

An Appraisal of the Role of Nigerian Police Force and Challenges of Democratic Process in Nigeria

Jibrin Ubale Yahaya

Political Science Department, Nassarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

Abstract: - This paper gives highlight on the issue of policing, internal security and challenges of Democracy in Nigeria. However, Nigerian democracy was full of a lot of abnormalities since the return of Democratic practice from May 29, 1999. Since then, one of the contending issues affecting democratic process in Nigeria was the failure of relevant security institutions to address the lingering issues of insecurity for a very long time. The papers basically identify some of key areas where insecurity has turned to become one of the major factors that militated against the operation of democracy and good governance in Nigeria. The country has every potential resource to meet the level of global index for development in terms of economic and political dimension but the reverse is the case, Nigerian Democracy is having so many problems of insecurity which resulted to damages of property and killing of many lives. The paper suggest for the peoples of Nigeria to enjoy the full dividend of Democracy and good governance as well as other African countries to copy from our governance practice, Nigerian democratic process must provides responsive and responsible leaders that can make things better in the country in the area of effective security structure, electoral reforms, economic recovery, social welfare services and conduct of good governance in Nigeria which will features accountability, transparency, peoples engagement in governance activities as well as observing the principles of fundamental Human Rights.

Key Words: Insecurity, Policing, Security, Democracy, Corruption and Violence

I. INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a form of Government which has its origin from Greek –city state but today democratic rule become an accepted form of Government in different parts of the world. Many scholars has cited the view of Abraham Lincon who sees democracy as ‘ ‘ Government of the peoples, by the peoples for the peoples’ ’ where other scholars are of the view democracy as a system’ ’ where the majority have their way and the minority have their say or other word democracy is a limited Government.

Democracy cannot be discussed without linked it with nature of national security formations and how insecurity affect the conduct of democratic process and operation of good governance, anywhere in the world. ‘ ‘ concept of governance refers to the use of political power to manage a nation’s affairs and shape its economic and social environment in line with perceived notion of public interest and social progress’ ’. (Nkom, 2000: 75).

Many Scholar has argue the major features of democracy is all about peoples participation in governance affairs, practice and exercise of fundamental Human Right, free and fair election as well as running responsive, accountable and transparent governance.

However, in a democratic setting leadership structures who are elected by peoples votes can use political power to provide a functional security that can allow the citizens to live in peace and harmony as a result of peoples electing government which is responsible and accountable for the people’s needs in area of human endeavor which covers economy, security and other related social welfare services.

Nigeria as a country needs leaders that looks beyond their tribe, regional sentiment a leader that consider the whole Nigeria as their constituency where they will offer their sacrifice to for nation building based on any capacity they found themselves.

According to Dr. Kyari a political analysis from University of Abuja (2017) in one of his interview with Radio BBC Correspondent, Hausa version he cited, It’s painful in this democratic dispensation in Nigeria we witness a lot of insecurity issues in different part of the country after 1999 election the first instance of national security was violent movement of Area Boys in the South West Zone particularly in Lagos and Ibadan where rude boys was created by either politicians or some Yoruba Elites to promote the Yoruba interest agenda as well as creating threat and in the minds of non- Yoruba’s living in area, they even attack security formations, during the tenure of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, while in 2007 there serious agitation of Niger Delta Militants who are organized group of criminals recruited by politician in the South-East Zone, in States like Rivers, Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom, these youth fights in destroying oil companies properties leading slide dropping of nation internal and external revenue because of the activities of militants, unless the arrival of late President Umaru Musa Yar Adu’a who launched the amnesty programs of the militant youth where these was giving training for vocational activities in Nigeria and abroad with stripe allowances every month that give a light that resource of national interest is highjack by local communities for selfish interest.

However, in 2009 still during the late Umaru in his way official visit to South Africa, the first ghastly attack between Boko Haram and security formations started in Borno State, North –East part of the country, the crisis continue until today

spreading in some neighboring states of Yobe and Adamawa, the successor of Umaru Yar A'dua Former President Jonathan has spend so much money in fighting the insurgency but until today the peace is not fully restore. While in the 2015, under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari , the issue of Biafara State was raised where the Biafaran militant announce date for independence and established their own security formations. All this events is showing us the danger of insecurity in democratic dispensation in Nigeria.

