



Community involvement in intelligence gathering and joint security force in crime control

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Abstract

Crime in the society today has become a recurring daily discussion that is bordering all manner of individuals and group living in the society. This is because, there has been serious insecurity in the land which is causing member of the society sleepless night as well as threatening their peaceful existence in the country. There is therefore every need to take proactive measures at ending this menace that has become an enemy not only to the growth and development of the society but the entire existence of humanity. The paper dwells on the involvement of community in intelligence gathering and joint security force in crime control. The paper went ahead to look at what is community and community involvement, intelligence, and their involvement in intelligence gathering in crime control. It highlighted the measures undertaking to control crime in the society. The paper also identified and discussed the role of community involvement in intelligence gathering in crime control. It also enumerated efforts of joint security force in crime control as well as elements of security intelligence in curtailing crime in Nigeria. It was concluded that community involvement in intelligence gathering and crime control is a welcome idea and should be sustained by all means by government. The paper suggests that Government should not relent in her encouragement and support to various communities in assisting in the control of crime through any means that could give positive result.

Keywords: community involvement, intelligence gathering, joint security force, crime control

Introduction

Globally and locally, crime fighting is not only the business of force agencies, nor individuals but seemingly a collective task of every individual who are either involved directly or indirectly. In recent times, stakeholders in the society such as government, non-governmental organizations, parents, school administrators, the judiciary, legislators, public office holders among others have been bordered over the level of insecurity in the society that is not only giving people sleepless night but also making lives very uncomfortable for the people. In this regard, communities have not also been bordered and shown concern but, has also been trying in many ways towards assisting law enforcement agencies in controlling crime. Ekolama (2017) ^[5] observes that crime fighting is a challenge globally and crimes are being committed on daily basis, with the perpetrators constantly thinking up and adopting new and sophisticated techniques, leading to high-profile crimes, even across international borders. Consequently, the Nigerian Government must adopt technologies, which of course have become an integral part of crime fighting globally in order for the government and its security agencies to be ahead of criminals and be able to reduce their menace to a minimal level. Thus, aside the role of other stakeholders in curtailing crime in the society today is the role of community members which cannot be overemphasised. This is because, no community can exist and function as a group of people in an environment that is full of insecurity of lives and properties. In Nigeria, there is a disconnect in the relationship between the public and the component in community policing which has been severed by the reported ill-treatment given to those who volunteer security intelligence to security operatives in the past, as well as the alleged sabotage by unscrupulous security personnel who decide to either ignore or hoard security intelligence voluntarily given. This explains the apparent need by the entire community members to cooperate with security agencies in furnishing security intelligence towards crime control.

Community involvement in intelligence gathering

Community is a local group of people with collective leadership, responsibilities, consciousness and aspirations who wishes their values to be transmitted to their heirs. Ochai (2012) ^[11] describes community as a group of people interacting among themselves in a geographically defined space, time, and certain cultural attributes like norms, belief and value system. The community may have similar socio-cultural norms and social institution. On the other hand it may have people of diverse ethnic origin and differing cultural practices. In the opinion of Hornby, (2012) ^[6], community means a group of people living together and united by shared interests, religion and nationality. This implies that community is the people living in one place and with the same nationality,

culture, or race. They share experiences in common and develop a strong sense of belonging due to their interactions in various life activities (Lonsdole, 2012).

Onyeozu (2007)^[14] infers that a community may contain more than an ethnic groups which have different ways of life, still, the social and economic problems which face them and which they fight together to eliminate remains the common bond that tie them together. In the same vein Chibuka in Akubue (2007) describes the community as a people obliged to one another not because of the place of birth, race, sex, religion, but people bound to one another and governed by shared taste, specific needs or common interest. He further looked at community involvement as the process whereby communities participate in the provision of security by forming vigilant groups and equipping them to join forces with security forces to control crime in their locality so that the lives of a common man and properties are protected from criminals. Community involvement in crimes control may refer to the process of engaging in dialogue and collaboration with community members and joint security force in crime control. According to Sanders (2011)^[15], the resurgence of community involvement in crime control as a focus of interest is borne out of the desire to ensure the well-being of her members especially as it pertains to securing their lives and properties. The participation of community in crime prevention activity is justifiable since they know their crime problems and localities better than outsiders from their communities. Community participation is grounded in the sense that the local communities know each other, even the strangers within the communities are all known. They know the activities of every individual within the community and they know when a strange movement is made. For policing to be effective and productive, the need to collaborate with the local community can never be overemphasised. In this vein, Liebermann & Coulson in Manaliyo (2016)^[9] observe that one of the most effective ways the police could be productive is by collaborating with the local community of which without the police officers will remain clueless strangers on major crime activities taking place in the community.

