



Inside the Nigeria Police Force: An Examination of the Condition and Facilities at the Police Stations in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State Nigeria

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Abstract

The Nigeria Police over the past years have undeniably suffered numerous challenges which have explicitly affected the discharge of its duties and obligations. This study surveyed seven police stations in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State Nigeria to examine the available amenities and police equipment used in policing the communities and implications on effective policing. Both qualitative and quantitative design was employed. In addition, cluster; simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used. 7 people were interviewed (police officers and community leaders) and a total of 200 questionnaires were administered to respondents. The method of analyses was content analysis and Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). The study found that the conditions of the police stations are not conducive and they lack basic amenities and police equipment that may aid effective policing in the area. The study, therefore, suggested that adequate monitoring of the police yearly allocations and activities will ensure transparency and effective execution of police projects and more importantly, it will facilitate effective policing.

Keywords: Nigeria; Police; Station; Amenities; Facilities; Corruption

1. Introduction

The Nigeria Police Force is the law enforcement agency established by the Act of Parliament to act exclusively as the National Police with jurisdiction to all states in the country to protect life and property and maintain law and order (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1999). Section 4, CAP 359 of the Police Act, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990, provides that “The police shall be employed for prevention and detection of crime. The apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due employment of all laws and regulation with which they are directly charged and shall perform such military duties within...Nigeria as may be required by them or under the authority of this or any other Act” (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990:4).

The Nigeria police like any other police institution is an inevitable and the most feasible component of the criminal justice system. The police institution remains an essential justice apparatus in modern society charged with the responsibility to preserve public order and maintain harmony, enforce laws, promote public safety,

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prevent and detect crime, and prosecute violators of laws (Ebbe, 2013). The police are considered to be public friends because they operate within the society or communities where people live and respond to public needs and requests (Hills, 2008).

However, over the past years, the Nigeria police had suffered and continue to suffer serious attack and criticism from the public, civil society organization, and media. The capability of the institution to carry out its responsibilities and achieve its mandate has remained the central subject of these condemnations (Edobor-Igbinovia, 2000; Okereke, 2012; Alemika, 2009). The Nigeria police have been labeled with different names and associated with all sorts of immoral acts. The collective image of an average policeman among Nigerians is that of fraudulent, ineffective, incompetent, and unproductive (Hills, 2012; Ikuteyijo, 2009; Ikuteyijo and Rotimi, 2014). Igbinovia (1982:334) noted that as far back as the 1960s after the independence, the Nigeria Police has been the subject of condemnation, in fact, 'there is no government agency in Nigeria that has been severely criticised as the NPF'.

The operatives of the Nigeria police have been found wanting in their activities and efforts to police the people and communities effectively. As Oluwaniyi (2011) argued, the Nigeria police have not been able to protect life and safeguard properties, maintain law and order and prevent crimes in the country. Ojo (2014) added that the Nigeria police hardly respond to emergency calls and if they do, it is often late when the damage is already done. Also, Domingo and Abraham (2013) pointed out that the Nigeria police lack the capability and manpower to conduct a productive investigation, track criminal activities, fight crime, and restore orderliness in conflict or unrest zones. In addition, Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi (2016) like Nwogwugwu and Kupoluyi (2015), Lambert et al (2010), Onyeozili (2005) and Odekunle (1979) found in their various studies that the Nigeria police is the hub of criminal activities and corruption in Nigeria and have rather contributed immensely to the rate of crime in the country. This is because most of the police officers aid and abet criminals, extort money from the people often with threat of force, arrest people indiscriminately, and perpetrate all sorts of unethical dealings such as demanding for bribe, selling and altering of evidence, exchanging criminal suspects or real criminals with unsuspecting or innocent individual, injustice, unlawful detention, torturing detainees and unjustified killing of innocent Nigerians.

