

**SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION (SBCC) APPROACHES  
AND COMMUNITY POLICING IN CALABAR SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study is premised on “Social and Behaviour Change Communication Approaches and Community Policing in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State”. It examines the awareness level of the concept of community policing and how it can be sustainably entrenched and effective, using a community-grounded communication approach. The study adopted the survey method as the research design while the data were gathered using the questionnaire. The population of study includes; CRUTECH residents, Police, Vigilante members and CRUTECH private security who are all stakeholders on security matters in CRUTECH. The purposive sampling method was adopted to select respondents from within the residential area while the Social Exchange Theory and Community Organization Model were used to theoretically underpin the concept of community policing in a social and behavior change communication perspective. The findings showed that, the awareness level of community policing among CRUTECH residents was moderate, hence, the isolation experienced between the parties. The study concluded that, for a result-oriented, cohesive relationship between the Police and the community, the government, Police, and Community Vigilant groups should adopt a conceptual umbrella to integrate their different message efforts that enable them share information for collective goals.*

**KEYWORDS:** Community Policing, Social Mobilization, Communication, Security, Behaviour Change

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## **INTRODUCTION**

With increase in economic downturn across the globe, high rate of unemployment, decrease in societal values and rising discontent among citizens concerning unequal social rights, there have also been commensurate increases in crime rates, social unrest, terrorism and militancy, and fear of crime in public places which have elicited concern from governments and even the police body across the globe.

The main concern lies not only in crime prevention but also, reshaping police reputation, and manner of response to crime or social unrest which somewhat present them as militarised rather than the public’s friends as usually portrayed by traditional police. The police institution across the globe seeks for a strategy that will centre on building ties between the traditional police and members of the community where they are domiciled in order to deter and reduce criminal activities.

### **Global Security Concerns**

Schubert, (1917) states that, the United States started projecting the idea of community policing due to decreased trust in law enforcement agencies and increased fear of crime. Community policing started gaining grounds and also, became a new norm which resulted in more police

assigned to beats in communities throughout the United States while they also, began to engage more community members, businesses, non-profits and others in partnership to combat crime in joint problem solving efforts.

Ibrahim, Saleh and Mukitar, (2016) state that, Nigeria embraced community policing on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, 2004, which was a pragmatic approach to police reforms that set in motion, a process for the departure from the known traditional policing that was viewed as reactive, incidence-based to a problem-solving oriented policing that is proactive with the community as a cornerstone of policy objectives.

That Nigeria police force embraced the philosophy of community policing as was obtainable in so many countries the world over, based on the premise that, in a democratic society, the police are obliged to protect and serve the public's fundamental right to liberty, equality and justice under the law, stating that, this can only be achieved if the police becomes part of the community rather than being apart from the community they claim to serve.

Also that, community policing is a paradigm shift that seeks to focus on constructive engagement with people who are the end-users of the police service, aimed at renegotiating the contract between the people and the police, thereby making the community co-producers of justice and a quality police service (AIJC, 2013).

### **Cross River State Situation**

In Cross River State, especially, Calabar the capital of the State had over the years carved a niche for itself as a peaceful, serene and crime-free city with the phrase, "Come and live, and be at Rest" ascribed to the word "CALABAR" as a significance of that impression. Accordingly, the peaceful nature of the city earned Calabar the status of the safest destination for business leisure and tourism; therefore, it became an epicenter for national and international events. (Nigerian Tribune, 2016). Between January, 2016 and 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2016, the Peaceful Impression about Calabar changed, it earned itself a new status, to the chagrin of its residents and the nation as a whole. The state including the capital has been overtaken by daily reports of kidnapping, armed robbery, militancy, communal clashes, cult killings, car thefts and other related activities, rendering it insecure for both the residents and visitors alike. Also, residents in the state now sleep with one eye open, business activities have been slowed down as scared investors and businessmen now close shops early while some are planning to relocate.

Apart from economic distress in the society on one hand, this trend was also attributed to the lackadaisical attitudes of security agents to work, their unhealthy relationships with criminals and release of criminals even before being charged for their crimes on the other hand. (Cross River Watch, 2016).

