THE INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN COMMUNITY POLICING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

While community policing is critical in the battle against crime in every neighbourhood, its efficacy is contingent on the community's preparation and support. The fundamental purpose of all civilizations is to foster an environment of cooperation rather than aggression, and to work for long-term peace and security. As a result, politicians and civic leaders are increasingly convinced that community policing is a crucial component of security strategy, owing to its role in maintaining peace. The purpose of this inquiry is to better understand community members' involvement in community policing in Nigeria. The study used a descriptive research approach and used Odeomu in Osun State's Ayadaade Local Government Area as a case study. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in the investigation. The multistage sampling strategy was adapted from non-probability methods in this study. In the first instance, purposive sampling was used, with an emphasis on eight notable town residents. Four community leaders/chiefs were also purposefully chosen since they possess adequate understanding of community policing in the area. Respondents were stratified in each of the designated areas. A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were sent to six areas for the quantitative sample, covering only the first and second objectives. The data gathered for this investigation were analyzed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The study concluded that community policing is becoming a more popular strategy for ensuring Nigeria's long-term peace and security. However, in order for it to work, it must put a high value on the participation of the community members.

Keywords: Crime, Peace, Security, Community, Community policing.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The necessity of community policing has increased in recent years as a result of an increase in criminal activity in our various neighbourhoods (Ordu & Nnam, 2017). Because community policing is essential for sustaining law and order in communities, an increasing number of politicians and civic leaders at the federal, state and local levels are recognizing the importance of community policing as an integral component of peace and security policy. Peace negotiations, the promotion of peaceful coexistence and the development of policies and initiatives to prevent or combat localized instability and threats to civic safety are all areas in which community policing may make a positive and significant contribution (Ordu & Nnam, 2017). Because of the difficulty of combatting crime and criminals, the police and other law enforcement organizations are unable to finish their work and achieve the greatest number of positive outcomes on their own. Many people who work in security and peace are familiar with the idea of community policing (Okafor & Aniche, 2015). It comes from previous successes like police-community collaborations, team policing, crime prevention, and the return of foot patrol.

Communities, according to Kpae & Eric (2017), can serve as police officers in their own right. Likewise, community policing, as described by the American Society of Community Police, is a way of thinking that places a high value on collaborating with citizens to prevent crime and resolve crime-related concerns, such as traffic accidents. Partnership is critical to the effectiveness of community policing, as both the police and the general public must work together to effectively combat criminal behaviour in order to be effective in their efforts. According to Olusegun (2016), residents of a particular community are more likely than others to be able to easily identify and track down those who commit evil within their immediate socioeconomic environment because they have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their geographical surroundings. Instead of using punishment as the main way to stop crime, community policing initiatives use a variety of crime prevention strategies that help police officers build relationships with the people they serve.

Furthermore, when it comes to community policing in Nigeria, it varies depending on the type, intensity, and breadth of the country's peace and security concerns. Community policing initiatives such as Nigeria's peace and security committees, tenant-landlord security harmony, and groups of physically fit men working shifts to protect the populace are all instances of community policing initiatives (Jegede, 2019). In addition, vigilante service groups, youth organizations, and civilian joint task teams (such as those in the North East) are active in the community. For example, the Ebube-Agwu operation in the country's South-East and Operation Amotekun in the country's South-West are both examples of such operations (Olusegun, 2016).

Moreover, local law enforcement is becoming increasingly popular in the twenty-first century, with an increasing number of countries implementing some version of it in their jurisdictions (Adeniyi, 2021). For example, in pre-colonial Igbo civilization, there was no distinction between law enforcement and crime-fighting. In African communities, the core characteristics of community policing, such as its essential characteristics and primary components, are neither new nor unfamiliar. Therefore, in Igbo culture, the role of police became a role that could be allocated to anyone who was ready to participate, and as a result, there was no specific organization in Nigeria with a clear purpose or primary goal of preventing crime until very recently (Okafor & Aniche, 2015). According to the saying, "elders do not permit goats to be strangled by the forest," and it was the collective obligation of the entire society to ensure that this

did not happen. Everyone who is an adult male in the country is a member of both an age grade and a masquerade society. This means that the whole country is responsible for policing, even though the age grades and masquerade societies play a big part in these efforts.

