

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Interrogating Community Roles in Funding Security Agencies in Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*Security has remained a fundamental need of any society. Sometimes, it requires the multi-stakeholder approach to sustain functional security operatives in most communities. This paper seeks to examine how local communities in Nigeria participate in funding security operatives within their local thereby contributing to national security. Paper shows that communities invest in their own security through volunteer donations and levies aimed at providing certain logistics such as accommodation to security operatives in their community.*

**Keywords:** Community, security, funding, developing countries

### **1. Introduction**

One of the oldest institutions in the chronological development of man is community and clustering environment. Man developed the idea of coming together based on the understanding and filial relationship within his area. This affinity could be as a result of common destiny as in the case of identical relationship. It could be as a result of common destiny as in the case of traditional *Osu* or *Oru* caste system. Community or town, traditionally, having a common destiny of traditional institution of rulership known as *Igwe Obi*, *Oba*, overwhelming sociocultural and political influence and authority. The existence of communities made the administration of the area less cumbersome for the colonial masters who saw the community as unity of command.

In explaining community, Chaturvedi (2006) sees community as an organization of social life within a limited area, based possibly, on common life and that exist for good life. In this own explanation, Hugo (1978), views community as a subgroup of people occupying a territory, less-sufficient than a society, with closer association, and deeper sympathy. However, community could be urban or rural. A rural community is relatively known for its serene environment with homogeneous cultural affinity and devoid of noise and environmental pollution (Oyaide, 2005). Such rural communities lack the luxuries of modern technology, the rapid movement of vehicles and environmental pollution. While urban communities have the paraphernalia of hustling and bustling activities and noise environment, with heterogeneous people, full of vehicles, commercial activities, industries and of course with the associated pollution, the rural community is known for its serenity and pristine environment devoid of deafening noise, rapid and hustling movement of motorable roads, etc. urban communities are devoid of.

For a community to be harmonious, peaceful, united and progressive, it must be well organized with effective and efficient administration (i.e., good governance) and guaranteed security. In fact, security is the most important variable to any community to be progressive and peaceful. Security is the ability to guard the lives and property of citizens in a society or community. Safe guarding lives could be in the form of physical security or fiscal security which involves employment opportunity, taxes, levies and all other policies that could help in the existence of the society or the state. For the purpose of this paper, security is conceptually understood to be that of physical security that is aimed at guarding or safeguarding lives and property in the community. This security could be in the form of vigilante, formal security such as police priest of deities or spiritual security of the clergies and other spiritual leaders. It could also be the security provided by the traditional institutions of *Igwes* and the cabinets including the town unions' leaders that help in organizing security services by the communities which include the vigilante, police and armed forces orpara military securities and of course the security of the organization of the traditional rulers and their cabinets including the town unions.

The financing of the above different types of security is a common concern of opera most communities in developing countries such as Nigeria. Its supplementary contribution becomes a system whereby the state governments through the commissioner for Human Development and Poverty Reduction and the state Police Commissioner (through the Divisional Police Officers) officially grant the people of the community, the opportunity of guarding their community. The vigilante or the security would be officially commissioned and their arms and ammunition would also be officially registered. This gives the security their opportunity to hold or handle guns.

The police, as well known, are the government instrument of maintaining law and order. The police are equally sent to the community to keep guard and maintain peace if need be. Also on alert, the police rush to the area of the distress calls. They guard against any act of criminality and violence of any sort. The police could be sent to the community on

outpost divisions, or on checks on the road or even sent to patrol the whole community. The police on special request could be sent to individual houses based on the merit of such cases.

## 2. Financing the Security Operatives

In the early 17th century, finance was mainly for the maintenance of the kings' palaces and the kings' households. By 18th century, the use of fund for public services started manifesting. The fund was no longer restricted to the kings' palaces, but now for effective administration. However, one of the first principal public functions of the finance is for the maintenance of law and order. These law and order include the security of lives and property. Abraham (1980) maintains that with money one can achieve his desires. The desire for good governance would also be achieved functionally with the use of money. Hence Crowther and Swamry (1985), maintain that of all the discoveries of man, money is the most essential invention of man as it is the basis for all public and private, socio-economic and political existence of man. Money i.e., finance is the main driving force of effective security services in any administration. And in the community, it is the main motivational tool for effective security service. Without finance, the security services of every community cannot function effectively and efficiently. Hence, the issue of finance for the security operatives in the community is a very vital topical issue in every community.