Consequently, the public confidence and cooperation that serve as the essential ingredients for effective policing have disappeared. The public seems to have lost confidence in the Nigeria police because of the poor attitude to work, disregard for fundamental human rights and failure to provide adequate security for life and property and maintain public order and justice (Agbibo, 2015; Human Right Watch, 2010; Adebayo and Ojo, 2009). The police now find it difficult to earn public support because the police-public relationship has deteriorated. Instead of handing over criminal suspects to the police, people now prefer to take laws into their hands (Onyeozili, 2005). As Yusuf (2007) observed, the absence of public confidence and police-public relationship in many Nigeria cities is responsible for the increasing mob actions or lynching against criminal suspects in the country. Moreover, communities across the country now depend on the services of the informal security agencies such as the vigilante to protect them and their properties and restore orderliness in many situations (Pratten, 2008).

Studies have attributed the ineptitude of the Nigeria police to the insufficient funding of the institution, lack of resources and training, poor working conditions, low pay, and corruption (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2000; Hills, 2008; Adebayo and Ojo, 2009; Human Right Watch, 2010). Vast sums of money are eye marked for the Nigeria police in the yearly budget to improve the capacity of the police to conduct the investigation, patrols, respond to emergency and finance other police projects and activities. Most of these allocations are squandered or stolen by the police senior officials. The results of the massive mismanagement and misappropriation of police funds



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as Karimu (2015) noted can be seen in the present deplorable condition of many police stations in the country and lack of office equipment and amenities, communication gadgets, and police kits such as bulletproof jacket, arms and ammunition and modern forensic technologies used in investigation.

In addition, the far-reaching effects of corruption and embezzlement of the money that could have been used to provide incentives for the police officers to supplement the meagre income are evident in the police high demand for bribes and extortion of money from the criminal suspects and motorists, the arbitrarily mass arrests of innocent people in order to get bail charges from them, and renting out of cells as VIP to detainees (Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi, 2016; Karimu, 2015; Lambert et al, 2010).

A visit (by the researcher) to some of the police stations in Ilorin Metropolis reveals the appalling condition of the structure of the stations and the lack of amenities and police facilities. All the stations visited do not have the power supply, fan, air condition, furniture, computer facilities, good toilet with running water, and good utility or operational vehicles to convey personnel around and also to aid effective policing within the local communities. Majority of the structures appear to be weak with tattered roofs and shattered doors and windows, the surroundings are untidy and unkempt and covered by a bush which allows rodent and reptiles to easily move around.

Previous academic research on police and policing in Nigeria have been concerned mainly on either the development of the institution of police or the corruption, extortion and unethical behaviors among police officers or the poor performance of the police. A systematic and extensive research that surveys the perception of the police on the major impediments responsible for the police inefficiency, the condition of the police stations (working environment) and the availability of the facilities that may enhance policing is rare. Very few literatures documented the deplorable condition of most of the police stations in the country and the available resources or facilities that may assist police in policing effectively. It is against this backdrop that this study surveys the conditions of the police stations in Ilorin Metropolis to examine the available amenities and police equipment used in policing the communities in Ilorin. The study is among the first of its kind to explore the police stations in Nigeria. The objective of this study, therefore, is to survey the physical condition of the police stations in Ilorin metropolis with an appraisal of the amenities and equipment available and the implications on policing.

2. Material and Methods

Ilorin the capital city of Kwara State is the sixth most populated city in Nigeria (National Population Commission, 2006). Kwara state (Ilorin) is categorized under Zone 8 in the Nigeria Police Command. Ilorin has one main police headquarters and four divisional police command with at least one police station to assist inhabitants with issues, disputes, disorderliness, investigation of local crime and so on. The research covered 7 police stations in Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State Nigeria. These stations include Adewole, Oloje, Apalara, Ogidi, Oja-Oba, Wara, and Surulere. These police stations are located in highly populated areas in Ilorin and each covers at least 14 districts in Ilorin Metropolis. The physical condition and the available facilities in these stations were assessed. This research implemented both qualitative and quantitative descriptive design. A variety of sampling methods were employed, including cluster, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Both in-depth interview and questionnaires were used as a framework for collecting information. The study interviewed 5 police officers and 2 community leaders. In addition, questionnaires were administered to a total of 200 respondents (individual member of communities) from the area covered by the 7 police stations. The information gathered was analyzed using content analysis and Statistical Package for Social



Scientists (SPSS) in generating simple percentage, and frequency distributions on some factor analyses of the responses relating to the research questions.

