context. Rather, community policing is a philosophy and value system against which policing objectives and performance are measured. Therefore, local models will vary and evolve according to the differing communities, whilst retaining and sharing the same set of core values.

According to the US Department of Justice (2012:5), police hardly solve public safety problems alone, but do so by calling for interactive partnerships with relevant stakeholders. The range of potential partners is large and this partnership can be used to accomplish the two interrelated goals of developing solutions to problems through collaborative problem solving and improving public trust. Indeed, community plays an important role in ensuring its own safety. Problem solving requires that police and the community work together in identifying neighbourhood problems and that community assumes greater guardianship of the neighbourhood (Leon-Guerrero, 2005:287). This is an indication of increasing importance of the order-maintenance and service provision functions in the operation of police agencies (Ni (Phil) He, Zhao, and Lovrich, 2005:303).

Skogan (2006, as cited in Rowe, 2008) has suggested that community policing is a process rather than a product and embraces three key elements: citizens' involvement, problem solving and decentralisation. Trojanowicz and Bucqueroax(1990, as cited in Tilley then Rowe, 2008) emphasised that community policing is both a philosophy and organisational strategy to allow community residents and police to work together in new ways to solve problems of crime, fear of crime, physical and social disorder and neighbourhood decay. Friedman(1992:2-4) examined

community policing as a policy and a strategy aimed at achieving more effective and efficient crime control, reduced fear of crime, improved quality of life, improved police services and police legitimacy, through a proactive reliance on community resources that seek to change crime causing conditions. This assumes a need for greater accountability of police, greater public share in decision making, and greater concern for civil rights. Rowe (2008) reaffirmed that one reason why community policing has not transplanted effectively to developing countries is that its adoption is primarily occasioned by the need to access international aid, and so the roots of community policing run shallow in these circumstances.

There is a more general conundrum that has implications for developed and developing countries alike, which imply that community policing is intended, among other things, to contribute to the development of social cohesion and capital. This means that qualities that are important to the success of the community policing itself. The phenomenon of community policing calls for meaningful understanding and relationship with the community in the areas of operation and decision making. Community policing also suffers from a problem of buzzword adoption; where many policy agencies claim to be practicing community policing with little knowledge of the fundamental philosophy of the paradigm (Ratcliffe, et al 2011).

In the light of this, Wycoff and Skogan(1998:140) contended that community policing is based on elements which include( 1)consultation- this is a situation whereby police put in place platforms for talking to residents and other community stakeholders about crime and other related problems requiring police attention, then community oriented priorities and ways to provide for their solution; (2)adaptation-this concerns the context in which the police are flexible in their approaches bearing in mind the cultural peculiarities of communities involved. Community policing decentralises decision making in a way that the various commands develop strategies to fit the particular problems of different societies. (3) mobilisation- this involves those forms of activities police undertake to enlist the assistance of the community to protect themselves and solve problems that generate crime.

The police resources are supplemented by the community to curb crime in the locality such as providing information, setting up of Neighbourhood Watch programmes, participation in crime prevention workshops, joining police-community advisory councils and financial contributions to crime prevention programmes etc. Okeke (2006) stated that by tradition, any operational

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

strategy developed by the police department is expected to have general application without recourse to cultural peculiarities of the area involved. This philosophical position takes root similar to the Management by Objectives theory which in which employees of an organisation have willingness and motivation to put in their best mental and material resources towards enhancing the organisational objectives and goals. This is consequent upon realisation that the employees are involved in decisions making processes that have direct bearings on their concerns. This theory gives room for participatory action and trust building in the affairs of an organisation (Okeke, 2006). Furthermore, Senna and Siegel (1997) have regarded community policing as potentially useful for a number of reasons. First, community policing strategy readily moves police officers from a position of anonymity in the patrol car to direct engagement with the community gives them more immediate information about problems unique to a neighbourhood and insights into their solutions. Second, it frees officers from the emergency response system and to engage officers more directly in pro-active crime prevention. Third, it assists in making operations more visible to the public while at the same time increases police accountability to the public. In addition, decentralizing operations allow officers to be more familiar with the specific workings and needs of various neighbourhoods. This is in addition to the needs of various constituencies in the community and to adapt procedures to accommodate those needs.