Against this backdrop, various communities seek to provide security for their residents by constituting vigilante groups, while the Police has also discovered the need to build a positive image devoid of abrogation of public trust whereby the perception of the Police as static, reactive, incident-driven bureaucracy would be disabused, leading eventually to the impression of a dynamic, open, quality-oriented image by the community. Community policing philosophy emphasizes that police officers work closely with local citizens and community agencies in designing and implementing a variety of crime prevention strategies and problem-solving measures (Wikipedia, 2010). These include the use of effective communication to enhance good relationships between the community and the police, whereby, the people in a community

enjoy a cordial relationship with the Police and possess a sense of protection while the Police at the same instance have an obligation towards security concerns that border on the lives of the community. Social and Behavior Change Communication strategies are plausible antidote for social transformation, that provide solutions across multiple levels of change and offer a platform for the promulgation of the concept of community policing in any community.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical basis of Community Policing in Calabar South is anchored on the Social Exchange Theory of Thibault and Kelley (1952), and the Community Organization model.

### **The Social Exchange Theory**

The social exchange theory assumes that every interaction involves an exchange, either goods or services while people try to get from others as much as they have given to them. It is based on how two parties feel about a relationship, balancing between what is put into a relationship and what is gotten out of it, and the chances of having a better relationship.

Its viability rests on the assumption that human beings recognize each other's needs, exchange in reciprocity, a situation whereby, a response is correlated to the worth of the original message. The theory encourages explicit acknowledgement of the costs and benefits of actions which should be promoted through campaign, with obvious efforts to minimize costs and maximize benefits with the intention to persuade someone to take part in an exchange believing that, the benefit of taking part in the relationship far outweighs the cost of risks and causes. Implying that, the benefits that both the police and community will derive from availing each other the necessary support far outweighs the risks and causes of non-alliance.

### **The Community Organisation Model**

The community Organization Model is also adopted to explain the social phenomenon of community organization for developmental purposes. It is concerned with how social systems function, change and mobilise community members, and organisations using strategies that work in varieties of settings, embodying an ecological perspective while addressing individual, group, institutional and community issues.

Community organising employ different approaches to effective change, they include; locality development which focuses on building consensus between parties in the exchange relationship and capacity to act; social planning approach whereby problem solving usually relies on expert practitioners; and social action aimed at increasing community's capacity to solve problems geared towards achieving concrete changes or results that redress social injustices.

The model projects the idea that, community, groups or individual's be empowered to gain confidence and skills to improve their quality of life, through community capacity building, are able to identify social problems such as civic engagements and address them, participate in the organizing process to enable them gain leadership and problem solving skills; identify relevant issues by selecting them into distinct, immediate and solvable pieces; and possess critical consciousness that will enable community members to identify the root causes of any social problems that arise in the community. The theory is grassroots inclined, conflict-oriented and used to mobilize disadvantaged people to act on their own behalf as active citizens of their country or state.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The Nigeria Police Force has a reputation that is a far cry from its slogan “Police is your friend” and this is not without obvious reasons. This impression stemmed from the view of an ordinary Nigerian about Police officers in Nigeria whom they perceive as corrupt, due to the level of indulgence in receiving bribes in full glare of the public, connivance with criminals, human right abuse, lawlessness, involvement in partisan politics that skews their sense of neutrality and objectivity, and even involvement in criminal activities. These have led to the impression that, the Police are not friendly, are adversarial in approach, unreliable and do not have good relationships with the ordinary citizens. These negative impressions have earned the Nigerian Police Force, gross mistrust from the public who view them as unreliable in discharging their duties.

