

Innovations

Factors that Affect the Implementation of Community Policing Program in Preventing Youth Delinquency in Some Selected Towns of South Gondar Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract : *Among all crimes committed, youth delinquency is a major issue throughout the world. It covers a multitude of different violations of legal and social norms, ranging from misdemeanors to felonies perpetrated by young people. To be up against crimes, devising community policing is found to be the best approach. In 2005, Ethiopia officially announced community policing as a policy at the national level. From whole to part, Amhara National Regional State has developed a regional community policing strategy by the Amhara National Regional Police Commission in the same year. In the process of implementing this crime prevention strategy, there are prodigious factors that deter its effectiveness. This study, therefore, is design to investigate factors that affect the implementation of community policing program in preventing youth delinquency in some selected towns of South Gondar Zone, Ethiopia. In doing so, mixed research approach and cross-sectional research design was used. The data were collected through in depth interview and questionnaire. Hence, low community and police force awareness about community policing (66%); absence of integrated police-community partnership (45%); insufficient human and material source(58.33); low engagement of the community with the police(53.33%);absence of integrated police-community partnership (45%), lackof anenablinglegislativeandadministrativeenvironment (34.16%); absence of organizational structures for community policing implementation (47.5%); and low community perception were found to be factors that affect community policing. As researches on factors that affect community policing strategy in Ethiopia are limited, there is paucity of information on community policing. Thus, this study may contribute to policy, evidence based community practices and future research.*

Key words: *Factors, Community, Police, Community Policing, youth delinquency*

Part I: Introduction

Background and Justification of the Study

There is an increased violence at a worldwide level. Crime, violence and victimization in the world have led to the occurrence of violent situations (UNODC, 2010). Among all crimes committed, youth delinquency is a major issue throughout the world. As the WAY (2015) report indicates, two-thirds and three-quarters of all offences are committed by youths. Youth delinquency covers a multitude of different violations of legal and social norms, ranging from minor offences to serious crimes committed by young people. Community policing (CP) has been used as one best approach to deal with the problem. CP is an approach in which police-community partnerships and problem-solving techniques have been used to identify the underlying problems that could be targeted to alleviate youth violence (WHO, 2015; UNODC, 2010; Okeshola&Mudiare, 2013).

In Ethiopia, community policing was announced officially as a policy at the national level in 2005 (Denney &Demelash, 2013). Following this, Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) has developed a regional community policing strategy 2005. Since the commencement of the implementation of community policing, it has been practically resulted in changes public perceptions (Denney &Demelash, 2013). However, the Office of Crime Statistics of Amhara region indicates there was a slight increase in the official crime rate from 2009 to 2010. Specially, youth delinquency is common in cities and towns of Ethiopia and taking place at fast rate (Bimal, 2013).

As it is mentioned above, despite CP is devised as the finest approach to prevent, youth delinquency has been increasing. This is an intellectual driving force of the study. This study, therefore, is designed in order to uncover the factors that deter the implementation of CP south Gondar administration zone.

Statement of the Problem

Police officers are necessary because there are criminals in every state and province. Police officers alone, however, are not guarantees of good life. Police without integrating with community does not make healthy society. Hence, community policing is established for prevention of crimes and to bring about community wellbeing. Ethiopia as state developed community-policing program to prevent crimes and to maintain social security.

Despite the program, there are an increasing concentration of crimes in communities that are detrimental to socio-economic progress as well as moral, physical and psychological wellbeing. Of the crimes committed, youth delinquency is becoming more serious, complicated and universal. In this regard, Amhara National State Police Commission (2021-2023) reported the number of youth

offenders is increased in three consecutive years. This showed that the magnitude of youth delinquency is more pervasive and the magnitude. Unemployment, poor background, broken family or poor parenting and influence of peer pressure are the possible reasons for it to occur widely in cities and towns of Ethiopia (Bimal, 2013). Although, youth delinquency is pressing problem, community-policing strategies are either to unequipped to deal with existing realities or do not available (WAY Report, 2010). Youth (Ethiopian context) refers an age group of 15-29 years. For the context of this study, we use people between 9 and 30 age group because ANRS Police Commission divided offenders into 9-15, 16-18, and 19-30 age groups in which the degree of committing crimes is getting high as we move from the first age group to the second and then to the third.