Despite the importance of community policing to the security needs of the contemporary world, Reiner (2000) logically presented more or less a major critique of this development. For example, Reiner (2000) argued that by virtue of the tactical disposition and nature of manner associated with the police work, there are inherent tendencies that police would fall prey to political influence. Reiner (2000) however argued that police should not be politicised even in the face of the prone operational uniqueness of the police organisation and governance. Reiner (2000) drew memory to some peculiarities of the police work and which have a range of implications on the practice of community policing. For instance, Reiner (2000) stated that police are closely connected with resolution of conflicts but usually through the power of coercion and criminal law. In order words, there are actions of the police which will certainly plugged individuals and groups into feeling of being policed against and to expect the police to command universal love among the public could be a mirage (Reiner, 2000). These actions and inactions makes the police to inherently loose the necessary legitimacy and love of the public.

For the police to gain legitimacy, it is not necessary that individuals and groups accept the police pattern of doing things in the society and that the police cannot serve the whole community if there is any need having a police at all (Reiner, 2000). The practice of community partnership policy encourages the police officers to perceive community members as partners in crime prevention and community safety and in the process improves relationships between the police and public. A shift in paradigms of the police's decision making and discretionary powers downwards to patrol officers has the capacity to place more authority in the hands of the people who best know community problems and expectations (Senna and Siegel 1997:491).

Innes (2003) has also justified community policing as follows: the police should serve the community by ensuring that police activities were driven by responding to the needs and desires of the community, rather than the interests of police managers; developing closer relations with the public would restore popular support for the police; Improve public relations would also have the effect of improving the police's ability to control crime, as it would improve the flow of local intelligence that is crucial in solving crime; community policing is also important in that, it is constitutive of one of the key trends in reconfiguration of the social control apparatus, whereby the engagement of community has been promoted as a key mechanism for the delivery of enhanced levels of control (Innes, 2003:67-8).

The reasons for adopting the more proactive approach inherent in community policing are both philosophical and pragmatic. At the philosophical level, any police organization that seeks to serve democratic and humanitarian ideals must be, and be seen open, fair, apolitical, accountable and responsive to public perceptions and expectations. Such policing is characterized by the notion of police service rather than police force, where the most significant benchmarks of performance are public satisfaction, trust, and confidence. Community policing, thus intended to institute a model and philosophy of policing that would re-establish a connection between the police and the community (Innes, 2003). According to Cheurprakobkit and Puthongsiriporn (2005:287), an earlier study of community policing conducted by the San Diego Police Department lends credence to the importance of two components of community policing: police-citizen partnership and problem solving. The study, as reported, found out that there are much stronger ties between the police and the community members and that was turned out to be more

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

important resources for policing in the areas of encouraging police officers to develop creative solutions that led them to solve complex crime problems more effectively.

The implementation of community policing would promote service culture within policing institutions characterised by implementing favourable interpersonal behaviour, proper management of time, professional appearance, good conduct, well-organised work areas, job efficiency, proper management of good image of the police organisation through responsible and accountable leadership and satisfactory service for the clients, which in this case is the community (Cheurprakobkit and Puthpongsiriporn,2005:289). Putting this study in context, it is important to note that despite of the promising operational disposition of community policing as a strategy, Button, 2007, Rowe, 2008 have however argued that more often than not, this kind of strategy of policing, meant to ensure adequate security, have been less than successful.

According to this argument, the enabling socio-cultural patterns were not usually put into consideration as required at the point of introduction. Hence the policy is being introduced into social, political and economic context that are not conducive to developing civil society relations with the police service. The police maltreat innocent citizens instead of giving them protection while communities treat police officers with suspicion, and consequently crime issues are not usually reported to the police authorities. As a result, there is a growing reliance on the private security industry to fill the gap between what the state can provide in terms of policing resources and the insatiable demands for policing service (Button, 2007:976). This has become a matter for great concern to both law enforcement officers as well as ordinary citizens who would like to feel assured of their safety. Under this scenario, the primary aim of fostering police/community collaboration suffers setback.