## 3. Source of Fund for the Security Services

Security fund depends on the types of security involved, for instance, the government official security such as the police, armed forces and paramilitary personnel are taken care of by the government. In other words, their duties in the communities are mere special duty postings, which last for brief periods, depending on the circumstances involved. In a crisis situation, where curfew is imposed, the security could only stay till the situation calms and everything returns to normalcy. In fact, even if the security on permanent posting due to government establishment or the rising of commercial activities in the community, such government security is taken care of by the government. However, the community plays vital roles in financing such serving security in the community by rendering the following logistics assistance.

### 3.1. Accommodation

In most cases, the community normally, provides accommodation for the security guarding their place. In some communities that need police post (i.e., outpost police station), they normally provide the house for the takeoff of the police services. The community builds or rents house(s) for the station including offices and residential houses. In addition, some communities could provide utility vehicles for the police. In the event of crisis, the leadership of the community could render some assistance by way of logistics and even accommodation if need be.

The sources of community fund for this type of services are varied. Sources of fund for community projects including security services depend on each community and the behavioural patterns of the people. Generally, both the Igwe's cabinet and the town union usually have official custodian of the fund or finances. They usually elect or nominate a person of sound character to be the treasurer and in some cases, a sound accountant is nominated as their financial secretary. This presupposes, the fact that an organized cabinet and or town union should have cash flow analysis of income and expenditure and proper documentation process. In fact, the Edith establishing development committee of every town made it very clear for constant rendition of accounts of the town. In some towns or communities accounts are rendered twice yearly, while some other towns make it compulsory for the renditions of the towns' account annually especially on the 'Towns' Day' which comes up in most towns, in Enugu state, between 26th and 30th December every year. Every donation, levy, contribution, income from sales of common assets such as communal land and cash from deforestation or economic trees are all kept in the bank, (in the name of the town or community), and with the particulars being kept by the treasurer. However, impress is kept by the treasurer. All these incomes that accrue to the community are used for such services as security operative and other development projects.

### 3.2. Vigilante

Vigilante security is one of the most active security operatives in every community in Enugu State. In some communities, vigilante keeps watch for twenty-four hours. While in other communities, the vigilante only keeps watch from dusk to dawn. In most cases, the vigilante securities use to have functional offices that are maintained effectively at all times. In these offices, all reports are lodged there. The secretary and or the chairman of the vigilante are always available to acknowledge the report and alert their members on the report. If it is an emergency, then these officers would mobilize their members for action.

Financing the vigilante security is a very serious issue in any community. It is usually community affair and it is an all-participatory venture. In many communities, the financing of the vigilante involves both home and abroad members of the community. People's contribution, are made monthly, yearly, semi-annually or annually. The vigilante offices are maintained and sustained by purely community effort. The government encourages the communities by way of commissioning their vigilante securities and neighborhood centers. In this type of vigilante, the government through the police, supplies them arms and ammunition, and their activities are known to the police. In fact, in this type of center, the vigilante and the police sometimes conduct joint operational activities or rather complimentary operational activities. One sees such joint vigilante or police activities in some areas in Enugu, Anambra, Benue and Northern states especially in the North East of Nigeria where terrorists and bandits have continually terrorized the people.

Maintaining these full-time vigilante security operatives is very expensive. Their recruitment uses to be through the scrutiny of the community leaders based on the candidates' character, agility and of course, their intelligence.

Sometimes, they are sent for some paramilitary or intelligent training or courses. Seminars and workshops are constantly organized for them. And all these can only be run effectively with finance. Paying the resource persons, feeding the members and sometimes giving them allowance (both transport and inconvenience) are borne by the community. In fact, to maintain an organized, effective and efficient vigilante is very expensive. In some cases, their offices could be donated by influential citizens or leaders of the community, but where there is no donation of offices or accommodation, the community usually rents offices or accommodation. In some urban communities, the vigilante securities are organized by each street. In this case, the vigilante could be non-indigenes and as such, there is a residential accommodation for them. These are the provisions for the vigilantes especially the full-time vigilantes.

