



# Public Perception of Police Activities in Okada, Edo State Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Police is an important institution in society. However, there are activities of police personnel in public domain which constitute embodiment of integrity problem. In line with this direction, this study specifically investigated public perception of police activities in a semi urban area, Okada in Edo State. The study adopted descriptive cross sectional survey design. Study population consisted of members of resident community. A sample of 194 respondents was used and this size was statistically determined using Cochran's formula. Data were collected at quantitative and qualitative levels. Method of data analysis was quantitative descriptive statistics and qualitative. Ninety-four percent of respondents had different forms of educational qualifications and 89.7% were 20 years and above. There were 30.0% of respondents that affirmed that police officers engaged in extortion on high way road. Respondents (12.4%) identified extra judicial killings associated with police activities. Other respondents (30.9%) maintained that police officers collaborated with criminals and 13.4% respondents identified harassment of unsuspecting citizens by police men. There were 69.1% respondents who claimed they paid for bail bond and 76.3% were victims of police illegal activities. Perception of service delivery by police men was rated moderate (43.3%), low (35.1%) and high (21.6%). There was consensus among police officials that some officers lacked integrity and public members were main collaborators that aided illegal practice. Police activities especially in Okada town, are fraught with illegal act and this really affected public rating of the organization. Therefore, there is need to intensify training and re-training of police officers especially in area of professionalism and public relations.

**Keywords:** Police Operation; Normative Expectation; Illegal Activities; Public Perception

## **1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem**

Police is an important institution in the Nigeria society. The primary goal of formal policing is to protect life and property and ensure that society is in stable order. The role of Nigeria police cannot be undermined in crime prevention. The Nigeria Police perform well to check all forms of crime ranging from violent crime to property crime where people build their confidence and trust in the society they live. There is no community with organisation of human beings that does not have the presence of police in Nigeria (Okunola, 2002). This gives credence to the fact that police is an acceptable organisation. Similarly, relationship between police and host communities is cordial and this perhaps explain some of the reasons which account for the success of police to curb crime. Critically speaking, some studies reveal that police is effective in their role to protect lives and properties of people in Nigeria (Onoge, 1993; Okunola, 2002; Odekunle, 2005). The reason for this conclusion is that the presence of police in many communities in Nigeria reduced crime rate and people now show maximum cooperation with police to achieve effective crime control (Odekunle, 2005). Although it is a subject of debate to agree that Nigeria police is effective in crime control, it is however certain to agree that the presence of police in communities across Nigeria suggests the essentials of the services provided.

Police is not masquerade and the people that wear the uniform are members of the society. Also police is a profession of occupation that people engage to build career. The economic interest of police men and women is not different from other people in other professional

career. Specifically, individual in his/her occupation aspires for success in socio-economic status. This suggests that central to the mind is the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that guide employees to remain committed and satisfied in their jobs. It is certain that employee like police officer desires decent work, want job that offers human dignity, freedom, equity, security of job stability and productive. However, the way people aspire to acquire desired opportunities and benefits in their job differ significantly. Lately in Nigeria, there are reports and insinuations that police officers engage in activities that undermine the integrity of what ideal police organisation should be (Human Rights Watch, 2016). There are cases of illegal extortions of money from unsuspecting public members, illegal arrest of unsuspecting citizens in a disguise for police raids, forceful collection of money from commercial motorists, intimidation of law abiding citizens, road blocks which have led to avoidable accidents on high ways and so on. This attitude is a major problem that constitutes negative public image of police organisation. Most of the studies available in the area of police have been focused on crime prevention, effective operation of police and criminological domain of police organisation (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005; Ajibade, 2011; Ojo, 2012)). Yet there is growing public concern about police integrity in Nigeria and how this mix to affect effective policing. This is the main focus of this study. In line with above discussion, this study was focused to:

- i. Identify activities of police personnel that negate normative expectation of the organisation in public domain.