3. Results and Discussion

The demographic distribution of the respondents as presented in Table 1 shows that 52% of the respondents are male and 48% are female. 17.5% of the respondents were between the ages of 25-30 years, 37.5% of the respondents fall between 31-35 years old, 29% were between 36-40 years old and 16% were between the age of 41 years old and above. In addition, it can be observed from the table that 6% of the respondents have secondary education, 38% have National Diploma and National Certificate in Education and 56% have Higher Diploma Degree and Degree. Also, 43% of the respondents were civil servants, 32% were employees of private organizations and 25% were self-employed.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Sex	%	Age	%	Education	%	Profession	%
Male	52	25-30	17.5	Secondary School	6	Civil Servant	43
Female	48	31-35	37.5	ND/NCE	38	Private Employee	
		36-40	29	HND/Degree	56		32
		41-above	16			Self-Employed	25

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2017

Results on the respondents' perception of the physical condition of the police station in their community as presented in Table 2 revealed that 29% of the respondents believed that the physical condition of the police station is very poor. 59% were of the view that the physical condition of the police station is poor, while 10.5% held the view that the condition of the police station is moderate and 3% believed that the condition of the police station is good. The implication of this is that a large number of the respondents perceived that the condition of the police station in their area or community to be poor.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents' Perception of the Physical Condition of Police Station in their Area

Item	Frequency	Percentage%
Very Poor	58	29
Poor	118	59
Moderate	21	10.5
Good	3	1.5
Very Good	0	0
Total	200	100

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2017

From the interview conducted with police officers, **respondent 1** noted that *the condition of the police stations in Nigeria (not only Ilorin) is pathetic. The physical structure and the environment are despicable. There is no electricity in most of the stations, the necessary facilities that will enhance conducive working environment such as fan, air-condition, modern toilet facility.*

Also, **respondent2** asserted that *police stations in the country are more or less a forgetting place. When people keep saying that the police failed to protect them and maintain law and order as their primary responsibility. We as police go through several challenges including our place of work. No matter how*



long an officer spent on patrol, he will come back to the station to rest or give a report for the day. Most of us are tired of the job because the place that supposed to serve as the office is not conducive. During the winter, the station is always like a cold-room because there are no windows and the doors are apology. Similarly, during the summer, the station is like a baking-ground as there is no fan or air-condition to neutralize the weather. Also, in the raining season, our station is always flooded with water because all the rooms are leaking and there no windows. The station toilet for the officers and detainees is terrible. In short, the working environment of the police stations is not conducive to us.

In addition, **respondent 3** stressed that *most of our stations are in bad shape. The buildings are dilapidated. Many of us (police officers) don't want to be or work in the station. We preferred to be on patrol all day or be posted out to guard politicians or private companies. Our police stations are poorly equipped and lack necessary facilities to be called a police station. I have served in at least 3 states in Nigeria, the stations that do have some facilities and conducive working environment are the state headquarters or zonal offices. Other police stations in the country from Abuja to Zamfara are absolute mess. The environment is not appealing. There is no place to relax after work, no section or unit for exercise. ... During the hot-season, we sit under the tree because the office is not conducive.*

Also, **respondent 4** shared the same view with **respondent 2 and 3** by saying that *police stations in Nigeria lack basic amenities. Many of us don't want to work at the station; we want to be posted out to work with private organizations because they provide a conducive environment for us. They treat us well.*

Furthermore, the first community leader interviewed stressed that the *entire physical condition of the police stations in Ilorin is in a sorry state (Respondent 6)*. Also, the second community leader stated that *the Nigeria police are like a forgotten institution. We don't really know what exactly the problems are; maybe it is corruption on the part of the government or the top officials in the police. The police stations are not just bad they are also worse. Some parts of the building are almost collapsed, there is lack of adequate ventilation, no furniture, and the jail cell is terrible and not hygienic (Respondent 7).*

The respondents' perception of the facilities available at the police station in their area presented in Table 3 shows that 49% of the respondents believed that the facilities at the police station are inadequate. 33% of the respondents perceived that the facilities in the police station are somewhat inadequate. While 13.5% of the respondents believed that the facilities in the police station are neither adequate nor inadequate and 4.5% perceived that the facilities are somewhat adequate. The implication of this is that a large percentage of the respondents perceived that the essential facilities such as computer system, internet, vehicle and other necessary materials that may enhance police activities are inadequate.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents' Perception of the Facilities and Equipment (such as computer system, internet, vehicle, and other essential materials) available at the Police Station in their Communities