### **2. Statement of the problem**

The Civil Society Panel on Police Reforms in Nigeria report (2012) reflects a range of concern about the divisions in communication between police officers and the public in Nigeria. The report suggests that this division in the police/community relationship has been identified as an inherent hurdle in the system of policing in Nigeria. This is in terms of the ability of the police to really position itself as the constitutionally recognised and trusted security agent to which citizens of all categories could take their security concerns in Nigeria. The public perception in

relation to lack of public confidence and the corresponding cultural gap has assumed a level whereby members of community are not willing to give useful information to the police in the task of preventing and controlling crime in Nigeria. This situation has been identified as one of the main problems in the implementation of various policing policies and programmes and this actually led to the call for the introduction of community policing in Nigeria (Civil Society Panel on Police Reform in Nigeria Report, 2012). Hills (2014) argued that the promotion of police and community partnership had been carried out by a range of politicians, practitioners, and criminal justice scholars who firmly believe in facilitating effective policing through partnership strategy. This kind of partnership strategy tends to serve as a means to build trust between the local people and the police. Hills (2014) stated that most of the countries of Africa that have engaged with community partnership approach to policing have not been as successful as planned. At the centre of both individual and institutional programmes there should be ethical policing as a matter of ideology. By the way, social problems should be perceived as issues of collective responsibility by the police and public in terms of identification, priority and problem solving (Hills, 2008). As part of demonstration of the tendency to ensure robust relationship between the police and community, various regimes of the federal government of Nigeria have stated the readiness to promote ideals of community policing in the country.

Conversely, there is an experience of the increase in the perceptions of crime and insecurity such as insurgency, kidnapping, armed robbery, youth restiveness and cultism in the country. This is a clear indication that the police-community partnership strategy introduced for relatively over a decade as argued by Dickson (2007), has not really achieved its original aims and objectives in Nigeria. To buttress this point further, even in recent times, there was an official policy statement credited to the President, Federal Government of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari reiterating the concern of the government of Nigeria to give priority to community policing on the nation's security agenda. This Presidential speech was delivered at the National Security Summit held on the 17th August, 2015 held International Conference Centre Abuja, organised by the Sun Newspaper and Nigeria Police Force. At the occasion President Buhari stated thus: '...Today's event represents a significant step in the effort of the new government towards redefining the policing and national security arrangements for our country. The significance of the event lies in its potential to galvanise community support and secure citizens' consent for the Nigeria Police in advancement of their crime prevention and detection mandate. As stated in my inaugural

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

address, we intend by the end of our four-year tenure to attempt to erect and maintain an efficient, disciplined, people-friendly and well-compensated security architecture. Effective policing of a society is dependent on the level of security consciousness of citizens and the strength of the understanding that exists between the Policing Agencies and the community. This explains why it is generally acknowledged that no police force in the world, no matter how well motivated, equipped or trained can successfully operate without the acceptance and support of the various communities. The need for community input to policing and crime management in Nigeria has even become imperative considering our current national security challenges in which kidnapping, armed robbery, murder, transnational crimes, terrorism, and other organised crimes have evolved to threaten our national values and overall progress as a nation...'(President Muhammad Buhari, 17 August, 2015)

In the light of this speech coming from Mr President, it is a pointer to the urgent need to foster collaboration between the police and the public so to reduce the risk of crime in Nigeria. However, as promising as this Presidential remark, this event was not the first of its kind to give prioritise to police/community partnership option in the country. Rather, successive administrative regimes from the time of former President Ibrahim Babangida, had also taken similar policy directions. The bane in this regard is the lack of fundamental knowledge of the nature, dynamics and risk factors associated with community policing in Nigeria as well as other sister countries of Africa. This lack of substantial knowledge about the culture that supports community policing has basically made its implementation absolutely difficult, not to talk of finding the suggestions to solve the problem of crime in Nigeria. Meanwhile, as noted by Hills (2014), to foster partnership between the police and community is also a function of trust, but that trust as a common denominator for this kind of relationship is problematic in Nigeria. Despite the immediacy and enormity of the challenges associated with crime and insecurity in Nigeria at the moment, there has been surprisingly lack of adequate studies conducted on community policing involving all the stakeholders, that is, the police personnel and community members in Nigeria, and how its culture might be better improved, in terms of policy and practice..

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

Media houses shall enlighten Nigerians on the usefulness of community policing.



