The Effectiveness of Community Policing System in Assosa Town: An Empirical Basis Analysis

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to assess whether the community policing system has achieves the desired level of peace and security Assosa town. The study used a mixed approach with usable sample of 386. And relevant data were gathered, presented and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques and thematic analysis techniques. The finding revel that data of organizations and residents are collected and the structure is installed to grass root level. However, low level of awareness, participation, relationship, facilities, confusion task and poor commitment of officers' are the hindrance factors that hinder the system from being effective, Therefore, the town police department has to provide awareness creation training to the community, revises the structure of the system, builds the capacity of police officers and fulfill basic facilities of offices with the collaboration of community.

Keywords: Community policing system, community partnership, problem solving and organizational transformations

1.0. Introduction

Community policing is new types of providing police service in which cooperating officers with the community to proactively identifies problem and provides solution in advance to minimize crime (community oriented policing service, 2014). In the other words, it is a type of policing in which police provides police services with the combination of the community. The aim of community policing system is improving the living quality of community by reducing crime and disorder and promoting safety (Community Policing Consortium 1994 quoted in *Fridell 2004)*. In consideration of the above, government of Ethiopia commenced community policing system in the country since 2005 to make service accessible and responsive to community (*Abebe 2009*).

1.1. Statement of the problem

Community policing system is effective when three mutually related efforts are done. The first effort is community partnership. Community partnership is engaging the community into police service. The aim of it is police and community have to work together to identify society problems and find solutions to it (Skogan, 1994). Community partnership can be real when there is positive community -police relationship. On the other hand, Ethiopian police were engaged on brutal activities on the previous regimes and leave negative memory on the community (Denney and Kassaye, 2013). This bad experience of police may have negative effect on community partnership.

The other effort is problem solving aspect of community policing. Problem solving involves both community and police on identifying priority issues of the community, officers analyse information with rising of "WH" questions and develop solutions to the problems **(** Coquilhat 2008). This new emphasis on making community members active participants in the process of providing police service, requires profound changes within the police organization. However, the empirical evidences shows that lack of knowledge and skills of officers about the new system , traditional police culture that is negative and resistant and bureaucratic bottleneck that discourage both problem solving and the development of police-community partnerships (Rosenbaum, Yeh, & Wilkinson, 1994:348-349 cited in Duman, 2008).

Among changes requires on police organizations. The first is that restructuring police organization and make it near to the community instead of central police service. Secondly, it needs builds community officers capacity of doing multiple tasks and their orientation towards service provision. Besides, community policing officers supposed to be generalist to carry out multiple responsibilities and take a team approach to collaborative problem solving and partnership with community. Thirdly, organization has to decentralize and commit resources and finances in fulfilling necessary facilities such as offices, communication infrastructures and other facilities to make the system continuance and effective(community oriented policing service, 2014).. In doing so, Assosa community policing system has been done some adjustment in police organizations. However, how far the reforms are effective in supporting police services a debatable issue.

Against the backdrop of the above-mentioned issues and arguments, therefore, the study tried to file gaps in Assosa town by measuring the effectiveness of community policing system. Hence, the study will answer the following research questions which state below.

RQ1: Does level of awareness affect effectives of community policing system?

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RQ2. How far community participation affects the effectiveness of community policing system?
RQ3: How strong the relationship between community and officers, and effectives of community policing system?
RQ4: How is the capacity of community police officer and its impact on effectiveness of the system?
RQ5: how far the capacity of problem solving aspect of community policing system affects effectiveness of the whole system?
RQ6.-What are the challenges of community policing system?

