

COMMUNITY POLICING AND CRIME MANAGEMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA, 2014 – 2023.

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Abstract

High level of crime and insecurity in Nigeria general and Anambra state in particular is a serious challenge to the security of lives and properties of the citizens as well as the progressive transformation of the state socially and economically despite the availability of the formal or regular police to take care of the challenges. The work examined the effectiveness of community policing initiatives in crime control and prevention across the communities of Anambra state from 2014 – 2023. The basic objective of the study was to ascertain the contributory roles of community vigilante groups in effective crime management in Anambra state. The study employed both primary and secondary data in effort to get an indepth insight into the phenomenon under investigation. The primary data were generated through responses to a structured questionnaire instrument. Secondary data were generated from books, articles, periodicals and journals. Simple percentages were used in the analysis of data retrieved from primary sources while qualitative method of analysis was employed in the analysis gotten through secondary sources. The study employed George J. Thompson's Gap theory as its theoretical framework. The study found out that political interference whereby politicians use vigilante groups for personal advantages, social and economic factors which include poor salary, poor working security materials, inadequate trainings were some factors hindering the performance of vigilante groups in the state. Based on these findings, the study recommended improved salary, adequate selection, screening of members of vigilante groups, provision of adequate modern security materials for enhanced performance in crime management and public safety.

Introduction

Nigeria and Nigerians have suffered in recent times from alarming and accelerating crises arising from escalating insecurity as well as governance system failure in coping with these murderous dimensions of threats to the lives, safety and property of its citizens (Bassey, 2019). The high rate of insecurity in Nigeria and the inability of government to deal decisively with the manifestations on the orgy of killings, armed robbery, kidnappings, farmers-herders clash, arson, etc, challenge the very basis of Nigeria's existence as a sovereign state. This is widely reflected in the global security ranking index (GSI) 2023, that Nigeria ranked 144 out of 163 countries in internal security challenges. This portrays Nigeria's security environment as a "Hobbesian nightmare", that is an environment or state of widespread anarchy characterized by wanton destruction of life and property, armed robbery, kidnappings either for rituals or for ransom, rape, assassination, burglary, etc, almost in all the geopolitical zones of the country (The Guardian, November, 19th, 2023).

In its survey of the Nigeria's security condition in the year 2023, Amnesty International (AI), maintained that criminal bandit groups are active throughout Nigeria. It went further to posit that attacks on civilians, motorists, local communities with gun fire, high explosives and kidnappings were very high in Nigeria especially in its northern part (Amnesty Report, 2023). According to Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report, 2023, Nigeria ranked 8th among the 10 top countries with the highest level of

terrorism in the world. The GTI 2023 assessed terrorism impact in 163 countries. With a score of 8.065, Nigeria has a terrorism impact that is very high. The most armed groups in the world according to GTI as of 2022 were Islamic states (IS) and affiliates, Alshabaah, Balochistan liberalism and Jamaat Nusrat AI – Islam wal Mushimen (JNIM). The United States (US) council on Foreign Relations entry on Nigeria in 2021 put the number of lives lost due to the activities of insurgents to about Eighty four thousand, five hundred and ninety five (84,595) from 2015 – 2020. This troubling state of internal security challenges have made Nigeria to remain among the least peaceful countries in the world as it ranked 144 out of 163 in the Global Peace Index in 2023 – thus, a state of peace and security that is very low.

With the rising levels of the activities of Boko Haram, kidnappings, armed robbery, farmer-Herders clash, the activities of unknown gun men, cultism, banditry, etc, Nigeria has been grouped with eight other countries in the world in High Alert Category that is countries that include; Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, etc, which have seen war in recent past and still have a large part of their territory swathed in active conflicts (Egwu, 2019).

Internal security challenges bedeviling Nigeria presently have no doubt dominated public discourse. It is the foremost problem confronting Nigeria nation. This has manifested in the activities of Boko Haram terrorist movement, the rampaging gangs of armed criminals specializing in armed

robbery, kidnappings for ransom from helpless criminals or for ritual purposes, political assassination, farmer-herder clash, Niger Delta Militants specializing in oil pipe line vandalization and taking of oil workers hostage, etc (The Guardian, 18th December 2019). On top of these are other forms of social vices such as rape, drug abuse, suicide bombings, arson, burglary, etc. Most people believe that these gory tales have been under reported even in the nation's news media.

Nigeria's internal security threat and challenges come from a plethora of sources, including the reality of ethnic, regional and religious diversities, internal political dynamics associated with the competition for power and resources and the crises associated with statehood and nationhood (Egwu, 2019). The causes of insecurity in a society are often complex, intentioned as well as varied in different contexts. Social relations within the state thrive in an atmosphere of peace and orderliness, absence of which threatens the very existence of the state. Insecurity impacts negatively on all citizens through the losses of lives and properties. Equally, crime in all its ramifications retard progress as no society with high levels of crime and criminalities can develop positively (Azu, 2019).

Maintenance of internal security is a basic function of the state. A state that cannot perform its basic function can be termed as a failed state. The efforts of Nigeria government through the instrumentality of the regular police and other official security agencies to confront the security challenges have not matched the rate of crime in the

country. Based on the above, and the need for better effective ways of surmounting insecurity, promoting public safety and enhancement of live in the society, community policing gained positive momentum in the country. Delivery of safety and security in society is a justifiable public good and the very essence of "Social Contract" entered by the whole citizens of the state for themselves. Unfortunately, social life in Nigeria has remained largely characterized by high level of fear and insecurity in a manner that suggests the country seem to lack the needed capacity to effectively discharge its security functions especially that of internal or domestic policing (Odinkalu, 2015).

Community policing is not new to communities in Nigeria because before the British conquest and colonization of Nigeria and enthronement of regular police, different communities and tribes that make up Nigeria had different traditional methods of policing themselves (Aniche, 2018). World over, community policing as a process of ensuring effective societal security is not a new phenomenon but a continuation of conscious efforts put in place by the community concerned for the continued socio-economic growth and development of the community and its inhabitants. It is democracy in action as it gives room for active participation of local communities, civic and business leaders, public and private agencies, residents, churches, schools and hospitals in bringing about a secure society by focusing on all who share concern for the welfare of the neighbourhood (Kelling and Mark, 1988).

