

Intelligence Gathering and the Challenges of Internal Security in Nigeria: A Review of Community Watch in Katsina State

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, the topic of intelligence gathering and community policing has received increased and sustained attention. Controversies surrounding ‘enhanced interrogation’ methods, for example, led to many questions, including what are and what are not effective to interrogate suspected offenders, bandits, terrorists, and witnesses. The security challenges in Katsina State such as banditry, kidnaping, ethno-religious conflict, murder, herders-farmers conflict among others have become source of concern to scholars and practitioners of security. The subsequent effects of these, are loss of lives and properties among the citizens. The security challenges in this area is traceable to space of intelligence gathering and lack of proper utilization by the security agencies working in the state. This paper therefore embraces as its theoretical outline, the Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) as its analytical framework to examine intelligence gathering and challenges of internal security in Nigeria with particular attention to Katsina State. The secondary method of data collection is employed by using security document obtained from the armed forces, police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) records, internet newspapers and academic journal among others. The paper argues however that there is relationships between the effective intelligence gathering, professionalism and national security in Nigeria, particularly Katsina State. The paper recommends among others, the training and retraining of Katsina State Community Watch Corps (C-Watch), in addressing internal security challenges.

Keywords: Security challenges, Intelligence gathering, Community Watch, Banditry, Security.

Introduction

Nigeria, since the return of democracy in 1999 has been battling with grave security contest ranging from ethnic-conflict, armed robbery, political assassination, terrorism and banditry among others. For example, the crime of terrorism that has devastated the country, mostly the north-eastern part of the country is one of the contemporary security challenges ravaging the land. Several thousands of people have lost their lives and property to Boko Haram insurgency over the years. The perennial attacks on natural resources in the Niger Delta by Niger Delta militants which has now taken the form of kidnapping for ransom in which several unemployed youths now engaged in all parts of the country is another security challenge that the security sector is grappling with to unravel. This has over time threatened the foundation of national security in which several huge of resources have gone into it to keep it at inlet. Some scholars like Rufa' I A. (2023), argued that insecurity is a critical factor responsible for socio-economic backwardness of northwestern Nigeria, particularly Katsina State. Thus, these challenges have been associated with the negative impact of climate change, population explosion, high rate of poverty, youth's unemployment and underemployment, illiteracy, limited security presence, porosity of Nigeria's land borders and ungoverned spaces among others.

The dreadful activities of bandits which began about a decade ago in the Northern region of Nigeria seem to have escalated and have taken a more dangerous dimension with the use of sophisticated weapons of warfare such as AK-47 riffles, Small Arms and Light Weapons among others. Banditry has thus become a recurrent feature in several communities in northern Nigeria, particularly Katsina State where residents can no longer sleep at night with their two eyes closed. These have resulted in loss of human lives, disability of some victims, displacement of people from their ancestral homes, looting of farm produce and rustling of cattle. Government's efforts to

curtail the menace through the use of armed forces of Nigeria and military operations in extreme cases, appear ineffective. Various scholars in the field of security and intelligence observed that one of the major reasons for the escalation of criminal activities in the country is the neglects of basic or essential elements of security which is timely procurement of security intelligence. It was further acknowledged that prompt identification of threats to both internal and national security with its attendant pro-active security arrangement, is another reason. In all climes that have recorded unquestionable victories over crime, have done so with robust intelligent gathering architecture that without ambiguity is reassuring and apt. The high successes gained in curbing crime in the developed world has been the act of uncovering criminal plots through information before they occur, which has in the superficial discussion, been prejudiced as the best practice and tagged “prevention is better than cure”. All information is necessary but some information for the intent of which they are meant is more impactful and felt based on the immediate goal it seeks to achieve. Besides the urgent concern to underscore the merits of intelligence gathering and to a large extent understand the processes, methods, resources and personnel to do surveillance and access information uncommonly in Nigeria by the conventional security agents, it is paramount to study the best way to deal with the menace by other new security agencies established by states government, especially in their respective communities, to augment the federal government’s effort to arrest the situation.

