



Implications of Decentralization of the Nigerian Police to National Security

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Abstract

The paper examined the implementation of state and local government police systems in Nigeria, with special emphasis on the problems and prospects that may accompany such policy implementation. It also investigated the major challenges of the current centralised police system in Nigeria that have made the establishment of the state and local government police structure necessary. The paper depended on the secondary method of data collection as a methodology used in gathering data for the research work. After doing a thorough study of the secondary data obtained, the researchers concluded that the centralised police system in Nigeria was no longer able to guarantee the protection of its citizens, due to its centralised, autocratic, political, inefficient, nepotistic, and other factors identified in the work. Finally, the study's policy implications recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria immediately draft and put into effect the current policy discussion around the establishment of state police, the necessary portions of the constitution must be changed to provide a place for the establishment of the state and local government police departments, the recruitment exercise in the decentralised police system should be based on men and women of integrity and of good character among others.

Keywords: Decentralization, National Security, Nigerian Police

Introduction

Crime is inherent in man. There is the assumption that when opportunity abounds and without any corresponding restraint in the form of police control an average person is likely to commit a crime (Giddens, 2001). The above view illustrates the necessity of effective policing in a political community. Policing is, therefore, a necessary condition for the effective political governance of any society, the absence of which would culminate in a Hobbesian state of

existence with a corresponding brutish outlook of humanity. The United Nations advises one police officer for every 460 residents of a nation for efficient policing (Kosoko, 2023). In Nigeria, the police officer and citizen ratio is put at one police officer for 650 Nigerians (Kosoko, 2023). Nigeria's current police strength is over 370,000 officers which is insufficient based on a ratio of one police to about 600 citizens which falls short of the UN-recommended ratio of one police officer to almost 450 citizens (Shehu, 2023). The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) requires an

additional 190,000 personnel to be at par with the United Nations recommended ratio of one police officer to about 450 citizens (Kosoko, 2023). To change this ugly narrative the Nigerian police authority has advocated the need for the federal Government of Nigeria to increase its annual recruitment quota of police personnel from 10,000 to 20,000 (Shehu, 2023). Up till this present moment, available records show that the normalisation of the police officer-citizen ratio has become a daunting task that is far from accomplishment. (Kosoko, 2023). The problem of the Nigeria Police is double fold, there is the problem of shortage of police officers, and worst still, there is the problem of gross ineffectiveness caused basically by corruption, and loss of morale due to the administration of poor incentives by the police authority, as well as poor recruitment, selection, and training of police officers (Omole, 2020). Daramola (2023), and Ayorinde and Ariguzo (2020) opined further that the structure of the Nigerian Police comprises a presidential appointee who is saddled with the responsibility of managing the Police Service Commission, the office of the Inspector General of Police, the 12 zonal commands, the 37 state commands, and the 217 area commands. There are 1730 divisional headquarters, 1212 police stations, 2,020 police posts and 328 police villages in Nigeria (Sasu, 2022). The essence of the Nigerian post-independence Police is to deter criminals through the exhibition of a tendency to effectively combat crime or prevent crime, to ensure that law and order prevail in society. However, in Nigeria, the situation is the exact opposite, with police officers facing charges of extortion, extrajudicial killings, neglecting their jobs, and other offences, and sexual abuse of innocent victims, who cannot seek redress through the appropriate authority. Others are illegal and unapproved duties, obstruction of justice, aiding and abetting criminals and criminal activities, complicity in acts of armed robbery and kidnapping, and so on. (Majid, 2016; Ayorinde & Ariguzo, 2020). The aforementioned maladies have made it necessary for the Nigeria Police to be restructured, as efforts to guarantee the force's efficacy and efficiency. The quest for reforms has been heightened by the increased level of insecurity of lives and property in recent times. More so, the agitations have been substantiated by the inadequate policing of the