Thus, the aim of community policing is the bringing about of effective crime management in the community (Ifedigbo, 2014).

In Anambra state, southeast of Nigeria, community policing initiative was established by Anambra Vigilante Law 2000, to complement the efforts of the regular police operating in the state in crime control and prevention. The law was amended in 2004 and referred to Anambra Vigilante Service (AVS) law, 2004. The law empowers the communities in the state to establish its own community vigilante group for effective crime management within the community. The law also mandates the community vigilante groups to assist the regular police in the performance of its constitutional duties by detecting criminal hideouts in the communities, gathering crime related information and relaying same to the police for necessary actions. It is based on this that this studies evaluated Anambra state community vigilante groups and their roles in crime management in Anambra state between 2014 – 2023.

Statement of the Problem:

Insecurity according to Aniche and Okafor (2018), is one of the major challenges confronting Nigeria statehood recently. In the northern part of the country, the menace of Boko Haram insurgents for Islamisation of the country, farmer-herders clash, abduction, armed banditry, suicide bombings, arson, kidnappings, hostage takings, human trafficking, etc, are the order of the day. In the south-western part, crimes manifest in the

form of armed robbery, political assassination, ritual killings, kidnappings, human and drug trafficking, cultism, etc. In the south-eastern part, it manifests in the form of armed robbery, burglary, theft, car snatching, the menace of the unknown gun men who are assassinating as well as kidnapping for ransom not only the rich members of the society but also political opponents of politicians, secessionist agitations, thugery, rape, cultism, etc. In the south southern part, that is the Niger Delta parts, resource control crime led activities, secessionist agitations, armed robbery, kidnappings, abductions, etc. In the middle belt part of the country, farmers-herders clash, kidnappings etc (Aniche and Okafor, 2018). All these challenges threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria as a sovereign state (Guardian, August, 7, 2018).

Urban migration, unemployment, high level of corruption, bad economy, poor parental upbringing, poverty, lack of adequate education, poor political leadership, etc, have among other factors, escalated the prevalence of crime in Nigeria (Mbachu, 2013). Historically, crime prevention and control in the various communities that make up modern Nigeria was chiefly a concern of every member of the community. With British conquest, colonization, independence, urbanization and modern governance, Nigeria state took over from the communities the function of crime management through the use of official police it inherited from its colonial masters (Bassey, 2019), and thus abandoned communal method of crime management.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the state security agencies, the Nigerian state has continued to suffer in recent times from alarming and accelerating crises arising from escalating security challenges.

Security is development (McNamara, 1990) and there can be no development without security as it entails peace of mind and conducive environment necessary for developmental initiatives. Security requires effective policing for protection of life and property so that daily businesses of the citizens and social life in the community may continue without hindrance (Bassey, 2019). Following such recognition, the Nigeria police force adopted a mission statement which centered on the “creation of a safer and more secure environment conducive for meaningful socio-economic development through effective crime prevention and control” (Okoro, 2010).

In Anambra state, the realization of the important role of community policing in the form of vigilante groups could play in crime management especially at the community level and conscious of the abuses associated with vigilantism led to government mainstreaming them into the security architecture of the state through enabling laws, operational guidelines and logistics which effectively transformed them from vigilantism to community policing. This study interrogated the role and performance of these community based groups in crime management in Anambra state from 2014 to 2023.

Research Questions:

In Line with the above stated problems, the following research questions were formulated to guide this study. They are:-

1. How effective has community policing been in reducing crime rates in Anambra state between 2014 and 2023?
2. What are the major challenges faced by community policing initiatives in Anambra state between 2014 and 2023?

Objectives of the Study:

The broad objective of this study is to appraise the performance of community policing initiatives in Anambra state. Specifically it seeks to

1. Determine the effectiveness of community policing in reducing crime in Anambra state between 2014 and 2023;
2. Find out the challenges militating the performance of community policing vigilante groups in Anambra state between 2014 and 2023

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community

There is a plethora of literature available on the concepts community and community policing. Community is a word with many meanings and uses. It is one of the oldest forms of human organizations. It is viewed as a place in which people live (villages, cities, etc) or reflecting a population group bearing similar characteristics (rural

dwellers, urban residents, etc) (Ezeh, 2002). Community varies from one area to another, but generally it operates on the belief that problems in the communities have solutions in the communities and the need that people making up the community participate in the matters affecting them at the community level (Ezeh, 2002).

Community is defined according to Webster Dictionary cited in Ojukwu (2013), as a group of people residing in the same area or region and under the same government. Ojukwu (2013), defines community as a conscious organization of individuals within a geographical area with definite and legal boundaries which support primary institution and use of some common facilities within the area. Olise (2007), maintained that a community is a group of people living together in a defined area and sharing common interests examples are towns and villages. World Health Organization (WHO), (1978), cited in Ojukwu (2013), stated that community consists of people living together in some form of social organization and cohesion. Its members share in varying degree, political, economic, social and cultural characteristics, as well as interests and aspirations including good health and protection of lives.

Sociologically, community is defined as a group of people who live in a geographically defined territory and share common socio-cultural attributes with similar socio-cultural institutions (political, economic, cultural and social). These may be business, common method of education, common world view, common religious beliefs and practices, etc.

Community according to Holland (1994) refers to the people who reside in one locality and are subject to the same interests.

Community is the most important framework in which an individual or group of individuals learn how to grow and develop socially, politically and economically. It is the centre of activities which contribute significantly to the development of human values. A community can be found in both rural and urban areas. A community can also be homogenous that is consisting of people sharing the same culture example, villages and town or heterogeneous that is consisting of people sharing different cultures example, urban cities (Ojukwu, 2013). Community constitutes a unit of solution in society and a process through which people take initiative and act in collectivity in which all economic and social services necessary for good life can be actualized (Bensman, 1994).

From the above, one can see a community as a group of people sharing a common geographical area, a common value system and common needs and interests.

Police

Police according to Brownson (2005) is a unit of armed forces established by the state for maintenance of law and order in the state. Moving further, he said that police is a branch or department of government which is responsible for the preservation of public order, safety and tranquility; enforcement of laws, the promotion of public health, safety, morals, the prevention, direction and prosecution of offenders. Nwakamma (2020) defined the police as the agency of government established in the state for the

maintenance of internal order in the state. This definition highlights internal order or security as the main reason for the creation of the police. Though the primary role of the police is policing, policing is however not the sole responsibility of the regular police. This is because, there are also inexistence in the state other internal security management agencies that collaborate with the police in the responsibility of internal maintenance of law and order in the state. Again, not all the organ shouldered with the responsibility of policing for effective domestic security belongs to the police force.