Additionally, as a result of the intensification of the insurgency in the North East and an increase in abductions in the South East, South West, and South-South regions of the country, the concept of community policing has become increasingly popular in Nigerian society. A communal approach to crime and criminal behaviour control has been adopted by Nigerian police officers in a series of initiatives to combat the escalating threat posed by the country's rising crime rate, which was in the news (Ikuteyijo, 2009). Community members were asked to assist police in their fight against crime and illicit activity by providing information and resources (Olusegun, 2016). No wonder Olusegun (2016) claimed that community policing is a tactic for combating crime and criminal activity that involves enlisting the help of members of the immediate community as alternatives to or complements to the work of the police force. As explained further by Olusegun (2016), it is a security method that is utilized in conjunction with, or in addition to, efforts made by people in the immediate community to combat crime and criminal activity. So, the Nigerian police and other law enforcement officers will not be able to keep or keep crime-free neighbourhoods unless the local community, especially young people and traditional institutions, help them. As a result, the goal of this study is to find out how well community policing works in Nigeria, whilst determining the level of people's awareness of community policing and the willingness of the people to support community policing.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Nigeria, as a member of the global village, cannot afford to remain apathetic in the face of a worldwide paradigm shift in law enforcement. Nevertheless, the use of community policing in Nigeria is beset by a number of challenges. One of the issues is that the majority of communities are placing less focus on support for joint security. This may be as a result of the trust and confidence lost by general population in the Nigerian police. It is difficult to adopt a community-based approach to policing. According to Alemika & Chukwuma (2000), a significant section of the Nigerian community has an unfavourable attitude toward community policing. Therefore, there is no effective collaborative effort between the community and the police in south-western Nigeria, and there are several barriers to efficient community policing in Nigeria, including attitudes, facilities, lack of competent officer training, inadequate infrastructure, logistics and god-fatherism. As such, this study aims at examining the role of community policing in maintaining peace and security in Nigeria by determining the level of people's awareness of community policing and determining the willingness of the people to support community policing, using Odeomu Community of Ayadaade Local Government Area of Osun State as a case study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of community policing in maintaining peace and security in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

a) Determine the level of people's awareness of community policing in Odeomu Community of Ayadaade Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria.
b) Determine the willingness of the people to support community policing in Odeomu Community of Ayadaade Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria.

2.0 Literature Review

Prior to the establishment of the Nigeria Police Force by the British colonial authorities in 1889, a number of groups, such as age grades, hunters, night guards and others offered community policing services in different communities in what is now known as Nigeria. However, with the establishment of the police force in 1889, community policing was supplanted by British Colonial Authorities in the country to serve as aid to the police force. In response, Tamuno (1970) claimed that this flashpoint underlines the action of having local guards and police on standby to carry out government orders in the event of protecting the committees. Nevertheless, there was a distinction established between local guards and police officers.

Similarly, Garba (2012) emphasizes that the Nigerian police force was established in the colonial era as an institution with origins and missions dating back to safeguarding the interests of the British colonialists. It was established by the colonial administration as a quasi-military force with the aim of controlling riots, suppressing the opposing populace and quelling rebellions. In other words, the colonial police were not necessarily established to provide community security, promote human rights, the rule of law, or provide social services. Rather, they were used in primitive expeditions to advance colonial territorial expansion of areas and to quell protests and resistance to colonial exploitation.

More so, in their analysis, Ikuteyijo & Rotimi (2012) characterized colonial-era policing as "anti-grassroots." The colonial police, on the other hand, were formed primarily to serve and protect the financial interests of the colonizers rather than to serve and protect the common people. A series of clashes ensued as police took on the very people they were tasked with protecting. From its inception, the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) has had a duty to protect government officials, particularly those who commit crimes against "natives". Nigeria's post-colonial police force is a colonial legacy that endures to this day. In this way, the NPF has remained true to its origins. Throughout Nigeria's military regime, the military nature of the police force has only been reinforced. Also, similar tactics were used throughout the colonial period to portray the police as harsh and frightening in the eyes of the citizens, thereby alienating or isolating the populace from law enforcement (Ekeh, 2002).

Furthermore, there is a frosty history of Nigerian community interactions with the police, as the colonial master's philosophy of policing was designed to foster enmity between those who are in custody and those who are not. To make matters worse, over time, public perceptions of Nigerian police corruption have grown so strongly that Nigerian police are considered the most corrupt government agency locally and internationally, weakening the bond between the community and law enforcement. The Nigerian police cannot fight crime, let alone stop it (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2012).