Pertaining to juvenile delinquency and community policing, different researchers have done various studies. Bimal(2013) studied on magnitude and impact of juvenile delinquency at Gondar town. By focusing on factors, common crimes, background and socio-economic status of juvenile delinquency, the study showed youths from poor parenting and less educated are more prone to delinquency. Nega and Berhanu(2015) have done on Criminality and Victimization in Oromia. This study yielded that the number of offenders increased from ages nine up to 30 and decreased after ages of 31. Volume of offenders in the second age group (16-18) was 12,600 (10,800 males and 1,800 females) or 13.1%, which is a significant share among other age categories.

Taye (2011) has also done qualitative study on factors that affect the implementation of CP in Awassa. This study has pointed out that lack of community contribution rather some community members participated in action of crime and lack of good attitude towards police are factors from the side of community. On the other hand lack of conceptual understanding of CP and lack of personnel, logistics, guiding rules and lack of research and development are factors emanated from police. Moreover, Yeshiwas (2012) conducted a qualitative study on emerging police practice in Ethiopia, taking the case of Bahir Dar. This study revealed that adopting new instruction, changing traditional police practice and motivating police officers were are difficulties to policing community in crime prevention. Frehiwot (2015) also conducted a qualitative study on challenges and prospects of implementation of CP in Bole sub city. With this study, she has identified prospects such as crime prevention and better community involvement and challenges such as lack of awareness, lack of training, absence of incentives and employees low attitude.

The above studies enable us to come to the point, though a number of steps have been taken to address the issues of community policing in Ethiopia, no particular step toward community policing as program to deter youth delinquency has been taken. There is no research done in the context of South Gondar zone on the area of factors affecting the implementation of CP in preventing youth delinquency using

mixed research approach. Since every crime has its own nature, specific and situational crime prevention approach that reduce opportunities for people to commit crimes through environmental design and providing assistance and information to potential and actual victims is advisable(UN, 2010). Factors affecting the implementation of CP in specifically preventing youth delinquency have been little studied in this country, particularly in South Gondar zone. Locally- based and situational crime prevention strategies and affecting factors of towns is not also explored. This being the case, it is the necessity of this research to address the current loophole in searching factors that deter the implementation of CP to prevent youth delinquency in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

This research was done to meet the following objectives

1. To identify the factors that affect CP strategies in preventing youth delinquency.
2. To examine police- community integration in the implementation of CP towards preventing youth delinquency.
3. To investigate the extent to which police officers social capital influences the implementation of CP process in preventing youth delinquency.
4. To explore the perception of residents on the contribution of CP strategy in preventing youth delinquency.

Part II. Research Methods

Research Approach

Research Approach

The study has employed mixed of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This is because mixed research approach minimizes the limitations of using single method. Quantitative or qualitative research method alone is not sufficient to address the complex social phenomena when they are treated independently. In other words, qualitative methods suffer from the limitations of generalizing the results beyond the specific research subjects and go through subjectivity during data collection and analysis. The quantitative method on the other hand, always fails to capture an in-depth understanding the issue under study.

Employing quantitative data and qualitative data together are very powerful. The survey identifies the extent of the problem, and the interviews can be used to give

some of the detail. Thus, the researchers used mixed approach to build a broader picture by adding depth insights to numbers through inclusion of, dialogues, words and narratives; to add precision to words through inclusion of numbers and statistics which help make results more generalizable and to triangulate data from different sources through different methods.