- ii. Examine implication of police activities on effective policing in resident community.

## 2. Literature Review

Nigeria Police began with a thirty-member consular guard formed in Lagos Colony in 1861. In 1879 a 1,200-member armed paramilitary Hausa Constabulary was formed. In 1896 the Lagos Police was established. A similar force, the Niger Coast Constabulary, was formed in Calabar in 1894 under the newly proclaimed Niger Coast Protectorate. In the north, the Royal Niger Company set up the Royal Niger Company Constabulary in 1888 with headquarters at Lokoja. When the protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were proclaimed in the early 1900s, part of the Royal Niger Company Constabulary became the Northern Nigeria Police, and part of the Niger Coast Constabulary became the Southern Nigeria Police (Dambazau, 1994). Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated in 1914, but their police forces were not merged until 1930, forming the Nigeria Police, headquartered in Lagos. During the colonial period, most police were associated with local governments (native authorities). In the 1960s, under the First Republic, these forces were first regionalised and then nationalised (Odekunle, 2005).

Nigeria Police performed conventional police functions and was responsible for internal security generally, for supporting the prison, immigration, and customs services and for performing military duties within or outside Nigeria as directed (Centre for Law Enforcement Education, 2003). Reportedly, there are between 1,300 and 2500 police stations nationwide (Odekunle, 2005; Nigeria Police, 2016).

Police officers were not usually armed but were issued weapons when required for specific missions or circumstances. They were often deployed throughout the country, but in 1989 President Babangida announced that a larger number of officers would be posted to their native areas to facilitate police-community relations (Alemika, 1997). This is now called community policing and there are police officers who are specially trained in America and Europe to enhance the innovation (Nigeria Police, 2016)

A substantial number of people in early 19<sup>th</sup> century in England resisted proposal for professional and uniformed Police. Their fear was that an armed force in the hand of the central government might threaten their freedom (Alemika, 1997). Moreover, when modern Police force started to develop later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most people were living under the control of European empire and European Police was organized to protect the ruler rather than the people (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005). However, the British who so disliked the idea of armed military style Police of their own soil, seemed to have few or no qualms at the time about using military police to keep the colonies under subjection (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005). The Nigeria Police force had its root and origin from the British colonial administration. In its inception, they were referred to as “yan doka” a kind of law enforcement agency (Baker, 2008). They worked diligently and were the most fearsome government agency, after the military (Dambazau, 1994). Incidence of Police brutality, corruption, violence, and abuse of power punctuated almost every decade of colonial Police history after political independence in Nigeria. In 1960 the

Nigeria Police force (NPF) started as a humble, honest and concerted institution. This can be explicitly acknowledge by their mission to the then Zaire to monitor and keep peace. They were highly respected and trusted by the people of Zaire because of their exhibition of professionalism, dedication and honesty (Alemika, 1997). What a remarkable mission.

However, the image and good name of the Nigeria Police force started plummeting, precisely from 1985 onward and the present precarious state of its existence the present situation of this once robust and outstanding institution is seriously under threat (Amnesty International, 2016). The pathetic state of service is that police are poorly and distastefully equipped, the training they undergo is a fire bridge approach exercise (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005). The second most important threat has to do with the apparent unwholesome plague that has massively and grievously gripped this once remarkable organization, this is bribery and corruption (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005; Amnesty International, 2016). The Nigeria Police and, bribery and corruption are two inseparable fellows. This menace is plausible institutionalised among and between members of the Police force. It has eaten extremely deep into soul of police. It has become Nigerian Police second nature. This is no prejudice to the Nigeria Police but rather an ostensible and pragmatic reality (Ajibade, 2011).