Due to police corruption, however, suspected criminals frequently resurface on the streets, terrorizing citizens and, in extreme circumstances, taking vengeance on those who handed them over to the police or organized their incarceration by the police. Furthermore, the police have been accused of revealing the identities of their informants to suspected criminals who were released under dubious circumstances and then pursuing the informants. Furthermore, it has been claimed that the police engaged in mass and illegal arrests, took money from motorists at legal and illegal roadblocks, engaged in bribery and corruption, used excessive force against innocent citizens, committed extrajudicial killings, participated in armed robberies, or provided arms to armed thieves and were unable to confront the armed thieves. In other cases, wealthy politicians hire police officers as private bodyguards and thugs and the police department becomes involved in

election violence. All of these people's opinions of the police contributed to their sentiments of estrangement from them.

Community individuals suspected of being police informants are being ridiculed as a result of deterioration in the public's opinion of the police department. Consequently, many Nigerian communities no longer looked to the police force for protection against violent criminals or other potential sources of danger. As an alternative, they have turned to various types of self-defenses or mob action in order to protect their own safety, including unregulated and frequently violent revenge against individuals whom they believe are endangering them all as a whole (Ekeh, 2002). As such, there has been a somewhat increased crime rate across the country.

In reaction to the increase in crime rates, night guards and vigilante organizations sprouted up around the country. Though, it is not a phenomenon of this decade, the Nigerian vigilante organizations have existed for decades, not just during civilian governments but also during the military administrations of Generals Babangida, Abacha and Abubakar, and they continue to exist now (Aniche, 2018). In a country with a high prevalence of delinquency and a scarcity of police training, equipment and manpower, law enforcement officials have long been considered an extension of their duties. As a result, in Nigeria, the traditional definition of vigilante is not limited to unarmed voluntary citizens or groups formed in local communities to assist security agencies in combating common criminality and social violence by apprehending and turning over suspected criminals. Violent vigilante groups holding suspected criminals are legal in Nigeria, as long as they follow the law and the subject is quickly turned over to the police (Aniche, 2018).

Looking deeply at the aforementioned, it can be agreed that community policing continues to be a hot topic in Nigeria. This has led experts to look into the idea in order to make broad recommendations for when it might be reintroduced in order to solve some of our society's security problems.

Looking further, Ordue & Nnam (2017) conduct a critical analysis of Nigeria's current situation of community policing. They claimed that a community policing approach allows officers to uncover, analyze, and solve societal issues with the full support of the community. Ordue & Nnam (2017) recognized that police-community relationships, information exchange between police and community members and police involvement in community affairs were recognized by Ordue and Nnam as essential programmes/strategies for effective community policing in Nigeria. Nonetheless, bribery and corruption, human rights violations, public mistrust/confidence, meddling attitudes of political godfathers in police-community affairs, lack of visionary schemes, excessive use of coercion and threats to enforce public compliance with rules, all pose significant barriers to effective community policing in Nigeria. They said that this had foiled all efforts to improve and stabilize police-community connections, a requirement for effective community policing. Nigerian police and local communities should adopt a culture of decency, social justice and total conscience change so that they can work together to make the country a better place to live.

Olusegun (2016) conducted research on the community policing system in south-western Nigeria in order to establish a link between the populace and the police. He discovered that the police and the community continue to believe that the police force, despite their obvious shortcomings, cannot effectively combat crime in society without the cooperation of community members. This necessitates collaboration between the police and the public.

In addition, Kpae & Adishi (2017) investigated community concerns and opportunities in Nigeria. According to these experts, community policing marks a paradigm shift away from traditional enforcement, which focuses on receiving orders from on high, and toward decision-

making in reaction to community problems. Kpae & Adishi (2017) stated that the police history, which is built on a semi-military command structure and in which officers are accustomed to employing force and brutality, is largely to blame for Nigeria's slow growth of community policing. They discovered, however, that when community policing gains police acceptance, crime rates will fall because citizens will back the police in their efforts to combat crime by acting as the police's eyes in the neighbourhood.

On another note, Ikuteyijo (2008) identifies the challenges facing community policing in Nigeria, concluding that some "powerful" members of society interfere in the administration of justice; some corrupt police try to maintain a status quo inert status, financial constraints, and a negative police image are bottlenecks hindering the effectiveness of community policing approaches in Nigeria. He concluded that for community policing in Nigeria to be successful, these challenges must be addressed while also taking into account the uniqueness of the Nigerian environment.