Item	Frequency	Percentage%
Inadequate	98	49
Somewhat Inadequate	66	33
Neither Adequate nor inadequate	27	13.5
Somewhat Adequate	9	4.5
Adequate	0	0
Total	200	100

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2017



From the interview, **respondent 1** observed that *major facilities that may enhance policing are lacking or not adequate enough, such facilities include computer system or modern IT system, police-radio, police-shield and other police equipment. We still practice the pre-independence method of record keeping and case registration using wall or blackboard and chalk. The patrol vehicle is not enough and often in bad shape all the time. One patrol vehicle is per police station and this one vehicle is used to patrol over 15 districts covered by each police station. There is often no provision for fuel to patrol, in most times we source for the fund to fuel the vehicle. Sometimes anyone who needs our service is asked to fuel the vehicle. We find it difficult to protect lives and property and maintain law and order in the communities.*

Also, **respondent 2** noted that...*it is disheartening that most of the police stations lack the basic facilities. Common notebook and pen are not provided. We often ask people to assist us with notebooks and pens whenever they come to report cases. The system of keeping records is archaic, as cheap as the computer is today; there is only one computer in our station and it is in the DPO's office. It serves no purpose for us this is because it is supposed to be used in record keeping and case registration at the station's counter. The patrol vehicle is another problem entirely, you will be surprised if I tell you that we need to push our patrol vehicle before it can start this is because it is not in good condition.*

In addition, **respondent 3** stressed that...*The provision of basic amenities that will aid effective policing is also lacking in virtually all the police station in the country. Most of the Nigeria police officers have no access to police portable radio and other modern equipment that makes policing effectively. No computer, scanner, printer and internet. When there is need to type, print or make copies of documents, no matter how highly confidential or classified a document is we go out to business centres to type, print and make copies.*

Respondent 4 also attested to this by saying that *poor equipment or facilities are one of the major factors impeding effective policing in Nigeria. For instance, it is always very difficult to call for back up during operation because the facility (communication gadgets) to do that is lacking. Most times we use our mobile phones to call for backup. In addition, another major problem is the maintenance of our patrol vehicle. If there is a report that requires police urgent intervention it is very difficult to get there as fast as possible because the vehicle may not be in good condition. If the vehicle is in good condition we are always faced with the problem of fuelling the vehicle.*

Respondent 5 claimed that *there is lack of medical facilities and a shortage of medical staff and drugs for the police officers. If we sustain any injury in operation, we often use our own money to treat ourselves. Also, there is a shortage of police kit such as bulletproof Jackets, and arms and ammunition, insufficient operational vehicles, and office equipment.*

Respondent 6 (Community Leader) observed that *it is a pity that we still operate in the 1960s policing system in Nigeria. All the police stations in Ilorin still use chalkboard to register detainees and record information (I don't know of other states). The stations lack basic equipment like computers, internet and other IT gadgets that would have assisted the police in policing effectively. It is very difficult for police to quickly track previous records because the record keeping system they use is outdated. There was a case of a stolen car, where the owner reported immediately to the nearest police station. Three days after, the car was used in a robbery and was traced back to the owner and he was arrested. He told the police that he reported the case three days ago. It was unfortunate that the police could not find the paper or record when they are asked to produce it.*



Going to the police station to report or make a request for police intercession particularly in an urgent situation, an individual must either go there with his/her car or hire a commercial car to convey the police or have the cash to fuel the police vehicle.