1.2. Objective of the Study
The general objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of community policing in Assosa Town and further have the objective to;
- Identify the impact of level of awareness effect on effectives of community policing system.
- To determine the impact of community participation on effectiveness of community policing system
- Foretell the degree of relationship between community and police officers and its effect on community policing system,
- Find out the capacity of community police officer and its impact on effectiveness of the system
- Portray the effect of capacity of problem solving aspect of community policing system   on effectiveness of the whole system
- Indentify the challenges of community policing system

Hypothesis
H_1: *Level of awareness of community significantly affects effectiveness of community policing system*
H_2: *level of community participation significantly affects effectiveness of community policing system*
H_3: *There is direct impact between the level of relationship between community officer and community and the effectiveness of the community policing system.*
H_4: *Capacity of community policing officer significantly affects effectives' of the system*
H_5: *Problem solving capacity of the system is highly affect the effectives of community police system*

2. Review of Related Literatures
2.1 Introduction
Community policing system is a new form of providing police public service which focus on maintaining peace and security with a collaboration of community. It promotes community partnership and problem solving in the area of enhancing community safety and security such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Community Oriented Policing Service, 2014). It aims that builds competitive, responsive and transparent institutions that works with the community (Groenewald, H., and Peake, G., 2004 cited in Chêne, 2012)

2.2. Pillars of Community Policing System.
Community policing system is an organization strategy that helps to identify causes that potentially increasing fear of crime and social disorder and take remedial actions through community partnership and problem solving tactics. (Chêne, 2012).The system has three key elements for being effective (Community Oriented Policing Service, 2014). These are
Community partnerships aspect of community policing: - One of the core components of the system is strong police-community partnership. The system is understood that police should not be the sole responsible body in maintaining peace and security. The community i.e. local government, civic and business leaders, public and private agencies, residents, churches, schools, and hospitals should also participate in ensuring safety and security of society (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994). Unlike traditional policing, community policing takes community involvement as advantage in ensuring community safety and wellness (*Fridel*, 2004)

To build strong community partnership, police must have good relationship with the community, in the quest for better crime control and prevention and mobilize the resources of community to solve most urgent issues of the community (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994). This partnership may be challenged by community showed resistance as a result of low awareness, poor community police relationship, low participation of community in police service and others (New Zealand Police, 2008)
Problem solving aspect of community policing: It focuses on the process of indentifying community priority issues and systematic examination of identified problems to take effective responses by both community and police (Community Oriented Policing Service, 2014). The major objectives of community policing is that carefully studying of the characteristics of crime and a neighbourhoods' problems and take remedial action accordingly (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994).

In problem solving, both community and police are engaged in ensuring community peace and order. Police officers engage on coordination and mobilization of the community in identifying and solving problems to enhance their wellbeing. On the other hands, community also take an active role sharing the burden of police.

This type of mutual benefit enhances police-community relationship and increases the responsiveness of the police (Chêne, 2012.) according to Skogan (1995). It is hardly possible create and maintain safe community without community participation because every problem is created and committed within the community. Therefore, community is a resource, support group and source of information (Murphy (1993) quoted in Skogan (1995). In order to have active participant community, it is crucial increase the awareness level of the community. Community participation depends on level of community awareness about the program Skogan (1995).

Organizational transformation: It is important that the structure of police institution have to transform to ensure community involvement and empower officers to make decision and make them accountable (community Oriented policing system, 2014). Organizational transformation focuses on restructure of organization in a way that promotes people participation and proactive problem solving. However, mere restructuring of the organization doesn't bring the desired result. It should also empower the community policing officers in terms of building capacity of officers, fulfilling of basic communication facilities, decision making authority and ordering of community resources (Community Oriented Policing Service, 2014). Effective community partnership and problem solving requires the capacity of community policing officers to adopt flexible management style and carryout the decentralized responsibilities (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994).

3.0. Materials and methods
3.1. Descriptions of study area
Assosa is the capital of the Benishangul-Gumuz Region regional state of Ethiopia. Located in the Assosa Zone, this town has a latitude and longitude of 10°04′N 34°31′E10.067°N 34.517°E, with an elevation of 1570 meters.

3.2. Sampling, Data Collection and Data Analysis Techniques
Mixed approach was used (Cress Well, 2003). To assess the effectiveness of community policing system and snap shot the surveyed area and characterization of the respondent.