The level of trust has degenerated so badly in Cross River State, especially in Calabar and is reflected in the increase in the rate of jungle justice being meted out to criminals within Calabar metropolis in recent times. Citizens no longer deem it obligatory to report or release any criminal apprehended by members of the community to the law enforcement agency whom they accuse of perverting justice after obtaining bribes from criminal elements, given to corruption, leading to gross mistrust and disdain for the police. The rift between the Police and the community needs to be bridged for the collective interest of the Nigeria Police Force and the Communities in which they are domiciled. Thus, the concern of this study is to determine the most sustainable ways of building a cordial and symbiotic community relationship between the Calabar South residents and the Police using a result-oriented effective communication mechanism.

Thus, the question, is if the Calabar South Local Government Area’s residents and police details resident there are aware that partnering to combat crime is an effective measure for crime prevention and security maintenance; and what is the role of Social and Behaviour Change Communication Approaches in Community Policing in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State?

## **Objectives of the Study**

In view of the problem raised, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Ascertain if the residents of Calabar South are aware that partnering with the police is a crime prevention and security maintenance measure.
2. Determine the level of awareness of community policing by Calabar South residents and the police domiciled in the area.
3. Highlight the benefits being derived from the police - community relations currently in Calabar South Local Government Area.
4. Determine the most appropriate communication strategy that can be used to enhance effective community policing in Calabar South L.G.A.
5. Suggest plausible strategic communication for sustainable community policing in Calabar South L.G.A.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of awareness among residents of Calabar South L.G.A. that partnering with the police domiciled in their area, is a crime prevention and security maintenance measure?
2. What is the level of awareness of Calabar South residents about community policing?
3. What are the benefits being currently derived from the police- community-relations in Calabar South?
4. What is the most appropriate communication process that can be used to enhance community policing strategies within Calabar South L.G.A?
5. How can community policing be made sustainable in Calabar South L.G.A?

### **Scope of Study**

The study “Social and Behaviour Change Communication Approaches for Community Policing in Calabar South Local Government Area” is focused on Calabar South L.G.A. using Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), residential quarters as a case study, and premised on the need to encourage cordial and result-oriented relationship between Calabar South Local Government Area residents and the police within the area using a socio-ecological communication perspective of SBCC, namely, Behaviour Change Communication, Social mobilisation and advocacy. It is based on two of the three SBCC strategies, the Behaviour Change Communication, BCC and Social Mobilisation Approaches, this is in order to exploit the possibility of the community members taking charge of security issues themselves without the direct involvement of policy makers.

### **Significance of the Study**

The purpose for the study is to demonstrate the use of Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategies and socio-ecological approach as veritable tools for necessitating positive attitudinal change, in organizational behaviour, as well as in individuals and social environments of an identified target population.

The study highlights the imperative of employing the socio-ecological approach to necessitate interactive partnership between the community and the police to identify problems across multiple levels of change and proffer solutions accordingly. The study would be of immense benefit to communication and development scholars as it provides contemporary development approach that takes cognizance of not only the creation of awareness but take cognizance of the individual and social factors as required by the new concept of communication for development.

The study would sensitize security institutions, particularly, the police on the imperative to adopt a communication process that incorporates and integrates all stakeholders in community policing for effective crime prevention and reduction.

The study revealed how interactive partnership between the community and the police can help proffer solution to public safety issues or problems.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Community Policing in Perspective

Community policing is defined by Ferraira (1996) as a philosophy of full service personalizing policing, where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralized place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems. It is concerned with the need for the police to adopt a proactive approach in addressing issues related to public safety.

The President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing in 2015 states that, community policing is 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 (Ibrahim et al, 2016). It takes cognizance of the relationship between the police and the community, which though are independent in structure, share the responsibility of ensuring a crime free and secured environment for all and sundry.

The Kenyan Police Service, (2017) defines community Policing as an approach to policing that recognizes the independence and shared responsibility of the police and the community in ensuring a safe and secured environment, which is aimed at establishing an active and equal partnership between them, through which crime and community issues can jointly be discussed, solutions determined and implemented. While Trojanowicz and Bucquerox, (1998) describes community policing as a philosophical and an organizational strategy that promotes a new partnership between the people and their police, which is based on the premise that, both the police and the community must work together as equal partners to identify, prioritize and solve contemporary problems such as crimes, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, overall neighbourhood delay, with the goal of improving the overall quality of life in an area.

