THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO VULNERABLE GROUPS: A SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an investigation on the impact of community policing especially as it relates to vulnerable groups. The study employed descriptive research design to survey the study area; sources of data collection were primary in nature within which the tool for data collection was face-to-face questionnaire. The findings indicated that community policing has a positive impact in giving special attention to vulnerable groups but there are still some challenges. It was revealed that some respondents such as women, children, elders and disabled involved in this study were optimistic that community policing is paying attention against crimes that direct or indirect affect their wellbeing. Furthermore, the study depicts that significant number of respondents were from police sector, followed by education sector, private security company sector, agricultural sector and the media sector. This has an implication in policing function in the country that the police sector is the key stakeholders in security matters in Tanzania. The study recommends the government to set up policy that will articulate explicitly the authentic role of police officers and social workers in helping vulnerable people in the community. Furthermore, community policing strategy should focus more on awareness creation, capacity building and assisting vulnerable groups and the community at large to participate aggressively in solving crime related problems.

KEY TERMS: *community policing, police, policing, social work, multi-agency, human service agency, Tanzania*

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INTRODUCTION

Protecting the vulnerable populations of abused children, women, old adult and dealing with the mentally ill on the streets and homes – has always been a matter for the police globally. However, in recent years public protection seems to have become an increasingly important aspect of policing (Dijk & Hoogewoning, 2016). According to Reiner, (1994) (as cited in Button, 2002) policing is a function of society that contributes to a particular social order that is carried out by a variety of different bodies and agents. Basing on the fact that many agents are involved in policing functions, Button, (2002) assert that a number of writers have attempted to classify the broad range of agents and bodies engaged in policing (Button, 2002). For example, Johnston, (1992a) (as cited in Button, 2002) provides a framework in which to review policing. He identifies four categories of policing namely: the private security sector, self-policing, citizenship and 'hybrid' policing. The latter category embraces all those public bodies (and some private bodies), which are engaged in policing, and according to him it includes bodies engaged in functions related to state security; special police forces; departments of state; miscellaneous regulatory and investigative bodies and municipal bodies. The later bodies involve amongst others from the local authority departments such as health and safety and social workers *(ibid)*.

Today, policing is not just enforcing the law anymore; on the contrary, it is a part of the social work practice in many countries Tanzania in particular. Now, in the 21st century, police has much more complicated and sensitive duties in the society in addition to traditional law enforcement duties. There is a continuous change and shift in police duties and responsibilities day-by-day requiring more to protect and serve rather than to enforce and coerce (Doğutaş, Dolu, & Güla, 2007). According to Lamin, *et al.,* (2016) community policing (CP) is people-centered as opposed to the marked bureaucratic and militaristic style which was widely influenced by British policing in the second half of the 19th century and used since the inception of CP in Tanzania in 2006. It is more about providing services to community members from a partnership perspective, not to overwhelm them with law enforcement (Lamin, *et al.,* 2016). MacDonald *et al.,* (1987) (as cited in Doğutaş, *et al.,* 2007)documented that in order to meet the expectations of the society, police departments need qualified officers and a well designed police training system "capable of responding quickly and intelligently to the accelerating pace of social change". He additionally, explain that   police training is unique in many aspects, for example, "Part art and part craft, part commonsense, part paramilitary, part social work" (Doğutaş, *et al.,* 2007).

From the above uniqueness in police training Mitra, (2012), argued that the modern police have to face newer challenges everyday where it is made conscientious to deliver a wide range of assistance to the people. Furthermore, the police are expected to deliver services ranging from detection of the highly sophisticated cyber crime to providing assistance to the elderly and the marginalized sections of the society. Modern police is supposed to uphold the philosophy of CP to ensure more proactive, people-friendly and problem-oriented policing (Mitra, 2012). Conversely, the social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being of the vulnerable population (Crawford & Walker, 2007; Maschi, *et al.,* 2009).

This push Dean, Lumb, Kevin, and Klopovic, (2000) to trace the account between the police and social work professions partnership geared toward serving their clients. They argued that the historical background of the police and social work relationship indicates that, for over a century, social service has been considered a key part of policing, and serving victims of crime and offenders has been a major emphasis of social work. Law enforcement and social work have served the same target groups but with varying success. Furthermore, authors continues by saying that currently there are social work and police partnerships in several jurisdictions that follow the crisis intervention paradigm involving three stages: response, stabilization and prevention. Police calls for service are crisis situations where police respond, stabilize and then partner with human service agencies that provide client based services and case management to prevent the problems that result in subsequent calls for service (Dean, *et al.,* 2000).