II. ISSUE OF NATIONAL SECURITY.

The concept of security has its origin from traditional period for a very long time since before the intervention of colonial masters where communities established capable group of strong men as warriors to protect the community territories from external intervention of enemies. Today various countries are training different categories of men and women as security agents to protect the country from both internal and external security threat. However, many scholars has raised arguments in the process of defining the concept of national security, but for the purpose of this paper let us view of some dignitaries who has experience working in Nigerian security sector to bring the understanding of the concept very close to Nigerian peculiarities.

Brennan (1961) observe the aspect of national security ‘‘ as a protection for national survival’’ this definition is showing us the structure of national security is the major pillar that sustain the survival of any democratic nation in the world because without strong security network there should various crisis both internally and externally. While Ray (1987) Sees, national security’’ in terms of desire and capacity for self defense’’. The capacity for a country to obtain self defense is from two angles in the area of internal control of crime by criminals or external aggressions from other countries of world. The issue of self defense become a global politic of countries of the world control others by scaring other countries of the world not to play with them in various aspect of human endeavor.

Al-Marshat (1987) view, national security ‘‘more than territorial defense but it must focus on physical, social and psychological equality of life of a society and its members both in domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system.,,

We can understand that democracy and national security are twin’s brothers that go hand in hand this equally to say any raising issue that is threat to national security is fundamentally a challenge to the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. It’s painful in Nigeria under democratic dispensation on little interval basis we are receiving various reports of pickup of schools girls in North-East, Farmers and Herdsmen Crisis in North Central in States Like Benue , Nassarawa and some part of North-West in States Like Zamfara and Kaduna. However, all this is showing us democracy in Nigeria is suffering bad

drivers who can drive the nation to a desired level of Development.

The state plays a major role in the security of her citizens, security is the key function of state.(Buzan, 2003) The concept of national security cannot be discussed without making reference to meaning of state. A state is the most inclusive organization which has formal institutions for regulating the most significant contracted relationship of man within its scope (Anifowose, 19991:85)

In democratic setting security is a situation which provides national and international favorable to the protections of a nation state which provides national and international conditions favorable to the protection of nation state and its citizens against existing and potential threat. National security traditionally is understood as the acquisition, deployment and use of military force to achieve national goals.(Held, 1998:226) National security, is own secured , it is free from military threats or political coercion (Aliyu, 2012)

From our above discussion the paper argue that for a democracy to answer its name and produce a good governance Nigerian democratic process must ensure national security is one of the core sector that policy make will give more emphasize so that democratic will give meaning and sense of direction towards nation building. Mean while some the technocrats and nationalist in Nigeria are raising a point that Nigerian democracy is in dilemma from 1999- to date than the period of military rule from 1983-1998, because their arguments is that during dictators military rules Nigerian’s are only denying the freedom of expression and military brutal treatment but after return of democracy in Nigeria from 1999 to date, things fail a part corruption is moving to higher level, killing of innocent Nigerians indifferent parts of the country as well as every speech of expression against government opinions is targeted as violent speech . So here we can understand what obtained in military dictatorship is today presence in our democratic dispensation but the concern of the paper is identifying insecurity as one of the challenges of affecting democratic process in Nigeria.

Statutory Functions of Nigeria Police in Democratizations Process

The rationale behind the formation of policing structure in the society is for the prevention of crime, maintenance of order and its enforcement in the society. The Nigerian Police Force has the mandate and responsibilities in the process of crime prevention and enforcement of law and order can undertake series of investigation on criminal cases and prosecute suspect in the court of law to determine the suspect as guilty or innocent.

Nigerian Democratic setting the police are the agent of crime control and prevention as well as prosecuting a suspect for the display of justice, these will ensure the maintenance of law and order in the society.

III. PROBLMES OF POLICING IN NIGERIA

The paper has argue that Nigerian democratic process was facing challenges in terms of satisfying the responsibility of establishing strong National Security, for the country to attained the status of joining the line of developed countries of the world. However, the following problems are ones of the key factors that militate against democracy in Nigeria as a result of the nature of our insecurity dilemma.

