

**ADAPTATION AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES
OF THE SPECIAL CONSTABULARY POLICE
IN NIGERIA,
2020 - 2025**

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Abstract: In a world where security threats are constantly evolving and societal complexities continue to rise, the demand for innovative and inclusive policing strategies has never been more urgent. Nigeria's security challenges, social disruptions, and other multi-faceted hindrances in Nigeria require solutions

that are both proactive and transformative. 2020 instituted an atmosphere of insecurity due to the establishment of Special Constabulary Police (SCP) and the non-payment of stipends. Consequently, Inspector General of Police (IGP) was sued to court and defeated and the services rendered by the SCP took a new shape. Many SCP laboured and died in the job while hoping for stipends. Primary and secondary sources of information were consulted. The study employed historical methods of description and analysis of data. Findings indicate that the SCP adopted strategies to deal with issues of habitation, health and food security. They also got involved in income-generating activities in the sectors of agriculture, trade, and transportation for survival. The study asserts that despite efforts made by these SCP to adapt and survive in Nigeria, more is required to ensure the protection of their rights and reintegration into NPF. Conclusively, the paper calls for SCP empowerment and all inclusive policing.

Keywords: Special Constabulary Police, Adaptation, Survival Strategies, Impact, inclusive Policing

Introduction

For several years, the Nigeria Police Force has used a crime-fighting method lacking public input for security and order. Police officers are often posted away from their origins to avoid bias; this limits covert intelligence needed to curb crimes and achieve internal security goals. The Special Constabulary Police (SCP) just like the Amotekun as observed by Izokpu (2022, p.103), recruits from ancestral clans where they serve, gaining local information to prevent crime. Aggression and disorder stem from frustration, conflicts and crime due to insufficient government security and welfare services, explaining police efforts' to abate crime (Izokpu 2022, p.105). SCP remuneration is a key policy recommendation for enhancing neighbourhood policing in Nigeria. Nigeria's police ration is below the UN's 1:450 (Kenku and Umar, 2025, p.84). SCP uses proximity policing, problem-solving, and community partnership for trust and safety. Special Constabularies exist in all Nigeria's security agencies; the SCP (Police) is the case study. Neighbourhood

policing reduced crime in Kenya by 23% over five years and improved intelligence in South Africa. In Nigeria, SCP's intelligence gathering failed due to corruption, poor funding and lack of trust from extortion, brutality and inefficiency. Countries like Japan, Rwanda and Philippines show Neighbourhood policing's crime prevention benefits. Non-payment of SCP wages is ill-treatment and a human rights abuse. In 2020, SCP protested online over unpaid stipends. Some SCP recruited from Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN), confront criminals, facing risks like gunshots and stigmatization. With 95 million Nigerians in poverty (Human Right Watch, 2022), this paper examines SCP adaptation and survival strategies in Nigeria, filling a gap on their coping mechanisms.





Figure 1: Police Training School, (PTS) Ogida
(Special Constabulary Police in PTS, Ogida, Edo, Nigeria in 3rd February 2020)

Theoretical and Conceptual Clarification

To realize this study, the Human Needs Theory (Rosati, Carroll and Roger, 1988, p.167) was used. This theory was propounded by Coate and Rosati in 1988. The fundamental premise of this theory posits that human needs constitute an incontrovertible driving force behind human behaviour and social interactions, serving as a pivotal explanatory factor. In the context of this study, the theory elucidates the multifaceted needs of Special Constabulary Police (SCP) IN Nigeria.

SCP Statutory Role /Survival Strategy

There exist similarities in the mandated responsibilities of various security agencies in Nigeria, often leading to overlaps and difficulties in demarcating constitutional duties. This frequently culminates in clashes between personnel from different security outfits on diverse security matters. Capitalizing on flawed security architecture in Nigeria, SCP personnel have deviated from their statutory roles (primarily intelligence information sourcing) to assume professional police functions such as crime investigation, law enforcement, protection, and prosecution of crime suspects. Additionally, SCP survival strategies encompass transcending their prescribed roles to perform tasks aligned with the statutory responsibilities of the

Nigeria Police Force (NPF), engaging in cooperative collaborative operations with other security agencies to contribute to national security objectives.