More so, it is clear that the Nigeria Police is the most unscrupulous organization that the general public have totally lost confidence in and disaffected with (Ajibade, 2011). It is still fresh in memory, the outburst and lashing

against the Lagos state command in 1998. This was the time former Lagos state Police commissioner Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, was severely criticized due to accusation against police men who were conspicuously involved in crime and crime related act across the state (Akinadewo, 2015). The social vices perpetrated by the police still persist when former President Olusegun Obasanjo openly declared that members of the Police are criminals/murderers especially the Apo killing in Abuja. According to Olusegun Obasanjo, members of the Police force hired their guns to criminals to commit assassination, armed robbery, covering criminals and get returns from criminals (Centre for Law Enforcement Education, 2003).

Sadly, those at the top massively exploit and maltreat those at the lower cadre. At times, a certain percentage is deducted from their paltry salary in the name of honoring a visiting officer or taxing them wittingly or unwittingly for a so called donation for the wedding of the commissioner's daughter, whereas, the low ranking officer live in dilapidated and semi prisoners environment (Akinadewo, 2015). This is vividly clear of Police barracks across the country. In addition to that, it turns out to be a nightmare for a retired Policeman to successfully secure his retirement benefits in a short while. One can spend between one to two years or even beyond before securing his entitlements. It is a fact that top ranking officials demand huge sums of amount as bribe from individuals in order to facilitate and speed up the process of their papers and subsequent release of funds (Amnesty International, 2016).

Noteworthy also is the recruitment exercise, which has become a money

making venture for those in charge. It is reported that people seeking to join the Police force pay as bribe, between ₦30,000 and ₦40,000 before they could get entry into the Nigeria Police force training colleges across the country. This has led to recruitment of unqualified and questionable character as officers (CIA World Factbook, 2006). When it comes to salary increment, promotion, transfer or any due incentives or favour, one has to oil the palm of those concerned or “rub their back” before acquiring any of the above entitlements. There is illegal collection of N50 from motorists and others on high way roads, road blocks across the nation (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2016). It is a complete waste of time arguing with the men in black when it comes to relinquishing ₦ 50 to the road side police officers. It is evidently clear that billions of naira has been pumped into the Nigeria Police in order to boost, equip and fully prepare policemen for any uncertainty and also to improve their welfare. Yet the overall result is poor police image especially the activities of police in resident communities where people continue hold negative image of police.

### **3. Methodology**

The study adopted cross sectional survey and descriptive design. Data were collected at one point in time using quantitative and qualitative method. The study population was composed of residents, male and female who lived in Okada community, a semi urban town in Edo state Nigeria. Okada town is the headquarters of Ovia North-East Local Government secretariat and with population of 65000 residents. The town is host to private university, commercial banks and other business activities. Sample size of the study was 194 and

this size was determined using statistical method of Cochran sample size. Sampling method consisted of purposive, random ballot and accidental sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select study location, Okada town. This was mainly because there is area command of police station sited in okada town and this provides for frequent activities of police in the town and public interaction. On the other hand the selection was informed by public complaints of police brutality and illegal activities perpetrated by some officers (Edo State Government Gazette, 2013). Okada town is composed of five political wards and each ward comprised some communities. Therefore, random ballot sampling was applied to select two wards and the composition of communities thereof. Accidental sampling was used to reach respondents who were selected to fill questionnaire and discussed items listed in the interviews. Method of data collection was quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative method was used to generate quantitative data in the form of statistics. Qualitative method was used to generate qualitative data in the form of textual soft data. Also instrument of data collection was composed of questionnaire and in-depth interviews (IDIs). There were 3 police officials purposively selected for interviews in the study. Method of data analysis was quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative method was based on descriptive statistics analysis in the form of tables, frequency and percentage. Qualitative method was based on content analysis and ethnographic method. This method sorted textual data generated from IDIs according to relevant objectives of the study and direct quotation of responses

in the form of ethnographic summaries was applied. The study took into consideration some ethical values such as seeking consent of respondents, anonymity of respondents, knowledge and security of both respondents and researcher.