1. To examine community leaders encourage their followers to cooperate with the police and other law enforcement agencies
2. Examining whether or not there is communication gap between the police and community necessary for the provisions of security in Nigeria
3. Providing policy makers and other stakeholders on policing and security with an enhanced knowledge of the nature, dynamics, risk factors in the implementation of community policing policy in Nigeria
4. To enlightened Nigeria community members on the need to appreciate the coming of this model and be prepared to collaborate with the police in crime detection and prevention
5. Examine and develop current organizational structures to drive community policing;
6. Making valuable suggestions for a culture that supports the practice of community policing policy for crime control in Nigeria

#### **4. Conceptualising Community Policing**

The 2008 Presidential Committee on Police Reform defines community policing as a straightforward concept of shared responsibility between the police and the community with a focus on provision of efficient and effective service. According to Bayley, “community policing is based on the fact that the ability of the police to control crime through law enforcement based exclusively on their own resources is limited”<sup>23</sup>. Funding, therefore, provides a pragmatic and compelling reason to pursue a community policing strategy. Generally, because of competing demands on public funds for health, roads, defence, energy, schools, portable water etc, government alone may not be able to meet all the needs of its security agencies; hence the need for partnership, which is emphasized in community policing.

In addition, police need to have information from the public in order to deter crime. Accordingly, if the public does not report crime, the police cannot take action against it. The public can also

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

provide information about conditions that lead to crime in their communities, enabling the police to focus their crime prevention on people, places and situations. Indeed, the concept of intelligence-led policing is fundamentally hinged on the Community Policing Model. This is to the effect that human sources often referred to in intelligence parlance and Human Intelligence (HUMINT) still represents the most potent source of criminal intelligence. Hence, engaging community policing principles will create positive conditions that will engender trust and seamless exchange of information between the community and their police.

### **Characteristics of Community Policing**

Effective community policing will, according to Austin Iwar, evidence the following key principles:

i. **Visibility and Accessibility** which encourages high visibility patrols, ordinarily on foot to interact with the public, gain the confidence and cooperation of citizens, and develop local knowledge. The aim of patrol activity is to be preventive and to provide public reassurance, therefore it must be directed and focused on clear objectives, and the demeanour of patrol officers must be civil enough to give citizens confidence to approach and to seek police assistance.

ii. **Community Consultation, Cooperation and Interdependency** which emphasizes that the police collaborate with the public at large in identifying and prioritizing community needs; work in partnership to devise and implement agreed solutions to identified problems; and the community actively engaged in the policing role through volunteer schemes, initiating neighbourhood support networks and augmenting police patrol activities.

iii. **Multi-Agency Collaboration** which presupposes that the Police should recognize that no statutory (or voluntary) body can make a meaningful impact on social problems if it acts in isolation. Hence, the police must evolve frameworks for liaising and working together with other statutory agencies and voluntary organizations in addressing crime and other disturbances to public tranquility.

iv. **Proactive Policing** – This provides that the underlying causes of crime, incidents and public complaints should be constantly analysed, threats projected, community enlightened and the

police adopt a systematic and integrated problem-solving approach with a view to reducing and preventing such incidents. In this regard, perception and actuality should be treated with equal seriousness (e.g. the „fear of crime“; public perception of police integrity and competence);

**v. Accountability** – **This principle encourages** police managers to be open and accountable about policies, strategies, operations and decisions affecting the community they are engaged to police. It also proposes that all police personnel are accountable for their professional and personal standards and for the treatment of citizens. In furtherance to this, **frameworks for monitoring and evaluating** policing effectiveness should be emplaced and made open to public scrutiny while a clear procedure for redress of grievances against police action by citizens should also be emplaced, publicized and feedback mechanism assured.

**vi. Quality Police Service Delivery** - Standards of service delivery must be measurable; testing objectives set for operational performance and public satisfaction and the police should develop a culture of service excellence.

Against these principles, community policing embraces a number of values including the respect for and protection of human rights; transparency and openness in relation to activities and relationships within and outside the police organization; demonstrable commitment at all times to deliver the best possible service; empowerment of all police personnel to make appropriate decisions and thereby facilitate a speedy delivery of quality service; willingness to seek for, listen to and act upon public opinion relating to policing priorities; accountability, where the police are properly answerable for what they do, and assurance that citizens with a grievance against the police have effective communication channels and redress.