The emphasis is on crime prevention and solving neighbourhood problems and its aim is to nip crimes in the bud before it happen, using proactive measures. Members of the public or community are then empowered to participate fully in policing while the police too integrate into the community.

The difference between community relations policing and community policing is that, police community relations are the relationships between the police force and the people it polices while community policing entails the involvement of the members of the community in carrying out police functions. Also, community policing differs from traditional policing in that, traditional policing is a temporary measure in curtailing criminal activities because their duty is to respond swiftly to incidents and emergency calls, identify and apprehend criminals, and prosecute them according to the demands of the laws. Though, community policing seem to be the most appropriate for the prevention of crime at the grassroot due to its engagement with the communities most affected by security issues, so the persons still express fear that the concept may increase more corruption among police men due to their close interaction with the community.

Chene (2012) states that, community policing could create more opportunities for corruption, unethical practices by promoting closer ties between the police and the community because it creates more opportunities for long-term personal interactions, preferential treatments and the

development of corrupt networks. The fact still remains that, the tasks of crimes detection and prevention cannot be successful without the involvement of communities.

In contrast to traditional policing, community policing, is basically a community-driven approach to solving problems and entails working with, and eliciting support from the community. Other purpose of community policing include apprehending criminals and getting information concerning issues that threaten the safety of the community.

In an open letter to President Obama of the United State in 2014 written by Policy Link, the Center for Global Solutions in collaboration with social justice leaders, congressional members, faith leaders and activists prescribed seven principles to improve police community relations, they include:

- i. Ensuring transparency and accountability
- ii. Investment in human relations training
- iii. Ensuring diversity e.g. engaging law enforcement personnel who are culturally sensitive, speak the communities language and are residents of their patrolled communities.
- iv. Proactively engage the communities – familiarize with community members, shun stereotype and bias.
- v. Reject militarisation – Avoid reaction and approach using weapon and force to confront problems but adopting open and cordial partnership for problem solving.
- vi. Examine and implement good models
- vii. Implement technology and tools for oversight.

Community policing is comprised of three key components strategies. COPS, (2012). They include:

1. **Community partnerships:** Between the law enforcement agency, individuals and the community they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police.
2. **Problem solving:** The process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and evaluate effective responses.
3. **Organizational transformation:** Alignment of organizational management, structure, personnel and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem solving.

### **Strategies for Implementing Community Policing**

These strategies and approaches include the following:

- i. Relying on community – based crime prevention by employing civilian education, neighbourhood watch and a variety of other techniques, as opposed to relying solely on police patrols.

- ii. Restructuring of patrol from an emergency response-based system to emphasizing proactive techniques such as foot patrol.
- iii. Increased officer accountability to civilians they are supposed to serve.
- iv. Decentralizing the police authority, allowing more discretion among lower ranking officers, and more invitation expected from them.

These can only be driven successfully with the use of effective communication.

### **The Role of Effective Communication in Community Policing**

Communication is the mechanism that drives any developmental process and therefore not an exception in the process of community policing. According to Wikipedia, communication helps to influence the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that tend to change social norms, galvanise actions, demonstrate healthy skills, reinforce knowledge attitudes and behaviour. It increases intended audience's knowledge and awareness of social problems or solutions.

Egbon (2001) states that, communication cannot function just as a mechanical transfer of facts from source to a receiving point but involves a circular interactive process of a dynamic nature which involves "dialogue in a free atmosphere of democratic interchange which creates opportunity for understanding the other person's point of view and vice versa". This concept of communication correlates with the assumption of the Social Exchange Theory that human beings understand each other's needs, exchange in reciprocity and response is correlated to the worth of the message.

Therefore, Social and Behaviour Change Communication Approaches which involve the use of complementary strategies, interactive and multisectoral communication mechanism that offer a functional platform for the propagation and promulgation of the three key components of community policing namely; community partnership, problem solving and organizational transformation, using the three communication approaches; behaviour change communication, social mobilization and advocacy at the individuals, community and society levels respectively, for organizational transformation and social change.

