

Building Trust between Police and Community to Ensure Public Safety: The Case of Oromiya Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The primary objective of this study is to identify the critical factors playing a significant role in the implementation of community policing, partnering the police and community to work together on the safety, peace, and security of the area. Six woredas located in the West Wollega Zone of Oromiya Regional State were selected after consulting the crime statistics and performance reports of community policing. Informants enrolled in interviews and filling out the questionnaires were selected purposely. Percentiles and thematic analysis were the procedures employed to give meaning to data generated in multiple ways. The findings show that community policing strategies are not helping the inhabitants to ensure peace and safety. It further indicated that a lack of trust between the police and the communities is one of the factors impeding the implementation. The community's conception of peace and leaving all the responsibilities of ensuring law, peace, and order to the police are part of the findings. On the one hand, the residential community views the police negatively and is unlikely to share the responsibilities for the area's safety and peace. It is thus keen to build trust between the police and the community to set up a partnership on solid ground to achieve the strategic emphasis of community policing.

Key Terms: Crime Prevention, Community Policing, Community, Police, Peace, Security

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INTRODUCTION

Community policing has become a dominant policing paradigm in contemporary police practice. It is a dramatic change in the philosophy of widening the path of police agencies in the making of the public part of their endeavors. Community policing is said to embrace two primary components: partnership and problem-solving. Wood & Bradley (2009) noted that a partnership requires the police to assist people with a multitude of problems and social conditions, including crime, and is a partnership because the police must solicit and actively partner in dealing with these problems. As pointed out by Kappeler and Gaines (2011), community partnership is fostered by the engagement of the police with the community to cooperatively resolve community problems, while problem-solving is where the community policing officer attempts to deal with the conditions that cause crime and negatively affect the quality of life in a community. The philosophy is more responsive and comprehensive police service. In the last few years, Ethiopia's law enforcement became familiar with the community policing model to build positive relationships between police and the community. As noted by Pamela, Mayhall, Thomas, Barker, Ronald, Hunter (1995, p.1) the reform executed by the American police recaptured the old belief that a police force can and should be "The police's police" – an agency that is responsive to the public it serves. Conceptually, community policing is defined as it is a proactive and decentralized approach, designed to reduce crime, disorder, and fear of crime by assigning the same officer to a specific geographic area on a long-term basis, Trojanovich, and Carter, (1998). Moreover, community policing looks to intervene in the problems of crime and disorder by forming a partnership with its citizens. Police can cultivate a wide variety of benefits by fostering partnerships with the community based on trust. It has appeared as a popular strategy within the field of development as part of state-building interventions to restore community confidence in the police, improve social protection, police responsiveness, and ensure adherence to human rights and professional standards (Wisler and Onwudiwe, 2007). It is known as a department-wide philosophy of full-service, personalized, and decentralized policing, where citizens feel encouraged and empowered to work in proactive and equal partnerships with the police to solve problems of crime, fear of crime, and public disorder.

Community policing is uniquely approached across the world as a strategy for some police operations to meet public demands. The central aim of community policing is indeed to bring both the community and the police on board to set up a strong alliance and divert the concerted efforts to create an area free of crime. According to Hughes, Lurigio, and Davis (2002), community policing centers are "a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime." As noted by Oliver (2000), it became well customized at the end of the 19th century in

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Western Europe and developed gradually. Nonetheless, community policing has undergone considerable changes in Western Europe, where people are well informed about the police models providing sufficient room for the neighborhood community to freely discuss issues considering peace and social order in a democratic manner. It was a response to a larger urban and rural problem of police in neighborhoods having ceded power and presence to criminal gangs and vigilantes. Its success relied on improving the image of the police officer in the eyes of the public. The image police establish in the community matters the effectiveness in ensuring peace and safety. The significance of the image in the Ethiopian context is evident and valuable to improving police and community relations. In colonial Africa, the European powers used a model of policing sharpened to enforce the colonial rules to colonize the Africans. Strict and very often harsh enforcement actions by police, paramilitaries, or the actual military forces of the colonial powers were used with no community participation. In some cases, particularly in former British colonies, policing at the community level was left in the hands of the traditional local leadership. Although it may have had elements of modern-day community policing, the practice was not readily brought in line with the premise of meeting the average public demand expected out of the police service. In pre-revolutionary Ethiopia, where only indirect colonial influence on policing was felt, traditional methods, where they existed at all, were directed at the community level by landlords and generally operated in their interests. (Markakis, 1986). Ethiopia as an independent country from any colonial rule was in one way influenced to pursue the police system practiced in the British Empire. The influence colonial rulers put with the intent of strengthening their power of repression through controlling the social movement are still maneuvering the system until the post-colonial times.