The total target population of Assosa town is 10860 households which divided into four kebeles, and/or 54 "Ketenas" and/or 150 *"Gotes"*/Block (Assosa Town Administration Police office, 2015). On this regard, by taking sample size determination formula a total of 386 samples were taken to achieve the objective.

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

Where, N= total population; n= sample size; e= the level of precision /Acceptable error

$$n = \frac{10860}{1 + 10860(0.05`)^2} = \underline{386}$$

Mean while, sample size 30-500 is already adequate for most of the research, in multivariate research (Ruane., 2009) Comrey & Lee also noted that samples of size 100 can give more than adequate reliability correlation coefficients (U. Sekaran, 2009) Non random sampling was used to distribute the questionnaires by selecting respondents who actually live more than two years in each block/"Gote". Further interview, Focus Group Discussion and observations were conducted in each kebele of the town and all data were collected in February, 2016. The primary data collected using questionnaire, interview, and FDG were analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods i.e. quantitative both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Qualitative content analysis was also done.

4. Data Presentation and Discussions of Findings
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
The demographic data consisted of age, sex, employment status and kebele of respondents. These demographic characteristics only explain the respondents of questionnaire.

Table 4.1 Demographic descriptions of respondents

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sex	Male	181	60.5	60.5
	Female	118	39.5	100.0
	Total	299	100.0	
Missing	System	1		
Total		300		
Age	18 years to 29 years old	147	50.3	50.3
	30 Years to 60 Years	143	49.0	99.3
	above 60 Years	2	.7	100.0
	Total	292	100.0	
Missing	System	8		
Total		300		
Employment status	Student	53	17.7	17.7
	private organization employee	7	2.3	20.1
	Government employee	135	45.2	65.2
	self employee	48	16.1	81.3
	Unemployed	42	14.0	95.3
	Retired	2	.7	96.0
	Other	12	4.0	100.0
	Total	299	100.0	
Missing	System	1		
Total		300		
Kebele	01	89	29.7	29.7
	02	64	21.3	51.0
	03	65	21.7	72.7
	04	82	27.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: survey 2016

Table 4.1 states that about 60.5 % of respondents are male and the remaining 39.5 % are female of the total respondents, respectively. Almost 99 % of respondents age fall underage group of 18 to 60 years. Around 45.2% of respondents are government employees. 29.7 % and 27.3% of the total respondents live in kebele 01 and 04, respectively.

4.2. Statistics indicating important variables for community policing system

Five point scales with eight variables were used to measure degree of effectives of community policing. Mean score were calculated to determine the status of factors in the system. With five point scales, the intervals for breaking the range in measuring each variable are calculated as follows:

$$\frac{max.-Min.}{Number\ of\ choose} = 5\text{-}1/5 = 0.8 = \text{interval of decision}$$

It means that the scores falling between the following ranges can be considered as: Score 1.00 – 1.80 Means very low level at all, Score 1.81 – 2.60 Means Somewhat low-level, Score 2.61 – 3.40 Means Fair, Score 3.41 – 4.20 means somewhat high and Score 4.21 – 5.00 Means Extremely high level (Best, J. W. 1977)

Table 4.2 the level of status of factors in community policing system at Assosa town

	N	Mini.	Max.	Mean	Std. D.	Level
level of awareness on community policing system	300	1	5	2.54	.979	Somewhat low level
level of relationship between community policing officers with community	298	1	5	1.95	.943	Somewhat low level
capacity of community policing system in solving problems	295	1	5	2.41	.943	Somewhat low level
participation of community	299	1	5	2.66	.883	Fair
capability of community policing offers	295	1	5	2.63	1.135	Fair
Level of participation of institutions	260	1	5	1.71	.946	Very low
effectiveness of community policing system	297	1	5	2.25	.968	Somewhat low level
Valid N (listwise)	286					

Source: own survey, 2016

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As the table 4.3 shows the level of community participation, the level of relationship between community- police relationship, and the capacity of community policing system in solving problems are somewhat low level their mean value is 2.54, 1.95; and 2.41, respectively. Capacity of community police officers and community participation is moderate which is 2.66 and 2.63 respectively. This low status of factors made the systems effective somewhat low with mean value is 2.25.