### **Social and Behaviour Change Communication Approach to Community Policing**

HC3, (2014) defines Social and Behavior Change Communication as a process through which communication is positively employed to influence the dimension of health and social well-being, tackling social determinants such as knowledge, attitudes, norms and cultural practices using the most powerful communication components and fundamental human interaction such as; information communication technology, mass media, community level activities, interpersonal communication and the new media.

Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) in a nutshell, involves the application of interactive, theory-based, research-driven communication processes and strategies which involve the use of complementary approaches, drawing on socio-ecological model to find a tipping point for change at the individual, community and social levels (C-Change, 2013). SBCC strategies using the socio-ecological perspective according to UNICEF (2009) include:

1. **At the individual level (Calabar South L.G.A. Residents):**

**Behaviour Change Communication:** This involves the provision of relevant information and motivation through well-defined communication strategies to address knowledge, attitudes and practices through identifying, analyzing, segmenting audiences and participants.

2. **At the community level (Police, Vigilante and CRUTECH Security Personnels):**

**Social Mobilization:** This is a process of bringing together, all feasible and practical inter-sectoral social partners and allies to determine felt needs, raise awareness of and demand specifically for a particular development objectives in this contest (community policing) and;

3. **Advocacy at the societal level –(Policy Makers):**

This is a cultural and adaptive process of gathering, organising and formulating information into arguments, to be communicated to decision makers through various interpersonal and media channels, with a view to influencing their discussion towards raising resources or political and leaderships acceptance and commitment for a development programme, thereby preparing a society for its acceptance.

### **Socio-Ecological Perspectives in Community Policing**

Social-ecological perspective or approach involves a multilevel and interactive dimension of addressing an identified problem. According to the National Cancer Institute (1995), the ecological perspective emphasizes the interaction between, and interdependent of factors within and across all levels of a social or health problem. The ecological perspective aver that, social issues should be addressed through multiple levels of influence because behaviour of an individual can be influenced or shaped by other individuals, community and the society vice versa.

The concept of community policing as desired by the police involves changing the concept of policing among police officers, and organisational transformation for changing police community relations with the community they serve, and on the other hand, gain the trust of the community members for mutual benefit of both parties. Therefore, since community policing approach is community-driven, it correlates with the socio ecological perspective, and specifically, the concept of Behaviour Change Communication which is also applied at the individual level and the social mobilization approach applied at the community level to bring all stakeholders to determine felt needs and take appropriate decision. These processes encourage interaction between the police, the departments, the officers who serve them and the community who depend on each other to provide solutions to identified problems, as advocated by the social exchange theory, that, based on the worth of the shared message, which is concerned with the felt needs of both the police and the community to prevent crime and maintain security, both parties relate in order to generate positive response that will correlate with the demands of the original message.

Employing the three SBCC approaches, behaviour change communication, social mobilization and advocacy to operationalise the three strategic components of community policing, which are community partnerships, problem solving and organisational transformation at the three levels of change, the individual, community and societal levels of change to stimulate

attitudinal change will require the identification of the following stages and proffering solutions based on their felt needs.

**Individual Level:**

- |                                  |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Communication Approach           | - | Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)  |
| Target Audience                  | - | Calabar South Residents   |
| Desired change                   | - | Encourage the willingness to partner with the police on crime prevention and security maintenance   |
| Message                          | - | Restoration of trust in the police and partnering with them will ensure a crime free environment.   |
| Communication channels using BCC | - | IPC-( Interpersonal communication) by police domiciled in the L.G.A., community leaders, resident associations, women associations etc. fliers, posters and billboards jingles etc. |

**The Community Level:**

- |                        |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Communication Approach | - | Social mobilisation   |
| Target Audience        | - | Police domiciled in Calabar South, community leaders, opinion leaders, members of community association, local chiefs and service providers like the vigilante groups in the area.  |
| Desired Change         | - | Community leaders should support the residents to collaborate with the police to nip crimes in the bud and maintain security while service providers such as the police should ensure transparency and accountability towards crime prevention in the community they operate. |
| Message                | - | Emphasising the need for community partnering to solve crime problem for societal and organisational transformation   |
| Communication Channels | - | Interpersonal communication, sensitization meetings, community outreach, television and radio, local songs and billboards etc.  |