The paper has identify a problems of policing in democratic dispensation from two perspective, in the area of problems that affect the society and the ones that affect the Nigerian Police Force as an institution.

1. Police and related Societal Problems

In this part paper discussed the nature of problems of policing in the democratic dispensation that has direct impact of on the process of discharging their mandate of securing the lives and properties of the society.

i. Nigerian Police Force and corruption practice

Nigerian Police are one of the that is highly full of corruption problems from top to down making the attitude of corruption in the service as normal routine duties for a very long time, many scholars and various institutions of accountability and transparency with both local and those with international has at various analysis corruption as one of problem affecting policing in Nigeria. The paper firstly observes the view of A. B. Dambazau (1999) Police corruption impacts directly on the police ability to prevent and control crime including criminal investigation. It does so in a number of ways such as;

- a) Corrupt policemen will devote time and energy in pursuing graft rather than the fulfillment of their responsibilities to the society.
- b) Police corruption facilitates the commission of crime or the escape from justice by others, leading to more criminality in society.
- c) Where the police are deemed corrupt and inept by the wider society, people tend to take measures into their hands to either protect themselves or seek revenge. For some, this generally means investment in private security; building with high fences around residence as seen in most Nigerian cities and for others it means either a return to traditional forms of justice or resort to "jungle justice"

While other scholars like Goldstein (1977), "corruption is endemic to policing. The very nature of the police function is bound to subject officers to tempting offers." According to Schmallegger (1991) referring to America societies "Police deviance has been a problem in American society since the early days of policing. It is probably an ancient and natural tendency of human beings to attempt to placate or 'win over' those in position of authority over them"

Samuel Walker (1992) describes four general types of police corruption, taking gratuities, taking bribes, theft or burglary and internal corruption.

Gratuities are small tips or discounts on goods purchased. In many communities taking gratuities is not considered corruption but merely the showing of goodwill to the police (with of course the hope that the police might perform their duties a little better for the person who shows the goodwill). In Nigeria we are conversant with the idea of the "traditional kola" being offered to the police as a n expression of goodwill.

1.1 Types and Dimensions of Police Corruption

Type	Dimension
Corruption Of Authority	When an officer receives some form of material gain by virtue of his position as a police officer without violating the law per se (e.g. free drinks, meals, services, traditional kola etc.).
Kickbacks	Receipt of goods, services or money for diverting business to particular individuals or companies.
.	Stealing from arrestees, from traffic accident victims, crime victims, and deceased bodies or property.
The Fix	Undermining criminal Investigation Or proceedings.
Direct Criminal Activities	Committing crimes against persons or property for personal gain in clear violation of the law.
Internal Payoffs	Prerogatives available to police persoqnel are bought or sold.
Flaking or Padding	Planting of or adding to evidence

Source: Roebuck and Barker, 1973

Police Brutality in Nigeria

Police brutality is seen as violent treatment of client which goes against the abusing the respect for individual or group Human Right.

Albert Reiss (1992) in his classical study of police abuse found that police verbal abuse towards citizen was far more common than the use of excessive force. The study found that the most common Human complaints of citizens against police, in order of frequency were:

1. Use of profane and abusive language.
2. Use of commands to move on or get home.
3. Stopping and questioning people on the street or searching them and their cars.
4. Use of threats to use force if not obeyed.
5. Prodding with a night stick or approaching with a pistol.
6. Actual use of physical force or violence itself.

The study of Reiss has show us the maltreatment of citizens by police a time based on social status of the suspect which led to many suspect from lower social status are the one suffering from the violent treatment.

ii. Politics with Policing

Politicians are using police in their state or at federal level to fight the political opponents or anybody that can become threat to their administration.” Despite the Nigerian Police Force are under the control of commissioner of Police who is reporting to the Zonal Assistant Inspector General of Police, but still at state level some politician uses police to either harass maltreat other opponents.” This some of the reason gives by Members House of Representative on Dec 12, 2017, during second reading of State Police bill. (Daily Trust, Newspaper)

However, in some quarters some politicians are using police to as tool during election period to win election and ensure no functional opposition in the state. Politicians in power or who are close related to the peoples in authority uses the formation of police force to achieve a certain political goal not using police at their domain to ensure effective security of lives and property.