Origin of SCP-Civilian Faceoff

The genesis of the SCP-civilian faceoff crisis is partly rooted in alienation experienced by SCP personnel, contributing to strained relationships with the public. SCP men often grapple with feelings of lacking control over their work processes, perceiving their roles as devoid of meaning, experiencing disconnection from the work community, and viewing work as peripheral to their identities and life. As Akali (2014, p.126) aptly noted, this state of discontentment is prevalent among lower-ranking personnel. Manifestations of this disaffection and unhappiness are evident in interactions between police (including SCP) and the public. The training and organizational focus of SCP personnel in Nigeria have historically emphasized apprehension and prosecution of suspects, with scant attention devoted to peacekeeping and service-oriented activities (Obaro, 2014, p.421-430). SCP personnel harbor perceptions of being misrepresented and mistreated by specialist and general duty officers, other policing entities, and the public. Conversely, the public harbors distrust towards SCP personnel, viewing them as potentially complicit in crime with the NPF, and perceiving them as ineffective, corrupt, insensitive, and callous. Notably, the training imparted to SCP personnel omitted critical aspects of garnering public approval and respect, thereby complicating policing effort in the country. To Reiner et al (2016, p.124b), they were trained in line with role envisaged for them.

Given that policing disproportionately affects marginalised communities, there's a pressing need to consider the shift toward paramilitary policing tactics and expansive surveillance measures and erode civil liberties protection (Reiner et.al 2016, p.153). This was not reversed in Nigeria during the period of our study. Many SCP were selected from Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN). A (2022) Human Right Watch report states that "Human Rights Watch research in 2021 found Nigeria lacks a functional social protection system to protect citizens from economic shocks. It also found that ad-hoc initiatives (Neighbourhood policing and CCTV program for instance) failed to protect people's rights to an adequate standard of living...."

Challenges Faced by SCP in Managing Hostile or Aggressive Detainee

A hostile and aggressive detainee is one who displays the following characteristics

- a. Displaying aggressive or assaultive behaviour;
- b. Having a history of violence toward officers or other detainee;
- c. Making false allegations against officers or other detainee;
- d. Being verbally defiant and abusive;
- e. And resisting efforts to control them.

When confronted by an immediate threat to their safety or the safety of others by a detainee, SCP officers in Nigeria are advised to take reasonable action to defend themselves and others, aiming to control the detainee effectively. Guidelines for responding to such immediate threats are outlined in Police Reviewed Force Order 237 (2019, p.50). When faced with an immediate threat from a detainee, the first thing is to request backup: SCP officers will often call for additional support before approaching a hostile detainee. Second thing is to assess the situation: officers will evaluate the threat level before entering a cell or confined space (Interviewed Egwali 05/05/2025).

Managing Hostile Detainees

According to the Nigeria Police Force Order (2019), the officer should:

1. Develop a tactical plan: to minimize physical confrontation.
2. Use force judiciously: CGS or TASER may be used if the detainee resists. When there is need for application of force, the officer in-charge of most police formation would order the most junior rank to use force in carrying out that particular task or function. Most times, when the result of that use of force becomes unpleasant (in the case of injury, death or serious harm) the officer in-charge would deny giving out such order or directive.
3. Take immediate action: if there is a risk of physical harm or need for intervention. In most police formation in Nigeria where SCP is found, being the most junior of all ranks, the SCP is the forefront in all police operations. Be that as it may, the question to ask is, what should be the defense of the SCP? Oloye (interviewed 14/5/2025) posits that "it is safer to write that order or directive giving by the commanding officer in-charge , SPO, Principal

(Patrol and Guard commander, Divisional Crime Office) and presented to the order giver to sign on it before carrying same out as directed. It is also safe to voice record or film the officer giving out that unlawful order and directive before carrying out such orders. Lastly, it is safer to have one or two of friends or colleague stand as witnesses to you in the event of such order and directive, less the order giver denied giving out such orders.