3.0 Methodology

A descriptive research design was used in this study. This is because the study examined and documented the function of community policing in promoting peace and security in Nigeria: a case study of Odeomu in Osun State's Ayadaade Local Government Area. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies as the instruments used to collect data. Due to the requirement for detailed information and the study's high sample size, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were considered appropriate for this investigation. The area of study, Ode-Omu, was formed in 1900 as a result of the Ibadan (Oyo) and Ife Relocation Treaty of 1886. Ode-Omu is located in Nigeria's modern state of Osun. Ode-Omu is its original name (in diacritics). The town was established in response to civil unrest in the neighbouring Yoruba cities of Ife and Modakeke in south-western Nigeria. Numerous Ode-Omu families have ties to the Modakeke community.

The study population consists of all significant inhabitants, chiefs and police officers from the town of Ode-Omu, which is prevalent in the study area. The population was chosen based on their ability to provide critical information about the issue. In the first instance, purposive sampling was used, with an emphasis on eight notable town residents. Four community leaders/chiefs were also purposefully chosen since they possess an adequate understanding of community policing in the area. Respondents were stratified in each of the designated areas. Within each stratum, respondents were identified using a snowball sampling technique and the first responder was identified using a gatekeeper. To minimize sampling bias for prominent members, respondent-derived sampling (RDS) and exponential discriminative snowball sampling were used. Two police officers from the town's police station were interrogated by the security agencies. We conducted a total of 14 interviews. The inclusion of community leaders/chiefs and notable community members was justified by the fact that they were constantly providing information about the area. A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were sent to six areas for the quantitative sample, covering only the first and second objectives. Depending on the population of each location and using Bayesian methods for small population analysis, some areas had many, while others had few.

Table 1:   **Areas and Questionnaire Distribution**

S/No.	Name of Areas	Sample Obtained
1.	Lagere	90
2.	Amola	80
3.	Okeola	70
4.	Okeowu	60
5.	Okeodo	60
6.	Palace Road	40
	Total	**400**

Source: Field Work, 2022

The study used a qualitative method and gathered data from both primary and secondary sources. For the primary data collection, in-depth interviews (IDIs) were performed with eight respondents from all categories (prominent members of the community) for the primary data collection, while key informant interviews (KIIs) were done with four community leaders/chiefs and two police officers from the selected town. The data gathered for this investigation were analyzed qualitatively only. The IDI and KII were conducted using audiotapes and handwritten notes. After data collection, the data were verbatim transcribed, translated and interpreted; the data were thematically coded according to the study's objectives; the coding was reviewed by another person to ensure inter-coder reliability; and secondary data gathered from the institutions listed in the data collection section of this study were also integrated for analysis. Atlas.ti 8.0 software was used to aid in the analysis and a content analysis method was used.

4.0 Results
4.1 The Level of People's Awareness of Community Policing
The IDI and KII reports confirmed that a sizable proportion of the population is aware of the issue, with 100% of respondents stating that they are aware of community policing. This demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of respondents are aware of Odeomu's community policing.

Both IDI and KII community members held ideas about how Nigeria's crime problem has grown and evolved. Additionally, there was unanimity among the police officers that participated in this research regarding the escalation of Nigeria's crime problem. According to these perceptions, kidnapping, terrorism, and human trafficking are three of the most prevalent components of Nigeria's criminal problem. Similarly, youth dissatisfaction in Nigeria is also coping with political upheaval and people's concerns due to domestic issues. According to police and community members, these crime concerns have resulted in not only a number of bloodlettings, murders and the loss of priceless lives and property, but have also emerged as the most severe danger to people's sense of dignity and human rights. This is why they believe security at all levels is critical. This is captured in their response as follows:

> *I must say that crime has increased beyond what used to exist. In those days, if we want to travel to the north, we leave around 9 PM or 10 PM at night. But today, anyone who tries such is only joking with his life. There was in fact a kidnap case reported some months*

ago in this town. God will have mercy on us (**Male, 45 years from Amola).**

Due to a surge in rural crime, Nigeria is facing one of the most serious social challenges in the world today. In addition, the fact that crime thrives in developing countries makes the situation even more volatile because it strengthens the foundation on which more anxieties might be constructed. Because of the deteriorating rural infrastructure, rural areas are predisposed to experiencing higher rates of violent crime than other places today. I know it is not well pronounced… (**Male, 33 years from Lagere).**