Most crimes or criminal acts are interwoven with inadequate social development and are widespread in the areas where poverty is most prevalent. Poverty hinders development and tends to contribute to the violation of human rights where conflict exists, and war crimes are often appearing. Development interplays in both reducing crime rates and the tendency for people to commit crimes. Safety, security, and protection increase the productivity of active participants in development programs and help to supply legal protection and dignity.

There are several theories promoted by scholars to explain the challenges of community policing. The first theory advanced to explain the significance of community policing was made by Wilson and Kelling's 'Broken Windows theory' (1982). The theory, as noted by Wilson and Kelling, social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired; all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. The premise advocates that when a broken window is abundant in each area of living, it shows that nobody cares about the condition of the area, which causes the other windows to be broken and nothing will happen. This analogy stands in support of crime and sometimes crime occurs in society.

The theory used to explain the philosophical bases of community policing is known as the Normative Sponsorship Theory (Oliver (Ed.) 2000). The theory proposes that a considerable number of people have goodwill and need the importance of building the community to ensure safety and order. It postulates that the community policing program secures a vast number of people who acknowledge the relevance of the rule of law, to create the area arduous to harbor crime. The police are, therefore, impotent to achieve any of the positive transformations, if the support of the public is not sent. Based on this proposition, drunkenness, begging, vandalism, disorderly behavior, graffiti, are commonly appearing to suppress the crime rate to enable to influence on the possible existence of crimes in a wider extent (Aliyu et al 2012).

Social resource theory (Oliver, op cite) is drawn from a widely supported social science concept (Törnblum et al, 2012). This concept conceived the idea of crime and policing from the angle of the people and not that of the state. From the people's viewpoint, crime is a personal problem resulting from people's unmet expectations, scarcity of resources, and police inefficiency. The police use social resources which are supposed to solve the problems of the people. The ultimate purpose of community policing is to ensure better, responsive and responsible, efficient and effective police service. The theory is of the people, for the people and by the people, one which supports the idea of a theory of democratic governance, empowerment, and theory of self-help. Social resource theory begins from seeing that crime is illegal but only from the state's point of view. However, for the people, crime is one of the experiences of life, the theory is a radical shift in theorizing community policing because of the way it empowers the people and made the police influence a social resource, which is made visible by the state by choosing within the citizens to address societal weaknesses. These ideas are hard for officials in the police and judiciary to accept. This issue itself is an inadvertent weakness in the research. However, until police reform programs at the regional level catch up with federal level program reforms, data gathering within the institution will be dominated by inputs and views from male representatives due to their participation in community policing activities. It became clear early in the research design phase that special attention was needed to increase the gender balance on Policing Boards as well as the different institutional and oversight structures which cascade down from this senior level of management.

The community policing model is often dedicated to offering the community a problem-solving strategy through developing trust between police and the community in both rural and urban settings (Hughes et al, 2002). The aim is to make the community partner in the crime prevention and detection work of the police service.

Community policing is always only one of the range of methods and operating procedures that the police will use in any given circumstance. It will contribute to police intelligence, though there are often difficulties with keeping trust and using locally acquired intelligence. It relies on local relationships and frequent contact between police officers and local leaders and victims of crime. Where, as is often the case in keeping public order, police or paramilitary squads is brought in, community policing is difficult to apply. Community policing broadens the nature and number of police functions compared with traditional policing. It is overwhelming to lay out the time that the police system was established based on the home-grown knowledge of policing the area in the neighborhoods. The emphasis looks at the organizational transformation, proactive collaboration, problem solving, and external partnerships to address the issues that concern both the police and community members. It has the power to evenly shift the focus of policing by placing equal emphasis on crime control, order maintenance and service. The tool essential to appear all the time is that the police are to work with community members and other collaborative partnerships including the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police. Ethiopia is a federal state with ten regional states and two city administrations demarcated based on ethno-linguistic classifications. It is a parliamentary form of government. The constitution has put the classification in leveraging of settlement, patterns, language, identity, and consent of the people concerned. The regional states have the power of self-ruling and administration. The Ethiopian constitution rectified the authority to self-administration within their district in article 52. Hence there are two layers in charge of enforcing the law of the land. The powers and functions of the Federal Government include the mandates of setting up and administering the national defense and public security forces as well as a federal police force. It uniquely deploys the Federal Defense Forces upon the request of a state administration to arrest the deteriorating security situation that is out of the ability of the states to control.