Table 4.3 Associations of variables and effectiveness of community policing system

Variables	Effectiveness of community policing system	Level of significance
Awareness of community	.644	.000**
Participation of community	.581	.000**
the level of relationship of community policing officers with community	.659	.000**
Capacity of community policing officers	.733	.000**
Problem solving capacity of the system	.764	.000**
Frequency of discussion with community	.206	.000**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: own survey, 2016

As the table 4.4 shows that there is statistically significant and positive association between awareness of community and system effectives (r= .644; P=.000**); participation of community and effeteness of the system (r=.586;p=.000**); the level of relationship of community policing officers with community, and effeteness of the system (r=.659; p=.000**); capacity of community policing system and effeteness of system (r=.733;p=.000**); problem solving capacity of the system (r=.764; p.000**); and frequency of discussion with community and effeteness of system (r=.206; p.000**) and their association is strong except frequency of discussion with community.

4.4 Regression analysis

In this part R^2, also called the coefficient of determination is interpreted because it very useful to explain the variables and since it measures the proportion of the total variation in Y about its mean explained by the regression of Y on X. on this regard if the study result in values of R^2 below 0.2 are considered weak, between 0.2 and 0.4, moderate, and above 0.4, strong (Centre For Teaching and Research Learning, 2010).

Table 4.4 the relationship between predictors and the effectiveness of community policing system

Predictors	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Community awareness	.644[a]	.415	.413	.141					
Regression					16.493	1	16.493	18.636	.000[b]
Residual					261.069	295	.885		
Total					277.562	296			
Participation of community	.581[a]	.338	.335	.898					
Regression					40.268	1	40.268	49.904	.000[b]
Residual					237.232	294	.807		
Total					277.500	295			
the level of relationship of community policing officers with community	.659[a]	..434	.432	.190					
Regression					35.607	1	35.607	43.231	.000[b]
Residual					241.329	293	.824		
Total					276.936	294			
Capacity of community policing officers	.733[a]	.537	.535	.289					
Regression					41.921	1	41.921	53.019	.000[b]
Residual					229.298	290	.791		
Total					271.219	291			
Problem solving capacity of the system	.764[a]	.584	.583	.766					
Regression					102.755	1	102.755	175.350	.000[b]
Residual					169.940	290	.586		
Total					272.695	291			

a.   Predictors: (Constant),
b.   Dependent variable: effectiveness of community policing system
Source: own Survey, 2016

Table 4.4 Shows that there is statistical significant relationship between community awareness (R^2=.413, p= .000); participation of community (R^2=.335, p= .000); the level of relationship of community policing officers with community (R^2=.432, p= .000); Capacity of community policing officers (R^2=.435, p= .000); and Problem solving capacity of the system (R^2=.583, p= .000); and effectiveness of the system. They have strong and positive impact on the effectiveness of the system except community participation. Community participation has modestly affected the effectiveness of community policing system.

4.5. Qualitative analysis
4.5.1. Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) Analysis
The participants of FGDs said that despite structure is decentralize to one to five arrangements, there is no community policing practice in Assosa town. Community policing is organized under crime preventive work owner process as coordination level. This structure made mix crime preventive office task with community policing office. Like crime prevention police officers, community policing officers provide service such as catch criminals, gang around criminals etc. Besides, community policing officers supposed to live in their assigned area and create social relationship with the community to get trust and information. He/she has a responsibility of providing 24-hour service to the community. However, kebeles do not provide accommodation facilities to the officers. This forces the community policing officers' travel and rent in a remote area to get an affordable home. These are contradicting with the philosophy of the system. It adversely affects the trust of community on the community policing. The community does not participate in the structures of below Kebele level of the system. Because those levels are organized for other kebele's duty such as distributing oil and sugar. But, the system holds it as one structure without any amendment.