Respondent 7 (Community Leader) also stressed that *the institution lacks everything required to police the people effectively. As a community, we do visit the police station and we often have a periodic meeting with the officers from the police station covering our area. Through these meetings, they were able to let us know the challenges they face. Among these challenges include fuelling of the patrol vehicle, the appalling condition of the stations such as no toilet, electricity and water and unavailability of basic materials such as paraffin oil or candle to light the station in the night, insufficient bullets and so on. We try to provide some of the materials we could afford for them to be able to police our area.*

From the foregoing, it can be observed that most of the police stations in Ilorin Metropolis are not in a very good condition in term of the physical structure and availability of basic amenities such as electricity, water supply, fan, air condition, hygienic environment, recreation room, and toilet that may provide the police with a conducive working environment. In addition, it can be observed that most of the police stations lack essential office equipment such as computer system, printer, scanners, and photocopier. No internet connection, security camera, police database, and information networking between different stations. Also, other important tools such as communication gadgets, bulletproof jacket, arms and ammunition and functional operational vehicle and other amenities that will aid police activities are lacking.

3.1. Implications

A conducive work environment generally increases workers' productivity and efficiency (Salunke, 2015). Therefore, a conducive environment or station with necessary modern facilities will not only aid policing it will also ensure and increases the public confidence in the institution of police (Tengpnongsthorn, 2017). However, information gathered from respondents' revealed that the situation or conditions of most of the police stations in Nigeria today are not encouraging and seem to have demoralized many of the police officers. Some of the respondents complained that most the police stations are dilapidated building with leaking roofs, no windows, electricity, fan, air condition and no water system toilet and so on. Working in an unhygienic and unconducive environment increases the likelihood of poor health condition, psychological distress and may result in poor productivity (Karimu, 2015). In addition, the condition of an employee's place of work reflects his commitment and willingness to give more in term of putting more vitality and trustworthiness (Tengpnongsthorn, 2017). However, this researcher did not investigate the effects of the present condition of the Nigeria police stations on the individual police performance or job satisfaction. The overall implication of the poor condition of the police stations in term of the available facilities on policing is the major concern of this section.

Lacks of basic facilities such as computers, internet and other gadgets in most of the police stations have serious implication on the efficiency of the police. For instance, from the interview respondents noted that 'most of the police stations in the country do not have the computer, internet, database and other IT facilities. Many still use the chalkboard and in some cases pen and paper to record cases and names of detainees'. Using the computer and other technological gadgets to record cases and keeping of records would have assisted and save police the stress of searching through a bunch of papers whenever there is need to retrieve information. The manual record keeping system may make it difficult for the police to capture information and generate a speedy report on their activities. In addition, without computer system and database it may be difficult to back up records and keep them in a safe place in case of fire or an outbreak. Moreover, easy communication between the police



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departments and share of record or information such as images, video, and reports that can be used to trace or identify suspects anywhere in the country may not be possible.

Furthermore, unavailability of appliances such as a printer, photocopier, and scanner that would have allowed the police to handle documents internally may also hinder effective policing. As one of the respondents noted that 'most times we go to the business centre to type, print and make copies of documents'. This practice is dangerous most especially when dealing with confidential or classified police information. This information may be exposed or leaked to the public and could jeopardize police operation.

Also, demanding for resources such as writing material, money to fuel operational or patrol vehicle is a practice that may breed and encourage police corruption and unethical conduct. As one of the respondents noted that 'we source for money to fuel patrol vehicle or ask individuals that came to report the crime to fuel the vehicle'. Another respondent asserted that 'they ask individuals that came to report cases to assist them with notebook and pen'. Officers may use this to extort money from people in the name of seeking for support. In addition, the poor condition of the patrol vehicles may also hinder police timely response to the emergency situation.

Effective policing rest significantly on access to information and public cooperation, availability of essential operational equipment, and police timely response to situations (Tengpnongsthorn, 2017). When people provide information to the police, they expect a quick response and police commitment to solving the problem. Therefore, the police ability to intervene and solve any problem increases public confidence and trust in the institution and also increases public cooperation (Motschall and Cao, 2002; Tankebe, 2010). However, when the institution of police begins to fail people by responding late to emergency situation in the name of unavailability of fuel or poor condition of vehicle or when an individual complainant is asked to fuel police vehicle before service can be rendered or when an individual is asked to buy notebook and pen for the police to record his report, the public may lose trust in the system and seek another means to protect themselves and handle situation (Jang, Joo and Zhao, 2010). Therefore, the persistent increase in mob justice, the rate of kidnapping, robbery, and other crimes in the state and country as a whole may be as a result or response to these anomalies.