This constitution has formed the Federal Government mandated to establish law enforcement agencies, including the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission (EFPC). The commission was re-established by proclamation No 313/2003 with the objectives of honoring the constitution and other laws of the country based on the participation of the public and keeping the peaceful life and security of the people. The Oromia National Regional State (ONRS) is one of the regional states of Ethiopia recognized by the constitution to administer the area by forming the state police with the powers and functions of keeping public order and peace. This seems one of the major reasons to owe the police institutions dictating the power of police to prevent crime in partnering the people to police the community (Federal Gazette, 2003). There are twenty two zones and about 36 woredas in the region. The zones and woredas possess the police legitimacy to keep law and social order. This study was carried out in Oromiya Regional State to critically explore the challenges to build trust between police and the community in the implementation of the community policing strategies. The concept of community policing was introduced in Ethiopia in 1997. The early results were not encouraging due to the failure of the police to create a structure conducive to reinforce the philosophical underpinnings and principles of community policing. The police officers were slow to accept the newly adopted policing paradigm. People were a bit confused to see the police in a new policing style of becoming transparent to the public, which has been unfamiliar with their experience for decades. It happened because of the Business Process Reengineering (BPR) project carried out in Oromia Regional State in 2002 to bring holistic change on the service of the police. The change in basic assumptions made during the study has finally brought community policing into focus as a policing strategy to build trust with the people. Adopting community policing as a leading policing philosophy in the region, it is urged to shift the policing practice from the traditional one to community policing. Traditional policing in this paper is the policing model that differs from community policing in its application. In line with this, institutional arrangements and legal frameworks were crafted in both the headquarters of the regional police and the Zonal Police Departments. They were accountable for initially introducing the pillars to the community to build trust between the police and the community. Community policing offices have been launched to introduce the neighborhood community to the shift and implementation of the principles and philosophies of community policing to ensure public safety. The integrated approach deals with getting the stakeholders and community members to be part of the police strategy based on the socio-economic context of the neighborhood. Its further deals with community patrol in the neighborhood watch programs under the close observation of the crime prevention departments responsible for controlling the area from upheavals by deploying enough uniformed police officers for patrol.

In West Wollega's Zonal Police Office, the unit in charge of over-sighting the implementation of community policing implies a high emphasis on sessions the area police staged to enhance the awareness level of the community and stakeholders on community policing in general and community patrol. Social disorders and illegal acts that appear incidentally in the area are always subject to police response and conveying information about the crime to the police is indeed the sole responsibility of the neighborhood community. Of these problems, most relate to the lack of effective management, insufficient numbers of trained police officers, and a lack of awareness of community policing principles and practices from the community's side. Arguments for the

practical challenges community policing encounters lead one to value the attention given by the area administrators to allot sufficient budget to run activities smoothly. This study explores the challenges impeding the implementation of community policing in the West Wollega zone's constituent Woredas (the lower administrative level in Ethiopian government administration) of Ayira, Gimbhi, Gullisso, Nedjo, Innango, and Genji.

This study examines the challenges community policing has encountered in its due course of implementation. Various theories explaining the practice are reviewed and the Ethiopian experiences are widely discussed. The study finally came up with commendable ideas to develop trust between the police and the community by focusing on community policing strategies as the only solution to strengthen police and community relationships.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

The use of questionnaires and interviews supported this investigation into the effectiveness of community policing approaches. Questionnaires were distributed to the community Policing Board members, while interviews were undertaken with chiefs of *Woreda* police offices and community policing officers. The questionnaires distributed to respondents enjoyed a high rate of return^[1] which suggests that all respondents took part willingly and voluntarily with comfort that their active support given to the research project would be in the interest of the regional police institution.

Table 1: Respondents by their Age and Sex respondents

| Sex | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Male | 80 | 86.2 |
| Female | 22 | 13.8 |
| Total | 102 | 100 |

Source: Own Survey (2021)

As table 1 shows, most of the respondents (80, or 86.2%) were male, and 22 (13.8%) were female. The responses gathered from the questionnaires and interviews were dominated by male participants more than females. The fact that there are more males than females shows that males outnumber females in the ratio of respondents.