entire land mass of the country caused by the increased population and its attendant social expansion. This inadequacy has culminated in vicious and horrendous attacks of terrorists, bandits, armed robbers, kidnappers, assassins, and so on, on the citizenry who have remained helpless despite the existence of security apparatuses, such as the police in the country (Oluwole & Mathew, 2018). Proposals are ongoing at the legislative chambers geared toward the decentralization of the Nigerian police service (Ayorinde & Ariguzo, 2020). The Federal Government of Nigeria has attempted multiple times to devolve the Nigerian Police to state and local government levels. For example, the Nigerian Senate plenary session of 17th April 2019 passed the Police Reform Bill, 2019, still awaiting the assent of the president. The essence of the bill is to restructure the Federal Police system through decentralization in line with the present state government structure to ensure effective community policing. Also, the Tony Ojukwu-led presidential panel on SARS reform rightly recommended the creation of state and local police structures in the country (Abdullahi, 2019). In a similar vein, the 36 governors in the country through their popular Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) had on the 19th of June, 2019, determined a plan for establishing the state police, a move that was programmed to advance in three stages, such as the submission of a memo on the issue of state police establishment to the National Assembly Constitution Review Committee (NACRC), the move to lobby President Muhammadu Buhari to cooperate and support the agenda, as well as attributing their request to the current atmosphere of insecurity ravaging the nook and crannies of the country (Gbadejo, 2019). In a bid to achieve the objectives of this paper, several issues were logically selected and scientifically examined. These are the introductory session, conceptual clarification, theoretical framework, and historical overview of the Nigerian police. The difficulties and opportunities of the Nigeria Police Force's decentralisation might be summed up as additional issues addressed in the work. Afterwards, a number of the study's policy implications were emphasized.

The Problem's description

Nigeria has witnessed an astronomical rise in crime rate in recent times, a social crisis that has become intractable. The high level of insecurity has led to unquantifiable loss of lives and property. This scenario has further worsened the ugly situation of brain drain that is currently ravaging the nation with well-trained and highly respected experts and professionals in various fields leaving the country in droves to seek greener pastures and to settle in a well-secured environment, as kidnappers and armed robbers have made the country uninhabitable. There have been several reports of kidnappings of professionals, such as medical doctors, university lecturers, business tycoons, and even religious leaders. The Nigerian Police as a state entity tasked with maintaining law and order has failed woefully in that regard, as it has become too centrally bureaucratic, nepotistic, corrupt, and overtly inefficient. Its members have been accused and prosecuted for acts of extortion and extra-judicial killings, while so many others guilty of similar offences have gone scot-free due to the culture of impunity that has characterised the country over time. The gross ineffectiveness that has become an intrinsic quality of the Nigerian Police has been attributed to several key factors by most scholars, such as lack of proper training that is attuned to global standards, lack of state-of-the-art equipment for combating crime, poor methods and criteria of recruitment of new officers, lack of promotion of deserving officers as and when due, poor monetary incentives, and so on. It is in light of the above that the move for the decentralisation of the police system was supported by both state and non-state actors, as a way to salvage the security culture of the country, and to ensure a reversal of the above-stated maladies. Specifically, the state police has been viewed as an alternative police arrangement to rescue the nation from the abyss of insecurity that it has been plunged into presently.

The study's objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (i) Examine the connection between Nigeria's police centralization and insecurity.
- (ii) Ascertain whether Nigerian insecurity is associated with the formation of state and local government police.