ANMOLI'S Dictionary of Public Administration (2000) defines police as a branch of the armed forces that is responsible for the maintenance of public order and the protection of persons and property within the state from unlawful acts. Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary of Contemporary English (2000) defines police as an official organization established by the state whose job is to make sure that people residing in the state obey the law, catch criminals as well as to protect people and property. This definition entails that the rationale for police is to keep control over a particular area in order to make sure that laws are obeyed and people, their business and property are protected by preventing and controlling crime.

Policing

Policing as a concept has many interpretations from scholars. According to Baker (2008) policing is not just the activity of the state official police. It involves any organized activity that seeks to ensure the maintenance of communal order, security

and peace through the elements of prevention, deterrence, investigation of breaches and punishments. Continuing, he maintained that it is a mechanism of governance as such it can be authorized and provided by both the state and non-state actors. Reiner (2003) on his own defines the policing as set of activities aimed at preserving the security of a particular social order or social order in general.

Policing has been a necessary governance mechanism in all societies world over in order to maintain law and order. Policing particularly in modern societies characterized by diversities, contradictions and patterns of crimes which arise from urbanization, industrialization, ideological differences, socio-political and economic inequalities is sine-qua-non for the provision of security and public safety in the society. Without effective policing, crime rates will always be on the increase and making good life unattainable. According to Mbachu and Umar, (2013) policing is a strategy-driven activity. Its aim is to maintain a high level of surveillance, security watch, strategic communication and enforceable action to deter any danger to life, liberty and people residing in a particular society. Arase and Iwuofe (2004) view policing from the institutional angle. According to them policing includes efforts that are more than the primary reliance on the formal regular police force and other security agencies of the state. It includes what individuals, groups, organizations or community does to prevent the commission of crime in the society and if inevitable to make legitimate reports to appropriate agencies especially the police for

the arrest of suspects. This shows that policing is effort made to maintain effective security in an area especially through surveillance and the threat of sanctioning.

The importance of policing the community has been in existence since the classical times. According to Etim (2019) in their various writings, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) and John Locke (1632 – 1704), have pinpointed authoritative reasons for civil society by moving away from state of nature characterized by all sorts of crime that threat the peaceful existence of human beings in the society. Thus, policing according to Etim (2019) is the activity of enforcing the terms of the social contract and criminal law, and it takes place in any society can be said to have such law. Policing in modern times started with the commencement of the London Metropolitan Police by Robert Peel in 1829; and by 1960, almost all the nations of the world had adopted it. Curling from Robert Peel, the fundamental basis for local policing is that the police by its nature, is supposed to be accountable to the local government (State and Local authorities where they exist) and ensuring that they (police) would be responsive to local feelings as well as have good relations with the local community.

Community Policing

Community policing is a philosophy of community crime management and as such it does not imply that formal police are no longer in authority or that the primary duty of preserving law and order is subordinated. However, it is tapping into the expertise and resources that exists within communities in

crime control and prevention and thus relieving the police of some of their burden (Kelling & George, 1988). Community policing, as a practice, predates both the colonial and post-colonial Nigeria society (Aniche & Okafor, 2018). It is basically what can be viewed as a new concept but old practice. Prior to the formation of Nigeria state, different communities inside Nigeria state had been protecting themselves internally. They had established structures and mechanisms for crime management (prevention and control) as well as law enforcements. The old philosophy of community policing rested on the assumption that all citizens in the community have it as a duty, responsibility and obligation of participating in the policing of the community (Kwaja, 2017). Thus the slogan “be your brother’s keeper” and “an adult cannot be around and she-goat delivers in prangs of pain”.

Community policing came as a result of rising levels of crime in the community and inability of the formal police alone to tame the tide. It came with the growing need among community members to participate in the fight against crime and disorder in the society. The goal of community policing among communities is to reduce crime by carefully examining the characteristics of problems in their particular community and then applying appropriate problem – solving remedies. (Kelling & George, 1988).

According to Abubakar (2018), community policing is a functional and effective partnership between the police and the community in indentifying crime and

security challenges within communities and finding solution to the problem. Sequel to the importance attached to community policing for crime management, the 2008 Presidential Committee on Police Reform (PCPR) defines community policing as a straight forward concept of shared responsibility between the formal police and the community, with a focus on provision of efficient and effective service. This concept entails building trust, engagement of diverse policed community in identifying and prioritizing threats, developing crime control and community safety strategies as well as partnering community's stakeholders to implement and re-evaluate the strategies. Trojanowicz (1998), defines community policing as a philosophy and organizational strategy that allows the police and the community residents to work together as partners in solving the problems of crime, fear of crime and physical disorder of a community in order to improve the overall quality of life. Okeke (2006), see community policing as a policing philosophy that promotes and supports organizational strategies to address the causes as well as reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through problem solving tactics and police – community partnership. This definition hinges on symbiotic relationships between the police and the community for crime management in the community. Police roles and functions are not only law enforcement but also include tackling a huge range of community problems ranging from armed robbery, burglary, assault, rape, drug abuse, etc that made society inhabitable for good life to thrive.

Security

The term security is derived from the Greek word se-cura which means to be in a state of fearlessness or fear. (Buzan, 2018) security is very vital for human existence, survival and societal development. It is concerned with the protection of life and property of one or more individuals living in a particular area. Security as a term has many forms; it could be physical security, economic security, health security, food security, cyber security, etc. The concept of physical and economic security is concerned with the protection of life, property and economic wellbeing of people living in a geographical area (Buzan, 2018).

Security as concept has been associated with the safety and survival of the state, its citizens and properties and businesses from harm or destruction. Thus, it is an absence of any threat or harm to the state, its citizens and the properties and businesses of the citizens. Mroz (n.d) defined security as “the relative freedom from harmful threats”. According to Buzan (2018), security is the pursuit of protection against threats. This definition entails that security involves the absence of threat to one's life or his properties. Security threat according to Gordon (2016), is anything that threatens the residents of a community or the things they value (Life, property, business, etc). Security threats are those action(s) of man which threatens the peace and safety of the people living in a particular area e.g. armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, cultism, theft, burglary, arson, rape, etc.