Given the fact that information and intelligence is a key to win war and fight every form of insecurity across the globe. This is why Murray (2000) argues that it is essential for law enforcement agencies to have an understanding of current environment to develop strategies and plans to meet the identified challenges. This can only be achieved through information and intelligence gathering. Capacity must be built to collect, collate, analyze and disseminate

information on criminal activities and various security challenges so as to afford the necessary law enforcement agents to operate effectively in combating such challenges. However, community participation in internal security is timely, hence the establishment of Katsina State Community Watch Corps (C-Watch). Even before his election into office, the Katsina State Governor, Dikko Radda, made fighting insecurity one of his major priorities. His idea of establishing a Community Watch was indeed well received within, and even outside the state, because of the killings, abductions, rustling and other forms of violence in the state and beyond, as mentioned above. Precisely, on October 10, 2023, Governor Radda launched the Katsina State Community Watch Corps after securing the requisite legal backing, from the State's House of Assembly. At the graduation ceremony to commission the first batch of 1,456 trainees, the state government handed over 10 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), 70 Toyota Hilux vans and 700 motorcycles for use by the members of corps to facilitate their patrols into the nooks and crannies of their communities. It is in this line that this paper examines the impact intelligence gathering on the challenges of internal security in Katsina State via Community Watch Corps (C-Watch).

Conceptual Review

Concept of Intelligence

There is no single common definition of the concept of intelligence, by scholars in the field of security, criminology, psychology, sociology and intelligence studies. The term intelligence has diverse connotations. For example, the American Heritage Dictionary (2010), views the word intellect as the capacity to gain and apply information. Intelligence is a very general mental capacity that includes, among other things, the ability to reason, prepare, solve problems, think abstractly, understand complex concepts, learn rapidly and learn from experience; the ability to learn facts and skills and to apply them, particularly when this ability is highly developed.

Intelligence is a property of the mind that includes many similar mental capacities, such as the ability to reason, prepare, solve problems, think abstractly, understand concepts and words, and read. Intelligence is not a single, unitary ability, but rather a composite of several functions. The term denotes that combination of abilities required for survival and advancement within a particular culture (Emmanuel, 2021). According to Adedire, Ake, and Olowojolu (2016), intelligence is the mechanism through which particular forms of knowledge relevant to national security are requested, gathered, processed and delivered to policy makers; the products of that phase; the protection of those processes and information by counter-intelligence activities; and the conduct of operations as required by lawful authority.

The term ‘intelligence’ is used variably and most researchers seem to agree on the ability to learn being a central aspect of intelligence. 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. Intelligence is divided into *strategic* and *operational* intelligence. Strategic intelligence provides policy makers with the information needed to make national policy or decisions of long-lasting importance. Strategic intelligence collection often requires integrating information concerning politics, military affairs, economics, societal interactions, and technological developments. This is in line with findings that G is a very good predictor of academic achievement. Prominent theories of intelligence divide G into two components: crystallized intelligence (Gc) and fluid intelligence (Gf). Gc refers to

knowledge acquired by past experience, for example, vocabulary or skills. Gc can be measured with vocabulary tests or tasks requiring general knowledge. In contrast, Gf is the ability to cope with new situations for which previously acquired knowledge is only minimally helpful. Also, Gf has been commonly regarded as the most reliable and predictive measure for successful performance in both educational and professional settings (Jaeggi, 2010).

Example, David (2020) views intelligence as the combination of psychological, cognitive and behavioral elements, in the study of human. Pentland (2007) argues that humans should firstly be viewed as social animals and only secondarily as individuals. According to his research with the so-called Socioscope, human behavior is largely predictable, non-linguistic signal response behavior. The immersion of self in a social network is a typical human condition and our unconscious ability to read and display social signals allows smooth coordination within the network. He further argues that important parts of human intelligence could thus reside in network properties (Jaeggi, 2010).

It was further believed that there is one „intelligence“ called G for general intelligence. A person was born with a certain intelligence which could be assessed by using short answer tests (IQ tests). Psychologists also assumed that this intelligence was difficult to change. But, can intelligence be only reasoning and cognitive abilities? Gardner (2018) makes a compelling point when he questions were the IQ tests in this world to disappear, will it be impossible to identify a person as intelligent or otherwise? Such questions have led us to a new world of understanding which has agreed that apart from the intellectual prowess, there are other inherent abilities in an individual which should also be taken into consideration before assessing his/her intelligence (Gardner, 2018).