**The Societal Level:**

- |                        |   |                                 |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Communication Approach | - | Advocacy                        |
| Target Audience        | - | Policy makers such as the state |

		commissioner of police, Calabar South area commandant, special assistant on security matters, traditional rulers etc.
Desired Change	-	To become change agents who advocate policies that will bring all stakeholders together to combat crime and maintain security.
Message	-	Mobilise residents to partner together with the police to prevent crime and maintain security in the area.
Communication Channel	-	Interpersonal communication, advocacy meetings, community dialogues etc.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, POPULATION AND SAMPLE

### Research Design

Survey research method was adopted as the research design for this study, using the questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The questionnaires were administered to a sample of the population comprising of CRUTECH Residents, police stationed in Calabar South, specifically, the Cross River University of Technology, CRUTECH, CRUTECH Private Security members and the members of the Vigilante Group resident within the premises who were purposively selected due to their collective roles on security issues within the premises.

### Study Area

The study area is the Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) residential Quarters, Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State was purposively selected and the population of study are residents who had lived on the premises in the past ten years. The criterion for selection is those who had witnessed the decline in the level of insecurity within this period.

### Analysis of Questionnaire Data

20 copies of the questionnaire were given out, retrieved and were useful for analysis.

**Table 1: CRUTECH residents, police, CRUTECH Private Security Personnel and vigilante's awareness level of partnership as a crime prevention and security maintenance approach**

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very high level	16	80%
Moderate level	2	10%
Low level	2	10%
Extremely low level	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 indicates high level of awareness of partnership as a crime prevention and security maintenance approach.

**Table 2: CRUTECH and Police awareness level of the concept of community policing**

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very high level	4	30%
Moderate level	10	50%
Low level	2	10%
Extremely low level	4	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 indicates moderate level of awareness of the concept of community policing.

**Table 3: Current partnership status of the Police-CRUTECH residents relations**

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very high level	2	10%
Moderate level	2	10%
Low level	4	20%
Extremely low level	12	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 indicates very low police – CRUTECH resident relations.

**Table 4: What are the Current benefits of Police-Community relations in CRUTECH**

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Adequate information on criminal activities	2	10%
Reduction rate in criminal activities	6	30%
Community engagement in decision making	2	10%
Increase trust in Police domiciled in CRUTECH	2	10%
No benefit at all	8	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 indicates the benefits being derived from the current police-community relations in CRUTECH.

**Table 5: Radio and Television are the most appropriate way to encourage police-community relationship in CRUTECH**

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very high level	3	5%
Moderate level	2	10%
Low level	2	10%
Extremely low level	13	65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 indicates very low acceptance of radio and television as the most appropriate communication medium for sustainable community-policing.

**Table 6: Face-to-face communication or community mobilization is the most appropriate way to encourage police-community relationship in CRUTECH.**

Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Very high level	13	65%
Moderate level	2	10%
Low level	2	10%
Extremely low level	3	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 indicates very high level acceptance of face-to-face communication or community mobilization as the most appropriate communication medium for sustainable community policing.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**To what extent is the level of awareness among CRUTECH residents about partnering with the Police Domiciled in CRUTECH, is a crime prevention and security maintenance measure?**

The findings in this study show that CRUTECH residents require more than mere awareness to partner with the Police in combating crime and sustaining a safe environment. Table 1 indicates that there is a high level of awareness on the need to partner with the police to safeguard the environment and not a situation whereby strangers guide strangers”.

According to the social exchange theory that a meaningful relationship is based on how two parties interact to create a balance between what is put into a relationship and what is gotten out of it, and exploiting the chances of having a better relationship. However, crime prevention and security maintenance do not depend basically on the level of awareness for partnership but the costs and benefits of the relationship. Therefore, there is need by the police institution to emphasise the need for cordial relationship between the police and the community, instead of just patrolling without any relationship with the host community.