According to Arnold Wolfers (in Emegha, & Sharkdam, 2020), security in any objective

sense is the yard stick for measuring the absence of threats to acquired values; in a subjective sense, it is the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. According to Walfer in Buzan (1991), a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice its core values if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war. Also, Robert (2014) in Emegha and Sharkdom (2020), maintained that security as a term is used to refer to safety or protection against a future risk of injury or death due to severe deprivation and the need for order and discipline as well as fair judgement and enforcement. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor (2020), defined security as a condition that exists due to the establishment of measures to protect people, information and property from hostile persons, influences and actions. They also maintained that it is the existence of conditions in which members of a society can carry out their normal daily activities without any threat to their life or property. It includes all measures designed to protect, promote and preserve citizens and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses, communities and nations against vandalism or violence. Okwori (2019), posits that security is state's or community's capabilities to defend its integrity from threats actual or imagined as well as acts of aggression from other potential enemies. According to Otto and Ukpere (2019), security means protections from potential and harmful disturbances in the daily life pattern of individuals at home, office or community.

Crime

Crime as a concept has no generally accepted definition among scholars. This is based on the fact that in some cultures, crime means any act that causes a disturbance of order and a deterioration of public safety. In some other societies, crime constitutes a steady descent into social disorder because it rest on the society (Archibong, Udobong and Antia, 2014) in Obiora (2021). According to Dambazau, (1994), crime is an act or omission that is contrary to public interest, and which is prescribed by an act passed by the parliament in the general interests of the society, and to which prescribed penalty is attached in the occasion of its violation. Continuing, Dambazau (1994), maintained that violation of crime involves four basic values which are; moral wrong, public wrong, law and punishment for the criminal. Sociologically, crime is an act that is anti-social conduct or behaviour that disrupts the norms of society (Archibong et al, 2014). For any act to be qualified as a crime, it must violate the criminal law of the society in question if not, the act or conduct does not constitute a crime (Igbo, 1999).

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, crime is any activity that involves breaking of the law, an illegal act or activity that can be punished by law. It can also be defined as an act committed or omitted, in violation of a public law, either forbidding or commanding it, a breach or violation of some public right or duty owed or due to the whole community. Igbo (2002), defines crime as any act or omission resulting from human conduct which is considered in itself or in its outcome to be harmful and which the state wishes to

prevent, which also renders the person(s) responsible liable to some kind of punishment. Anugwom (2002), maintained that crime is generally referred to as law-breaking behaviours of member(s) of a society which is in violation of the criminal law and therefore associated with punishment. This definition entails that once a member of a society breaks law either knowingly or unknowingly, such a person is subjected to punishment. Tappan (1960), opines that crime is an intentional act or defense or justification and sanctioned by the state either as felony or misdemeanor.

Crime is a deviant behaviour that violates the prevailing norms and cultural standards prescribing how human beings ought to behave normal in the society. It is a serious threat to the social, economic and political security of a society as well as a serious factor associated with under development for no society can develop under high rates of crime. Along this line, Dambazau (1994), defines crime as an act or omission contrary to public interest and which is prescribed by an act passed by the parliament in the general interest of the state and to which prescribed penalty is attached in the occasion of its violation.

The negative impact of crime to societal growth and development both socially and economically can never be overemphasized, hence Onoge (1998), maintains that crime no matter its size destroys both human and social capital and also damages the relationship between the citizens and the state. It undermines economic growth by discouraging both local and foreign

investments in the environment it manifests. Furthermore, it also undermines democracy, rule of law and the ability of the state to promote sustainable development and good governance.

Crime Management

Crime management is actions taken either by the community or state government to stop crimes and criminal activities from occurring in the society. Bello (2019) argued that crime management policy is the overall plan and strategy designed by the state to address insecurity or rising crime level in the state. According to Australian Institute of Criminology AIC, (2012), crime management is variety of approaches that are applied by individuals, groups, societies, industries, non-governmental institutions and all the levels of government to target the numerous social and ecological influences that upsurge the danger of crime disorder and persecution. Continuing, it maintained that it is those actions that are intended to prevent or reduce the incidence of crime commission in the society which are done through the altering the environs in which they occur, or by superseding more approximately to alter the social or other circumstances which are supposed to have fundamental implication with respect to them.

Adebayo (2013), opined that crime management refers to the distraction of instruments that causes crime. Expatiating further, he maintained that crime management can be seen as the design of attitudes and actions that are directed at both decreasing the danger of crime and improving the sense of

protection and security to promote the quality of life and as well as develop situations where crime cannot be committed. According to Brutai (2017) in Bassey and Ogbonnaya (ed.), (2019), crime management is the act of keeping or maintaining peace within the borders of a sovereign state of self-governing territory. United States Department for Home-land Security (DHS), defines it as the act of keeping peace within the state territory generally by upholding the natural laws and defending it against threats. The council of European Union (EU), opined that crime management also known as internal security management includes the use of multiple security sectors both formal and informal police to address major security threats which have direct impacts on the lives, properties, safety and well-being of the citizens of the state including natural and man-made disasters like forest fires, floods, storms, etc.

Akinlabi & Iheme (2021), define crime management as efforts or methods taken by the governments or competent authority to reduce crime in the state. Quinney (1968), in highlighting the importance of crime management in the society maintains that authorities of the state or community employ various mechanisms to regulate citizens' behaviour either by encouraging or discouraging certain behaviours. Take for instance, Nigeria's criminal justice emphasizes on reducing crime in the society through increased efforts on police prosecutorial and other strategies made by government or non-governmental actors using available human and material resources at their disposal.

Vigilantism

Vigilantism is a strategy for policing in the local communities in order to bringing about reduced crimes and criminal activities as well as protection of lives and properties of community members (Usman, 2018). According to Gaines and Cordner (1999), it is the act of keeping watch over a giving area in order to prevent or control crime from occurring in the area. Vigilantism entails that policing is not just the activity of the traditional police, but also involves any organized activity that seeks to ensure the maintenance of communal order, security and peace through the elements of prevention, deterrence, investigation of breaches and punishment. Thus, it is a mechanism of good governance in crime management and as such, it can be authorized and provided in the state by both the state actors and non-state actors (Baker, 2008). Vigilante group is defined as constituting members of a group of people who try to prevent crime or punish criminal(s) in their community especially because they think the police is not doing this enough. Vigilantism is the act of preventing, investigating and punishing perceived offenses and crimes without legal authority. It is defined according to Cambridge English Dictionary as the practice of ordinary people in a place taking unofficial action to prevent crime or catch and punish people believed to be criminals.