Considering the amount of violence that has been done in the country over the past several years, it is possible that all of the crimes against public order have been classified as such. Human beings, regardless of their social or economic standing in the country, place a high value on security. The security sector's selfishness and corruption will not provide a guarantee in and of themselves (**Male, 67 years in Okeode).**

There is a lack of consensus on the subject when it comes to offering responses to the question about the sort of meaning associated with the concept of community policing from the police and community perspectives, as the question implies. While police officers and members of the public have a common understanding of the necessity of community policing in terms of policy and practice, there are also widespread misconceptions about it. While police officers' perspectives reveal a preference for community policing as a technique for ensuring community engagement, it is also frequently viewed as a way to "soften" the stress of police operations. On the other hand, community members' emphasis on community policing implies that community security institutions should be developed in accordance with the people's traditions, practices and laws, rather than relying on them. This is in stark contrast to the fact that the statute establishing the Nigerian Police Force empowers the agency to enforce the law, safeguard the sanctity of the country's constitution and ensure the country's general peace and security. According to the respondents,

If anyone is arrested by this local security, they have no right to interrogate or detain. It is the duty of the police. Even though, they assist in soft peddling the challenges of operation, they are still under the control of Nigeria Police Force (**Male, 42 years in okeola).**

Olode has existed before police came to existence. Police should not be the one to decide what punishment goes to whoever commits a crime. In Ikire, there was a case of arrest of Fulani men who killed someone. They were arrested by OPC and delivered to police, second day, they were released (**Female, 51 years in Palace Road).**

The premise that community members see the community policing programme as being intimately linked to reporting crime and government misconduct is supported by factual evidence, regardless of who is participating. In the event that any police officer is found to have engaged in corruption while carrying out their assigned responsibilities, they will be subject to disciplinary action regardless of their rank or position within the organization. People who work for the government or for the police don't have to worry about self-destructive effects from the country's policing policy.

> *Look how big Odeomu is, count the number of police officers in the town, they are not enough to provide security. Yes, we know that we cannot process a criminal officially but then we work even harder than the police officers* (**Female, 51** *years in Okeola*)**.**

Table 2: Participants' Responses to The Level of People's Awareness of Community Policing

Awareness of Community Policing	Frequency	Percentage
Aware	400	100%
Not aware	0	0%
Total	400	100.0%

Source: Field work, 2022

According to the information in Table 2, 100 per cent of respondents are aware of community policing in Odeomu. However, no one is ignorant of the existence of community policing in Odeomu. This means that 0 per cent of those polled stated they were completely unaware of this.

Table 3: **Participants' Responses to the Types of Local Community Policing Existing in Odeomu**

S/No.	Aware		Not Aware	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. Oduduwa People's Congress	379	94.7	21	5.3
2. Olode – Ibile (Night Guard)	392	98.0	8	2.0
3. Amotekun	290	72.5	110	27.5
4.Voluntary Members of Community	257	64.3	143	35.8

Source: Field work, 2022

According to the information in Table 3, 94.7 per cent of respondents are aware of the Oduduwa People's Congress. However, 5.3 per cent of those polled stated they were completely unaware. 98.0 per cent of respondents are aware of Olode – Ibile (Night Guard). However, 2.0 per cent of those polled said they had no idea. 72.5 per cent of respondents are aware of Amotekun. However, 27.5 per cent of those polled stated they were completely unaware. 64.3 per cent of respondents are aware of Amotekun. However, 35.8 per cent of those polled stated they were completely unaware.

Community policing is a proactive strategy used in Odeomu in which the police, in connection with Amotekun, respond quickly when a crime or threat is reported or indicated by members of the community. People believe that the police and Amotekun respond effectively, despite the fact that they have identified a number of issues that are attributed to the government rather than the police as a whole.

The interviewees shared their own personal experiences with community policing and highlighted how it differs from traditional door-to-door policing in various respects. Members of the public have reported seeing police officers moving in groups of two or more officers while carrying out their responsibilities. Potential offenders are intimidated and deterred from committing crimes as a result of police/Amotekun activities. According to those who responded to the survey, the police and the local security in Odeomu town also monitor the streets for suspected automobiles. Additionally, they police the neighbourhood on motorcycles and occasionally borrow automobiles from local businesses. According to research, when police officers patrol in their own vehicles rather than renting a car from another agency, patrols are far more effective.