4. Limitations

The study is not without its limitations. A number of limitations weaken the reliability and validity of this study. The study gathered the perception of the public and interviewed very few police officers. The sample size may not be a representative of the population of the police officers under the 7 police stations the research covered and there may be some variation in perceptions of other officers. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings is limited. In addition, the opinions and responses of the police officers and the community leaders interviewed were self-reported. For this reason, there was bound to be traces of bias and tale in the responses. Although the researcher visited the 7 police stations to verify some of the assertions. However, the study is expected to provoke further research of this nature.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Nigeria Police Force over the past years has undeniably suffered numerous challenges which have explicitly affected the discharge of its duties and obligations. Among the problems include the mismanagement and embezzlement of police resources which have led to the unavailability of basic amenities and facilities at the police stations. It is worrisome that corruption in the Nigeria police has turned the police personnel to beggars, rogues, and heartless individuals who demand writing materials from the complainants or mandate complainants to fuel operational vehicles before service can be rendered, and using all sorts of inhumane



interrogation techniques such as torture as primary interrogation tool to collect information from criminal suspects.

Policing has moved beyond the level it is practiced in Nigeria. Today, computer system and other IT gadgets, for instance, have become essential tools of communication within the police departments around the world. The uses of the internet, database, security cameras, and other forms of digital communication system have made it so easy to capture information and generate a speedy report without any stress (Ackroyd et al, 1992). In addition, technology has simplified the means of exchanging information between police departments. Sharing of records or information such as images, video, and reports that can be used to track and identify criminal suspects anywhere have become so easy and have assisted greatly in policing. Furthermore, police stations are equipped with the recreational centre, exercise unit and interrogation section with modern facilities that will enhance interrogation without the use of force. Also, operational vehicles are now computerized and equipped with modern facilities that allow officers to call for backup, check people identity and verify car plate numbers (Chan, 2001; Nunn, 2001).

It is however unfortunate that majority of the Nigeria police stations lack all these facilities. They still use an archaic policing system which many analysts refer to as 'pre-independence policing system'. However, it is not too late to revive the system. Amendments can still be done to resuscitate the state of the Nigeria police, to make it wear a new look like other civilized country's police. The following suggestions are therefore provided:

- Since mismanagement and corruption have been recognized as the major banes of the Nigeria police, the government should establish an independent body of inquiry saddled with the constitutional power to conduct a periodic, transparent, and comprehensive audit of the police account and that of the Police Service Commission, investigate the systemic corruption within the Nigeria Police Force and prosecute or handover anyone found wanting to the anti-corruption agencies, monitor all financial activities of the NPF and Police Service Commission including procurements, and design a blueprint on how to reform the police within a reasonable timeframe.
- The need to increase the financial allocation or support to the Nigeria Police Force. This will enable them to provide for the needs (such as vehicles and modern equipment) of the various police stations in the country. However, each state command of the Nigeria Police Force should be mandated to publish its financial reports quarterly (including budget execution, revenue or fines and supports received from communities or private individuals).
- The Nigeria Police Force should embrace the whistle-blowing policy the Federal government is presently using to combat corruption and other acts of indiscipline in the country. Police officers should be encouraged to report anonymously any irregularities such as extortion, bribery, embezzlement and other unethical conducts around them with maximum protection against any reprisal.
- There is also need to make provision for police incentives to encourage them. Every organization has a way of appreciating employees' commitment and efforts. The Police Service Commission together with the Nigeria Police Force should find a way to motivate and appreciate police officers by providing adequate incentives that will serve as a supplement to their meagre income.

6. Practical Implication

Adequate monitoring of the police yearly allocations and activities will ensure transparency and effective execution of police projects and more importantly, it may facilitate effective policing. When there is room to



track the extent to which the police annual budget allocation (meant to improve the capacity of the police) has been expended by the Nigeria Police Force, then there is every possibility for complete execution of project and transparency in procurements. By doing this, the various police stations in the country will be able to get what they need to improve the working condition and provide the necessary amenities and facilities that will enhance effective policing in their localities. In addition, the public will begin to see the changes in the institution and provide the necessary support the police need to be able to achieve its mandate.

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