Community vigilante groups are considered as referring to different groups of people in communities who take up arms to protect themselves, families and their community as

a whole when they (community) feel the absence of government security (Ihemeje, 2021). It is also a term used to describe an unofficial security outfit of a community that provides security and safety of its members (Akinlabi and Ihemeje, 2021). According to Oyayi (2016), community vigilante groups are groups of people who carry armaments to protect themselves and their community when they felt that state government has failed its role of protecting and securing them. A community vigilante group is seen as that part of citizens security initiative influenced by incessant criminal activities which undermine the safety of lives and properties in the community. It is made up of members of a group of people who try to prevent crime as well as punish criminals in their community: especially because they think the police are not effectively doing this. It is organized according to the traditional and cultural system and strongly reinforced by the authority of the traditional ruler and elders of the community (Chukwuma, 2022).

In Anambra state, the realization of the important role vigilante groups could play in crime management and conscious of the abuses associated with vigilantism led to government mainstreaming them into the security architecture of the state through enabling laws, operational guidelines and logistics which effectively transformed them from vigilantism to community police. This study therefore interrogates the roles and performances of these community based groups in crime management in Anambra state from 2014 to 2023.

Factors Responsible for the Emergence of Community Policing

Community policing through the instrumentality of Community Vigilante Groups entails efforts put in place by community members and set up a group devoted to crime and vandalism prevention in the community. According to Obianagha (2011), the police and citizens relationship in Nigeria is characterized by prejudice and preconceived motions. The masses tend to resist the police by viewing the police as their enemy while the police always try to assert their superiority and authority on the citizens. According to Ezelisiaku (2013), human right abuses, brutality, false and illegal detention of innocent citizens are another factor responsible for the establishment of community policing known as vigilante groups. The law specified the basis through which the police can arrest, detain or prosecute a suspect or somebody deemed to have committed an offence, crime or offended the law. This implies that the person must be reasonably informed on why he/she is being arrested and must not be detained for more than 24 hours without being charged to a court of competent jurisdiction. The reverse is most often the case in Nigeria, hence, the rationale for community policing (Ezelisiaku, 2013).

World over, policing is anchored on protection of lives and properties of citizens, to control and fight crimes, investigate, arrest, detain and prosecute any person that has offended the laws of the state. But in Nigeria, police arrests and detains perceived suspects indefinitely before investigating.

According to the editorial of the Vanguard of 19th June, 2008, the Nigeria police hardly informs a suspect either orally or written or even caution them before statements are taking from them. They are most often never allowed bail even when the nature of the offence warrants bail. When they do, they collect various huge sums of money from the suspects after detaining and torturing brutally in order to elicit “confession” (Chukwuma, 2005).

Lack of quick response to crime scenes by the police officials because they are always far away from the people also is another factor responsible for the formation of community policing vigilante group by communities. Most often before the police come to the scene of crime, the criminals must have committed the crime and gone away not minding that the police got the crime information on time. This has equally led to trust deficit between community members and the police. The community does not believe on the efficacy of formal police in community internal crime management as most criminals reported by the community members to the police are often released from police custody (Ezelisiaku, 2013). But the community needs a policing outfit that is nearer to them and ready to respond whenever called as quickly as possible. Crimes are committed in the community by the members of the community. Community policing officers (vigilante members) by being members of the community know the criminals more than the official police who are not members of the community. Their presence in the community scares and deters

people who are nursing any intention of committing any crime. Again, when vigilante member is on guard, the criminals or suspects cannot run away or be declared “have never been seen” because they are members of the community and as such known by the community (Chukwuma, 2005).

The Nigerian Police and Crime Management

The police are the statutory constitutional body responsible for the preservation of law and order as well as the protection of individual members of the society in the exercise of their legal rights. Similarly, section 214 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended provides the police with the responsibility for public safety, public order and crimes prevention within the state of Nigeria (Imobighe, 2003).

Ikuteyiyo (2018), in conceptualizing internal security and crime management argues that internal security or crime management encompasses all efforts at ensuring that the country is free from all forms of internal crisis and the responsibility rests with the conventional police and other paramilitary forces. In exceptional cases, the military may be called upon to assist the police in crime management for internal security and stability in the state. According to section 217(2) of the 1999 constitution as amended, it empowers the Nigeria Armed Forces to suppress rising insecurity and act in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the president and commander-in-chief. This is corroborated by section 8(1) and (3) of the Armed Forces Act

of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004. This aspect of law specifies that the “operational use of Armed Forces” in Nigeria is essentially for the purpose of maintaining and securing public safety and order in the country.

Crime is a dynamic phenomenon as such; its management must also continue to be dynamic. As crime rate continues to rise recently in Nigeria, its management equally requires a comprehensive programme of security sector transformation involving a complete change in the system that governs the security establishment in the country (Bryden, 2011). Thus, it is one of the reasons behind state backed community vigilantism. Security sector transformation encompasses a wide range of institutional processes that impact virtually upon all aspect of an organization’s existence for success to be ensured. This implies that there is need for paradigm shift from the traditional model of Nigeria policing where authorities are centralized and police only respond to call for services which has a marginal impact on crime management (prevention and control). This assertion is supported by Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) – a civil society organization. It argues that the traditional mode and organization of policing in Nigeria have become more of an albatross than a veritable solution to the challenges of insecurity. It went further to maintain that, the police stations in Nigeria are “torture chambers” and “the police are more likely to commit crimes than prevent them” (Abubakar, 2012).

These social vices as Udefuna (2014), argued have continued to make efforts of the police force grossly low in crime management. In collaboration with the view of NOPRIN, the Presidential Panel on National Security (PPNS), recommends that effective policy response to the multi-dimensional threats confronting the Nigeria state must be predicated on the determination of the “remote causes of breach of peace and security, potential and current flash points of conflicts, role and effectiveness of security agencies as well as the imperatives to be taken by the three tiers of government” (National Security Report, 2011). The import of this, is that Nigeria’s internal security section deserves urgent government attention (crime management) to cope with the escalating menace of high rising domestic crimes and anarchist movements, if not, the country may soon begins to experience the type of scale of insecurity that countries such as India, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Sudan and Afghanistan have been battling for years (National Security Report, 2011).