As Gardner further assumed that, a person's intellect or non-intellect cannot be sealed by a single intelligence test as every human being in his/ her own way has multiple latent abilities. Based on this belief, he defined intelligence as "a psychobiological potential to process information so as to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in at least one cultural context". By 1983, armed with a thorough research in psychology, anthropology, cultural studies and the biological sciences, he proposed in his book "Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences", seven intelligences, linguistic, logical, musical, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal which every human being possessed, maybe in varying degrees. In 1995, an eighth intelligence „naturalist' was added. Lumper (2018) defined intelligence as a general, unified capacity for acquiring knowledge, reasoning and solving problems. Psychologists of the splitter persuasion hold that intelligence is composed of separate mental abilities that operate more or less independently. But for US. Intelligence Community, intelligence is a cycle that covers process of collecting information and developing it into intelligence for use by IC customers. The steps in the process are direction, collection, processing, exploitation, and dissemination (National Intelligence Strategy, 2023).

Concept of Intelligence Gathering

Like any other concept in the academics, the concept of intelligence gathering was highly debated as regards to its definition by scholars and practitioners. In the context of this paper however, various field submits different views on the technical words that define the appropriate bounds of intelligence gathering. By focusing on when intelligence gathering begins and, consequently, on three terms in this paper: "collection," "acquisition," and "targeting" are seen as the main three forces account for better understanding of this concept (Lee, Perlin and Schottenfeld, 2019). According to Ogunbowale (2018), Intelligence gathering is a necessary tool law enforcement

agencies needs for countering criminal activities in 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. Faki, (2020) views Intelligence Gathering as collecting information (data) and developing it into useful information used for intelligence (solving a problem). The use of intelligence information is more diverse, and the intelligence gathering process is more fluid (Faki, 2020).

Intelligence gathering is a clear-cut strategy deliberately designed and developed by security apparatus to access and exhume privileged information from the opposite camp via infiltration, espionage, planting cameras, hacking, etc. with the overriding purpose to outsmart and forestall security glitches which would affect negatively the health, welfare and socio-economic development of a nation. Operations Security Intelligence Threat Handbook (OSITH) refers to intelligence gathering as intelligence collection, a product resulting from the collation, evaluation, analysis, interpretation of collected information product that provides a country with a good standing about an adversary and usually this information is circled around military capabilities or other matters that directly or indirectly threatens the national security of a country. Security here should not only be seen as militaristic, it includes but not limited to trade, culture, diplomacy and proprietary from a national corporation. This information gathered, as espoused in OSITH provides an edge over the adversary and allows implementation of a well-developed strategy to end any security threat from the beginning. Worthy of note is that intelligence Gathering starts from assembling fragmented information from different sources about an enemy's security plans, operations, logistics, personnel, etc. and disseminate it to be analysed, verified and confirmed to be used in intelligence processes for or against it. OSITH further maintained that for intelligence

gathering to be efficient, it must oscillate a circle process through which intelligence is obtained and made available to users and accordingly it has five steps as used in USA intelligence community. These steps are:

Planning and Direction: this step involves the management of the entire intelligence effort, from the identification of a need for data to the final delivery of the intelligence product to the consumers. The process deals with identifying, prioritizing and confirming intelligence requirements, translating requirements into observables, preparing collection plans, issuing requests for information collection, production and dissemination, and continuously monitoring the availability of collected data.

Collection: this includes receiving relevant security information and making it available to be processed to form a template that can be used to achieve a goal. It covers the management of various activities, including advancing guidelines that ensure maximum utilization of available intelligence resources to meet the needs of the security target.

Processing: this forms the third step of the circle and involves the conversion of information so gathered and received into an intelligence tool. It encompasses translation and reduction of intercepted messages, detailed and comparing with others.

Production: this stage basically analyzes, evaluates and finally explains in concrete terms the information gotten for the benefits of the security community and a nation's safety. Here, the production source involves general collation of information from the database, individuals, country etc. to enable the relevant bodies to act proactively, timely and objectively.

Dissemination: this forms the final stage of the circle, and it presupposes conveying importantly the finished information gathered and authenticated to be used by the agency or body concerned

to act in the interest of the organisation, institution, country, etc. (Enyia, Achu, Duke, Njong, Takim and Okpa, 2022).