Conceptual Clarification

The Meaning of Police

Eme and Ogbochie (2014) defined police as a group of individuals who are organised to enforce the law as well as investigate acts of violation of the law. That is, the police are concerned with matters of law enforcement. Forms of policing exist in all societies since it is the agent of stabilisation of the political community, and a means of ensuring peace and harmony prevails in the society. The nature of the modern state is such that to ensure law, order, stability, and a cordial atmosphere conducive for governance, there is the need for an appropriate committed, and well-armed security outfit to enforce orderliness in the society. Such an institution is needed to apprehend those who breach peace and its associated variables, and those who engage in acts of criminality leading to the loss of lives and property, as well as safeguard the liberties of the citizenry. In Nigeria, the police are responsible for the above-stated functions of crime prevention. This aligns with the Police Act of 1990, Part 11, Section 3, Cap. 359, which set the agenda for the creation of the Nigeria Police Force (Eme & Ogbochie, 2014). According to Bittner (1970), police is a mechanism for the distribution of situationally justified force in a society. Bittner regarded the police as officials whose primary task is responding to social disturbances. In other words, the police are a sort of generalist first respondent, taking care of disturbances or emergencies that range from quotidian to toxic. This form of emergency governance may require the police to rush accident victims to the hospital, bring, bring alcoholics indoors on a winter night, break into a locked house or apartment to see whether an elderly occupant is alive and well, persuade a mentally ill person who has barricaded himself in his apartment to return to the hospital, administer emergency first aid to a heart attack victim while waiting for the ambulance to come. Police also rescue the drowning, and talk suicidal people from out of killing themselves (Miller, 2023; Baylay, 1994). Second, the police exercise their powers to detain some person by preempting the detainee's liberty right (their freedom to leave). This is the characteristic police power to arrest. Third, the police exercise their power to trespass

by preempting a civilian right to exclude them from their property. However, the police as a state agent are public officials. They exercise their power in the interest of the whole polity under an obligation to respect each member of the public equally. They are not permitted to pick and choose among the interests of particular countries or individuals, to favour some groups over others. This is one way in which the police are distinguished from civilians, and especially from vigilantes and gangsters (Miller, 2023). The concept of policing can also be understood from the ideas that Robert Peel developed to define an ethical police force. In his model of policing police officers are regarded as citizens in uniform. They exercise their power to police their fellow citizens with the implicit consent of those fellow citizens tagged “policing by consent” indicates that the legitimacy of policing in the eye of the public is based upon transparency about their powers and their accountability for doing so (Lentz et al., 2007). The principals traditionally ascribed to peel were synthesized into nine principals which states thus: The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and is order; the ability of the police to perform their duties depends on public approval of police action; police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public; the degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity to use physical force; police seek and preserve public favour not by catering to public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law; police use of physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient; police, at all time, 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 being only members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizens in the interest of community welfare and assistance; police should always direct their attention strictly towards their function and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary; the fact of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder,

not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it (Worldcampus, 2008; Bittner, 2005).

Conceptualizing State Police

State police refers to a police system that is owned, managed, and financed solely by the state government, and which operates within a limited geographical entity. It highlights the division of authority to manage the police force from the Federal Government to the various State Governments. The proposition for state police creation is always predicated on the effectiveness of community policing (Conklin, 2007; Nnaji & Ojiego, 2019; Bewaji & Amolegbe, 2015).

A Synopsis of Nigerian Police over the Period

The colonial administration of Nigeria founded the Nigerian Police in 1930. Before 1930, there existed the Hausa Constabulary, which was established in 1879, the constabulary of the Royal Niger Company (1888), the Niger Coast Constabulary (1894), and the Lagos Police Department, founded in 1896. The several police departments were combined in 1914 for colonial administrative convenience. Lagos then became the centre of control of the entire national police (Nwanze, 2014). As previously mentioned, the colonial government is where the Nigerian police originated, but it became consolidated when it was enshrined in section 194 of the 1979 and 1999 constitutions. Centralisation of the Police Force in Nigeria was operationalised through the Nigeria Police Act (Felix & Mustapha, 2009). Although the state police commands are situated in every state, the state governors, who are recognised as the chief security officers of their states, take instructions from the police central office in Abuja (Ayorinde & Ariguzo, 2020). The purpose of the establishment of the police during the colonial regime was to resist any dissent from the colonial administration. In 1960, the police were used as guards by the masters. Presently, the Federal Government still utilizes them just to protect their point of view, even when that viewpoint is unconstitutional. The first constitution of Nigeria after independence mandated each of the defunct regional governments to operate regional police forces, while the Federal Government Police at the centre maintained an oversight function.