Some Special Considerations:

1. Mental health: if a detainee appears mentally ill, the SCP is primed to prioritize medical attention.
2. Managing combative detainee: not less than two SCP personnel handled uncooperative detainees with a history of false allegations, and interactions are videotaped to protect against future litigations.

Nature of SCP Service and Remuneration

Voluntary Service: section 49 and 50 of the Police Act indicates SCP roles are part-time (typically -16 hours/week), voluntary, and supplemented by other primary occupations.

Misconception: contrary to views that SCP provides employment for youth, the framework emphasizes voluntary contribution.

Adapting to Societal Changes

In light of the evolving dynamics of our society, it may be necessary for government at all levels to reassess their approach to compensating SCP personnel. The increasing monetization of service has led individuals expect some form of remuneration for their contributions. The community benefits more from all policing arrangements than the police itself. As state governments develop operational guidelines tailored to their unique contexts, they may need to consider providing stipend to SCP to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Preserving the Principles of Service

While exploring options for remuneration, it is essential to preserve the core principles of the SCP framework. The voluntary nature of service and the community-driven approach must remain intact, even as governments adapt to the

changing needs and expectations of society. By striking a balance between these competing demands, governments can foster a more effective and sustainable policing model. Policing by the SCP according to Chidi K.O (Interviewed 2nd Sep. 2025) is based on the assumption that policing is a collective social and corporate responsibility of all and sundry though spearheaded by the police but it also serve as a check on the excess of the police and other law enforcement agencies. Political context and forms of police brutality adopted the strategy of colonialism where states forceful subjugation of the colonized was the order of the day - and the process of enforcing these laws was by violence and abuse of human rights (Allen 2014 p. 143). This was in the past where enforcement of labour laws and tax policies were brutally done, which was why the police was much feared by members of the public before the period under review. In the period 2020-2025, there is no forceful subjugation of Nigeria citizens; the process of law enforcement today is non-violent, subtle moves, arrest, detention and prosecution in the court.

Firearm Regulations / Restriction for Special Constabulary Police

Nigeria's legislative framework delineates a distinct categorization of firearms, clearly demarcating those that are prohibited from those that are permissible. As auxiliary officers operating within their designated communities, SCP personnel are vested with specific police powers. However, it is crucial to recognize that their authority is circumscribed and does not equate to the comprehensive powers entrusted to fully -fledged police officers.

The operational ethos of SCP personnel is deeply rooted in a community-centric approach, underscoring the imperative of fostering cooperation and nurturing trust with the communities they serve. Their strategy emphasizes collaborative engagement and eschews assertive or oppressive tactics, which could potentially undermine the fragile fabric of community relations. Given the nuanced nature of their role, SCP personnel are expressly not authorized to carry firearms classified as prohibited.

In scenarios necessitating the deployment of prohibited firearms, SCP personnel are expected to forge synergistic partnerships with conventional police units. Should circumstances arise where the utilization of such firearm becomes requisite for enforcement purposes, SCP personnel are mandated to forthwith notify

the commander of the conventional police unit. This ensures an appropriate response aligned with the stipulations of the Police Act and other pertinent legislative enactments.

Upholding Legal Compliance and Community Trust

Adherence to Nigeria's laws constitutes a paramount obligation for SCP personnel, particularly in refraining from the use of prohibited firearms throughout the discharge of their duties. By conscientiously observing these legal boundaries, SCP personnel can cultivate and sustain a positive, trust-based relationship with the community. This is predicated on mutual understanding, cooperation and an abiding commitment to friendly and approachable law enforcement practices.

The community-driven approach adopted by SCP personnel consciously diverges from paradigms often associated with other security agencies-paradigm that may evoke perceptions of occupation or authoritarianism. Instead, the SCP model champions a law enforcement posture that is welcoming, accessible and attuned to community needs, thereby fortifying bonds of trust and cooperation vital for effective policing in Nigeria's diverse societal landscape.