Concept of Community Policing

The 2008 Nigerian Presidential Community 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 services. The concept entails building community trust; engagement of the diverse policed community in identifying and prioritising threats, developing crime control and community safety strategies and partnering to implement and re-evaluate the strategies. In essence, community policing is built on trust mutual trust between the police and the community engagement, socialization between the police and the community towards threats assessment and partnership between the community and the police towards attaining the common objective of community safety (Arase, 2019).

According to Bayley (2005) “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.” Funding, therefore, provides a pragmatic and compelling reasons to pursue a community policing strategy. Generally, because of competing demands on public funds for health, roads, defence, energy, schools, potable water, among others 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. It was further observed that police or security agencies need to have information from the general public (Community) in order to deter crime. Accordingly, if the public does not report crime, the police/security agency cannot act against it. The public can also provide information about conditions that lead to crimes in their communities, enabling the police to focus their crime prevention on people places and situations (Arase, 2019).

However, the International Criminal Police Organisation (ICPO) views community policing as the provision of conducive atmosphere in which the police and law-abiding citizens can work with each other to solve problems, share resources, promote inter-agency collaboration, prevent crime, reduce conflict, bring offenders to justice and improve the overall quality of community life. Similarly, Chutter, views community policing as a working partnership between the police and law-abiding citizens to prevent crime, arrest offenders and enhance the quality of life. Both views are expansive and cover such important requirements of community policing framework as the need for a working relationship between the police and law-abiding people in the community. It also, recognises the enhancement of citizens' well-being hence relating successful community policing to human security and consequently development (Burutai, 2019).

Concept of National Security

Some theorists equated national security with national defence, but security encompasses a considerably broader range of issues, dangers, and responses. In reality, while security is comprised of various components, strong military readiness is a basic necessity ingredient the cutting edge, without which any discussion of security would be meaningless. Defense is a small but important part of a country's overall security. Military security is the most visible aspect of National Defense, but it is far from the only one. In Cold War scenario, the two phrases were nearly inextricably linked. The decoupling of two concepts has been more apparent since the conclusion of the Cold War. This is because, on the one hand, security is increasingly being seen in broad terms, encompassing technologies and information. Second, and perhaps more importantly, security issues are no longer systematically linked to and associated with any political or military actor. To put it another way, the military's response to instability was insufficient and tentative. When it comes to creating security policies, defence strategies are no longer sufficient.

While much ahead of the basic idea of national security, Morton Berkowitz and Bookes' definition of national security as a nation's ability to preserve its internal values from external dangers is still inadequate. It implies that dangers to a country's security originate from the outside, but it ignores the threat from within. Political unrest and widening economic inequities regional development disparities, as well as cultural, linguistic, and ethnic animosity, are the bane of modern politics. To a larger or lesser extent, every nation must protect itself from them. When a nation is economically and technologically developed, politically secure, and socio-culturally unified, it can be said to have a sword for its own protection.

Defining the Concept of National Security According to Walter Lippmann (2006), "A nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interest to avoid war and is able if challenged to maintain them by war." According to Michael law, "National security, is the state of being free from external physical threats." According to Low, all moral and intellectual dangers should be considered, but it is physical violence that is widely regarded as the ultimate leverage against the state, and thus as a real and tangible threat to its survival. However, if nations were not concerned with the defence of their values other than their survival as sovereign states, they would not have to be concerned about their security as much as they do now. As Orvik puts it, "security would be a matter of course if there were no threats to national ideals and institutions."

Robert McNamara's definition, which is more applicable to our times, "security is not military hardware do it may include it security is not military force though it may income pass it security is development and without development there is no security." The United Nations recognized this developmentalist approach to national security when, in its 25th session in 1970, it accepted the recommendations of the first committee of the general assembly and passed a resolution that, among other things, called for closing the economic gap between developed and developing

countries as soon as possible, which is closely and essentially linked to the strengthening of all nations' security and the establishment of peace. Subrahmanyam, an expert on security and defence studies in India, “clarifies that national security does not simply imply preserving territorial integrity. It also entails ensuring the country's rapid industrialization and the development of a unified, equitable, and technical society. Anything that gets in the way of its progress, whether inside or outside, is a national security threat.” Subramaniam's concepts are based on India as a generalization to the great majority of third-world countries (Singh, 2015).