Community Policing and Crime Management

Recently in Nigeria, high rising levels of crime of all sorts have led the Nigeria government to institutionalize structures and mechanisms for police and community partnership for crime management (prevention and control). This is in light of the difficulties associated with formal police officers in effective policing in Nigeria generally. This is unlike in the past, when the police was regarded as the point of resort in times of emergency (Kwaja, 2019). Today,

Nigerians especially those in rural communities view the police as an oppressive occupying force established by the state for suppression of the citizens. Police brutality most often sparks off rural and urban disorder and this has made some members of the public to perceive the police as being at the forefront of maintaining an unjust system that emboldens criminality of all sorts due to its weakness in law enforcement. Thus, there is a serious disconnection between the people, community and the police which makes the people not to cooperate with the police in crime management.

Crime is a dynamic phenomenon and as such only a super-dynamic police organization can cope effectively with the increasing complex profile of crime. Hence, many democratic countries world over have adopted community policing using community vigilante group or neighbourhood watch group as their policing philosophy. The principles of this new philosophy entail that effective policing should focus on partnership between the formal police, civil society, communities and development associations as a means of collectively ensuring safety and security in communities (Arase, 2019). The goal is to have the people that will actively take part in policing their communities in partnership with the police for their own welfare. This partnership will not only enable the community people know their security concerns but also help them to address them holistically.

This idea of finding best policing practices for crime management in communities led to the formation and establishment of

community policing outfits (Vigilante group) initiative in almost every part of Nigeria. This is as a result of the gradual failure of the traditional policing method otherwise known as “Reactive Policing Technique”, whereby the police commence its work after the crime must have been committed and the criminals out of sight. Community based vigilante group is highly essential in community crime management. While the provision of security in the society is the sole mandate of the state which it does through the use of police and other security agencies, presently in Nigeria, it is clear that this important task cannot be achieved by the police and other official security agencies alone without the support and participation of community members. Good security is a public good without which development and good life cannot occur in the community (Arase, 2019). In the face of escalating security challenges confronting the country recently, the study argues community policing through vigilante groups will be of effective help that shall rescue the nation from high rising security challenges that is threatening the existence of the country.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts George .J. Thompson's Gap theory as its theoretical standpoint. Gap theory is a behavioural theory developed by George .J. Thompson in 2006. Gap theory is germane to understanding the police public partnership in crime control and prevention in the community. The theory argues that when there is mistrust between the public and the police it creates a growing gap between the police and the community in too many

areas. People mistreated by the police withdraw from the police and are never eager to help the police. Regular police as an agency of the state created to take care of the people so that peace and tranquility will reign in society. Until regular police officers are taught to care for the people, the “gap” increases. As the gap continues, the crooks in the community benefit from the “gap”. However, the better the police treat the people, the safer they feel and the more the gap shrinks. As the gap closes, it closes on the crooks and bad elements in the community. (Friedman, 2012).

According to George .J. Thompson (2006), the quality of contact with the people by the police affects the way and manner the people in turn perceive the police. Therefore to improve on the quality of contact with the public, the police should be taught about the “90 – 10 principle” of the community. The theory maintained that in societies with high rates of crime, 90% of all the people in the community are good, hardworking and decent folks trying to make a living with dignity. 10% are the criminals – the murderers, kidnappers, armed robbers, drug dealers, bandits and other bad elements that need to be taken off the streets of the community.

However, the problem with police work that promotes crime in the communities as well as creates the “bad gap” is that too often, 90% of police contact is with those 10%. This distorts police view of the community. The police easily become cynical and tend to “go to war” against those 90% of the communities rather than taking proactive role that will prevent crime and arrest criminals.

This according to Thompson (2006), explains why the police are most hated by the community where they are most needed. People mistreated do not give intelligence information or extend hands of friendship to those who mistreated them.

Application of the Theory

The validity of George .J. Thompson’s Gap theory could be seen as the main reason for the establishment of community policing initiatives in the communities for effective and prompt security provision in Anambra state. The security situation in Anambra state prior to the focus of this study is a Hobbesian nightmare – that is a state of anarchy characterized by high rates of crime and criminal activities like armed robbery, kidnappings, burglary, terrorism, car snatching, cultism, etc in almost all the communities of Anambra state. To make matters worse, the regular police do not respond proactively to crime scene or arrest criminals as quickly as reported. This therefore brought about mistrust, lack of confidence and wide gap between the public or the communities and the regular police in the state. As this gaps widens, it made live unbearable to community inhabitants as well as chased away most influential and wealthy sons and daughters of the state to other parts of the world. Most importantly, it chased away customers or business men and women coming into the state for business activities. This thus impedes development and poses a serious and harmful threat to the realization of sustainable development in the state. Ineffort, to solve this unpleasant condition that threatens the wellbeing of individual members of the community in particular and

the community as a whole, the community established for themselves a community policing initiative that will guarantee their safety as well as provide for them environment that is crime free. This community policing initiatives in the form of community vigilante groups work in partnership with the regular police for effective crime prevention and control especially in the rural community where the presence of regular police is rarely felt because they are always far off from the community.

For effective performance of the vigilante groups, their members are drawn from the community concerned. This makes it easier for them to respond to crime scene as soon as the crime occurs unlike the regular police that must be called upon before they can answer distress call. Also, they know the community terrain very well more than the regular police. All these make them to carry out their duties of crime management effectively as well as the reason the state recognizes their efficiency and accord them legitimacy.

Article 14(2), (A) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended states that the provision of security, welfare and conducive environment shall be the primary responsibility and goal of the government. With increase in crime rates and state government knowing the importance of security as a basic need of the people openly supported communities in the establishment of community policing outfits with different names to provide effective security to the communities. It also enacted other policies to support the effort of the formal police, and

community vigilante groups in crime management across the communities. Some of the policies include: the prohibition of tinted glass vehicles, installation of Closed Circuit Television and street lights across strategic roads and markets in both the rural and urban communities of the state, increased provision of security materials and salaries to community policing outfits, etc. These are to ensure that community vigilante groups controlled the rising rates of crime in the state. With these effective support, no community presently in Anambra state is without indigenous community vigilante group and this has helped to reduce greatly the rising incidence of crime of all sorts and insecurity in the state.