Ejiogu and Mosley (2017)^[3] sees intelligence as all about gathering useful information to solve identified problems, intelligence could also be seen as the ability to think, to learn from experience, to solve problems and adopt to new situation. Intelligence is important because it has an impact on many human behaviours. Current models of intelligence gathering within communities by security agencies in many West African nations employ the services of the so-called informants. Intelligence is the product resulting from the collection, collation, evaluation, analysis, integration, and interpretation of collected information. It is a specialized information product that provides the State or an adversary with information required to further its national interests. One of the most important functions of intelligence is the reduction of the ambiguity inherent in the observation of external activities. In the most obvious case, adversary intelligence organizations may seek information concerning military capabilities or other matters that directly threaten the national security of the State (Oladayo, 2018)^[13]. Informants are motivated under duress to telescope information, often leading to recall error. Information overload from many data sources affects persons across a broad section of human activities; however, gathering intelligence by distinguishing and leafing through massive amounts of data is much less appealing, compared with target, identifiable, and goal- oriented data from human agents (Ejiogu & Mosley, 2017)^[3]. Innes (2006)^[7] observes that in the United Kingdom, intelligence-gathering processes are more likely to be successful for gathering data about the threat from known places and people than for locating threats from unknown places and persons.

Measures undertaking to control crime

Ejiogu and Mosley (2017)^[3] identify various ways and measures in which crime can be controlled in the society through the efforts of community in intelligence gathering and joint security force in crime control.

1. The public security officials need to take stock of what the communities know about crime within their communities and neighbouring areas and what they can do to help.
2. Engage influential figures in the community as partners in the policing of terrorism.
3. For intelligence gathering, create stacked administrative and monitoring systems made up of increasing dimensions of communities within communities; this could be viewed as intelligence-connected communities.
4. Public security officials should make conscious efforts to grow public partnerships and improve public perceptions of their service through engagements in social and political activities within target communities.
5. The control of crime by state security agencies should include community-based platforms for addressing public uncertainties and fears.
6. Based on the concept of connected communities and connected security agencies, encourage collaborations and joint training and operations of West African trans-border security agencies.

My Alarm Centre (2021)^[10] also indicates eight tips to help reduce neighbourhood crime as:

1. **Join in a town watch (or start one):** Join in a town watch programme or get the community involved in one. One has to be in tune with one's neighbours regular activity and keeping streets and homes well-lit. When a neighbourhood is well-marked with town watch and security signs system, it gives a good sign of security consciousness and deter any possible burglaries.
2. **Get to know your neighbours:** One should not be an island where he leaves, knowing your neighbours can provide an extra set of eyes on your home. People care about those they know, building relationships with your neighbours provides community understanding and a sense of watching out for each other.

3. **Teach kid empathy rather than violence:** Educate kid on a safety ways to help others. They should be encourage to be confidence in resolving problems peacefully and not by violence.
4. **Share tips about security camera system:** Information about installing security system should be shared and the benefit associated to it. This will encourage more members of the community to installing such. There is strength in numbers, the greater number of community member equipped with security systems, the more secure the entire community will be.
5. **Get involved in local organisations:** Get involved about the happenings in your neighbourhood and make the connection necessary to keep the community save.
6. **Create a favourable rapport with police enforcement:** Build a good relationship with the law enforcement in community event. Get to know what they do and who they are to enable you communicate community concerns more effectively.
7. Stay current with crime trends stay up to date with the news and crime trends. Report any suspicious activity to your local law enforcement, stay proactive and get involve.