In response to the question, respondents stated that police were engaged in media activities such as television broadcasts, radio talk shows and local newspaper articles, in addition to meeting with community leaders in an attempt to increase public involvement in the investigation. According to people who responded to the survey questions, police use community meetings and

radio broadcasts to educate the public on a regular basis about crime prevention. FM radio stations broadcast messages in local languages to reach listeners who are unable to understand or communicate effectively in English. For people who are unable to interpret or communicate in English, this is extremely beneficial. People will have the option to ask questions and receive additional information on the topic/matter during the presentation. Numerous respondents claimed that local governments were tapped to disseminate information on the need for community security, which they believed to be right in this case. However, the police officers who participated in the survey claimed to have succeeded in bringing about community sensitization through partnerships with religious leaders who have permitted them to speak about topics related to community policing in churches and mosques (Osajie, 2021).

As a result, the Odeomu police department has communicated with precincts around the surrounding area that have a history of crimes similar to those that have occurred in Odeomu. Those living in Gbongan, Ikire and Sekona, in addition to those living in Odeomu, have reported an increase in criminal activity, whilst those living in Oogi have reported a decrease in criminal activity. Some police officers said that crime fell following the establishment of communication links between stations in Odeomu and other nearby stations. Nonetheless, the report stated that a large number of crimes continued to take place throughout the evening and night.

Participants also reported that the police had made an attempt to involve members of the public in community policing in their local communities, which was supported by the majority of respondents. A considerable drop has been observed in the usage of mob and lynching justice, which was once the sole alternative available after someone was discovered to be committing a crime. The vast majority of the public now chooses to report such occurrences to the authorities instead. In the aftermath of the fighting, Odeomu has seen a rise in the level of security available to its citizens. Several of the police officers who participated in the survey stated that one of the key reasons why people have turned to community policing is that they all share similar interests and requirements at the moment. They thought that after a catastrophe, people wished to be at peace with themselves. As a result, members of the neighbourhood have banded together to support community policing efforts in the area.

4.2 The Willingness of the People to Support Community Policing
Respondents felt that shifting the focus of policing away from the state and toward committees is a vital component of the developing community policing movement which aspires to establish a more democratic style of law enforcement. When it comes to a conceptual aspect, organising partnerships between the police and residents offers two distinct advantages: Most significantly, this sort of partnership contributes to the development of trust and the encouragement of citizens to cooperate with law enforcement in the fight against crime and illegal activities. They promote the exchange of information between the general public and law enforcement, which leads to enhanced crime-fighting outcomes. This is reflected in their response as follows:

> *Our willingness to support this community policing of a thing is rested upon trust. There is likewise in it a form of transparency that gives us insight into the interplay of security in Ode Omu* (**Female, 48 years** *in Okeodo*)**.**

> *I believe that supporting community policing is in fact to our benefit. It fosters unity amongst the members of community. Likewise,*

> *everyone gets to have feeling of a stakeholder* (**Male, 25 years** *in Lagere*).

According to a considerable percentage of respondents, participation in community policing requires members of the community to take an active role. Often, community policing strategies are founded on the principle that all individuals should be able to maintain their quality of life while also battling crime, with the hope that this will result in a reduction in crime and other problems in the community. People in the community must be recognized for their significant contributions to the achievement of these goals and this must happen immediately. Having a cohesive society in which police legitimacy is established and citizens regard law enforcement as legitimate is good for the overall success of the community as a whole. Some members of the community, on the other hand, are frequently uninformed of the essential role that the police play in assisting with community policing activities, which is a situation that has to be addressed. According to a female respondent,

> *Actually, a larger population takes passive part in community policy but if we can have more hands taking the active part, security will increase the more* (**Female, 31 years** *in Amola*).

The police officers who were interviewed came to the conclusion that the problem-solving technique does exist and is effective in solving crimes. Neither Amotekun, Olode, the OPC, nor any of the community-based security units, they asserted, operates in a manner that is distinct from that of the police, nor does any of the community-based security units work independently of the police. Additionally, more people are becoming cognizant of the reality that community participation is critical to the success of a community policing programme. Understanding the community is essential in order to comprehend the different origins of crime that can be found therein. It is only through the participation of the community in the identification and prioritization of concerns that it is possible to achieve problem-solving objectives through community policing. Collaboration-based problem solving fosters confidence, enables the exchange of information, and leads to the identification of alternative solutions that can benefit from the combined attention of police officers.