The reason for indigenous community policing members is based on the fact that criminals reside inside the communities. Community members know them very well as well as the community environmental terrains. Nigeria formal police personnel are not enough to police the whole communities of Nigeria or know the criminal hideouts in communities. Making indigent resident community members as community vigilante personnel has reduced to a great extent the problem of criminals terrorizing communities. With community policing outfits, criminals in communities do not have field days any longer as it was before and thus brought about reduction in criminal related activities in the communities.

Empirical Review

Many scholars have offered several views on community policing as an effective strategy

on crime management in Nigeria. This is as a result of rising levels of crime in Nigeria and the inability of formal police to effectively provide adequate security to lives and properties of the citizenry especially those in rural communities. This inability to provide effective security have made some state governors to inaugurate quasi police outfits known as community policing vigilante group with different nomenclature such as vigilantes, neighbourhood watch, community guards or traditional police; however, vigilante group is the most common term or unofficial security used to complement the efforts of the formal police in crime management in the state (Kalu and Wapmuk, 2020). Crime management are acts, strategies or method employed by state governments, non-governmental actors, communities, etc in preventing or reducing crime level in the society using human and material resources at their disposal (Ihemege, 2021).

Chikwendu, Oli and Nwankwo (2015), in their paper titled “The Role of Vigilante Service Groups in Crime Control for Sustainable Development in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria” maintained that effective security is vital for sustainable development in the state. The findings from their study revealed that increase role of crime and the inability of the formal police to control and prevent crime led to public loss of confidence in the police. They also noted that the inability of formal (regular) police to protect lives and properties of the citizens in the state effectively which is the main reason for their establishment, led communities into

the formation of community policing initiatives in Anambra state. This is supported by the study conducted by Chukwuma and Alemika (2004), in the paper “Internal Security challenges in Anambra State”. The study revealed that rise in crime rates in Anambra state in particular and Nigeria in general was one of the major reasons for communities constituting and patronizing of vigilante outfits in Anambra state.

In addition to the above, their work further revealed that community vigilante outfit members are community indigenous able bodied youths recruited and maintained by the community concerned and changed with the function of crime management in the community. They are not far away from the community but resident in the community thus are pro-active to crime situations than the regular police who are far away from the community and only respond to crime situation when called upon by the community with its attendant unnecessary delays as a result of bureaucratic bottle necks associated with bureaucratic institutions. Thus, the regular police are reactive to crime scenes as such before they can come into the scenes, the criminals must have finished their operations and moved away. This reactive nature of regular police becomes a thing of serious challenge to crime management in the community as it gives rooms to criminals to have free space to operate and terrorize the community.

Collaborating, Osah and Osita (2017), in Abubakar (2019), in his work “National Intelligence Agency and the challenges of

Internal Security and Community Policing in Nigeria”, observed that community based vigilante group initiative is a potent weapon in the quiver of the government and various communities to stem the flow and tide of all forms of crime in Nigeria. Equally, they maintained that community oriented policing outfits is actuated by the growing need for the community or people at the local level (grassroots) and their immediate environment to have the benefits of local police services to supplement the effort of the regular police and other law enforcement agencies in order to ensure and guarantee the safety and security of their lives and properties. They equally maintained that though the regular police are doing good job in ensuring community safety by apprehending and prosecuting criminals but their functions are more of reactive and such a report or call must be registered with them before they could swing into action which

most often do not give the community their desired results. They concluded that community policing, is a philosophy that aims at promoting the community partnership with regular police to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime social disorder fear of crime, etc.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the survey research design. The area of study is Anambra State. The target population used in this study is traders, farmers, artisans, civil servants, police officers and religious groups especially Christian women organization who were identified during their annual August meeting identified from three communities from three local government areas and from the three senatorial zones of the state.

Table 1: Distribution of Anambra State Population by Local Government Areas and Senatorial zones

S/N	Senatorial Zone	Local Government Areas	Population
1	Anambra Central	Awka North	112,192
		Awka South	189,695
		Anaocha	284,215
		Dunukofia	96,517
		Idemili North	431,005
		Idemili South	95,517
		Njikoka	148,394
2	Anambra North	Anambra East	152,149
		Anambra West	167,303
		Ayamelum	158,152
		Ogbaru	223,317
		Onitsha North	125,918
		Onitsha South	137,191

3	Anambra South	Oyi	168,201
		Aguata	198,391
		Ekwusigo	158,429
		Ihiala	302,277
		Nnewi North	155,443
		Nnewi South	233,362
		Orumba North	172,362
		Orumba South	184,548
Total		5,527,810	

Source: NPC, 2016 Estimate

Sample Size and Technique

In consideration of the large size of the study area and population, sample survey technique was used. The size of the sample was determined using Taro Yamane (1968) formula for selecting sample size. The formula is thus:-

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

Where n = Sample Size

N = Population Size

1 = Constant

e = Degree of error (take 0.05)

$$= \frac{738,597}{1 + 738,597 (0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{738,597}{1780.025}$$

$$N = 400 \text{ (approximate).}$$

Thus, the choice of four hundred (400) as sample size for this study is supported by social sciences research scholars especially Nwana (1981), who opined that choosing a representative sample, has no fixed number or fixed percentage.

Tools for Data analysis

The data generated from the questionnaire and returned questionnaire were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies and simple percentages to demonstrate the responses that were obtained from the respondents. The hypotheses were tested based on the response from the respondents using simple percentages.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Data Presentation

Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents of the six communities on the basis of 65 each. However, the researcher was able to retrieve three hundred and eighty (380) copies of the questionnaire. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were not returned. This is statistically represented as follows using simple percentage formula:

$$\frac{F}{N} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Where F = Observed Frequency

N = Expected Frequency

Applying this formula we have;

Number of Distributed Questionnaire = 400

Number of Returned Questionnaire = 380

Number of Not Returned Questionnaire = 20

∴ Percentage of the Returned Questionnaire =

$$\frac{380}{400} \times \frac{100}{1} = 95\%$$

Percentage of Not Returned

$$\frac{20}{400} \times \frac{100}{1} = 5\%$$

Therefore; the data presented and analyzed in this study are based on the three hundred and eighty returned copies of the questionnaire which represents 95% of the sample size.