### **Imperative of Police-Public Trust and Partnership**

The very important of partnership between the police and the public was underscored by the Principle of Law Enforcement articulated by Robert Peel - the pioneer Chief of London Metropolitan Police. In 1829, he made nine statements advanced in the Principles; five directly emphasize the importance of public consent, trust, and collaboration. Principle two, for instance, states that “the ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police existence, actions, behavior and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public respect“, while principle three highlights the imperative of the police to, of necessity, secure the

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain public respect. Principle four notes that the degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes, proportionately, to the necessity for the use of physical force and compulsion in achieving police objectives. This is in reference to police conducts that could negatively impact on the legitimacy of the police, negatively affect community trust and endanger effective police-community partnership.

Principle five highlights strategies that could be engaged to strengthen the bond between the police and the community. It observes that the police seek and preserve public favor, not by catering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolutely impartial service to the law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustice of the substance of individual laws; by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of society without regard to their race or social standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour; and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life. Principle seven emphatically states that the police at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police are the only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the intent of the community welfare.

In further underscoring the strategic importance of police legitimacy and community partnership in modern policing, the Task Force on 21st Century Policing initiative of the government of United States notes that trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect is key to the stability of communities, the integrity of the criminal justice system, and safe and effective policing service delivery. The Task Force also notes in its Final Report that building trust and nurturing legitimacy on both sides of the police/citizen divide is the foundational principle underlying the nature of relations between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve and that the public confers legitimacy only on those whom they believe are acting in procedurally just ways<sup>26</sup>. In addition, law enforcement actors cannot build community trust if they are seen or perceived as an occupying or hostile Force coming in from outside or evolving from within the community to impose control on the community without the

policed populace's consent and input. This observation is germane to the policing realities in Nigeria.

Within the Nigerian internal security space, the imperative of Community Policing Model was highlighted in Paragraph **5.26 (i-iv)** of the Government White Paper on the Report of the Presidential Committee on Police Reform (April, 2008) which states that "There is need to adapt community policing to suit Nigeria's peculiarities. Government should formulate a Community Policing Policy and Framework for the country, taking into account our cultural and political environment".

The report further requests that „all police officers should undergo training in the basic philosophy and practice of community policing and that the principle of community policing should be included in the curricular of all police training institutions". In accepting these recommendations, the Federal Government in the White Paper directed that "The police should establish effective police-community linkages from the lowest to the highest levels to ensure the implementation of crime prevention strategies and policing priorities of the various communities".

These recommendations summarily emphasize the imperative of police's integration into the community it serves and in responding to the needs of that community, and the community participating in its policing and supporting its police. One of the main enablers of public partnership is the development and strengthening of Police Community Relations Committees (PCRC) and various Neighbourhood Watch schemes (Vigilante groups).

### **Community Policing in Practice : Models Across Africa**

It might be helpful to draw inferences from citizens-driven policing models in other parts of the world that have experienced security challenges peculiar to ours in order to drive home the essence and effect of the practice as a potent internal security management model. In Kenya, faced with the challenge of cattle rustling, two villages formed a joint security system. They selected a „Commandant“ and an Assistant, and hired five police reservists. Some citizens donated vehicles and other kits while the communities contributed to pay them little stipends. The Police reservists worked alongside Rangers employed by large scale Ranchers to repel cattle raiding, while the Kenya Police established a radio connection with the reservists and daily

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

monitored and regulated their activities. Following these moves, cattle rustling declined remarkably in the affected localities<sup>28</sup>.

In South Sudan, a Market Association in Yei arranged with the Police that when any trader is arrested for any compoundable crime, he or she is handed over to the Association. The Market Association resolves the issue and report their resolution to the Police. This arrangement has been successful in preventing escalation of relatively low-level disputes thereby reducing the burden on the Police and the Criminal Justice System. In Uganda, another work-based organization, the Taxi Drivers Association has an agreement with the Police that allows the association to police taxi and bus parks in respect of traffic offences, pickpockets, and other disputes between drivers and passengers, while exchanging criminal intelligence with the Police. The Police, on their part, offer the association's members training in crime control and prevention<sup>29</sup>.