According to Cross, (2014); Hassani, (2016) the Sukuma villagers and Kulya in central and northern Tanzania respectively, developed a local solution and formed village defence groups known as *sungusungu. It* comprised an elected village-level leadership of typically male elders such as *Kubiha* (army officer), with expertise in medicine and divination, and all able-bodied male residents could be called upon to participate in the recovery of stolen cattle, armed with bows and arrows that were often poisoned. The new forms of defense (sungusungu) then extend widely throughout the region and therefore the relationship between *iritongo* and 'sungusungu' remains powerful. However, despite various achievements obtained with the establishment of 'sungusungu', the defense system remains in danger due to fact that it was brutally practiced and not empowered enough for local safety and security in the country (Cross, 2014; Hassani, 2016).

Even though it is clear that modern policing is no longer just enforcing law but rather to protect and serve the community, in Tanzania there is no documentation on the results of the impact of CP strategy in giving special attention to vulnerable groups such as elders, women, youth, children, disabled person to mention just a few who are prone to victimisation. It is from this backdrop, this study aim at investigating the same, in outlook to make

available evidence for policy makers and multi-agency of human service to increase working relationship for the wellbeing of the marginalised segment in the society.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

The North Pemba region is amongst thirty regions in the united republic of Tanzania located in Zanzibar Islands-Pemba. Its capital region is Wete. According to the 2002 Tanzania National Census, the population of the Micheweni District was 103,816, and Wete District 107,916 a total of 211,732 (URT, 2013). Specifically, the study was conducted in two selected Districts of Wete and Micheweni. The good arrangement and implementation of CP programs in the region was the major reasons for selecting the study areas. In addition, logistic support from police officials was another reason for selecting the study area.

Sample size and sampling frame

The sample size and sampling were conducted by the aid of Regional M & E and Regional CP police officers from different *Shehias* (commonly known as Wards in Tanzania mainland) from within the urban and west districts. The sample population covered around 184 respondents of which the following were involved; Police officers, Security stakeholders, Education sector, NGO's, Media, Religious leaders, Politicians, Disabled to mention just a few. The main tool of data collection was field research survey using Paper and Pen Interviewing approach to fill in questionnaires by the aid of researchers.

Study design, data sources and collection

The study employed descriptive design to survey the study area. The study was conducted from March to May 2013, whereby, the data collection processes was done from 04th to 08th March, 2013. The study used primary sources of data, whereby, the main tool of data collection was field research survey within which face-to-face questionnaires were employed using paper and pen interviewing approach.

Data processing and analysis

The study used quantitative research method of data analysis. Questionnaire responses were coded by assigning code numbers to questionnaires. The raw data were analysed through the aid of Computer software- Microsoft Excel and Statistical Packages for Social Scientist (SPSS) IBM version 20 whereby, raw data were entered in the SPSS and then manipulated in the excel, the final output were interpreted through tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Mallick *et al.,* (2011) vulnerability is a multidisciplinary concern and conferred to a point that vulnerability is a situation when shocks and pressures attack the community repetitively Mallick *et al.,* (2011). This vulnerability thus leads to harm to the peoples' life and living style, (Davis, 2011). Therefore, vulnerability in policing means the capability of women, children, disabled, elders, drug addicts/substance abuse, mentally ill, homeless, to mention for just a few, to be victimise and or become victim of crime by virtual of their physical appearance and or socio-economic statuses in the community. Table 3.1 and figure 3.1 show perceived views of interviewed informants on the impact of CP in giving special attention to vulnerable groups who are most likely to become victims of crime in percentage.

Table 3.1: *Type of Institution/Sector * Giving special attention to vulnerable groups who are most likely to become victims of crime Cross-tabulation*

Type of Institution/Sector	Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Total
Agriculture	1	2	3	8	1	15
Business	1	2	0	3	3	9
Civil Servant	1	0	2	2	4	9
Construction	0	1	1	0	1	3
Education	5	6	5	4	4	24
Environment	0	0	0	1	0	1
Media	4	0	4	1	1	10
NGO's	4	0	0	0	2	6
Police	10	9	17	22	23	81
Political	1	0	0	0	1	2
Religion	2	4	0	1	1	8
Private Security Company	2	2	2	7	3	16
Total	**31**	**26**	**34**	**49**	**44**	**184**

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The findings from table 3.1 depict that significant number of respondents were from police sector n=81, followed by education sector n=24, private security company sector n=16, agricultural sector n=15 and the media sector n=10. This implies that the police sector is the key stakeholders in security matters in Tanzania.