However, the regional police forces were distributed by the military Government of General Gowon as a result of the part of the Northern Regional Police Force in the 1966 pogroms. The disbandment was scheduled to commence in October 1966 and to be completed by the end of 1972 (Nwanze, 2014). Nigeria had 12,000 Police officers as of 1960. As a result of the expansion of the force after the Civil War, the number was increased to 80,000 in 1979, although a majority of them were not properly trained. One major attempt made in the past to x-ray the activities of the Nigerian Police was the committee established in 1967, which reported that the Nigerian Police was “hopelessly corrupt”. Earlier in 1952, a parliamentary investigation of the police force led to a description of the police by one of the parliamentarians as “Old Sergeants” with “deep corruption” in the NPF. That report was galvanized in the 1990s, as evidenced in the description of the Nigerian Police in 1994 as the organisation “most people join to make money” (Agbonika, 1990).

Theoretical structure

This study is based on the control theory. The major proponents of this theory are Travis Hirschi and Anthony Giddens. The theory postulates that every individual is inherently disposed to commit a crime if there is no instrument of deterrence to restrain them from committing such acts (Giddens, 2001). The theory, therefore, implies that human beings cannot be self-regulated or self-controlled not to commit a crime, but must be regulated and controlled from the exterior. One criticism of the theory is that it did not consider the inculcation of moral values in certain persons through religious instructions or other approaches of value orientation, which could restrain them on the grounds of morals not being involved in crime-related issues or other activities that are considered amoral. According to the control theory, there is a need for the presence of police and their equipment at all levels of society to serve as a deterrence strategy for the real and potential criminals in society (Giddens, 2001). The relevance of this theory is based on the fact that state police, which is the crux of this paper play the role of deterrence strategy to restrain

people from committing crime or to prevent even the perception of crime by persons that may be disposed to committing crime.

Methods

The paper depended on the secondary method of data collection as a methodology used in gathering data for the research work, such as the utilisation of textbooks on the subject area, internet sources, government documents and publications, academic journals, and newspaper publications.

Decentralisation of Police: Rethinking State Police System in The Nigerian Context

A study on the decentralisation of police in Chicago conducted by Skogan and Hartnet (1997), and a similar study embarked upon by Frank et al (1997) in Cincinnati, USA, found that the extent to which effective policing is achieved concerns large geographical area is enhanced with increased decentralisation. Before those studies, Mastrofski (1992) found that decentralization of the police system served as motivation for police officers’ commitment to their work. In support of these postulations, Majid (2016) observed that team spirit and effective policing strategies are based on the decentralisation principles of the police system. Another study conducted by Ayorinde and Ariguzo (2020) found that there was an expression of optimism by stakeholders in South Western Nigeria over the implementation of Nigeria's state police. It is illogical to assume that a police officer who was born and had lived all his life in the far North, suddenly became effective throughout the nation's far eastern region. The people in his new area of police assignment will not trust him based on the differences in their languages and customs. They are not likely to give the criminals up to these sets of police officers for lack of trust concerning their safety. Criminals very often are residents of the area that they harass (Miller, 2023). The system of state police is a characteristic feature of federalism (Conklin, 2007). Similarly, law enforcement officials in the US are categorised into citizen police, private police, and public police. The federal and state police systems are what constitute the public police system in the USA. Also, in Argentina, each province has its