**What is the level of awareness of CRUTECH Residents about community policing?**

From table 2, it can be observed that moderate numbers of CRUTECH residents are conversant with the concept of community policing. Fifty respondents (50%) agreed to being moderately knowledgeable about the concept of community policing while four respondents (20%) strongly agreed to be conversant with the concept. Four respondents (20%) also claimed absolute ignorance while two respondents (10%) claimed a fair knowledge of the concept of community policing. This is despite the launch of community policing in Nigeria since 2004, the concept is not yet well grounded. This can be attributed to the same issue of introducing laudable policies but poor execution due to lack of commitment at various levels of government and enforcement institution concerned.

Community policing brings police and citizens together to prevent crime and solve neighbourhood problems (Law Testher, 2017). It enables crimes to be nipped in the bud before

it happens, helps the police to get a better sense of resident's needs and also, assists residents to develop greater trust in the police.

### **To what extent is the partnership between CRUTECH residents and the police domiciled in the area?**

Table 3 shows the partnership status between CRUTECH residents and the police mounting guard in the area. It revealed a very low level of relationship with twelve respondents (20%) disagree to any sort of police-community relationship existing in CRUTECH, four respondents (20%) claimed a low level relationship, two respondents (10%) among the vigilante admitted a fair level of relationship while two respondents (10%) agreed that a high level relationship exist. This indicates that there is a very low level of any relationship existing between CRUTECH residents and the police patrolling within the premises. This type of scenario will prevent the police from discovering the underlying causes of crime within the community.

Therefore, the police should seek out ways to encourage a greater means of striking good relationship with the community they serve, involve them in its pursuit to control crime in order to identify areas of concerns in the community and proffer the most suited problem-solving solutions.

### **What is the extent to which CRUTECH residents benefit from the police-community relations in CRUTECH?**

From Table 4, it can be observed that two respondents (10%) agreed to obtaining of information on criminal activities within the premises, six respondents (30%) acknowledged reduction in criminal activities, all respondents (100%) denied any community engagement activity, implying that the obtainment of information and reduction in crime was basically the achievement of the police without the contribution from CRUTECH residents. Two respondents (10%) expressed trust in the police within CRUTECH while ten respondents (50%) deny any significant benefit. This imply that, the police domiciled within CRUTECH are far from earning mutual trust from the residents and this can only be as a result of working in isolation without any conscious effort by the police to immerse themselves in the community, invariably denying the community of joining the police department as partners in crime prevention and control, defeating the essence of community policing. Together in partnership, the community and police department work together to achieve a common goal of a safer, better place to live. (BJA in Lawteacher, 2017).

### **What is the Most Suited Communication Approach for Sustainable Community Policing in CRUTECH residential quarters?**

Table 5 shows three respondents (15%) highly in favour of sole use of radio and television for mobilising the police/CRUTECH Communities, two respondents (10%) indicated fair or moderate use of mass communication media, two respondents (10%) disagreed with the notion of using radio and television alone for the purpose while thirteen respondents (65%) totally disagreed that these media should not be the sole mode of communication.

Furthermore, Table 6 shows thirteen respondents (65) highly disposed to the use of interpersonal and social mobilization in creating awareness or entrenching the ideology of community policing, two respondents (10%) fairly disposed, two respondents (10%) disagree while three (15%) absolutely disagreed with the use of interpersonal and social mobilization for community policing entrenchment.

## **FINDINGS**

Findings of this study, based on the data presented revealed that, the concept of community policing is far from being practiced in CRUTECH due to the low level of interaction between the CRUTECH community and the police men that patrol the neighbourhood. There is little awareness on the concept of community policy and the police do not engage the community in decision making and therefore, unable to create an enabling environment, trust and reliability in such a manner that CRUTECH community members feel a sense of belonging whereby the police too records a sense of acceptance by the community. The social exchange theory of Thibault and Kelly aver that, human beings recognize each other's needs, exchange in reciprocity with a response that correlates to the worth of the original message. In this case, the community is bound to respond to the partnership gesture of the police, if they are consulted and their concerns taken account of according to the desire of the community in determining and evaluating operational community policing policy and practice. The attendant result will strengthen the trust, respect and favourable opinion of the police.