Concept of Internal Security Management

Internal Security Management is the process of creating conducive and secured environment in any given society (Dimsey, 2008). It could be likened to the efforts which are made to protect the community where people live in an environment free from intimidation and fear of violence (Abubakar, 2019). According to Netshitahanene and Vollenhoven (2002), internal security management is the step taken to secure the citizenry both physically and psychologically by the use of variously assigned security function and strategies. Laura (2014), affirms that internal security management involves ways of providing security technologies and strategies which can be used to mitigate the formidable security threats in the environment. They are plans or measures taken to protect and manage violence, reduce security risks and ensure that the environment is safe. It is the act of keeping peace within the borders of a sovereign state generally by upholding the national law and defending a territory against internal security threats. Responsibility for internal security management lies with the police and other paramilitary forces and in exceptional circumstances the military or armed forces.

However, internal security management is measured by the extent to which a state creates and maintains law, order and the development of process to guarantee freedom from threat and fear

of losing life, liberty and property (Imobighe, 2017). Internal security management focuses more on welfare, contentment and security of every citizen, group, community and security of every citizen, group community and component states/units in a country. To guarantee internal security, government assumes the chief duty by means of laws, regulations and the establishment of law enforcement agencies, who have the institutional duties of protecting the state, the people and their strategic assets of survival against all forms of internal threat. The analysis of institutions as framework and process for internal security management can also be engaged for better understanding of internal security management. The institution is the mechanism for governance and management of public and social affairs and order, and it comprises rules, procedures, regulations and processes that are established, routinized, standardised, stable and durable to constitute “guiding framework for actions”, interactions and the achievement of goals in both the public and private realms

Methodology

However, this study largely depends on the use primary sources through the conduct of oral interviews with various leaders in Katsina State. Oral data acquired is however supported through information gathered from secondary sources. This include among others, journal of security from across field of studies.

Trends of Traditional Vigilante Groups in Nigeria

In Nigeria during the pre-colonial era, there were no legislations in the collectivities of chiefdom, emirates, villages and cities. Rules and regulation evolved through African religious beliefs and philosophies and were handed down from generation to generation through immemorial customs and traditions. There were social orders without criminal law. Justice at the time was a family

affair. The authority of the father was not questionable by anybody in his family, as patriarchy and patrilineal formed the order of authority and inheritance throughout Nigeria. Pre-colonial period in Nigeria witnessed the absence of a formalised Police system. Heads of households and entire villages had their ways of keeping out habitual offenders. During the pre-colonial period, the community or village council was the highest court of justice. Also, the Emirs and Obas and Obis constituted the highest courts in their kingdoms. Each village constructed various barriers such as physical barriers, use of rotational community watchmen against outside invasion or invasion by burglars from neighbouring villages. The efforts to prevent victimisation in Nigeria appealed to transcendental reality. In this vein, some properties were kept in the shrine grove. They believed that if anyone steals something from a shrine grove that person will die of mysterious sickness. Their cash crops, fruit trees and movable possessions outside the home were secured from vandalism and criminal intervention by using the leaves of sacred trees such as youngest leaves of palm frond, ash and others. Criminal law emerged in Nigeria with the advent of Europeans into the chiefdoms, kingdoms, emirates, clans and villages of the Nigeria regions in the 18th and 19th centuries as part of measures for crime prevention and control (Onyezili, 2005 cited in Akinlabi and Ihemeje, 2021).

In the process of colonization, each colonial power introduced its laws, political organisation and system of justice. The annexation of Lagos in 1861 by the British government marked the beginning of a formal system of policing. The Lagos Constabulary was established to control and prevent crime at the colonial trading posts, residences and at the colonially controlled urban centres. All colonial crime prevention strategies concentrated on the security of life and property of the colonial masters. The rural areas were ignored. Thus, the traditional system of crime prevention and control (policing) predominated in the rural areas.