independent police, likewise, each of the 31 states of Mexico has its own police. The same applies to India, a state police exists for each state and territory (Duren, Hendrix, Hickman & Kyckelhahn, 2016). In addition, there are 18,000 public police agencies in the USA, with 90% of the public police numbering 15,833 agencies constituting local police consisting of the city, town village, borough, parish, and country police (Duren, et al. 2016). Nigerian state police were established based on importing state police structures that work in other federalist states with some structural modifications to suit the ecological diversity of the country and its various local communities. The view that the state police system is an attribute of federalist states has proved critics of its implementation in Nigeria wrong. This is because Nigeria cannot be among the states operating federalism, and then exclude herself from some vital operating tools of federalism, such as the issue of state police. Such a position, if allowed, would be a sheer contradiction. It is therefore desirable to have state police in a federal government like Nigeria. It is therefore desirable to have state police in a federal government like Nigeria. Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo stated that the state police system remains the only panacea to insecurity in Nigeria (Abolade, 2021). By July 6, 2021, a bill for an act to amend the Constitution to give room for the creation of state police and other security services of the state government scaled second reading in the House of Representatives. With the passage of this bill, police concerns will move from the exclusive legislative list to the concurrent list that is, for police to exist at both the federal and state government levels concurrently (Ikumi, 2021). As a corollary to the above-stated issues, the governors have the moral justification as head security officers of their respective states, to call for the creation of state police in their respective states, since as chief security officers of their respective states, the responsibilities for the upkeep and maintenance of the police have been handed to them due to the nonchalant attitude of the Federal Government in this regard. These responsibilities are in the form of the provision of logistics, allowances, and others. Despite these huge sacrifices made by the Governors towards the welfare and effectiveness of the police, they

are still excluded from the exercise of power and control over the police outfits in their respective states, except if they secure approval from Abuja the Federal Capital Territory to deploy the police for any meaningful engagement (Akinwumi, 2021). This state of dilemma which the state governors found themselves have in no small measures truncated the security network of the various states of the Federation. The former governor of Ekiti State governor and chairperson of the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF), Dr. Kayode Fayemi noted that the demand for state police is an extension of true federalism as each component unit of the federal system is entitled to ownership and control of its security outfits. He argued that the state police would co-exist with the Federal Police, emphasizing that the Federal Police would discharge functions that cut across states of the Federation; while the state police would be restricted to each state of operation, and comprised of individuals who possess wider knowledge of their local environment, stating that such persons would be faster in responding to urgent security issues that emanates from such localities (Akinwumi, 2021). While lamenting the state of insecurity in Nigeria, the former governor of Taraba State, Darius Ishaku requested for the establishment of the state police from the Federal Government to effectively arrest the ugly security trend in the country. He advocated a split of the police into federal, state, and local police systems. In the same vein, former President Obasanjo observed that he had been to a country like Columbia in the last five years, where they initially reverted to a centralised police system from the previous decentralised arrangement, and he noted that they thereafter decided to revert to the decentralised police structure. That attempt at policy reversal by the South American country is an indication that the state police system is better and more effective than the centralised federal police system (Akinwumi, 2021). There is this argument put forward by many critics that state governors would take control of the state police of state police to oppress and witchhunt their political rivals citing the cases of the First Republic's defunct Northern and Western Region abuse of the regional police structure. However, even at the present moment when the Federal Police is fully in operation, political leaders who are overly

ambitious still have a strong tendency to use the Federal Police as a tool for personal grudges. The immediate experience in Anambra State where a sitting governor, Dr. Chris Ngige was abducted in broad daylight through the connivance of the police is a good case study of the abuse of the Federal Police. Thus, in the absence of appropriate reform and sufficient checks and balances, state police may also turn into a willing instrument in the hands of politicians, particularly those in positions (Omole, 2020).