Figure 3.1: *The impact of Community policing in giving special attention to vulnerable groups*
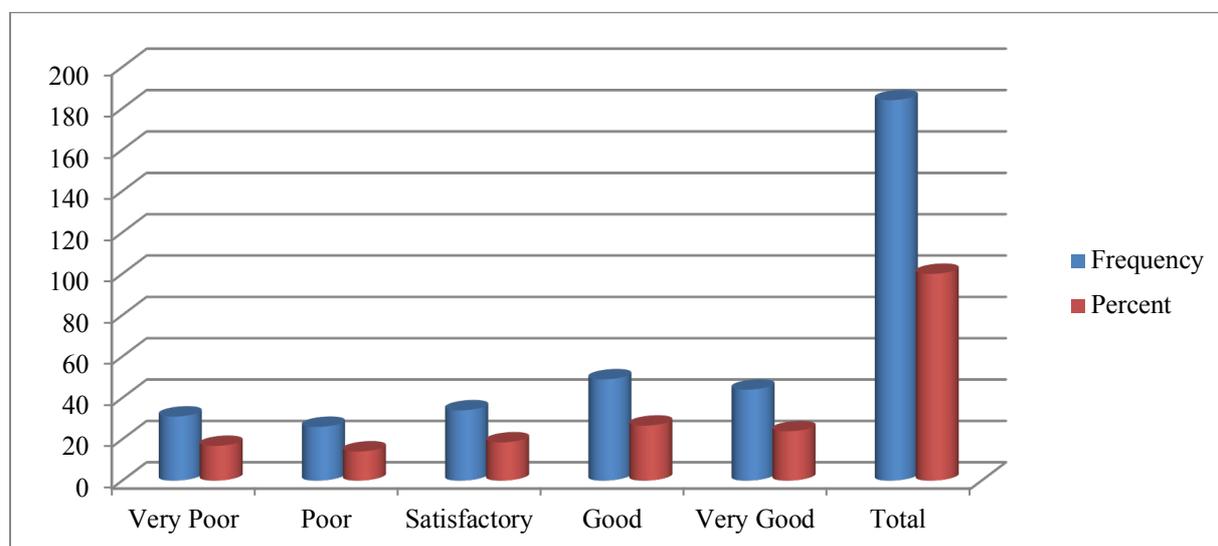
Source: Field Survey, 2013

The findings in figure 3.1 show that CP is doing well whereby about (n=93) 50.5 percent were of the view that CP have good impact in giving special attention to vulnerable groups who are most likely to become victims of crime, (n=57) 30.9 percent CP is doing poor, and (n=34) 28.5 percent viewed it to be satisfactory. The data indicates that there is good attention paid to vulnerable groups from being a victim of crimes. Currently, women, children, elders and disabled have been satisfied with the attention paid by community, neighborhood watch groups and police against crimes that direct or indirect affect their wellbeing.

The satisfaction toward CP in giving special attention to vulnerable groups was also observed in Ireland by Mulcahy, & O'Mahony, (2005) they found that while some improvements in policing were noted, members of

marginalised communities consistently voiced a strong demand for greater consultation with the police and involvement in the policy-making process (Mulcahy, & O'Mahony, 2005). This push Holmer, & Deventer, (2014) to argue that CP programs face unique challenges when dealing with marginalized communities and members of society, such as an ethnic minority or women with limited voice and legal protection. Just as it is important not to view a police service as monolithic, so it is for the communities they serve. How police interact with one segment of a community might be completely different than how they approach another (Holmer, & Deventer, 2014).

Good results from the data findings implies that the Tanzania Police Force-TPF and other stakeholders raised awareness through forums, community meetings and seminars to the general community about the protection of vulnerable groups and how they can contribute to their own safety. For example, Miles, (2006) documented that the inclusion of women in policing through their representation has brought great changes on paying attention to the vulnerable groups against crimes. Women police have seen to pay more attention on caring affected groups as efforts of empowering their fellow and other related vulnerable groups. Special attention to vulnerable groups has brought great changes; fear of crime reduced, police have got good look, and members of these affected groups are more likely to become involved in problem solving. There is recognition and reporting vulnerable group's crimes and are now treated seriously by police when they are disclosed (Miles, 2006).

It is from the above recognition, Mitra, (2012) contended that CP provides a new way for the police to provide decentralized and personalized police service that offers every law abiding citizen an opportunity to become active in the police process. It stresses exploring new ways to protect and enhance the lives of those who are most vulnerable - juveniles, the elderly, minorities, the poor, the disabled, the homeless (Mitra, 2012). At a distance from protecting and detecting crimes Bittner, (1974) (as cited in Karn, 2013) argued that in practice, the police spend a large proportion of their time performing other roles – responding to emergencies, protecting vulnerable people, preventing terrorism – and are often called upon to deal with situations characterised as 'something-that-ought-not-to-be-happening-and-about- which-someone-had-better-do-something now' (Karn, 2013).

In England, when assessing inter agency work Stanley, *et al.,* (2009), they revealed that police officers and social workers were positive about the work of specialist domestic violence services and noted that they reassured demands on their services (Stanley, *et al.,* 2009). As Jones & Maguire (n. d.) pointed out there has been a growing recognition in Britain, and other European countries, that the police operate within an increasingly diverse and heterogeneous society made up of a range of different 'communities'. On the contrary, there is clear evidence of problematic relationships between the police and disadvantaged communities in western democracies. This partly reflects structural inequalities in wider society (Jones & Maguire, n. d.).