**4. Socio-Economic Characteristics**

Findings from table 1 showed that respondents (26.8%) were within the age range 21-25 years. Respondents (10.3%) were below 20 years, 10.3% were 26-30 years, 17.5% were 31-35 years and 9.3% were 36-40 years. Other respondents (8.2%) were 41-45 years, 9.3% were 46-50 years and 8.2% were 51 years and above. The implication of this finding is that most respondents (74.2%) were below 40 years. This suggests that the population of the study was largely young population and active

to social life. When respondents were asked to give information on their marital status, 69.1% said they were single. There were respondents that said they were married (24.7%), divorced (5.2%) and separated (1.0%). The educational qualification of respondents showed that 23.7% had post graduate academic qualification. Others had first degree qualification (16.5%), diploma/college education (9.3%) and post primary school qualification (37.1%). Few respondents (5.2%) had no formal education. The implication is that though literacy level was high in the study area, there were still instances of people who could not read or write. This negates the phenomenon of millennium development goals that attempted to achieve universal basic education (Micah and Amina, 2014).

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
≤ 20 years	20	10.3
20-25	52	26.8
26-30	20	10.3
31-35	34	17.5
36-40	18	9.3
41-45	16	8.2
46-50	18	9.3
51 years and above	16	8.2
Total	194	100.0
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	48	24.7
Single	134	69.1
Divorced	10	5.2
separated	2	1.0
Total	194	100.0
Highest educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	10	5.2
Primary school	72	37.1
WASCE/GCE/NECO	16	8.2
OND/NCE	18	9.3
HND/First degree	32	16.5
Post Graduate	46	23.7
Total	194	100.0
Religious affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
African traditional religion	10	5.2
Islam	70	36.1

Christianity	110	56.7
Others	4	2.1
Total	194	100.0
Monthly income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5,000	88	45.4
5,001-10,000	20	10.3
10001-15000	30	15.5
15,001-20,000	18	9.3
20,001-25,000	12	6.2
25,001-30,000	2	1.0
30,001-35,000	6	3.1
35,001-40000	10	5.2
40.001 and above	8	4.1
Total	194	100.0
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Government ministries employees	18	9.3
Corporate service employees	12	6.2
Self employed	72	37.1
Teachers	14	7.2
Lecturers	6	3.1
House wife	20	10.3
Unemployed	18	9.3
Students	30	15.5
Other occupations	4	2.1
Total	194	100.0
Ethnic origin	Frequency	Percentage
Igbo	46	60.0
Yoruba	36	17.1
Hausa	30	11.4
Bini	76	7.1
Other ethnic group	6	4.3
Total	194	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Further findings have shown that 56.7% in the study area practiced Christianity. Other religious affiliation included Islam (36.1%), traditional beliefs (5.2%) and other varieties (2.1%) of religions. This made the study area a multi religious affiliation. Income distribution among respondents showed that 45.4% earned below N5000 naira monthly. This represented highest percentage of income distribution among respondents. The implication is that there was a general low level (70.2%) of income in the study area. Occupational distribution of respondents showed that there were respondents employed in government ministries (9.3%), corporate private sector (6.2%), self-employed (37.1%)

and teachers (7.2%). Others were lecturers (3.1%), students (15.5%) and other forms of occupations (2.1%). The ethnic origin of respondents showed that 39.2% were *Bini* ethnic origin. This represented highest percentage of respondents. This perhaps is not unconnected with the fact that the study was conducted in the *Bini* dominated area, which is Okada town in Edo state. Other ethnic groups included Yoruba (18.6%), Igbo (23.7%) and Hausa (15.5%). Also there were other ethnic groups (3.1%) like Tivs, Igala, Igbira, Urhobo and Ijaws. The inference that could be drawn from this finding is that the study area was multi-faceted in ethnic grouping. This is good to

promote inter ethnic relations and social peace since Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation-state.

**5. Activities of the Nigeria Police Personnel that Negate Normative Expectation**

The Nigeria Police was established to perform some statutory functions in the prevention of crime in our society. There are times when many aspects of the Police services resemble and promote illegality. The table below investigated some of the activities of Nigeria Police that reinforce sharp practices.