Research design

For the study embodies more than one case that can be studied at particular time and for it includes people at different cities, researcher found cross-sectional research design apposite to the study. According to Mathews and Ross (2010: 122), cross-sectional design is suitable for a study with questionnaire surveys, with participants selected using random sampling processes. Moreover, this design can be used for a study in which the data may be collected in many other ways (through observation, or from documents or interviews) that may be both quantitative and qualitative (using purposive sampling). Both approaches can be used alongside each other, which are called concurrent embedded strategy. Using this strategy provides a study with the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative data; researcher is be able to collect the two types of data simultaneously during a single data collection phase and can gain perspectives from the different types of data. The mixing of the data from the two methods is often to integrate the information and compare one data source with the other (Creswell, 2009). In this case, the role of the quantitative data is to understand how far the factors that affect CP in the prevention of youth delinquency. Quantitative data can also identify the independent variables such as organizational factors, community based factors, police-community integration level and strategy factors and to explain how they affect the dependent variable.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study area (South Gondar zone) is selected purposively because the researcher resides in the area. The study area is selected for the reason that giving priority to local problems and delivering a research-based community service for the surrounding community is very essential as well as mandatory.

From elven Woredas of the zone, four woreda towns (Debre Tabor, Woreta, Addis Zemen and Hamusit) were selected. The sites are selected based on cluster sampling technique. According Mathews and Ross (2010), cluster sampling is a sample consisting of cases selected because of their proximity to one another. Hence, the researchers employed this sampling technique for the reason that it reduces time and resource needed to access the selected cases.

Concerning the target group, the participants were *Kebele* leaders, police staff members and CP police officers, justice office leaders, elders and youths. Accordingly the selection of those participants was done using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The number of participants for the interview was determined by data saturation principle.

The total population of the study is 125, 290, from this, 399 residents were selected by simple random sampling technique. In addition to this, 120 police officers were selected by simple random sampling technique in order to investigate the extent to which police officers social capital influences the implementation of CP process in preventing youth delinquency. Generally a total of 519 participants were selected for the survey.

In order to determine the sample size for survey questionnaires, the researchers will employ the following formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; n= is Sample size

N= the total population of each stratum

e= the level of precision

Methods of Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. Survey questionnaire and in-depth interview were instruments used to collect the primary data as shown in the following topics.

Questionnaire-the primary data from household survey was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires will be composed of both closed and open-ended types of questions and covered the factors affecting the implementation of community policing program to prevent youth delinquency. The reasons why a questionnaire will be developed here in this study are closed and open-ended questionnaire is amenable data gathering instrument in quantitative approach.

To collect data certain procedures was taken in to account. First clear and precise questionnaire in line with research objectives will be prepared. After this, pilot test was undertaken. Finally, it was duplicated and distributed to respondents to obtain data about the factors affecting the implementation of CP in preventing youth delinquency.

Secondary sources-To supplement the primary data, secondary sources of information was collected through extensive review of published and unpublished

documents. Different related journals, guidelines, workshop manuals, conference paper and proceedings were used.

Methods of Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques will be used in this study.

The quantitative data analysis is a process of tabulating, interpreting and summarizing empirical and numerical data for the purpose of describing or generalizing the population from the samples. Upon completion of the data collection, the data was be coded, edited, digitized and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) and analyzed using descriptive statistics, and presented using frequencies, percentages and tables.

Qualitative data analysisconcerning the qualitative data,summarizing what was heard during the discussions in to words, phrases or patterns would be the major tasks that could be accomplished in qualitative data analysis. Hence, the information collected through in-depth interview and focus-group discussions in relation to the issue are documented and analyzed textually to substantiate the statistical results from the structured questionnaire. In general, the collected data was analyzed through narrations, descriptions and direct quotation.

Ethical Considerations

Through data gathering process, the investigators of this research has consider the interest or voluntariness of the research participants. The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents were respected. And the independence of the research was clarified and conflict of interests or partiality has been made explicit.

Part III. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Factors Affecting the Implementation of Community Participation in the Study Areas:

The realization of community policing is dependent upon different factors. In our study areas, there are a number of factors that inhibit or influence the implementation of community policing. Accordingly, the findings that have been identified as factors that challenge the implementation of community policing in the study areas are presented and interpreted in this part.