Core Functions of SCP Personnel

The SCP role represents a shift away from colonial-era policing models, which often emphasized occupation and control. Instead, the SCP should be seen as a community-owned and community-driven initiative, working in tandem with residents to address local security concerns. By leveraging the SCP community policing approach, regular police units can focus on addressing more serious crimes, ultimately enhancing public safety and security.

The constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria (1960) established the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) as a federal force to fight crime, provide security and maintain law and order. SCP is a product of NPF's effort to strengthen security. In his speech on 31st December, 2018, on *strengthening partnerships*, UN's Secretary General, Antonio Guterres said "these efforts would not have been possible without close cooperation between experts nominated by Member States and the Police Division through the establishment of working groups, a practice I will endeavor to retain" (UN Policing Report, 2018, p.16). The duties of SCP personnel are diverse

and critical to maintaining public safety and order. Their key responsibilities include:

1. Protective crime detection and prevention: they identify and mitigate potential crime hotspots to reduce criminal activity likelihood.
2. Conflict de-escalation: SCP personnel engage in resolving disputes.
3. Intelligence sharing: vital information is collected and shared with local police commanders for informed decision-making.
4. Maintaining law and order: they uphold the law, ensuring public order and addressing breaches of peace.
5. Visible public patrols: regular patrols of public spaces provide security presence and deter crime
6. Public safety guidance through advice and education.
7. Addressing minor offences.
8. Community partnership: strong relationships with schools, businesses, religious groups foster collective crime prevention efforts.
9. Supporting key duties: they contribute to traffic management and school-related tasks, enhancing safety.

Adaptation Strategies / Government Neglect of SCP

The SCP constitutes a collaborative network aimed at augmenting security provisions and nurturing synergistic relationships between law enforcement entities and the community they serve. Despite its objectives, the SCP operates against a backdrop of a tenuous institutional framework, characterized by a notable dearth of legal underpinning.

Resource deficiencies critically impede SCP, manifesting in curtailed mobility, constrained communication capabilities, and an attendant diminution of overall operational efficacy. The amelioration of these shortcomings necessitates considerable financial outlays directed towards training initiatives, equipment acquisition, logistical support, and structured community engagement programs. Paradoxically, governmental entities exhibit a marked dependence on the SCP for the discharge of security and law enforcement responsibilities.

As posited by Okeleke and Eduvwie (2025, p.16), in instances of governmental confrontation with crisis- encompassing social disorders such as protests, riots, strikes, and mob justice-police forces including SCP components, are frequently deployed to function as intermediaries between societal elites and the broader populace. They undertake critical stabilization roles, often serving as a provisional bulwark pending potential military intervention characterized by punitive measures intended to restore order.

In certain Nigerian locales, the operational efficacy of the special constabulary has been undermined through co-optation by ethnic or political interests, precipitating partiality and discriminating practices in the enforcement of security. Concomitantly, elements within traditional police structures sometimes perceive the SCP as encroaching upon their authority and threatening job security, engendering inter-organizational tensions. Such dynamics foster conflict, impedes collaborative endeavors, and detracts from aggregate effectiveness.

Nonetheless, the vigor and adaptability demonstrated by the patriotic volunteers integral to the SCP across diverse Nigerian communities merit acknowledgement. Households associated with the SCP have evinced heterogeneous coping mechanism in response to substantial challenges and exogenous stressors, deploying strategies pertinent to securing habitation, ensuring food security, and addressing health exigencies.



Figure 2: SCP Na'AllahSuraju in Makurd

Source: Field work photo by researcher, 24 August, 2025.

Housing Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of SCP Personnel in Nigeria

The SCP in Nigeria faced significant housing challenges, necessitating various coping strategies to address their accommodation needs. The approaches to habitation varied across different locations. Observed habitation strategies are:

Many SCP personnel resorted to sleeping on mattresses placed directly on the floor due to financial constraints preventing them from acquiring standard mattresses and cabinets. Double beds were a luxury afforded by only a few. A significant number lived in the outskirts of major towns, unable to afford accommodation in central areas. Some SCP members secured free living spaces through appeals to police patrons, Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) members, or wealthy individuals within their communities. A limited number managed to rent houses or apartments, either near or far from their work places. Many stayed with family of friends at no cost.