The finding in table 2 showed that when respondents were asked to give their views about their knowledge of Nigeria Police services, 75.3% said they had knowledge of Police activities. Also, there were 46.4% of the respondents that said Police officers in their community abuse fundamental human right of the citizens. Few respondents

(15.5%) said it is not true that Police abuse human rights. Similarly, 55.7% of the respondents said it is true that Police are fond of demanding gratification in the form of kick back, bribes and illegal extortion of money from citizens. There were 7.2% of the respondents that said it is not true that Police demanded gratification from citizens. In this case, a respondent was emotional when he said:

Nigeria Police has a bad history when it comes to collecting gratification from the citizens. They demand illegal money from people without doing what they are actually employed. They have wasted many innocent lives. They arrest indiscriminately and detain suspects without cause. They violate human rights without reason. Nigeria Police has bad reputation in the public domain (IDIs/respondents/okada town/2014).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Activities of the Nigeria Police that Constitute Illegality

Knowledge of the Nigeria Police services	Frequency	Percentage
I know Nigeria Police force and their functions	146	75.3
I don't know Nigeria force and their functions	8	4.1
Indifferent	40	20.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Nigeria Police force abuse fundamental human right	Frequency	Percentage
It is true	90	46.4
It is not true	30	15.5
Indifferent	74	38.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Police is fond of demanding for gratification	Frequency	Percentage
It is true	108	55.7
It is not true	14	7.2
indifferent	72	37.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Police charge money for bails despite that it does not attract any financial charges	Frequency	Percentage
It is true	134	69.1
It is not true	6	30.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Police use to collaborate with criminals to aid and abet them	Frequency	Percentage
It is true	108	55.6
It is not true	86	44.3



Total	194	100.0
Police officers extort money from travelers on high way patrol services	Frequency	Percentage
It is true	138	71.1
It is not true	40	20.6
Indifferent	16	8.2
Total	194	100.0
There is non-challant attitude among Police officers when they are called to respond to distress.	Frequency	Percentage
It is true	102	52.6
It is not true	92	47.4
Total	194	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2014

A female respondent shared a dismay view when she said:

I don't think there is anything good about Nigeria Police. Many innocent lives have been lost to reckless attitude of Police officers. It is a pity that those we call our friends are now our worst enemy (IDIs/respondents/okada town/2014).

The implication of the view above authenticated the quantitative data in this finding when most respondents believed that Police personnel abused human rights and are fond of demanding gratification from the citizens. This practice still persist especially the report of international organisation that affirmed it (Amnesty International, 2016). Further finding showed that 69.1% of the respondents said Police charged money for bail bonds despite its fundamental provision of no monetary billing. However, 30.9% of the respondents negated the view above. Again, 55.6% of the respondents said Police collaborated with criminals to aid and abet crime in our society. This assertion supported the view held by former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo who believed that Police collaborated with criminals to carry out nefarious activities in Nigeria (Centre for Law Enforcement Education, 2003). On the other hand, 44.3% of the

respondents did not think that Police collaborated with criminals. Although it is true that some Police officers are refined and noble in character, the amount of illegal activities in the organisation is enormous as attested by majority of majority of respondents. Finding showed that 71.1% of the respondents believed that Police officers extort money from travelers on the high way patrols. There were respondents that were indifferent (8.2%) to the above view and 20.6% negated the view. Against this background information, a female respondent said:

Many times, media report Police collaboration with criminals. There are instances when armed robbers operate in places close in distance to Police stations. It is after the operations of the robbery incident that you see Police personnel in the scene. They make indiscriminate arrests of law abiding citizens. They extort money from public. The particulars of vehicles may be original and up to date. Yet Police officers sometime cause deliberate delay. They request for drivers license and hold it to themselves in the bid to make situation worse. This is just very unfortunate (IDIs/respondent/Okada town/2014).