According to one response to a question, "issue solving is a self-sustaining process, akin to community cooperation". Police must pay attention to, as well as recognize and acknowledge the authenticity of the concerns of the general public in order to sustain community support. The opinions of neighbourhood groups and law enforcement officers will differ when it comes to selecting which specific concerns should be handled first. While some residents may consider the presence of derelicts who sleep in doors, break bottles on sidewalks, and pick through garbage to be the most significant issue in the neighbourhood, the police may consider armed robbery to be the most serious issue in the neighbourhood. When it comes to community policing, officers should be on the lookout for people who are in need of assistance and other organizations such as government agencies should aid officers in identifying and locating these people. This is expressed by a male participant thus:

> *Whenever we have a problem, we bring it to the attention of the local vigilante organizations in the community. If we compare vigilante institutions to conventional police agencies, we find that we rely on them more because, despite the fact that different police officers*

have differing opinions on the subject, an officer who is not from our community and who is not well acquainted with our community's criminals will not know these individuals any better than we do. If you are unsure of the facts, it is preferable to contact a vigilante to investigate. Because of the widespread corruption uncovered inside the police department, the officers will encourage you to come back the next day or the next day after that (**Male, 64 years in Palace Road).**

Table 4: **Participants' Responses to the Willingness of the People to Support Community Policing**

S/No.	Name of Areas	Active role play		Passive role play		No Role Play		Sample Obtained	
1.	Lagere	34	8.5	52	13.0	4	1.0	90	22.5
2.	Amola	13	3.2	65	16.3	2	0.5	80	20.0
3.	Okeola	22	5.5	46	11.5	2	0.5	70	17.5
4.	Okeowu	16	4.0	44	11.0	0	0	60	15.0
5.	Okeodo	39	9.8	18	4.5	3	0.8	60	15.0
6.	Palace Road	12	3.0	28	7.0	0	0	40	10.0
	Total	**136**	**34.0**	**253**	**63.3**	**11**	**2.7**	**400**	**100**

Source: Field work, 2022

Active roles are direct community policing roles such as being a member of the community police, attending security stakeholder meetings or other relevant roles that directly contribute to community security. While passive roles are indirect roles that involved reporting issues and so on.

Table 4 categorizes the data into groups that are numerically relevant to the study's objectives. Therefore, 136 (34%) respondents stated that the willingness of the people to support community policing in the community was an active role, whereas 253 (63.3%) respondents stated that the willingness of the people to support community policing were a passive role play. At the same time, 11 (2.7%) respondents stated that the willingness of the people to support community policing was not a role-playing situation.

Three critical issues must be addressed before community policing efforts can be successful. First, there must be clear information about what community policing is; second, there must be clear infor mation about what community policing is supposed to accomplish; and third,

there must be clear information about whether community policing is effective at accomplishing any of its possible objectives.

However, despite widespread support for community policing, there is startlingly little agreement on what constitutes community policing. Community policing is a term that people say they know about, but their understanding of the term doesn't cover a wide range of ideas about community policing, like empty rhetoric and public relations; nor does it cover a wide range of programmes such as community meetings, foot patrols and community outreach.

According to respondents, community policing is largely a policing concept that defines the nature of a new type of engagement between the police and the general public rather than a collection of applied legislation. As previously noted, some respondents believed that this connection was primarily symbolic. Others, on the other hand, were unconvinced. It was also agreed that the police have a responsibility to communicate and involve the public in law enforcement and crime prevention issues as well as to keep the public safe.

Rather than being viewed as an ideology in the conventional sense, community policing is believed to be accomplished through specific organizational and operational techniques. According to the current state of affairs in Nigeria, the most frequently used organizational strategy is "decentralization," which is also referred to as "sectorization" or "sector policing." In Nigeria, decentralization is the most commonly used organizational approach, but it is also the most expensive. Apart from the Nigeria Police Force, various other law enforcement agencies, including the US Department of Justice, have begun implementing force-wide or local versions of sector policing as part of their overall strategy. Police shops and mini-stations, neighbourhood meetings and community-based crime prevention are just a few of the most common operational tools used in community policing today.