This problematic relationships between the police and vulnerable groups was also observed in the study of Crowther (2000); Ellison (2001); Newburn (2002) (as cited in Mulcahy, & O'Mahony, (2005) they revealed that the relations between the police and young people, ethnic minority communities and other marginalised groups has high levels of harassment, confrontational policing styles, overt misconduct and other behaviours that emphasise the control rather than the service aspect of policing. Additionally, Lee, (1981) documented that enormous licence the police have historically enjoyed when dealing with marginalised communities signified that certain groups were, in effect, 'police property' (Mulcahy, & O'Mahony, 2005).

In the US and UK, a study of Trickett *et al.,*(1992) (as cited in Jones & Maguire, n . d.) has shown that not only are people living in areas of high social deprivation generally more likely to be victims of crime, they are more likely to be victimised again and again. Multiple victimisation is significantly more common in high crime areas. They keep on explaining that the police have been criticised for the way they define and conceptualise the problem of racial violence and harassment. Furthermore, they argued that the police have tended to overlook the crucial element of racial motivation to incidents. Whilst gay men in particular have complained of being unfairly targeted by law enforcement, they also feel that the police fail to provide proper protection for gay people who have been victimized (Jones & Maguire, n. d.). A study in South Africa Wells, & Polders, (2006) found that anti-gay crimes are still prevalent, and that confidence in the police was found to be low with most cases going unreported hence victimisation (Wells, & Polders, 2006).

Another research conducted in the USA and the UK about the policing of domestic violence concluded that the police do not treat victims with the required degree of sympathy and understanding, they do not take a sufficiently serious view of the offence of domestic violence (indeed, they may not regard it as a criminal offence at all), and they may regard the victim as in some way responsible for what has happened to them *(ibid).* In South Africa Westhuizen,   (2016) revealed that emotional intelligence skills were found to be useful in dealing more effectively with crowd control, domestic violence incidents, and resistance to arrests, murder cases, assisting rape victims, child abuse cases and taking statements. Furthermore, it was established by social workers through the use of examples that police members were able to use their emotional intelligence skills, but they need improvement and development in all areas of emotional intelligence (Westhuizen, 2016).

This study therefore suggest that in order to have sustainable policing cooperation between the TPF and other human service agencies notably social workers in giving special attention to vulnerable people, it is a high time now for the government of Tanzania to set up CP policy that will articulate explicitly the authentic role of police officers and social workers in helping and give special attention to those vulnerable segment of people in the

community in policing functions with effective and efficient service delivery. The rationally is not to view policing as police merely job but rather is everyone's task. The study further recommends that, vulnerable people policing is one of the ways forward for CP success and for this reason hybrid policing. CP strategy should focus more on awareness creation, capacity building and enhancing vulnerable groups and the community at large to participate aggressively in solving crime related problems and decision- making in all security matters that have an effect on their lives as co-producers of policing implementation in Tanzania.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion
Policing is a function of society that contributes to a particular social order that is carried out by a variety of different bodies and agents (Button, 2002). It is not just enforcing the law anymore; on the contrary, it is a part of the social work in the community (Doğutaş, et al., 2007). The historical background of the police and social work relationship indicates that, for over a century, social service has been considered a key part of policing, and serving victims of crime and offenders has been a major emphasis of social work. Law enforcement and social work have served the same target groups but with varying success (Dean, et al., 2000).

The modern police have to face newer challenges everyday where it is made conscientious to deliver a wide range of assistance to the people. They are expected to deliver services ranging from detection of the highly sophisticated cyber crime to providing assistance to the elderly and the marginalized sections of the society. Modern policing is supposed to uphold the philosophy of CP to ensure more proactive, people-friendly and problem-oriented policing (Mitra, 2012). Conversely, the social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being (Crawford & Walker, 2007; Maschi, et al., 2009).

Findings indicates that on the average 50.5 percent were of the view that CP have good impact in giving special attention to vulnerable groups who are most likely to become victims of crime, 30.9 percent CP is doing poor, and 28.5 percent viewed it to be satisfactory. This finding suggests that there is good attention paid to vulnerable groups from being a victim of crimes in Tanzania.

Recommendations
The study recommends that the government of Tanzania to set up CP policy that will articulate explicitly the authentic role of police officers and social workers in helping and give special attention to those vulnerable segment of people in the community in policing functions. It further recommends that vulnerable people policing is one of the way forward for CP success and for this case hybrid policing. CP strategy should focus more on awareness creation, capacity building and enhancing vulnerable groups and the community at large to participate aggressively in solving crime related problems and in decision- making in all security matters that have an effect on their lives as co-producers of policing performance in Tanzania.

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