Community policing officers do have limitation in mobilizing the resource of the community. The officers do not have appropriate skills and knowledge for a system. They selected among crime preventive officers and assigned them as community policing officer without sufficient training. This results officer are unable to provide awareness creation training, mobilize resource from the community to carry out tasks, develop a proposal to reduce the burden of police to the community and make functional low level community policing structures. To sum up, community policing of Assosa is poor in partnership of community and problem-solving.

4.5.2 Interview analysis
Assosa town police department is commenced community policing system to make police service accessible to the community. One of a major aspect of community policing is community partnership. To create community partnership the police department has been collected data of the community to create an enabling environment of community partnership. However, the status of community partnership is low as a result of low level of awareness of community. Secondly, community policing officers do have limitations in terms of knowledge and skills to carry out tasks of the system. Because the town administration police department simply assign police officers as community policing officer without adequate training and education. Police officers got only one-week training about community policing system. This made officers incapable on mobilizing resources. Thirdly, the low commitment of community policing officers, Kebele, and town administrators are hinder the system from being effective. Fourthly, Absence of appropriate office and office facilities are also another factors that hinder the system from being effective. Finally, the number of community policing officers limited compare to the area of coverage. An officer has a responsibility of controlling more than three "Ketenas" at a time. It is barely possible to reach each level of community policing structures. The system does not have any partnership with all members of the community except residents of the society.

The second aspect of community policing is problem solving. Problem-solving is a process of identifying community priority issues and give solution before it causes of crime. The community is participating in identifying the problem of which crime may be sourced at. Some problems are solved with the collaboration of both the community and the officers. The problems which are beyond of the community and the officers are supposed to be solved by the consultative councils. However, there is no consultative council at the town level which made the system disable in problem-solving. The consultative council of Kebeles level does not properly function as a result of poor attention given by administrators.

A basic aspect of community policing is organizational transformation. Structural change made by the police department to make more decentralize and made service more accessible. However, structures below kebele level are not functional as it expected. It is hardly possible to reach in each Ketena, "Gote" and one to five arrangement with limited number officers. Generally, they agreed that it is too difficult to say community policing system in Assosa is effective.

4.6 Hypotheses test
Proposed hypothesis are tested based on the results of the linear regression analysis. Hypothesis is supported when the Sig. value is smaller than 0.05; and a null hypothesis is rejected when the Sig. value is equal or larger than 0.05 (Pallant, 2010). Beta coefficients were used to evaluate the direction of each linear relationship (i.e.

negative or positive). Therefore, interpretation of the t-statistics and beta estimates proceeded for each hypothesis.

Table 4.5 Hypotheses test

Model Hypothesis	Independent Var.	Dependent Var.	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
			β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
H1	Awareness level	Effectiveness of the system	.640	.056	.644	4.317	.000
H2	Community participation	Effectiveness of the system	.587	.059	.581	7.064	.000
H3	Level of relationship between officers and community	Effectiveness of the system	.667	.056	.659	6.575	.000
H4	Capacity of community policing officers	Effectiveness of the system	.743	.046	.733	7.281	.000
H5	Problem capacity of the system	Effectiveness of the system	.820	.048	.764	13.242	.000