Observations of informal contacts with police officers demonstrate that many police departments define community policing fairly broadly and that definitions vary significantly between and within departments. The following are some of the purposes identified in the responses for foot patrol officers and community constables: contact with the general public, public reassurance, deterrent, prevention and information collection among other things. Given its demonstrated success, it seems logical to conclude that the widespread interest and support for community policing are a result of this reality. On the other hand, replies indicated that there is scant evidence to support the notion that community policing can be done effectively or fulfill the programme's objectives. The extent to which community policing can help reduce crime and fear of crime has not been properly investigated or established at this time. According to the study's findings, the number of crimes has decreased during the day but has climbed at night in particular regions.

5.0 Discussion

The first research question examined community policing awareness. An examination of the interaction between the community and the police in Odeomu was conducted. According to the results of this question, community residents said that a link exists between the community and the police in Odeomu and that community policing occurs in the community. The majority of the proponents of community policing believe that it can promote community cohesion and social organization, resulting in a decrease in crime and unrest (Kerley & Benson, 2000). According to the results, community-oriented policing does not operate in a linear fashion from police to community; rather, it thrives when there is a constant flow of information between the two (Bain et al., 2014). For that purpose, a proactive approach to policing increases the likelihood of positive

public perceptions of police and enables more effective execution of community policing projects (Wentz & Schlimgen, 2012). Positive interactions with police may theoretically increase trust in police work and relationships within the community, increasing the possibility that members may approach officers with local problems (Bain et al., 2014). When community policing is conducted effectively, it has the potential to increase crime reporting rates in affected neighbourhoods. To understand why research on the effectiveness of community policing can come to different conclusions about rising and falling crime rates, this point of view should be taken into account.

Upon being questioned about their desire to support community policing, it was discovered that the locals of Odeomu were extremely involved in the law enforcement process. The research found that law-abiding residents should be given the opportunity to participate in and contribute to community policing and that they should be included and supported when it comes to community policing and the police process. The literature reviewed agreed with the study's conclusion that law-abiding residents should be given the opportunity to participate in and contribute to community policing and that they should be included and supported when it comes to community policing and the police process. A mutually beneficial partnership between the police and the community is also required for effective community policing. This partnership must be mutually beneficial in that the police must not only rely on community members for information but also on community members to act as a link between the police and the community in order to assist with the delivery of policing services (Skogan, 2008). It was agreed that the best way to achieve community policing is through the identification of their security requirements by working together. As a result, the police department's attentiveness and motivation to address the issues they identify are subsequently increased as a result of this (Wycoff, 2008).

Additionally, researchers discovered that members of the community were able to assist the police with a variety of procedures involved in the fight against crime including the reduction of crime, the increase in prosecutions and the increased reporting of crimes. In support of this claim, a literature review conducted by Kiarie (2012) found that the primary goal of community policing was to establish trust and cooperation with the community. Kiarie (2012) concluded that the primary goal of community policing was to establish trust and cooperation with the community. The fear among many officers is that the trust and confidence they have built with the community will be shattered as a result of their officers' using excessive force, failing to prosecute criminals and failing to follow up on cases but it is believed that the problem stems from all other units within the police department, not just the unit in which the officer is currently assigned.

6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, community policing is becoming increasingly popular as a technique of ensuring long-term peace and security in Nigeria. It can be utilized to this end. Although its implementation must be broad, it must be done in a coordinated manner with members of the community all pulling together in the same direction. Again, whether the government is successful in providing the Police Department with the resources necessary for the implementation of community policing, as well as the extent to which the police use those resources, will be essential to the success of community policing initiatives. Taking these considerations into account, the general public recognizes the importance of community policing in crime prevention and control, as well as its impact on conflict management and the development of relative peace in Nigeria. Programme implementers must, however, revisit the programme in order to have the intended comprehensive impact. They also need to find and fix flaws, fight threats and take advantage of all the opportunities this technique gives them to the fullest.

7.0 Recommendations

- ✓ Communities should be included in the conception and implementation of community policing programmes. To avoid the perception that the community is only a beneficiary of the policy and to promote the concept of cooperation, the community should be involved from the start of the policy formation process.
- ✓ As previously said, the term "partnership" has a favourable connotation and implies a degree of equality, or at the very least balance and reciprocity between partners. Additional research into the relationship between community policing and national security should be conducted. A special emphasis should be placed on determining the existence of a negative association between the two concepts.
- ✓ This research has demonstrated how some community policing initiatives can become corrupted and, as a result, become involved in illegal activities. A thorough inquiry must be conducted into how such programmes, which were designed to promote community security, became misguided and began to pose a threat to national security.

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