On the other hand, a respondent was quoted in his words, when he said:

I think Police is trying. They are doing good work to prevent crime in our society. There is good part of the Nigeria Police, though there are also bad aspects of the force agency. The organization of Police in Nigeria can be improved to restore its respect and honour (IDIs/respondent/Okada town/2014).

It may be pointed from the views above that there are positive aspects of Police activities that people appreciate as good and valuable. At the same time, there are negative aspects of Police activities that people are critical of and which present Police services in bad manner or otherwise corrupt activities of Police services. This has been major concern of the Police Force to eradicate abnormal behaviours of personnel (Nigeria Police, 2016). Similarly, 52.6% of the respondents said there is non-challant

attitude among Police officers in times of distress calls. However, 47.4% of the respondents were opposed to the veracity of the above statement. Notwithstanding, there is widespread belief among respondents in this study that police personnel cannot be absolved from illegal activities that tend to undermine normative expectations of good police officer.

**6. Police Service and Effective Community Policing**

Police service is inevitable in every community. However, some services provided by police were designed to extort unsuspecting public members and this could affect effective service to host community. The table below shows respondents’ perception of police services and how they affect community policing.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents’ Perception of Police Service in Resident Community

Police service is fraught with illegal activities	Frequency N=194	Percentage (100%)
Agreed	146	75.3
disagreed	8	4.1
Indifferent	40	20.6
Description of police service illegal activities	Frequency	Percentage
Illegal collection of money on high way patrols	54	30.0
Extra judicial killings	24	12.4
Collaboration with criminals	60	30.9
Harassment of unsuspecting citizens	26	13.4
Indiscriminate arrest of innocents	24	12.4
Others	6	3.1
Victim of Police service illegal activities	Frequency	Percentage
I have been a victim	148	76.3
I have not been a victim	40	20.6
indifferent	6	3.1
Police is effective in their service delivery	Frequency	Percentage
It is true	70	36.1
It is not true	96	49.5
Indifferent	28	14.4
Perception of effective service delivery in the community	Frequency	Percentage
High	42	21.6
Moderate	84	43.3
Low	68	35.1

Source: Field Survey, 2014

The finding in the table 3 showed that 75.3% of the respondents agreed that there were illegal activities carried out by Police officers in their community. On the other hand, 4.1% of the respondents disagreed and 20.6% of the respondents were indifferent. The forms of police service illegal activities ranged from illegal collection of money on high way patrols (30.0%) to extra judicial killings (12.4%), collaboration with criminals (30.9%), harassment of unsuspecting citizens (13.4%) and to indiscriminate arrest of innocent citizens (3.1%). There were 76.3% of the respondents that said they have been victim of police service corrupt practices. Similarly, 20.6% said they have not been victim of Police illegal activities, while 3.1% of the respondents were indifferent. In an interview conducted with a male respondent, he was unhappy in his views when he said:

It is very unfortunate that Police no longer command respect of the citizens. When you see Police, you see corruption. Nigeria Police now is synonymous to corruption. There is double standard in the Police. Police are not my friend (IDIs/respondents/okada town/2014).

In the similar direction, another respondent stated clear in her views:

I have been victim of Police inordinate ambition and corruption. Police have collaborated with persons who defrauded me of my hard earned money to deny justice to the just and reverse criminal case to favour criminals. They collaborated with criminals in many instances to pervert justice. Nigeria Police need to be reformed to flush out bad images (IDIs/respondents/okada town/2014).