The Nigerian Police concentrates on sporadic patrol of the high-way and mounting of roadblocks to check for stolen vehicles and automobile and driver's licenses and traffic violation. The frequent patrols of the neighbourhood to establish Police presence in the cities and to apprehend criminal offenders in the act, common in Western urban centres is not characteristic of Nigeria Police law enforcement strategies. Instead, Nigeria's police force often deployed static law enforcement agents that would not patrol the neighbourhood or lookout for criminals, perhaps the law offenders, but they would rather choose to wait for victims or concerned citizens to report crime (Ebbi, 1996). In 1996, the Federal Government established a new crime prevention unit called 'Operation Sweep' (Para-Military Police Force) which was created out of the Nigeria Police Force and charged with the responsibility of patrolling all the major highways, busy seaports, and large city neighbourhood, notorious for harbouring dangerous criminals. At the local level (community), Police mount roadblocks along major roads and many armed robbers from different Local Government Areas have been apprehended through this method. Local Government Councils encourage towns and villages under their jurisdiction to continue to use the informal or traditional methods of crime prevention to help the Police. At the village or town level, the traditional methods of crime control and prevention are still in vogue. Towns or villages still maintain vigilante groups to prevent crimes and apprehend offenders; they take the offenders apprehended to the Police at the Local Government headquarters (Akinlabi and Ihemeje, 2021).

In the history of crime prevention and control in Nigeria, during colonial era the 'hunter guard' or 'night guard' system (sodesode) was used in Western Nigeria, while community guard was used among Igbo community (ndi-nche-obodo) as complementary efforts to Police force in crime control and prevention at community level. In the mid-1980, community vigilante groups emerged in various cities to replace the sodesode system (hunter guard) to complement efforts of the Police

in crime control and prevention at local level. The traditional concept of vigilante groups in Nigeria, exclusively referred to un-armed voluntary citizen groups, created in local communities to help the security forces confront common crimes and social violence, by arresting suspected criminals and handing them over to the Police. The Nigerian law recognises the lawfulness of vigilante groups arresting suspected criminals provided they are unarmed and that the suspect is immediately handed over to the Police (Amnesty International, 2008). This type of informal policing has been in existence since 1922 as neighbourhood guard in the USA. It came into existence in Nigeria in 1983 as a vigilante group during the Buhari regime, as part of the efforts to prevent and control crime. As a follow up in 1984, the then Inspector General of Police, Etim Inyang, inaugurated the Police Community Relation Committee (PCRC) in all the States of the Federations and directed Commissioners of Police to urgently revitalize vigilante groups to enable the Police and public to interact regularly in the fight against crime. From a policy standpoint, it becomes important to register all the vigilante groups in each State to harmonize operations under the supervision of the Police (Roberts 2004; Inyang 1989). As a result of this effort, vigilante groups came to be popularized by some Military Governors, particularly in Nigeria. Since the return to democracy in 1999, however, Nigeria has witnessed proliferation of vigilantism. Vigilantes have been organised at a variety of levels from lineage to ethnic groups, in a variety of locations from village ward to city streets, to ensure security of life and property within their domain (Prattern, 2008). These groups are called different names and are differentially related to the traditional practices and authorities of the community. Such groups are called by various names such as: Mbayer Ikyaiaor or Denon Toffi (Rapid Response Group) in Gboko East LGA, "Olodes" (hunters) in Oye LGA of Ekiti State, Egbe (age grade) in Ilejemeje, "Yan farauta" (local hunters) or "Yan gadin dare" (night watchmen) in Hadejia LGA of Jigawa State, "Kato da Gora" (big man

with a big stick) in Kiyawa LGA of Jigawa State, or “Yan banga” (vigilante) in Katsina State, Ndinche (community guard or guards) in Enugu State and Landlords Associations Ushongo LGA (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2003).

Result and Discussion

The rate at which insecurity increases in Nigeria is very alarming. It is no longer news that a good number of people are encountering different kinds of insecurity on a daily basis. Cases of insecurity in the country are amounting to a large indefinite number as they cover a range of issues from Boko haram, kidnapping for ransom, banditry, farmer-herder conflict, arm robbery, amongst others. To this end, many scholars have discussed the studies of insecurity in the country from different angles. A problem, which initially appeared as localized disputes between herders and farmers over access to land, has morphed into an intractable crisis posing a major threat to national and regional security. The level of banditry escalated between 2014 and 2019 attracting a lot of attention, while assuming increased political undertones in the run-up to the 2019 Nigerian elections, particularly in Katsina State (Suleiman, 2019).