In Sierra Leone, some communities in the South have established mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The Bo Peace and Reconciliation Movement (BPRM) is a coalition of 11 community groups working on peace building, reconciliation and crime prevention in the Bo District in partnership with the local police. Its twenty Local Peace Monitors have resolved many conflicts such as family matters, fighting, land cases and leadership issues. They handled 255 cases in 2014 and their work has reduced communal conflict and litigation in the local courts, and helped many ex-combatants reintegrate into the communities. BPRM's success has earned it the commendation of the Provincial Administration in Bo. Similar citizens-driven crime management arrangements exist in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Liberia, while a Corporate Sector-driven model operates in South Africa<sup>30</sup>.

Back home in Nigeria, historically, our revered traditional institutions are known to be strong social control actors who have been deploying their grassroots reach and time-tested cultural frameworks for information collection and dissemination, crime detection, and dispute resolution at community level. Their strong knowledge of history, culture, norms and customary practices as well as their reverence by their subjects are vital assets that could be tapped into to engender community – driven policing and address local and national crime and security challenges. Aside this, there is an ingenious model of community-driven crime management initiative that is noticeable in Plateau State. At the peak of the Jos crises, a community security arrangement in which Muslim brothers providing security for Christian brethren on Sunday Church services and

police Christians were engaged to secure their Muslim brothers and sisters during Juma'at Prayers was emplaced in partnership with the local. In presenting a united inter-faith and inter-ethnic front to confront a common enemy, this innovative community policing security model became potent in the management of the security challenges on the Plateau.

Even more significant is the Citizens-driven internal security model in the North-East geopolitical Zone of Nigeria where youths with the support of different components of the local community, volunteered to complement the State by forming themselves into Vigilante and Community Defence Bodies to defend their communities against terror attacks. The strength of the „Civilian JTF“ as they are popularly called, lies not in the sophistication of their firearms, training or pecuniary benefits, but in their exceptional courage, exemplary passion for their communities, and advantage of full understanding of the topography of their communities. The „Civilian JTF“ also draw strength from their knowledge of the local population such that they can easily identify and isolate strangers and locals linked to terrorism and other crimes. Furthermore, they have ability to generate quality criminal intelligence that is vital to crime management and the war on terrorism. Fighting arm-in-arm with the Military and complementing the anti-crime functions of the local Police, these non-state policing actors have proven to be vital assets whose names will be written in gold when the counterterrorism story of this nation will be documented.

### **Nigeria Police's Community Policing Effort**

The concept of community policing in the Nigeria Police Force surfaced when some police officers were sent to England to understudy community policing as practised in the UK.

Consequently, in 2004, it was officially launched in six pilot states - Enugu, Kano, Jigawa, Benue, Ogun and Ondo. In 2008, in line with the president's declaration of 7-point agenda, the then Inspector General of Police introduced Community Policing as both the strategy and

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

philosophy of the entire NPF. Some of the existing instrument of community policing in Nigeria Police force are:

Partnerships have been introduced in two Divisions in Lagos and FCT. The senior representatives involved – from Local Government, police, the communities and many other key agencies have made a commitment to work together in the future to gain a full understanding of the local safety issues that affect their communities and work in a partnership to resolve them.

Establishment of Community Safety and Security Forums Community Safety and Security Forum is one of the recent efforts by the police to promote community/police relationship with the primary objective of collectively fighting crime. The police holds periodic meeting with the community. The local government should be encouraged to play a key role in such structure either as convenor or host. The local councils' halls have always served as venue for all kinds of community meetings and could serve as the venue and secretariat for the forum. The importance of taking the hosting or organization of the forum away from the police is to encourage partnership in crime prevention rather than paternalism, where the community members are treated as mere informants. Participants in such a forum should include representatives all stakeholders in crime prevention in the community including women, non-indigenes and (Informal Police) IPS.

However, this meeting has not been consistent. It is only conveyed when there is emergency situation as observed in the cases of the Boko Haram in Bornu State, Niger-Delta unrest and Heredmen

Police/Community Relations Committees (PCRCs) (PCRCs) is an-ongoing committee setup by the Nigeria Police Force. It works to bring together members of a locality's diverse communities and its police officers to improve community and police relations, further an authentic community policing culture, and promote dignity, understanding, and respect in police and community interaction. The PCRC has been established in some part of the country to achieve the aforementioned objective. For instance Community Safety



## **Impediments to The Success of Community Policing In Nigeria**

The following factors constituted impediments to the successful implementation of community policing in Nigeria.