These views by respondents both in quantitative data and qualitative data have confirmed the continuous fear by human right organisations that Nigeria Police brutalise unsuspecting citizens and also engaged in unwholesome activities (Amnesty International, 2016; Federal Bureau of investigation, 2016). Consequent upon the views expressed above, 49.5% of the respondents said that it is not true that Nigeria Police is effective in their service delivery. Few respondents (14.4%) were of the opinion that Nigeria Police is effective in crime prevention, while 36.1% were indifferent. The perceptions of the level of effective service delivery by police were rated high (21.6%), moderate (35.1%) and low (43.3%). The implication of the finding is that police service delivery is fraught with many practices that undermine public trust and lack luster attitude to cooperate in community policing. This means that some police officers are perceived as lacking honour and respected personality which seriously affect public trust and effective policing. However, there is conscious and frantic effort by Police organisation to address some of the problems in the Force which have seriously labeled Police in negative dimension in the public domain. This position above was attested to when a divisional police officer said:

There is police ombudsman that sees to public complaints. It is true that some police officers are not doing well in this profession because of their illegal activities. There is no room for such officers now. Police organisation encourages public complaints against corrupt officers to flush out the bad eggs. The public also have a role to play if police must overcome the problem of illegalities among officers. People should up with facts and good

evidence. Police organisation will protect such public members as whistle blower (IDI/Divisional Police Officer/Okada/2014).

In another view, a Divisional Crime Investigative Officer said:

Police alone cannot be bad and corrupt without latent support from members of the public. Some people in the community do not want follow the right order. They prefer to cut corners. Some Police men are ready to cooperate with such people provided it will benefit them financially. It is a bad scenario. The Police organisation is ready to flush out such unscrupulous element (IDI/Male Police Officer/Okada/2014).

Similarly, a female police maintained in her view when she said:

There is need to improve salaries and allowances for police men and women. Police are human beings like other people out there. The condition of service is poor and not encouraging. This usually allows some officers to compromise (IDI/Female Police Officer/Okada/2014).

Therefore, it suffices to say that the project to improve the image of police and policing in Nigeria is the responsibility of all stakeholders which consist of public members, police officers and government.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study has established that police service in Nigeria is fraught with many practices that undermine the real value of the profession especially in the context of the community that was studied. Critically speaking, members of the community where this study was conducted expected that police profession should be service that people could rally round, respect and

trust to protect community from incessant crime and criminal behaviour. The general expectation was that a police officer should be refined and eschew dishonourable behaviour that people could see as good example. However, many police officers engaged in sharp practices to extort money from unsuspecting public members, illegal road blocks in the pretence of checking crime, harassment of armless public, extra judicial killing and indiscriminate arrest. This unwholesome behaviour negates normative expectation of who a police man should be as it is obtained in other developed nations of the world like Britain which is a prototype origin of Nigeria police. This study therefore makes some recommendations that could possibly correct the ills in the police service.

- i. The study established that notable numbers of police officers engaged in activities that undermined normative expectation of police service. This means that some serving officers take advantage of their profession to enrich themselves at the expense of the real service they are employed to provide. This study recommends that there should be public complaint boxes in specialized locations like post office, local government secretariat office and liaison offices, schools and banks and so on that would give members of the public opportunity to submit complaints about erring officers. It is therefore expected that this should be treated as urgent

- public affair by which culpable officers could be punished to serve as deterrent in the service.
- ii. Some services of police in the study area undermined public trust and this seriously affected effective community policing. The implication is that members of the community decline to cooperate with police in the fight against crime and criminals. Yet the ultimate goal of police is to protect lives and properties of people in the society of abode. Therefore it is required that police service should intensify the effort of community relationship to build trust among members of host community. The real problem is lack of trust in the community. Police can build public trust by

establishing special unit in the service saddled with this specialised duty. The unit should collaborate with specialised institutions, universities, schools and non-governmental organizations and civil societies where it could be possible to build public trust.

### 7. Limitation of the Study

This study only focused on the activities of police that people perceived as illegal in resident community. However, there are individuals who are victims of police brutality which could be adequately engage in qualitative method of study. This may likely provide in-depth understanding of strategies used by police in their nefarious activities. The sample size of this study may be expanded in subsequent studies to allow for more accurate generalization.

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