2. Problems of Police as an Institution

The paper also argue to observe secondly the problems of police as an institution of Government in an area that reduce the value of police in performing their mandate of securing lives and property in the society, the following items are the problems:

- i. Lack of enough working tools for the police force in Nigeria, where the observe that police in Nigeria are lacking enough equipment that will enhance them to act in performing their duties.
- ii. Lack of motivation to the Nigerian Police Force as cited in Alemika (1991) “with gross lack of organizational autonomy in (a) the appointments, promotion and discipline of commanders and senior officers and (b) funding and operations, the Nigeria police is reduced to a mere appendage of government.

These give a room for officers and Men of police force not offer their services as mandated by constitutions to secure the Nigerian society.

i. Bureaucracy in Nigerian Police Force.

Nigerian Police Force as an institution was suffering from hard administrative procedures in the conduct of policing operations in Nigeria and demonstrations of poor leadership style by top senior management operators. This has been found in the work of Alemika (1988) “Police inefficiency in Nigeria has been attributed to “prevailing undemocratic political system, widespread cases of corruption among top government officials and those who control the economic sectors, inadequate funding of the police, poor management of available resources by police leadership, poor conditions of service, inadequate resources for police – work and pervasive effects of the nations socio economic order.

Bureaucracy is one of the internal problems that effect the functional operation of policing in democratic dispensation in Nigeria which brings about ineffective and poor performance of police in Nigeria.

ii. Shortage of manpower of Police Force in Nigeria.

Nigeria as a country, with larger population in African Continent, has lower security personnel’s to maintain law and order in the society which helps to generate the various categories of crimes found in Nigeria at different parts of the country. Kayode (1983) has observed that “the acute shortage of men has reduced the police to crime – fighters to the detriment of the diversification of police functions. Furthermore, the Nigeria Police lack equipment for achieving the stated objectives. They are limited in terms of properly equipped and maintained scientific laboratory, transport and communications, specialized and sophisticated work tool and office accommodations.

The issue of lack of enough manpower in the Police Force has brought a lot of set back to the democratic nature of Nigeria, which need to be address.

Ways Forward

In this part the paper has address the solutions to the problems police that are found both internally and externally and how effective policing in Nigeria will consolidate the democratic process in Nigeria, through the following means.

- Nigerian Government under democratic dispensation should provide enough modern and functional working tools to the Nigerian Police Force in order to prevent and control criminal activities in Nigeria.
- Fighting Corruption in police force through reforms in the police curriculum by teaching Men and Officers the dangers of corruption in services that devalue the image of the force from public sector, as well as re-orienting serving men and officers on the importance of fighting corruption in the service so the police force to restore public confidence and offer effective service to the public.
- Policy Makers in this democratic dispensation Nigeria should create policies that will motivate the Men and Officers of Police Force to have a good working conditions in terms of salary, allowances and timely promotion.
- The Policy Makers should also create a scheme of service that will address the nature of bottle neck found in the service in the process of operating their routine daily security duties to ensure effective security service delivery to Nigerians.
- In this present democratic dispensation in Nigeria, Government should have policy of recruiting and retraining of members of Nigerian Police Force both locally and internally to make them active and professionally in discharging their duties of maintaining law and order in the society.

- Government in democratic dispensation should create an environment that brutality of violations of fundamental Human Right by report any violation to relevant Human Right bodies both with national affiliation and those with global coverage to ensure no Rights of citizens is violated unnecessary.
- Politicians in Democratic Dispensation in Nigeria should stop playing politics with the issue of National Security, these will help in consolidating the democratic process in Nigeria.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper is in support that democracy cannot be sustained and produced a positive result without the foundation of a very strong national security in Nigeria, many events of insecurity happening in Nigeria like the issue of Niger Delta militants in the South-South, State Like Rivers and Bayelsa, Boko Haram in the North-East, in states like Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, Kidnapping and Army Robbery in the North-West, in States like Kaduna, Kano and Zamfara Fulani and Farmers crisis in the North Central in States like Benue, Nassarawa and Taraba. However, we can understand that all these activities of insecurity is a serious threat to the sustenance of democracy and good governance in Nigeria, as giant of Africa that need to be model for other African countries.

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