Table 2: Age of the respondents

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|--------|------------|
| 20-30 | 50 | 49.1 |
| 31-40 | 40 | 39.2 |
| 41-50 | 10 | 9.8 |
| 51-60 | 2 | 1.9 |
| 61 and above | - | - |
| Total | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

As shown in table 2, most of the respondents, which were approximately 50 (49.1%), were in the age range of 20-30, while 40 (39.2%) were between the age range of 31-40. Only a few respondents 10 (9.8%) and 2 (1.9%) were in the age range 41-50 and 51-60 respectively. Based on these classifications within the broader sample set of respondents, most of the respondents formed either adults or young adults.

Table 3: Respondents by their Educational Background

| Educational status | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------|------------|
| M.A/ M.Sc. above | - | - |
| Degree | 60 | 59.1 |
| Diploma | 30 | 29.2 |
| Certificate | 10 | 9.8 |
| 10 th Complete | 2 | 1.9 |
| Total | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Table 3 shows that 60 (59.1%) of the respondents were first-degree holders and 30 (29.2%) were diploma graduates. Only 10 (9.8%) respondents (1.9%) were graduates of the certificate, while 2 were 10th-grade completers. The educational background of respondents is therefore a guarantee to develop confidence in the validity of the responses gathered from those who are able enough to read and write.

Table 4: Respondents Awareness on Community Policing

| Item | Level | Number | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| How do you rate your level of understanding on community policing? | Excellent | 30 | 29.4 |
| | Good | 37 | 36.2 |
| | Average | 15 | 14.7 |
| | Poor | 20 | 19.6 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

As shown in table 4, 30 (29.4%) respondents rated their understanding of community policing as excellent, while 36 (36.2%) as good. While 15 (14.7%) said it was average, 20 (19.6%) are not aware of community policing. The table shows that the number of respondents who rated their understanding of community policing as excellent or good outweighs the rest. However, a considerable number of respondents rated their knowledge as below average. It is well noted that their level of understanding matters in their determination and active participation in implementing the community policing programs.

Table 5: Community Engagement on Community Policing and their attitude in Crime Prevention and Control

| Item | Level | Number | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| How would you rate the community engagement and their attitude on the power of community policing in crime prevention and control? | Very high | 15 | 14.7 |
| | High | 20 | 19.6 |
| | Average | 30 | 29.4 |
| | Low | 37 | 36.2 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

According to the table, 30 (29.4%) of respondents thought the level of engagement and attitudes of collaborators toward community policing was only average, while the remaining 37 (36.2%) rated low. The remaining 15 (14.7%) and 20 (19.4%) were rated as very high and high, respectively. From this, it could be argued that the community's attitude towards community policing is low. Interviewees said that community engagement to develop community policing in the areas is low. This shows that the inhabitants are not well informed about the new paradigm of policing in the area. They claimed that the police lag in developing awareness-creation programs to enhance the participation of the people based on knowledge.

Table 6: Level of openness to receive citizen complaints about community policing

| Item | Level | No | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|
| Are the police open to receive public complaints on community policing? | Excellent | 5 | 4.9 |
| | Very Good | 5 | 4.9 |
| | Good | 10 | 9.8 |
| | Average | 15 | 14.7 |
| | Poor | 67 | 65.6 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

As the table depicts, 82 respondents (80.3 %) rated the level of openness by the institution to receiving complaints about police as either poor or average. This implies that the cooperation between the community and police is poor and may show an area where trust in the police is low. As the interviews with the head of police and community police officers on the challenges of community policing in crime prevention and control show, lack of interest from the side of the community and the limits on the budget to run capacity-building training are the factors impeding the progress of giving the principles of community policing.

Interviewees further noted that the police complaint handling procedures are not communicated to the public and the helplines are not stretched to ease communication. They pointed out that the police are not inviting and the public regret complaining, fearing the revenge that might happen some days later.

Table 7: Door-to-door contact with the inhabitants to create positive awareness on community policing

| Item | Choice | No | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|------------|
| Is the door-to-door contact made to create awareness on community policing effective? | Yes | 45 | 44.1 |
| | No | 57 | 55.9 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Table 12 shows that most respondents (55.9%) said that door-to-door contact with the residents about community policing was not undertaken while 44.1% claimed that they were. Interviews held with police leaders indicated that formal meetings, rather than door-to-door encounters, took place every two weeks or so. The

police leaders shown that not only was the budget inadequate for door-to-door meetings, but that the public was not really engaged or supportive of door-to-door encounters with police officers.