Others lived in houses owned by community members (including those living abroad), offering assistance with maintenance in exchange for free accommodation. Very few SCP personnel owned homes. Notably, none of these volunteers received

housing support from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), government empowerment programs, or housing scheme.

Food Security Challenges and Coping Mechanism of SCP Personnel in Nigeria

Food security emerged as profound challenge for SCP personnel in Nigeria, critically impacting their livelihoods. In response, SCP members adopted various adaptation strategies to navigate their circumstances. Research involving interviews with 20 SCP personnel, predominantly those with familial responsibilities, revealed nine key consumption (food security) coping mechanisms employed to mitigate food shortages:

1. Purchasing less expensive foods: respondents in communities like Gboko, Kaduna and Abakality adopted this strategy to manage limited resources.
2. Reducing food quantity per meal: SCP members in locations such as Aba, Ajara-vetho, decreased portion sizes to stretch available food supplies.
3. Reducing meal frequency: universally, all interviewed SCP personnel cut back on the number of meals consumed daily.
4. Seeking assistance from relatives or friends: Ibeku SCP members in Umuahia, Abia state, rely on support networks for sustenance.
5. Sending household members to eat elsewhere: a minority of respondents from Ajara-Veth, Lagos state resorted to this approach.
6. Consuming reserved food stocks: in places like Obiaruku and Kaduna, some SCP personnel utilized food meant for future seasons (example, seed yam).
7. Prioritizing children's consumption: adults often restricted their intake to ensure children had food, leading to adults experiencing hunger.
8. Begging for sustenance: only a small number of respondents directed household members to beg for food to support the family.
9. Extended fasting: a very limited number reported going without eating for entire day.

Notable gaps in support: NGO Humanitarian Aid, no of the interviewed SCP members received food related assistance from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS).

Government food support: SCP personnel did not benefit from governmental food aid programs.

Health Challenges and Coping Mechanism of SCP Personnel

Health was a critical aspect of the living conditions faced by SCP personnel in Nigeria. Alongside habitation and food challenges, these individuals encountered significant health issues, prompting various coping strategies. Identified health strategies are:

Identified health strategies: four key health coping mechanisms were observed among SCP members. 1. Herbal remedies: Many prepared and consumed herbal concoctions to address health concerns, reflecting a preference for traditional approaches. 2. Local Pharmacies: SCP personnel often opted to purchase medications from local pharmacies when ill, rather than seeking hospital care. Laboratory tests, typically associated with hospital visits, were avoided due to cost considerations. 3. Selective Preventive Practices: A minority boiled water before consumption, a practice highlighted by an SCP member, Chidi Kingsley (Interviewed 2nd Sept 2025) as a preventive measure against diseases like typhoid and malaria.

Notable Health Gaps: HIV screening, none of the SCP personnel underwent HIV screening. Mosquito net use, operatives generally did not utilise mosquito nets with virtually all respondent lacking them. Humanitarian aid, SCP members did not receive health related assistance from non-governmental organisations.

Survival Strategies

Many SCP in Nigeria were involved in income-generating activities such as trading, transportation, engagement in public services and agricultural practices as a means to survive in the region. As dynamic as they were, their skills and ingenuity were manifested in these domains as a means of raising income to take care of their needs.

Statistically, over 200 SCP were involved in trading activities in the country. Others learnt trading while in the country as a means to survive. Some had good

knowledge of the management of commercial operations, which made them succeed. They operated all forms of business transactions just to earn a living in the land. Some owned small shops and business spots along major roads in the Onicha markets, Abraka, Mowo-Ibafu, Obalende, Ibeku, Gboko, Ajara-Vetho and Ariaria market. Their survival was therefore tied to their ability to outsmart others in business. NkechiAnazodo, a business woman in Abraka market, revealed that every day she went to the market with market gardening crops to sell. She had engaged in the business since 2012, and because of that, she was able to feed her family. Another informant in Onicha market revealed that she cooked beans, abacha and okazi every morning and evening to satisfy her customers, which enabled her to own a restaurant at the Onicha main market. Thanks to their involvement in these business activities, they were able to cope and survive in the region.