Table: Factors that affect the implementation of Community Policing (Responses from Police officers)

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Low awareness about CP from the community	48	40	56	46.66	12	10	4	3.34	-	-	12	100
2. Low awareness about CP from the police force	8	6.66	4	3.33	81	67.5	2	22.5	-	-	12	100
3. Absence of integrated police-community partnership	54	45	10	8.33	36	30	2	16.66	-	-	12	100
4. Lack of resources (such as funds, material resources and trained professionals)	70	58.33	42	35	8	6.66	---	---	-	-	12	100
5. Low engagement of the police with the community	8	6.66	13	10.83	9	7.5	5	4.16	-	-	12	100
6. Low engagement of the community with the police	64	53.33	31	25.83	1	0.83	6	5	1	0.83	12	100
7. Lack of an enabling legislative and administrative	41	34.16	34	28.33	2	1.66	20	16.66	-	-	12	100

Administrative environment		6				83						
8. Absence of organizational structures for CP implementation	57	47.5	45	37	11	91	6	5	1	0	120	100

The above table shows that the factors that obstruct effective implementation of community policing in the selected study areas. From the total of 120(100%) the percentage of police officers strongly agree that lack of resources (such as funds, material resources and trained professionals) (58.33%) and low engagement of the community with the police(53.33%) is as the main factors that obstruct the implementation of community policing. In the same vein, 35% and 25.83% of the respondents agree that lack of resources and low public engagement as the major factors. Furthermore, the respondents strongly agree that absence of organizational structures for community policing implementation (47.5%), absence of integrated police-community partnership (45%), low awareness about community policing from the community (40%) and lack of an enabling legislative and administrative environment (34.16%) as another factors in the implementation of community policing in the study area.

In addition to quantitative survey, the finding from the interview with police officers indicates that lack of the necessary material and human resource has been negatively affecting the implementation of community policing in the study areas. One of the interviewees responded that: “Lack of resources for example, transport has also negatively affected implementation of community policing and resulted in low motivation among the police force”

Similarly, interviews with police officers indicate that lack of an enabling legal and administrative environment, especially for those who wish to report suspicious activities and wanted persons is another problem that obstructs the police-community relation and the implementation of community policing. One of the interviewees put his idea forward: “Lack of legal frameworks to protect informers has negatively affected implementation of community policing. Because of these informers are afraid to release information hence criminals cannot be punished”. The finding reveals that lack of resources (such as funds, material resources and trained professionals) and low engagement of the community with the police as the major factors which obstructed effective

implementation of community policing to a very high extent. The finding also indicates that absence of organizational structures for community policing implementation (and low awareness about community policing from the community and lack of an enabling legislative and administrative environment (34.16%) as the factors that affect community policing to a high extent. Whereas factors such as low awareness about CP from the police force(6.66%)and low engagement of the police with the community(6.66%) are the factors with a low impacts on implementation of community policing.

Community Participation in Community Policing Platforms and Activities

community policing involves close relationship and partnership of the community and the police. Police work involves providing service to the community, and the establishment of a supportive police-community relationship is very important. The police should engage and share responsibility with the community in the overall task of policing. For this to occur there must be a structured consultation between the police and the community. Thus, community-policing forums are community-police joint meetings that discuss local problems, policies, priorities and strategies. In response to the question on the extent on the community participation in community policing platforms and activities in the study areas, the findings obtained from the community and the police officers is presented in table two and three as follows.