Argument against the Centralised Police Arrangement in Nigeria

There is the frequent deployment and redeployment of members of the police service across the states of the Federation, basically without any local knowledge of the area of their assignment. This trend has in no small measure hampered the efficacy of the Police in Nigeria. The poor pay of police officers has led to seeking alternative sources of income, which often leads to vices, such as absenteeism, lateness to work, bribery and corruption, illegal roadblocks, and extortion. Just like the case of the judiciary, every newly posted police officer will have to start the cases he meant on the ground fresh thereby leading to unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks (Agbonika & Musa 2014). As stated earlier, although they must provide for their families, Nigerian police officers receive poor pay. The simple logic is that if you pay someone #20, 000, per month, and you give him a gun, you are invariably giving him the order to rob and harass people. For instance, a police officer was arrested in Adamawa State in 2011, over giving robbers guns to rob at #200,000, for several years before his eventual arrest. The said policeman earned N84,000 a month with two wives (Nwanze, 2014). A few years ago, the corruption inside the Federal Police was further exposed when, a former Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun was found guilty of embezzling public funds which amounted to 98 million dollars. Similarly, Mike Ehindero, his replacement, was admitted as a guest of the state to Kuje Prison over allegations bordering on corruption and public trust betrayal. In addition, on January 9, Demola Aderinde was shot dead by a policeman in cold blood strictness, the prosecution of the case in the court was frustrated due to the prevailing culture of

impunity in Nigeria (Nwanze, 2014; Nnaji & Ojiego, 2019). The essence of the police was to create a society devoid of criminal elements and their unwholesome activities (Eme & Ogbochie, 2014). The fundamental essence of the establishment of the police has remained constant since its emergence, what has been altered is the approach by which the police have attended to this essence of its creation (Sasu, 2022). The roles that police play now extend beyond that of guards and investigators, but it has extended to areas such as crime prevention by instructing the citizenry on how best to safeguard themselves and their property (Agbonika & Musa, 2014). The majority of the problems facing the police are caused by the fact that they are citizens of the community they are supposed to be policing. This hinders effective policing since the vices that are widespread in society do not exclude the police personnel members who are part and parcel of society. (Abolade, 2021). The prevalence of poverty and inequality in society are some major factors identified as the causes of crime in Nigeria (Aderounmu, 2021). Crime is a creature of the society which the individuals commit. As stated earlier, the inequality that abounds in Nigeria is an invitation to crime (Eme & Ogbochie, 2014). This is a contradiction where the society which creates crime will in turn expect the police to arrest the crime waves (Daramola, 2023). Combating crime in Nigeria is a very difficult task since the social system in Nigeria is prone to generating crime situations. So, the police should not be expected to do much considering the contradictory social formations that have served as a limitation to fighting crime, this is evident in the frequent reports of police officers themselves being engrossed in the crime they were supposed to tackle (Omole, 2020).

Difficulties in the Nigerian State Police System Establishment

There have been agitations for the formation of state police due to the lackadaisical attitude and ineffectiveness of the Federal Police. This initiative has received opposition from some sections of the country due to the concern that state governors would use these initiatives to build private armies to witch hunt and selectively prosecute real and perceived enemies. Such fears were attributed to the role played by the police in

May- June 1966, under the Administration of Hassan Katsina, a former Premier of the defunct Northern Region, and the police under Samuel Akintola a former Premier of Western Region in 1964. Although the fears are not out of place, they are just too irrational and emotional (Agbonika, 1990). The laborious processes and procedures needed in amending the Nigerian constitution present another significant obstacle to the establishment. For example, Article 214 (1) of the Constitution of 1999, states that, "Subject to the requirements of this section, there will be a Nigerian police force known as the Nigeria Police Force, and no other police force will be established for the Federation or any part" (Akinwumi, 2021). Also, the unwholesome attitude exhibited by several Nigerian state governors has cast aspersion on the creation of a police force that is owned and operated by the state. For example, Professor Remi Ayede, who once headed the Political Science Department at the University of Ibadan, opposed the creation of state police. He stated that state police should not be the issue under consideration because of the acts of irresponsibility exhibited by some governors in the massive looting of covid 19 palliatives meant to cushion the effects of the lockdown on the poor masses., a phenomenon that was eventually unveiled by endsars protesters. He noted that, if the governors could be so irresponsible in such pedestrian issues, what then is the justification for their effective and objective implementation of the policy of the state (Akinwumi, 2021)? A former Inspector General of Police, Mr Mohammed Adamu, while countering the view that state commissioners of police do not take orders from state governors but rather take directives from Abuja, stated that Police Commissioners at the State Level do not take instructions from him before they act in their respective states, adding that, they are to work with the state and local government authorities, by implementing the decisions and policies of states and local governments security council's meetings. As the former Inspector General of Police has stated, in reality, was the issue of former Governor Wike of Rivers State and a former Police Commissioner of River State, who was accused by Wike of taking orders from Abuja against the interest of River State, a state the police chief was supposed to secure to maintain