Also, over 100 SCP in Nigeria got engaged in the public services, with a majority working in the private sector. Within the private sector, a majority of these workers were security guards of nursery, primary and secondary schools. Many negotiated payment on a monthly basis, while others were paid according to the number of days they worked in the month. In some places, a day security work was fixed at 1000 Naira per day. Some of the security guards also worked in the evening while engaging in different activities during the day. Thus, security work was one of the mechanisms employed by SCP to survive. This was because the income they received from security work helped them to run their families and equally perform several tasks in the country. Some informants revealed that some newly constructed schools they secured or guarded came as a result of the new law in the country that permitted the establishment of private schools in the country.

It was also revealed statistically that over 300 SCP, especially men, became commercial bike riders and vehicle drivers of all categories, most especially in the towns of Kaduna, Kano, Makurdi, Onicha, Badagry, Iyano-Ipaja, Abraka and Aba. This particular sector was lucrative, as it did help in the provision of basic necessities for survival. One of the informants, Enudeme Sylvester, posits:

I left Obiaruku because of the insecurity that destabilized the entire area. I was a commercial motorcycle rider, and I came to Kwale in 2012. Since then, I have been working with my motorcycle transporting agricultural

products from the farm to the market. This made me earn not less than seven to fifteen thousand daily. With this, I was able to feed myself and my family. I equally made sure that I saved 25% of any amount I worked for per day for the future. I live with my family in Abraka without any difficulty, and I now have a plot of land in Kwale where I intend to construct my house in the future.

In the same domain, Na'AlahSuraju, a tricycle driver in Makurdi, explained that as a tricycle driver, he was able to take care of his family. According to him, the members of the host communities, even though they were competitors in the sector, were collaborative. He narrated how he left Kaduna when his taxi was almost burnt down by criminals in Kaduna. He earns almost eight thousand Naira a day, which gives him the opportunity to send his children to school and survive in the country. The picture below shows Enudeme Sylvester, an SCP commercial motorcycle rider, and his colleague SCP Chinedu Andrew in front of Kwale motorcycle Park waiting for passengers.



Figure 3: Enudeme Sylvester (right) Chinedu Andrew (left) at Kwalepark.

Source: Field Work Photo by researcher, 30thJune, 2025.

The above picture reveals the determination of neglected and unpaid SCP operatives in the transportation sector to survive in Nigeria. Enudeme and his counterparts expressed their willingness and determination to serve the public and raise money to cover their daily expenditures.

In conducting focus group discussions with SCP men riding motorcycles in Abraka, Badagry, Kwale and Aba, a majority revealed how initially it was difficult for them to reside in the region, but with the passage of time, they became used to the environment and quickly adapted to the societal operations of the region. To make sure they remained strong in the community, many grouped themselves and formed associations which brought them together. Members of these associations meet on Sundays to commune with each other. During meeting sessions, they slaughtered fowls and ate with corn. Palm wine was also consumed in recognition of their rich cultural heritage. This instituted a sense of solidarity and brotherliness among SCP in the country. During these weekly meetings, members were mandated to save 5000 Naira, after which it was channelled to a beneficiary as contribution. This money did help the recipient to take care of his belongings as well as those of his family members.

The study also unveils that agriculture was the most popular and lucrative economic activity ventured by SCP as a means of survival in the region. Over 600 SCP were involved in this activity. Many were gifted and dedicated farmers and exhibited their skills in farming in most of the communities in the country, especially in Ugheli, Otukpo, Gboko, Kwale and Umuebu. They cultivated maize, cassava, Irish potatoes, and beans, among others. Their dynamism in agriculture diversified their potentials as they engaged in the rearing of animals, especially fowl and goats. They rented lands from members of the host communities in the region and cultivated on a large scale, especially women who were engaged seriously in the cultivation of vegetables. They sold their produce in the main markets of Issele-uku, Gboko and Kwale as well as to retailers and also exported some to towns like Badagry and Umuahia.