Table 2: Community Responses on Community participation in Community Policing Platforms and Activities

Items	Yes		No		Not sure		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Reporting information on suspicious	184	46.7	200	50.76	10	2.54	394	100
2. Work closely with police through community policing forums	166	42.13	204	51.77	24	6.1	394	100
3. Participation in security related activities such as through forming	174	44.16	215	54.57	5	1.27	394	100
4. Participation on discussions related to community problems	194	49.24	198	50.26	2	0.50	394	100

5. Collaborating in reporting and exposing criminals and wanted individuals to police	186	47.2	208	52.8	--	--	394	100
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Table 3: Police Officers Responses on Community participation in Community Policing Platforms and Activities

Items	Yes		No		Not sure		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. The community report information on suspicious characters or activities to police	34	28.33	80	66.77	6	5	120	100
2. The community Work closely with police through community policing forums	56	46.67	63	52.5	1	0.83	120	100
3. The community Participates in security related activities such as through forming security watch arrangements	60	50	58	48.33	2	1.67	120	100
4. The community Participates on discussions related to community problems	49	40.83	71	59.17	--	--	120	100
5. The community Collaborates in reporting and exposing criminals and wanted	59	49.17	61	50.83	---	--	120	100

The data presented on table (2) indicates that the majority of the respondents from the community respond that their engagement in different kinds of community policing platforms and reporting suspicious activities is low. According to the data, the percentage of the respondents who answered “no” on their participation through forming security watch arrangements (54.57 %), in reporting and exposing criminals and wanted individuals to police (52.8%), working with police through

community policing forums (51.77%), and discussing common community problems and finding their solutions (50.26%). Their participation in terms of reporting information on suspicious characters or activities to the police force is also low (50.7%). In the same way, the response obtained from police officers (presented in table 3) on community participation in established community policing platforms and reporting suspicious characters and wanted individuals to a nearby community policing station and police office is very low. Therefore, in all our study areas, the level of community participation in community policing activities was not attractive. The reasons for this low community participation are attributed to different factors. In our interview, the reasons provided by police respondents in this state of affairs were, lack of interest of some residents in being involved in community policing activities and platforms; lack of knowledge of the benefits of police-community joint forums, lack of communication channels between the police and the community (for instance, lack of secured reporting mechanisms and frustration to report wanted individuals; and attitudinal problems from the community, i.e. taking that fighting and preventing crimes is the sole responsibility of the police force, not the community.

Community Perception about the Contribution of Community Policing in Reducing Youth Delinquency

The table 4 shows results on the extent to which community policing has succeeded in reducing crime rates, especially youth delinquency. Accordingly, the data obtained from the community about the level of security since the introduction of community policing in the study areas is discussed as follows.

Table 4: Community Perception about the Contribution of Community Policing in Reducing Youth Delinquency

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Neutra l		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Community policing has enhanced the public image of the police	5	14.2	7	18.	18	47.2	7	19.	-	-	39	100
2. Community policing brings police forces closer to the people	6	15.2	8	22.	17	43.4	7	19	-	--	39	100

3. Community policing has increased community	50	12.69	104	26.39	144	36.54	91	23	5	1.26	394	100
4. Community policing has contributed for reduction of youth delinquency and public fears	36	9.13	49	12.43	125	31.72	181	45.93	3	0.76	394	100
5. Community policing has contributed to identify local problems and concerns by the police and the	95	24.11	63	15.98	148	37.56	88	22.33	-	-	394	100

Different scholars such as Whisenand and Ferguson, (2002:207) and Dempsey (1999:234), suggest that the community and police work together based on the principles of community policing. Having a close partnership community and police, and both parties are working together towards a shared goal might have different benefits such as decreased potential for police-citizen conflict; reduction in crime rates; a better flow of information between the police and the community; and better implementation of crime prevention and crime control activities.

In response to the contribution of community policing in preventing youth delinquency in particular and crimes in general, the responses obtained from the community is presented in table According to the results obtained from the community respondents, the majority of the response on the effectiveness of community policing in reducing crime rates, especially youth delinquency, its contribution in identifying local problems and concerns by the police and the community, its contribution in bringing the police closer to the people and community satisfaction in CP, was negative. This indicates that the frequency of the incidents of crimes before and after introduction of community policing is not changed. Crime rates are still very high, so contribution of community policing is low. Therefore, the important benefits that were expected from a community policing approach have not yet been realized in our study areas. This finding goes with the findings of Taye (2011) conducted at Hawassa city. According to this study, despite the introduction of community policing in Hawassa, serious crime has continued, as has the fear of crime.