Source: own survey, 2016

Table 4.5 shows awareness level of community , community participation, Level of relationship between officers and community , Capacity of community policing officers and problem capacity of the system were significant predictor of the effectiveness of the system at $p=0.05$ and their nature of relationship was positive ($β=.640$, $β=.587$, $β=.675$, $β=.743$ and $β=.820$, respectively). . Consequently H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4 and H_5 were accepted.
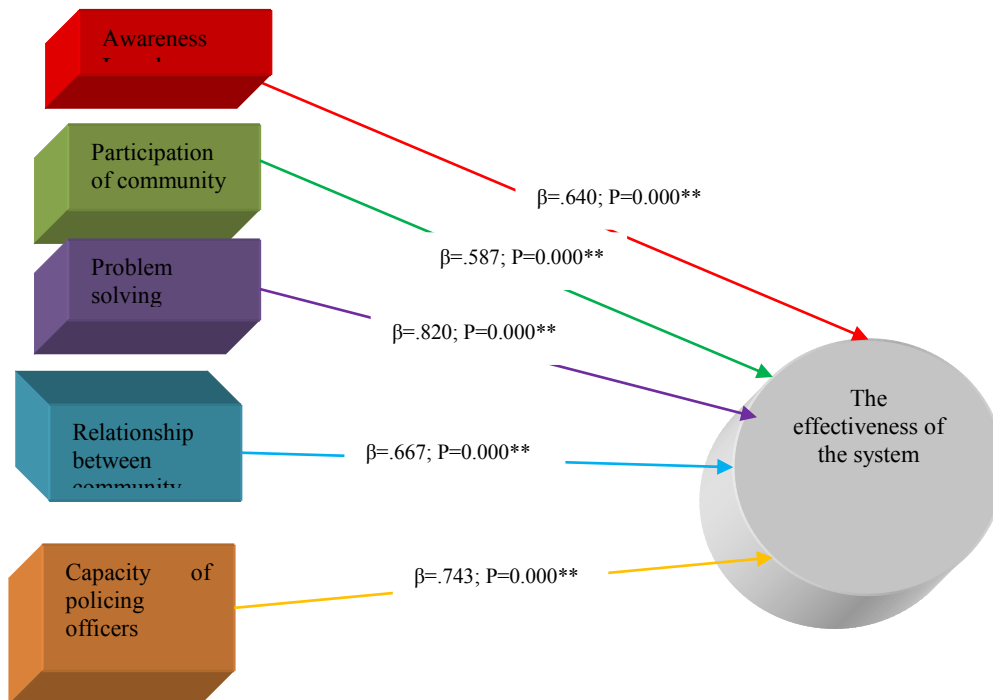

Diagram 4.1 Conceptual Model

5. Conclusions and Recommendations
5.1 Conclusions

Assosa town police department commenced community policing system since 2010 to give effective and efficient crime prevention. However, community policing system is ineffective. Assosa town resident's level of awareness about the system is somewhat low. Community policing officers did not conduct awareness creation program to the community. Even those who have little awareness got information from other sources rather than

community policing officers. Secondly, Despite the data of community collected and organized the community in the different structure to make them participate in the system, there is no community partnership in the system. The community participates in the system only when problems occur. Besides, there is no memorandum of understanding with organizations which force the organizations to participate in the system. In addition, It organized community policing offices under crime prevention work owner process and decentralized police office to kebele level but misses' town level administration. This results the system has no consultative council at the town level. Even kebele level consultative council is not properly conduct meeting regularly. The relationship between community policing officers and community is weak. This is the result of the assigned officers did not introduce themselves and created social relationship. This is happing as a result of poor favorable environment for community policing officers such as office, home, and telephone. In addition, like crime prevention police officers, community policing officers provide service such as catch criminals, gang around criminals etc. It adversely affects the relationship of community policing officers and the community. The assigned community police officers do have limitation in processing the identified problem and present to the consultative council. This is a result of insufficient training and numbers of officers. Besides, the system is poor in providing solution for the identified problems as a result of poor commitment of officers and kebele and town administrators. This makes community policing system is ineffective.

5.2 Recommendations

To improve the community policing system, the following suggestions are forwarded.

- ✓ Bensishangule Gummze Regional state police commission in general Assosa town police department, in particular, has to prepare and provide awareness creation training to the community.
- ✓ The organization structure of community policing system should be independent of crime prevention department.
- ✓ Bensishangule Gumuze regional state police commission has to amend the community policing system strategic document. The document has missed the town level of community policing structure and has to include in the document.
- ✓ The strategic document says nothing about the standard of community policing offices/centres and the commission has to include the standard of community policing centres /offices.
- ✓ The department has to give training on how to lead the community and mobilize community resource to the community policing officers.
- ✓ The town police department with mobilizing the community and has to build standard community policing offices/centres and billboards. This office has to provide accommodation facilities to officers. This makes officers provide 24 hours service to the community.

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