Figure 4: Cassava and Maize farm by Two SCP in Kwale

Source: Field Work Photo by author, 24th July, 2025.

The above Cassava and Maize farm was very symbolic in sustaining the life of SCP Chinedu Andrew and SCP Enudeme Sylvester and their family members. Thanks to skills and strength and determination brought with by the ingenuity of their personality in their cassava and maize farm. They were able to provide the basic needs of their family and send their children and other family members to school.

Impact of SCP Neglect/Survival Strategies on Internal Security of Nigeria

The inadequacies within the production of credible intelligence by SCP and lack of synergy and poor handling of intelligence products worsened insecurity in Nigeria during the period under review. Secondly, operatives struggling to survive had divided attention. Thirdly, Seeing SCP men on uniform working on their farms or as commercial motorcycle (popularly known as okada) portrays Nigeria on red-light in international arena. Lastly, the fact that some Special constabularies put on uniforms meant for regular officers makes civilians unable to differentiate between special constabularies and regular officers, crimes committed by the constabulary's

tarnishes the image of the entire security agency. According to Ikuteyijo and Rotimi (2012, p.123), in the face of police inability to stem

Surging crime waves, the people of Nigeria are turning from formal law enforcement agencies to informal ethnic militia groups for protection. But the relationship between the police and these ethnic militia groups is often anything but cordial and this is often to the detriment of the people to whom the police owe a duty of protection. Government neglect of SCP especially in the area of non-payment of stipends led to what Human Right Watch tag “undermining the criminal investigation: justice for sale”. To Human Right Watch, “interviews with victims of crime, police officers, lawyers and judges indicate how the course and outcome of criminal investigations depend almost entirely on payment by either the complainant or the accused”. The aberration, justice for sale to the highest bidder comes to stay.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study reveals that SCP personnel in Nigeria adopted multifaceted survival strategies, engaging in sectors like agriculture, trading, transportation and public service to address pressing challenges. Coping mechanisms and outcome: this income generating activities enabled SCP members to manage difficulties related to the following:

1. Habitation: addressing accommodation needs amidst financial constraints.
2. Food security: mitigating food access challenges.
3. Health: coping with health care demands.

Notably, the research highlighted that non-governmental organizations did not contribute support in the study context.

Recommendations for enhancement:

1. National coordination support program: the government should establish this initiative to empower SCP members, ensuring regular stipend payment. Collaboration involving federal, state, Local government, and bodies like NDDC could bolster constabulary capabilities and fund neighborhood policing effectively, drawing lessons from what NDDC is doing in Delta State University (Eduvwie et al (2024, p.71). Action point: document devastation

- caused by unpaid stipends; reinstate, identify, and compensate SCP personnel returning to police formations for seamless Nigeria Police Force (NPF) integration.
2. International partnership: foster alliances with global security agencies and civil society organizations for specialised training and knowledge exchange.
 3. Anticorruption measures: strengthen policies within SCP to boost public trust; align recruitment/ training within international best practices; establish robust monitoring/ evaluation mechanisms, accessing SCP internal security impact.
 4. Institutionalization and data driven approaches: formalize SCP roles/ responsibilities; adopt data-driven law enforcement strategies.
 5. Neighborhood Safety Forums (NSF): implement NSF models akin to South Africa's approach, engaging civilians in policing discussions and crime prevention; expand SCP recruitment (Alemika, 2001) noted a 25% crime decline in active NSF areas).
 6. Enhanced cooperation and intelligence: integrate SCP into government payroll (per intelligence services Act 2001), potentially cutting policing cost by 40% shifting from reactive to proactive security models.

Perspective on SCP's role: SCP presents a localized, cost effective, and sustainable strategy for augmenting public safety in Nigeria, underscoring potential for optimized community focused security outcomes.

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