Pertaining to the low effectiveness of community policing in the study areas, several reasons can be mentioned. As indicated in the first part, the implementation of

community policing in the study areas is being obstructed by several factors such as resource limitations, absence of partnership between the police force and the community, awareness problem and low engagement of the community with the police, and absence of well- organized organizational structures. Therefore, low effectiveness of community policing in the study areas may be because of these factors.

Police-community interaction and police Social Capital

Police-community relation is one of the factors that would enable or constrain the implementation of community policing. Different literatures suggest that having a positive relationship between the police and community is one step to create partnership between the two and work on community policing in a joint manner. On the other hand, a negative relation between the two would negatively affect the implementation of community policing.

Table 5: Community Response on Police-community interaction (Police Social Capital

Items	Very friendly		friendly		Unfriendly		Not sure		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. How would you rate the relationship between the police and community in your	152	38.58	180	45.70	60	15.22	2	0.50	394	100

According to Radelet and Carter (1994) and Lab (2004) cited in (Taye, 2021:82), having a good relationship between the police and the community one of the requirements for implementation of community policing. One of the objectives of this study was to examine how the police-community relation (police social capital). Accordingly, both the police officers and members of the community in the study area were asked to respond on this issue.

The finding presented in table 5, indicates that 55.83 % and 41.67 % of police officers said that they have a friendly and very friendly relation with the community relation, respectively. In the same way, the data presented in table 6, community-police interaction is very friendly (38.58%), friendly (45.7%), and unfriendly relation (15.22%). Based on these findings the police-community relation or the social capital of police officers in the study are were good. The police have a close relationship with the community because of different reasons. According to the interview findings, the police-community relation is good since most of the police staff members in the area natives who are born in and around their work place. They have relatives and interact with the community in various social and community affairs. Despite the fact that the police builds a good social capital, their integration and partnership in terms of implementing community policing is very limited.

Police-Community Interaction on Community Policing Activities

Table 6: Police officers Response on Police-community interaction on CP issues

Items	Usually		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Don't know		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. How often do the police consult local residents on security	5	4.17	50	41.67	61	50.83	-	-	4	3.3	120	100

Table 6, contains result on the time interval that police officers discuss about community policing issues with community. Accordingly, the respondents said that their engagement with the local community on the issues of community policing indicated as rarely (50.83%), sometimes (41.67%), and usually (4.17%). This implies that the extent that local police officers engage themselves with the local community to discuss on community problems and searching their solutions is rare and very limited.

Part IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

From the findings of the analysis it is possible to conclude that the implementation of community policing in preventing youth delinquency has been challenged because of several factors. According to the finding, some of the challenges faced in realizing

community policing program includes but not limited to, lack of awareness lack of resources such as trained personnel and materials, lack of awareness about community policing from the community side, and absence of partnership between the police and community. . As a result, the effectiveness of community policing with regard to preventing youth delinquency is very limited. In most study areas, youth delinquency is still a pressing issue.

The study also assessed the police-community interaction or police officers' social capital and how it influences the implementation of community policing. Therefore, it was found that in all study areas, the police-community relation is good, i.e., the police has friendly relationship with the local community. However, the police-community relation (partnership) towards working together in community policing activities is very limited. Therefore, the police officers' social capital is not directly related to the implementation of community policing

Lastly, the study concludes that community policing requires the police and the community to work together as partners in identifying effective actions and address the related issues of crime and social ills in their own community.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, study suggests the following recommendations to ensure effective implementation community policing approach and reduce crime.

The researchers recommend that the government should allocate the necessary material and trained human resources. Most importantly, capacity building programs must be arranged for the sake of enhancing the knowledge and skills of the community policing officers with the principles of community policing and implementation strategies. For the sake of creating partnership between the police and the community, awareness must be created for the community about the objectives and strategies of community policing. Awareness creation is also necessary about the role and responsibility of the community in community policing. It is also recommended that organizing different voluntary organization and members of community (such as elders and the youth) is important to deal with local community security and development issues.

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