The role of community involvement in intelligence gathering in crime control

The business of controlling crime as it has created so much worry and concern today, community members as stakeholder make conscious efforts at making sure that crime is been controlled. In a bid to control crime in Nigeria, the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ibrahim Idris has re-emphasized the importance of community policing and partnership of security agencies with members of the public in the fight against crime in Nigeria. Speaking at the maiden graduation ceremony organized for officers of the Nigeria Police Force who had undergone the Professional Executive Diploma in Crime Prevention and Community Safety awarded by Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State in conjunction with Academy Halogen and the Association of Certified Forensic Intelligence and Crime Analysts (ACFICA), Mr. Idris expresses that the numerous security challenges faced by the country could be pro-actively tackled with the adoption of community policing and cooperation of members of the public. Thus, the following are the various ways communities get involve in curtailing crime.

Community policing

Community-oriented policing is one important way that communities are playing their role in controlling crime today. This has been adapted to enforce the requirements and the need for community members' involvement and participation in setting and maintaining standards of social norm that would prevent criminal recruitment in local communities. The use of community intelligence can help the police overcome the limitations and gaps in intelligence gathering that characterize their established processes (Innes, 2006) ^[7]. One of the advantages of community intelligence is that it provides the police with an accurate knowledge of the actual demographic makeup and the complex structural framework of communities that would be important for counter crime control. The communities have greater access, reach, knowledge, and relational synergies to articulate and understand the indoctrination of crime ideas across their unique social environments. When aggregated, individuals and groups within communities form dynamic agents of surveillance.

Forming of vigilant group

Communities help complementing the efforts of security agencies in the control of crime in their locality through vigilant group. Thus, communities getting involved in intelligence gathering and joint security force in crime control has been visible through creating a formidable vigilant group as watchword in the communities so that the lives of the members and properties are properly protected. According to Comer (2009) ^[2], there are instances whereby, communities form vigilante that regularly go round the community areas to protect the people from external aggressors as well as their lives and properties from thieves. Relatedly, Okorie, Ememe & Egu (2009) ^[12] assert that communities have been known to organize local vigilante groups to protect community members and properties from criminal elements.

Hiring of members as security

Communities help complementing the efforts of security officials through providing security in such schools. Most at times, they either contribute in hiring and paying or some members of the community or parents who are retired as air service men to help control crime in their area of jurisdiction. Ugwoke (2012) ^[16] observes that in this era of security consciousness, the communities in their involvement in intelligent gathering in crime control help in employment of some security men to protect the community from being raided by thieves.

Voluntary services by members of community

There are instances whereby members of the community voluntarily offer themselves to fight crime to the core at the individual level and not through hiring or been part of the vigilant group. Such member of the community may be even present serving security men who stands for the community at all times to not only defend them against external aggressors but to also control crime.

Provision of useful information to security agents

Communities also get involve in intelligence gathering in crime control through been observant about suspected move of criminals in their localities and reporting them to security agents to take quick action to avoid the occurrence of their criminal acidities.

Not getting involve in harbouring criminals

One very important role the community member's play in helping to control crime is to avoid harbouring of criminals in their area of jurisdiction. There is no gain saying that some communities seem to provide refuge for criminals who stay in door in their houses and go out in the night to undertake their criminal activities. Such situations become very detrimental to the peaceful existence of the entire community.

Efforts of joint security force in crime control in Nigeria

Intelligence gathering is a necessary tool law enforcement agencies needs for countering criminal activities in the society. It could be directed towards containing crime, to aid policy formulation and implementation, and monitoring the execution of government projects and programmes. Data collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization are key components of the intelligence process. Over the years, the Department of State Services (DSS) has developed robust structures which enhance its collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) through intelligence-sharing.

In recent times, the need for crime control in Nigeria has led to a collaborative effort of Joint of security forces synergizing for the purpose between both agencies. Indeed, the war on crime is still ongoing, but for the collaboration amongst the security services, Nigeria may have been overrun by now. The counterterrorism/insurgency programmes is yielding remarkable results because they are intelligence-driven. Indeed, the Service has continued to acquire capabilities in the area of human and technical intelligence, which is aiding our collective efforts to contain terrorism and other violent crimes in Nigeria. Below are some specific platforms which are aiding intelligence-sharing amongst the security agencies; Attitudinal Change: As highlighted earlier since the return to democracy in 1999, the various security agencies embarked on several reform programme, to drive attitudinal change amongst officers and men of the services.