However, another category involves violence committed by criminal gangs involved in large-scale cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, pillage, and attacks on gold miners and traders. The authorities sometimes also refer to these gangs as “bandits”. These groups comprise a mix of individuals from Hausa, Fulani and other ethnic origins who seek to enrich themselves rather than to advance a political or ideological project. They also act unconventionally, sometimes in rivalry with one another. Rustling activities have resulted in the theft of a huge number of cows, deaths of people and destruction of property. Cattle rustlings have significantly contributed to the increasing security challenges facing Katsina state and seem to have become big business involving the herders, big time syndicates, and heavily bandits. Virtually all the states in the

northwest Nigeria particularly Katsina State are affected by cattle rustling which is very rampant in rural areas, it does not only pose serious security challenges at the specific areas of conflict but also threatens to engulf places outside of the rural sector.

It was further observed that there are competing narratives regarding the causes and nature of the problem of banditry in Katsina State and neighboring states. Some view the conflict as one of the effects of climate change, particularly decreasing amounts of rainfall, on the “scarcity” of arable land and pastures. The drop in rainfall over the years translates into the scarcity of water, which in the context of a rapid population growth rate places pressure on land, and fuels intense conflicts between pastoralists and farmers whose livelihoods and survival are based on access to land. Another school of thought associates the growing insecurity with state failure due to corruption, the collapse of institutions of governance, de-industrialization, growing poverty, and a culture of impunity that pervades state and local governance in the state. Still on the issue of insecurity, some observers explain the instability in Nigeria’s Northwest in terms of porous borders and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. They argue that arms have found their way into the region from the Maghreb following uprisings in North Africa and countries of the Sahel, including post-Ghaddafi Libya. Protagonists of a natural resource curse trace the conflict to competition over “gold deposits,” pitching those engaged in illicit gold mining against local communities, as well as certain big-time mine owners believed to have strong links with government. Yet, there are those who believe the conflict is spiritual, and the problem facing the region is the result of a test from God. Typical of the thriving culture of conspiracy theories in Nigeria, the narrative that is gaining wider currency in both policy and public circles is the view that the escalation banditry is the handiwork of the political opponents of the ruling party, who lost out during the 2019 and 2022 general elections (Suleiman, 2019). It was equally, revealed that in their attempt to provide security

to their various communities and assist the security agencies, within the affected areas, Katsina State Community Watch Corps (Vigilante Group), unintentional claimed some lives of innocent citizens in the course of investigation and surveillance. Example, on 17th December, 2023 in Kankara LGA, an innocent person was killed by the Katsina State Community Watch Corps. Also, there was similar incident in Dutsinma and Batsari LGAs where a two (2) persons were killed in the course of investigation by Katsina State Community Watch Corps respectively. From the foregoing, the corps lacks professionalism in the discharge of its duties.

Katsina State Community Watch Corps and Internal Security

In his attempt to ensure safety and security of people in Katsina State. From inception, Katsina State Governor, Dikko Radda, has recruited at least 1,500 Community Watch Officers drawn from the eight frontline local government areas of the state, to assist the troops deployed by the Federal Government of Nigeria (Armed Forces/ Joint Operations) in security area particularly the area of intelligence gathering and surveillance, for better operations. This is part of measures to empower the residents to defend themselves against bandits' attacks. The governor also, observed that insecurity is paramount and important to his administration, hence his government has attacked it head-on. The creation of the Ministry of Internal Security and Katsina State Community Watch Corps was the beginning of institutionalising his strategy to deal with insecurity where he enacted a security containment order and set up an advisory committee on security in the state. His administration, has spent seven billion naira to procure armored personnel carriers, 65 Hilux vehicles, 700 motorcycles, provided training for the Community Watch Corps Officers, and other security equipment.

The state government also, partnered with the UNDP to establish Planet Hub, Peace Hub, and Preventive Facilities with a pilot project in Jibia to help reverse the trend of insecurity in the state.

The state's approach has been one of the strategic planning engagement and partnership both within and beyond the borders of the State. The state immediately responded by freezing price increments on government-owned public transportation services.