This will lead to a partnership aimed at achieving a common goal of preventing crimes before they happen and proffering the most suited solutions to jointly identify problems in the community. The study also revealed that, in handling communication matters at the community level, the most suited communication approach is the inter-personal communication and social mobilization approach.

Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) approach will help an individual to gain knowledge, attitudes, and practices associated with the community policing ideology and also provide opportunity to gain relevant information and motivation through well-defined strategies. While social mobilization involves linking together all inter-sectoral partners to determine felt needs, raise awareness and empower the community to demand for a particular approach to development objectives, in this case, entrenching the practice of community policing. This concept of community policing corroborates the idea of the Community Organization model that emphasizes a community-driven approach to assessing and solving social problems using local development, social planning and social action approaches to effect change.

The successful implementation and effectiveness of community policing can be evaluated based on the reduction in crime rates in a geographic area, control of violence or social unrest in a community, ridding the community of criminal elements and pervading sense of safety in an environment. These can only be achieved when the police perceives the community as an agent and partner in promoting security rather than as a passive audience.

## **Implication**

Without purposeful interaction between the police and community members, the efforts at improving security and prevent crimes will remain elusive. This is based on the fact that, the concept of community policing which is premised on the principles of community partnership, organizational transformation and problem-solving can only be operationalised when there is a functional platform for it. It therefore believes on the government and the police force to adopt a communication mechanism like the SBCC strategies that offer a platform for the integration of multi-sectoral and diverse messages geared towards educating members of the public, re-orientate police personels, identify problems and develop solutions that are best suited to address felt needs.

## **CONCLUSION**

Effective community policing helps to bridge the divide and enhance transparency between communities and the police that serve them for the purpose of partnering to effectively solve security problems. The bottom-line is to reduce the risk factors that are the layers and causes of criminal conducts. The success of this endeavor depends on meaningful, result-oriented and purposeful collaborative effort of all stakeholders in security concerns, communities and strategic communication experts who collaborate for positive results.

It requires the police and the community in which they patrol to partner together to identify problems, solutions, make decisions about implementation of processes, programmes and projects geared towards crime prevention and security maintenance. They partner to address possible scenarios of an event and focus on the impact of the humanitarian operations because inability to communicate effectively would result to communication breakdown. A police that communicates cordially with members of the community will have access to information on criminal activities, their new locations, tactics, and suspect's description without any inhibition on the part of community informants.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- To enhance community policing in Calabar South Local Government Area, there should be efforts towards overhauling the police body by a reorientation of the Police institution towards attitudinal change, professional efficiency, proficiency in discharging duties among the police, improvement of police-community relations. There should be a conceptual umbrella such as that provided by SBCC for stakeholders in security matters to integrate their disparate message efforts that enable them create and disseminate information that while different in nature, are related in the adoption of effective strategic communication.
- Police should be open, respectful, accountable and sincere in their dealings with the public, this will minimize the level of distrust and lack of confidence in their police by a community.
- Residents should get meaningfully engaged by organizing, informing and commit to a safe, violence-free community, by working with the police as partners without fear or favour.
- There should be a collaborative effort by the government, police institution, police department and communities, brought together using community mobilization and behavior change communication approach that offer interactive problem solving platform.
- Police departments should train their members to be loyal, patriotic, transparent and committed, encouraged to shun partisan politics in the course of discharging their duty in order to maintain loyalty and patriotism to the state they are pledged.
- Proactive and sustainable community engagement practices should be given high priority whereby community partners and police work in partnership to address issues of relevance and immediate concerns through community capacity building,

participation, ability to select issues most relevant at a given period, critical consciousness on how to solve other emerging security problems, driven by effective and most suited communication approaches.

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