Most respondents at the station and area level showed that not enough has been done on the part of the *Woreda* community to ensure effective implementation of the community-policing approach. The reasons most cited by the respondents for the negative view towards police activity and general factors that affect the implementation of community policing in the study area include:

- Lack of community commitment since not all residents are involved and those who are involved are not paid;
- Lack of interest and willingness from the community, and
- Lack of knowledge about the benefits respecting citizen's personal and family safety and security which could be brought about by their participation.

It is possible to conclude that there is lack of discussion with the community about community policing. The police strategies made ready every year in the area is not centering the community concerns and needs from the police. This situation created the difference between police and the community gradually and totally swept the feeling of companionship to combat crime together to foster peace and tranquility in the area.

Table 8: Community policing related training

| Item | Choice | No | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|------------|
| Have you ever attended community policing related training? | Yes | 62 | 60.8 |
| | No | 40 | 39.2 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

As is seen from the above table most of the respondents (60.2%) replied that they have taken part in community policing training and the respondents (39.2%) replied that they did not. From this it is possible to conclude that the training provided by the local government was not amazingly effective or evenly distributed. Taken together with other answers recorded in the tables above, it appears that if training was provided, it was not very effective.

Table 9: Community policing is effective in strategy to prevent and control crime?

| Item | Choice | No | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|------------|
| Do you think community policing is an effective technique for crime prevention and control? | Yes | 62 | 60.8 |
| | No | 40 | 39.2 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Table 9 shows that many of the respondents (60.8%) believe that community policing is an effective strategy to effectively prevent and control crime by bringing both community and police under one umbrella. However, interviews with police leaders revealed that the implementation of these programs was difficult. In the view of the police leaders, the public expected the police to do all the work. Voluntary participation on the part of the public was rare. Although, as a concept, community policing is clearly believed in and subscribed to by many people in West Wollega Zone there is reluctance from the community to work with the police. It is only when citizens come together that they can tap into benefits such as crime reduction. The main purpose of community development is to de-emphasize over reliance and lofty expectations on what local government can do for communities. There are many advantages to be gained from active citizens' participation in community development. The citizen learns to understand and appreciate the individual needs and interests of all community groups. The individual begins to understand group dynamics as it applies to mixed groups. The citizen can bring about desired change by expressing one's desire, either individually or through a community group. The citizen learns how to resolve conflicting interests for the general welfare of the group. The individual learns how to make desired changes.

Table 10: Level of organizing community groups for effective implantation of Community Policing

| Item | Level | No | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| What is the level of organizing community groups for effective implantation of community policing? | Excellent | 2 | 1.9 |
| | Very good | 10 | 9.8 |
| | Average | 30 | 29.4 |
| | Low | 60 | 58.8 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Organizing community groups is one of the essential elements to make sure citizens take part as much as is needed. As the above table shows, around 1.9% said excellent training and 9.8% of employees said they had

particularly good training on organizing community groups, 29.4% said they have average training but 58.8 % of them said they had a low level of training. From this data we can see that approximately 58.8 % of officers lack training on how to organize community groups. The problem is made worse because the Zone includes people of different social status and different ethnic groups. It was made clear that there was no recognition or reward for ability or achievement in Community Police work. From this we can clearly conclude that the concept has not been formally ‘institutionalized’ within the existing policing merit-based systems and performance management mechanisms. It also suggests that, without reward schemes, it would be extremely hard to encourage the community policing officers to work hard and meet the desired strategic goals.

Table 11: The community participation in community policing programmes

| Item | Level | No | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|
| How do you rate community participation in community policing programs? | Excellent | 10 | 9.8 |
| | V. Good | 12 | 11.7 |
| | Good | 15 | 14.7 |
| | Average | 20 | 19.6 |
| | Poor | 45 | 44.1 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

The above table shows that most of the respondents (63.7%) and 65 stated that the participation of the community in the community policing program was either poor or average. Only a few respondents, about 35%, replied that the participation of the community in the community policing program was excellent, very good or good. Interviews with the heads of police and heads of community policing officers gave their reasons for the low participation of the community in community policing as listed below:

- lack of knowledge and understanding of community policing philosophy;
- fear of retaliation by criminals;
- fear of police abuse;
- little understanding of existing laws;
- hatred for police due to their misconduct;
- weakness of police to share power;
- neglect in safety and security matters; and
- leaving all crime prevention duties to the police.