Theoretical Framing

This paper adopted Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) as its analytical framework. The origin of Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) is associated with an American sociologist, Daniel Bell (1919-2011), who coined the idea of „queer ladder“ in an attempt to explain the instrumental essence of organised crime as a desperate means of socio-economic empowerment and social climbing. This theoretical perspective has since fertilised into a popular theoretical framework widely used in contemporary crime studies. The basic assumptions of QLT are; organised crime is an instrumental behaviour, it is a means to an end; it is an instrument of social climbing and/or socioeconomic advancement; and it is a measure to accumulate wealth and build power. Often ascribed to Queer Ladder Theory is the notion that organised crime thrives in contexts where the government's capacity to dictate, sanction and deter crime is poor; where public corruption is endemic; and where prospects for legitimate livelihood opportunities are slim. Under these circumstances, the incentive to indulge in crime is high, while deterrence from criminal living is low. In other words, the benefits of committing a crime surpass the costs and/or risks involved. This creates pretext for criminal impunity and franchise. Applied to the context of this paper, QLT enables one to come to terms with the prevalence of organised crime in Katsina State. In this regard, it is observed that the phenomenon of banditry has been driven by criminal quest for economic accumulation in an environment. This has been worsened by the prevailing socio-economic discontent and attendant livelihood crisis in the state, in addition to the seeming indolence of relevant government agencies towards arresting the ugly situation. The concept of “Ladder” in QLT signifies untoward pattern

of social mobility. Hence, those who take to organised crime, such as banditry, do so as a desperate means of economic accumulation and socio-economic empowerment. Therefore, a necessary consequence of this trend is prevalence in crime rate and a state of insecurity in the state, hence the establishment of Katsina State Community Watch Corps (Okolie-Osemene, 2015).

Conclusion

Conclusively, it was revealed that many factors led to the establishment of Katsina State Community Watch Corps by His Excellency Dr. Radda. The fundamental factor is inability of the Police patrol teams and military deployed the state to reach some inner parts of the frontline Local Government Areas in the state. The other factors responsible for the lingering insecurity is the proximity of vigilante members to criminals and better understanding by the vigilante groups of their terrain than the armed forces and police. Katsina State Community Watch Corps (vigilante groups) emerged in Katsina State to augment Police efforts in combating and preventing crime particularly banditry and their informants more efficiently in the face of obvious shortage in manpower needs and logistics support for the Nigerian Armed Forces serving within Katsina State. Moreover, the measures implemented to convert and control bandits activities, showed that every community member was implored to keep watch in their various areas. The other measures were reporting of person(s) with doubtful integrity and nefarious character in the community to the Katsina State Community Watch Corps and other security agencies, using indigenes as spies on criminals' hide- outs and reporting such hiding places to Katsina State Community Watch Corps. Furthermore, findings on the usefulness of study observed that Katsina State Community Watch Corps (community vigilante group) stopped and controlled banditry through useful information passed to the security agencies from time to time. From this study, it was established that Katsina State Community Watch Corps (vigilante group) were self-help or supporting strategy of

preventing and combating banditry at community level, but lack professionalism in intelligence gathering and dissemination. They were effectively coordinated through the state government's efforts to provide security and mechanisms against banditry, ending-up killing people in the process. Thus, one could deduce that Katsina State Community Watch Corps (vigilante group) play an important role in combating banditry and control at the community level within the affected LGAs. The Nigeria Police Force also accepted the role of Katsina State Community Watch Corps as complementary to the statutory function of the joint task forces (Operation Hadarin-Daji).

Recommendations

In order to squarely address intelligence gathering and challenges of internal security in Nigeria with particular attention to Katsina State Community Watch Corps, the following recommendations were made:

- (1) Katsina government should strategise to create meaningful employment for the youths trapped in the phenomenon through the creation of programmes aimed at addressing the prevalent poverty in the state.
- (2) Katsina State government should sustain the military efforts in prosecuting the war against banditry as well as equip the security forces with both types of modern equipment and necessary incentives to enable them carry out their duty without hindrances and liaison with the Katsina State Community Watch Corps, particularly in the areas of intelligence gathering and arrest.
- (3) There should be training and retraining as well as re-orientation to inculcate ethical values and reverence for life and human right in the people and also the Community Watch Corps.
- (4) Government at all levels should put in place functional security system like community policing mechanism to complement the operations of other security agencies (Joint Task Force) as well as the need for proper orientation of the Katsina State Community Watch Corps on the need

to maintain peace and order professionally. The local vigilante understands the terrain of their communities/environment better than the newly posted armed forces from other states.

(5) Government should intensify efforts to mobilise financial and human resources to fund disarmament, and re-orientation programmes to curtail the problems of arms proliferation and assisting bandits with vital information across the state.

(6) Finally, there should be sufficient supply and fixing of modern technology as well as increased surveillance for better and prompt information gathering and disseminations across the state.

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