Although this process still on, it has help to improve the Camaraderie amongst all categories of personnel; promoting the Concept of Community-Based Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP): All crimes are usually hatched, planned and executed within the community. Therefore the community is central and critical to security management and law enforcement. In this regard, the efforts of the DSS, NPF and other stakeholders is contributing appreciably to sensitization and education of the community. Indeed this efforts has helped to develop capacities amongst non-state actors to know the different dimensions that constitute threats, to know appropriate individuals to report to or feed with information, to know how to use basic investigation techniques, to understand basic security and safety procedures which may include how to avoid certain dangers, and getting them to also become peer educators.

The joint task forces: The various Joint Task Forces in flashpoints which comprises of the DSS, the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigeria Police Force, National Intelligence Agency, Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and other critical stakeholders. The successes recorded so far by the JTFs would not have been possible without the robust understanding between the agencies in each Task Force unit.

Oladayo (2018)^[13] identified elements of security intelligence in curtailing crime to include:

1. **Log management:** The collective processes and policies used to administer and facilitate the generation, transmission, analysis, storage and ultimate disposal of the large volumes of log data created within an information system.
2. **Security information and event management (SIEM):** An approach to security management that seeks to provide a holistic view of an organization's information technology (IT) security. Most SIEM systems deploy multiple collection agents to gather security-related events from end-user devices, servers, network equipment and specialized security equipment like firewalls, antivirus or intrusion prevention systems. The collectors forward events to a centralized management console, which performs inspections and flags anomalies.
3. **Network behaviour anomaly detection (NBAD):** The continuous monitoring of a network for unusual events or trends. An NBAD program tracks critical network characteristics in real time and generates an alarm if a strange event or trend is detected that could indicate the presence of a threat. NBAD is an integral part of network behaviour analysis (NBA).
4. **Risk management:** The process of identifying, assessing and controlling threats to an organization's capital and earnings. Such threats include financial uncertainty, legal liabilities, strategic management errors, accidents, natural disasters and information technology (IT) security threats.
5. **Network forensics:** The capture, recording, and analysis of network events for the purpose of discovering the source of security attacks or other problem incidents. "Catch-it-as-you-can" systems capture all packets passing through a certain traffic point, store the data and perform analysis subsequently in batch mode. "Stop, look and listen" systems perform a rudimentary analysis in memory and save only.

Based on the above discussions, the following are suggested:

Government should support community involvement and joint security force in crime control by providing adequate funds that could be used to purchase all the needed crime fighting weapons as well take the issue of their welfare as paramount so that they could not be cheaply bought by those who perpetrate and aid criminal activities.

Government as well as community leaders should put heads together and orient members of the community as well as the joint security force on measures that would be used to approach issues concerning crime that may not involve the loss of their lives.

Government should organize proper training of community members who are involved in fighting crime at the community level inform of vigilant or community policing on how to tackle criminal issues in their locality. Joint security force should also be sent to undertake security courses that will make them more professional in dealing with crime issues.

Government should as a matter of necessity try as much as possible not to politicise crime through melting of justice to only those who are not in their political parties. This means that no citizen in the society irrespective of status, tribe or ethnic group should be shielded when involved in crime. If that is done, there will be a level ground for community members as well as joint forces to get positive result in controlling crime.

There should be a setup of monitoring team by government to checkmate the activities of vigilant community group as well as joint security force so as to curtail their excesses and misuse of power to with hunt their enemies rather than do the right thing which is fighting of crime.

Conclusion

The issue of crime has been a disturbing issue to the entire world and Nigeria in particular in recent times. There has been every need that all hands be on deck to control crimes in the society through any means, methods and strategies so that the entire member of the society will not only enjoy peaceful living but will also live in a crime free society. The paper has therefore concluded by calling not only identifying the areas of controlling crimes but has also stressed on role of communities in getting involvement in intelligence gathering and joint security forces in fighting crime to the finish.

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