These findings provide further evidence to conclude that community participation in community policing initiatives was very low in this Zone.

Table 12: Society willingness to work with community policing officers to avoid criminal activity in the neighbourhood

| Item | Level | No | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| How do you rate society's willingness to work with community policing officers to avoid criminal activity in the neighborhood? | Excellent | 12 | 11.7 |
| | V. Good | 10 | 9.8 |
| | Good | 20 | 19.6 |
| | Average | 10 | 9.8 |
| | Poor | 50 | 49 |
| Total | | 102 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

As the table depicts, about 60 (58.8%) said the willingness of society to collaborate with the police is poor or on average. The remaining 52 (36.1%) rated as excellent, very good, or good witnessing the collaboration between the two is alarmingly deteriorating.

Community crime prevention involves citizens involved in neighborhood watch programs, with ordinary members of the public taking more ownership of their neighborhood security. Neighborhood watch programming is said to be effective with the collaboration exerted by parties coming forth in community policing (Bolton, 2006). There are downsides to neighborhood watch schemes ranging from criminal abuse to poor evidence and intelligence. Good communications are needed, which may be difficult to find in rural areas.

However, the response of the respondents on the above table shows that the willingness of the community in working with community policing officers in prevention and control of crime in the neighborhood was exceptionally low in West Wollega Zone. The reasons appear to be:

- most residents leave security issues to the police,
- most residents are either reluctant or hesitant to take part,
- there is a lack of knowledge on the benefits of self-security and the importance of shared responsibility to prevent crime,

- lack of willingness and interest of the community to participate in police activities and in their own security matters,
- lack of response to police calls,
- suspicion of corruption on the part of police officers;
- police misconduct,
- failure of community to provide crime-related information to the police; and
- police perceived as arrogant and brutal rather than as potential partners.

The issues outlined above are all significant issues. There may be such low public regard towards the police for reasons not covered in detail in this study. It may also be the case that this low level of public regard will inevitably affect the successful introduction of community policing.

Main Findings

The implementation of community policing in the West Wollega Zone has not been successful because of police-community relations. Community policing attempts have failed to bring police and citizens together. Although there is wide support among informed people on the theoretical benefits of community policing, the practical difficulties of implementation in an under-developed country make actual community policing ineffective.

The major factors associated with the failure of the implementation of community policing include the widespread view among the population that dealing with crime is a matter for the police alone and not the community. This issue has made most of the people reluctant to attend the meetings underpinning the community policing concept organized by the police. Furthermore, there is inadequate understanding within the community on the benefits of self-security and the importance of a shared sense of responsibility to prevent crime.

The study also finds that the implementation of community policing did not achieve the expected outcomes. This finding is separate from any findings on the crime rates in the Zone. These were not considered in detail, but it does appear that the introduction of community policing has not had any significant effect on either the incidence of crime or on crime statistics more generally. The study did reveal that public feelings on the effectiveness of community policing are skeptical.

Of most concern was the low opinion of the public for the police, due to their misconduct or a perception of misconduct. It is likely that this, in turn, makes the police reluctant to share policing powers and anti-crime planning at the local level. People are extremely reluctant to attend meetings and appear to be suspicious of police house calls made in the interest of community policing.

Conclusions

The analysis shows that the implementation of community policing held in the past years in the West Wollega Zone could not reach a significant change in improving the performance of policing in the study area. Community policing requires the police and the community to work together as partners in finding effective actions and addressing the related issues of crime and social ills in their own community. It is a first step to support the community closely to provide assurance about the police presence with them to prevent crime.

Besides differences in application, community policing is the chosen way of policing in the contemporary world. We cannot deny the fact that the police could not do their work without the support of the public and the public cannot have peace and order without the police. Therefore, the police-community relationship must be a two-way partnership. Because the police cannot shoulder the burden of crime prevention alone, it is important at this time for police officers of West Wollega Zone to seek closer co-operation with the community. The police need to work on its public image.

Community policing officers should bring police and citizens together to prevent crime and solve neighborhood problems. This helps police get a better sense of community needs and helps the community to develop greater trust in the police. Together, in partnership, the community and police department could work together to achieve a common goal of community policing as an effective way to promote public safety and to enhance the quality of life in a community in West Wollega Zone.

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