Police Officers’ Assessment of NPF Reforms: Evidence from an Area Command in Ondo State

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Proposal/Abstract

The return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999 saw the introduction of reforms to improve the capacity and performance of the country’s public institutions. One of such institutions is the Nigeria Police Force [NPF]. Over the years, reforms in the NPF have resulted in the establishment of the Nigeria Police Council, and Police Service Commission [PSC], among others. Despite these reform efforts, the operational capacity of the NPF has waned to the point that the subsequent Nigerian governments often rely on the deployment of the military to police several civilian areas and crime hotspots. In 2016, the World Internal Security and Police Index (WISPI) ranked the NPF as the worst performing police organization in the areas of capacity, process, legitimacy, and outcomes. The deployment of the military to perform conventional police duties and the recent poor ranking of the NPF by WISPI raise fundamental questions on the effectiveness of the NPF reforms.

This article analyses police officers’ assessment of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) reforms in Ondo State between 1999 and 2012. Using a quantitative methodology, 305 police officers from the Akure Area Command participated in the study. Results were presented and analysed using tables, percentages and means scores on a 5-point Likert scale. Findings reveal a low level of reform awareness among police officers. The article suggests that the NPF reforms were neither well-formulated nor adequately implemented. Even though the NPF reforms marginally but differentially improved the various aspects of police operational capacity, there was no much improvement in the overall police capacity and performance. The article shows that the performance and implementation of the NPF reforms in Ondo State have been constrained by corruption, inadequate funding, policy inconsistency, poor leadership and lack of reform communication to implementers, poor condition of service for officers,
among others. The article concludes by attributing the poor performance of the NPF reforms to the unfavourable contexts in which the reforms were formulated and implemented.

**Keywords**: Nigeria Police Force, police operational capacity, police self-assessment, police reform, reform performance