To run such vigilante takes a lot, financially. The financing of this type of security involves, age grade associations, clubs, religious bodies, markets men and women (especially the shop owners and traders), the vocational workers such as the motor and motorcycle mechanics, carpenters, welders, vulcanizes. They pay levies or make donations that are sent to the central purse of the community and are properly recorded. Sometimes, task force could be set up or the vigilante leadership used to collect some levies on the behalf of the community (especially if they are directed). In such cases, proper records are kept and the monies so collected are remitted to the central purse through the town union officials or their traditional ruler.

### *3.3. Personal or Group Guard*

This is a private security arrangement that acts as such. The arrangement is also very personal. Some households usually organize and contract securities to guard their houses, shops and personal effects. It could even be as personal guard whereby such security officer takes care of the safety of his client. This type of security operative is normally sourced through applications or request to government recognized or registered security agencies such as Eagle securities in Enugu, Gallant Guard Securities in Kano etc. The security personnel are being scheduled and posted by their organizations. They could be changed on daily basis, weekly or even monthly basis. The finance for such guards, are made directly to the agencies who usually payroll their staff (i.e., the security personnel) from their treasury. The finance for such security would only involve the community if the security agents are guarding public establishment of the community. For instance, some communities in the South East normally engage these types of security agencies to guard some government projects in their places, such as transformers, community secondary schools and some other critical installations, including electric cables, water borehole engines and generators for their communities. In such cases, the community usually provided funds for the payment of these securities based on the contractual terms with the sole agency and not the actual staff on guard. In the Northern and South Western Nigeria their palace guards are being arranged and provided by direct labour (i.e., the communities using their people) or by approaching the private security agencies for contract guards. In either case, the communities take charge of the securities' payment and provisions of their arms and ammunition.

Also, prominent citizens and influential politicians and even some businessmen and women could organize private securities for themselves, or for their communities. Involving the communities for such security funding depends on the volatile nature of such community and the type of uneasiness reigning in such communities. It is also pertinent to note that financing security on community project depends on the type of the projects and the agency that attracted such projects. For instance, the Telecommunication Net Work Mask are being guarded by the company or organizations that provided them. In other words, the organizations in charge of such mask usually provide the security for the protection of the mask and their generating plant attached to such mask. In this case, the community could only be involved to the extent of supplementary effect, by way of providing accommodation and any other necessities for the guards. A construction company working in a community may provide security personnel to guard their equipment. Here, in as much as the concerned company takes care of the security of its property, the community could be involved to the extent of providing logistics to complement the effort of the company. Financing such complementary effort is usually done by the town union and the leadership of the town. The community could source its fund through appeal to the citizens of the town, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) or Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) such as the church, clubs, age grades etc. or even levy the people so as to effectively contribute to the safety of the project of such companies and agent or corporation.

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Man's ideology of communalism has made him to be conscious of his environment and community development. It has also made him his brother's keeper and in very loose attachment to his neighbor and the environment. Based on his philosophy, man imbibed the idea of development which Koinyan and Nzenwa (2000), argue that development starts only when man is able to take control of his environment, to manipulate and manage progressively everything in his environment with a view to better his living. In other words, development engenders man's ability to maintain and retain his environment, so as to be peaceful and happy in his environment. For any government to be assumed successful, its society or environment must have been very peaceful and united. Security of any community is the hallmark of its governance. Where this is lacking everybody feels insecure, hence making such community to be vulnerable. Security engenders real development as it is the first consideration of any investors. Even the government considers the security of project development in any community before embarking on such projects.

However, one of the greatest problems of any community is finance. In most cases, people abscond from contribution on every project within their community due to embezzlement, corruption and insincerity. For effective project to take place in any environment or community, the leadership or rather the project coordinators should be

trusted and they should be frugal with public fund so as to render account properly. This has been the problem of most of the communities. Getting such prudent person has been the greatest problem of most communities in Nigeria. Besides, people are complex being, even when the leadership or project co-coordinators are prudent and sincere, the people always suspect them, hence, making the sincere ones to be skeptical in accepting to handle public fund, or to work for the community.

Some of the security personnel, especially the village vigilante lacks manners. Security jobs need intelligence and high level of alertness. Most of the security men lack these skills. The government should as a matter of necessity, organize constant orientation and training on security matters for the people and make such workshops, seminars and courses compulsory for the security personnel in the society. This will help to shape the security personnel while carrying out their duties. Education is the foundation of any development; hence, the people need to be educated. The government should continue to make education in the communities to be free and compulsory so as to eradicate the rate of illiteracy in the society. A secured environment is a happy environment and a happy environment is a healthy environment.

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