1. Lack of commitment to the project by implementing officers;
2. Inadequate support from the government;
- 3 The hostile relationship between the police and the informal policing machinery
4. Lack of support from members of the public;
5. Internal resistance by policemen who benefited from the traditional policing and who prefer to maintain the *status quo*;
6. Meager welfare package/incentives for policemen.
7. Public Attitudes towards Crime and Justice

## **5. Recommendations**

a) The government and other stakeholders should ensure full implementation of policies and programs that are focussed on community orientations that support community policing in the country. There should be serious campaign advocacies that tend to promote awareness among the populace in a way that would stimulate their beliefs that the police personnel are human beings like them. And that they are there to serve them in order to bring peace to the community. Whoever has lodge any complain to the police should be seen as somebody looking for peace and order and not pieces. The police personnel are being paid from the tax payer's money to serve the interest of the community. The police institution should be allowed to play its role in ensuring that an individual or groups of persons does/do not take the law into his or her hands. The total implementation of the principles of rule of law is vital to the practice of police/community collaboration as a strategy of policing crime in Nigeria. This is because it is one of the best ways to improve confidence levels among community members on police personnel.

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

b) There should be a political will on the part of government and other stakeholders to implement principles of community policing as a strategy to achieve crime cut in Nigeria. The necessary reforms to that effect should be carried out in a manner that it would become the general norms of policing in the country. Playing politics with community policing should be seen as trivializing issues which border on security of the nation.

c) The existing curriculum in the various police training schools, police colleges and police academies should be redesigned, enhanced and tailored in tune with dictates of community policing philosophies and best practices across the world. Principles and practices of community policing should be included in the general and civic studies programmes and curricular of various universities, civil service personnel training programmes of various ministries and parastatals as well as other defence and security institutions in Nigeria.

d) Government should adequately equip the police personnel in terms of funding to cater for welfare issues, logistics, training and other emoluments which may be capable of enhancing the morale of police personnel for effective performance of police duties. The salaries and other welfare issues of the police should be adequately reviewed and taken care of at all times. There should be an improved relationship between the police and the community they are serving for maximum information flows. Community members should evolve a sense of security consciousness through awareness creation so they are able to detect people with questionable characters in their midst and make necessary report to the police authorities regardless of the family closeness and community network so crime can be prevented and controlled

e) Parents should imbibe their wards with the tenets of societal core values of integrity, honesty and patriotism at the family levels while taking their children to school to prepare them for a responsible life in the future. There should be a sense of cooperation of the police with vigilante or other community security support groups in the various communities in Nigeria. This is in

recognition of the fact that without such kind of cooperation, criminals cannot be located since the criminals are also members of their various communities. There should be a decentralisation of the police organisation in Nigeria to give room for local participations and to carry out an all-round reform that would allow implementation of community based policing. Civil society groups and other credible stakeholders in the nation's security system should be well represented in the control of the Nigeria police rather than concentrating the controlling resources only in the hands of government. The mechanism for checks and balances should be well entrenched to avoid the security apparatus being an instrument for abuse. Strict observation of the rule of law and impartial enforcement by the police and other security authorities are supposed to be the conventional ways of institutionalising mutual trust between the police and the community they are constitutionally meant to serve.

f) There should be strong advocacies to integrate the indigenous policing mechanisms with the activities of conventional policing institutions. This range of advocacies suggested the integration of useful aspects of traditional institutions with the official security structures. This suggestion was necessary in order to promote the harmonisation of strategies to ensure the prevention and control crime as well as other instances of devastating conflicts in Nigeria.

## **6. Conclusion**

The essence of this paper is to examine the meaning attached to the philosophy of community policing in Nigeria. Also examined are the police/community relationship structures and risk factors as held by the police officers and community members who are the stakeholders of community policing project in Nigeria. In the course of this write up, attempts were made to review the relevant literatures on the notable concepts such as policing, community, and community policing. In addition, literatures on the historical perspectives of policing in Nigeria,

## *Socio-Political Appraisal of Community Policing in Nigeria*

functions, organisations of the Nigeria Police Force, the contemporary social problems facing policing and the community policing policy transfer in Nigeria have also been reviewed. By and large community policing is a collective effort that all citizens of Nigeria must be involved.

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