order and law (Akinwumi, 2021). The Borno State Governor, Babagana Zulum, also, opposed the establishment of a state police system in Nigeria on the ground that the state governors would apply it to wipe out from their respective states members of other ethnic groups that are different from theirs (Olafusi, 2021). Before 1966, there existed the central police force alongside side regional law enforcement agencies in both the Western and Northern Regions. The first Republic (1960-66) witnessed widespread complaints against the local police forces in the nation, as being employed both to manipulate elections and to subjugate political rivals by the administrations of the Northern and Western Regions. There were allegations that these Regional Governments have turned the local police forces into personal thugs during election periods to persecute and harass members of opposition parties and to obstruct free and fair elections. As a result of these complaints, by 1970 the military government dissolved the local police structure and absorbed a majority of the members into the central police system. The Nigeria Police Force, which is the major law enforcement agency, was established by the constitutions of 1979 and 1999 and gave backing to the central police forces called the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) (Ikumi, 2021).

Conclusion

With the high level of insecurity in the country at the moment, several demands have been made for the decentralisation of the police to the pre-1970 era due to the obvious failure of the central police apparatus. The argument for the decentralisation of the state's control over the police rested on the fact that the state police would transform into neighbourhood policing where those who are members of the communities, and who know the community so well would be assigned police duties to effectively secure their vicinity. Moreover, members of the public would trust them more than strangers who are commonly enlisted in the centralised police arrangement, and they would be likely to give information about criminals and their hideouts to agents of the local police. Nevertheless, state police are inevitable in the securitization of Nigeria. Therefore, any attempt to make it a reality is highly solicited. Several problems have

characterised the central police arrangement in past decades, for instance, the unequal deployment of police personnel and materials, with some states getting more than others irrespective of the security challenges prevailing in each state, and on no justifiable basis, which leads to some states remaining unmanned by members of the police force in comparison with others. Also, many state governors are frustrated because after spending huge amounts of money on police logistical support, they would end up reaping little or nothing in terms of the security of their states. Worst still, they would have no legal control over the utility of the equipment and the police personnel. Also, there are several instances of policemen who are sent to secure a place they are unfamiliar with. In addition, there are cases of officers who have been denied promotion because of a lack of political connection in the system. This situation has demoralised such officers and eventually dampened their zeal to fight crime and secure the community (Eme & Ogbochie, 2014).

Recommendations

To effectively implement the concept of creating state and local government police in Nigeria as examined above, some policy recommendations have been put up. These are as follows:

- i. The Nigerian Federal Government should completely formulate and implement in no distant time the ongoing policy deliberation of setting up the state police.
- ii. The necessary constitutional amendments should be made as soon as possible to make space for the establishment of state and local government police forces.
- iii. The recruitment exercise in the decentralised police system should be based on men and women of integrity and of good character, and who would be recommended by top members of the existing Federal police, religious leaders, and traditional rulers, as well as heads of former schools attended by the applicants. In addition, their names should be published in the local media, where the public would be asked to send a report about their character to the

appropriate authority in case there are those with questionable character. This approach would ensure that only the appropriate and qualified persons are selected and enlisted into the new security outfit.

- iv. There should be adequate remuneration and supply of state-of-the-art equipment, to boost the morale of the officers.
- v. The federal, state, and local government police should coexist. While the state and local police would be in charge of state and community policing, the Federal police would be responsible for inter-state security operations.

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