Analysis of the questionnaire distributed according to the six selected communities in Anambra state.

Analysis of the questionnaire according to the six selected communities from three local government areas from the three senatorial zones.

Communities	Questionnaire Distributed	Returned Questionnaire	Percentage (%)
Nnewi	65	65	17.1

Otuocha	65	62	16.3
Ogidi	65	65	17.1
Igbariam	65	63	16.6
Abatete	65	65	17.1
Otolo	65	60	15.8
Total	390	380	100

Source: field survey, 2023

The table shows the questionnaire distributed and returned from the six communities selected for the study. It also shows their percentages.

Research Question One

How effective has community policing outfits been in reducing crime in Anambra state between 2014 and 2023?

Questionnaire Item

The organization and mode of operation of community policing outfits in Anambra state led to its effectiveness in crime reduction.

Respondents' Responses

Responses		Percentages (%)
SA	200	53
A	130	34
U	—	—
D	35	9
SD	15	4
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table reveals that 200 respondents representing 53% of the total respondents Strongly Agreed that the organization and mode of operation of community vigilante group outfits led to better performance of community policing outfits in crime and insecurity reduction across the communities of Anambra state. 130 respondents representing 34% Agreed. 35 respondents representing 9% Disagreed and 15 respondents representing 4% Strongly Disagreed.

The implication is that the organization and mode of operation of community vigilante groups have effectively checkmated the rising levels of crime and insecurity in Anambra state. Mode of operations of community policing outfits as observed from the responses of the respondents indicated that it brought about effective security of lives, property and general well-being of the community members. The mode of operations include good working relationships and partnerships with the regular police and other state security agencies, relaying vital information about criminals in the community, assisting the police in locating their hideouts and movements. This made it easy for police to burst criminal hideouts and arrest them without much difficulty.

Research Question 2

What are the major challenges faced by community policing initiatives in Anambra state between 2014 and 2023?

Questionnaire item

Poor monthly remuneration as salary to vigilante members and inadequate provision of security materials are some of the challenges to effective community policing initiatives in Anambra state.

Do you agree?

Respondents' Responses

Responses		Percentages (%)
SA	160	42
A	170	45
U	0	0
D	30	8
SD	20	5
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table reveals that 160 respondents representing 42% Strongly Agreed that poor take homes as salary paid to members of vigilante outfits do not spur them to perform effectively. Equally, inadequate provisions of security materials make their security duty highly challenging to them. 170 respondents representing 45% Agreed on the above assertion. 30 respondents representing 8% and 20 respondents representing 5% Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed respectively. The implication is that poor salary and inadequate provision of security materials to community policing outfits are a serious challenge to effective security and public safety provision. Poor salaries given to community security outfits are not enough to take care of their basic needs not minding the importance of their jobs to the community. Most members of community policing outfits have families and relations who depended on them directly and indirectly for survival. Monthly stipends paid to them as salaries by the state made them to always engage in corrupt means of collection money even from the criminals who they are supposed to checkmate.

In addition to this issue of poor salary is inadequate provision of security materials. Most community security outfits operate with obsolete security materials and non-functional guns. This made it difficult for them to confront criminals with sophisticated weapons. This most often made criminals to overpower them or even kill some of them during operations. This equally led most security members to run away whenever they noticed that criminals were operating, coming their way or hearing the sound of their gun.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The study dwelt on “Community Policing Crime Management in Anambra State, Nigeria, 2014 – 2023”. The work looked into the performances of community policing

outfits in Anambra state between the period 2014 – 2023 and their roles in crime management (control and prevention) across the communities of Anambra state which led to crime reduction as well as the challenges that tended to hinder them from effective performance and on how to enhance their efforts for more effective security and public safety provision in Anambra state.

From the research question one “How effective has community policing been in reducing crime in Anambra state between 2014 – 2023?”. From the response of the respondents gotten from questionnaire distributed across the six communities of Anambra state selected randomly from the three senatorial zones of the state, the findings revealed that the organization and mode of operation of community policing outfits in the communities led to effective security provision for crime reduction in the state. This was captured in table. Also, being resident indigenous members of the community as well as quick response to crime scenes proactively led to early detention and control of crime scenes. This was well seen in table.

The table maintained that financial and material supports from the state and community concerned boosted the morale of community security outfit members in the discharge of their duties. From the responses of the respondents, it indicated that financial and material inducements to the security personnel are vital to the success of their operations. Table revealed that the introduction of community policing outfits contributed effectively to employment generation among able bodied youths in the

communities without job. Community policing initiatives thus has led to drastic reduction on youth unemployment in the communities in particular and the state at large. The above findings were equally supported by the view of Akinlabi, K.L. and Ihemeje, G.C. (2021) in their work titled “Role of Vigilante Groups in Crime Prevention and Control”. Equally, Udeagbala and Ntukogu (2022) in their work titled “Vigilantism and its implication on Nigeria’s national security” supported the respondents responses.

In addition to the above, the findings of research question two (2) showed the response of the respondents on the research question titled “What are the major challenges faced by community policing initiatives in Anambra state from 2014 – 2023?”. From the data generated from the response of the respondents, it revealed in tables 20, 21, 22 and 23 that poor salary, inadequate provision of security materials, politicians and wealthy men interference in the duties of community policing initiatives, employment of ex-convicts and repented criminals as security men and inadequate training were some of the security challenges faced by community policing outfits in Anambra state under the period of study 2014 – 2023. These challenges impacted negatively in the performance of the security outfits in bringing about security and enhancement of public safety in the state. This position was supported by Udeagbala and Ntukogu (2020) in their paper titled “Vigilantism and its implication on Nigeria’s National Security: A case study of Anambra Vigilante Group 1998 – 2020.

Recommendations

Crime and insecurity pose a serious challenge to the growth and development of the citizens and the state. Based on the findings from this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:-

Improved monthly remunerations

Members of the community policing outfits are human beings some with families and other responsibilities, paying them stipends as salaries at the end of every month is the reason some of them indulge in all manner of illegal act like collection of bribes, stealing, leaking of official security information to criminals, etc in order to get money and take care of their needs. If the communities they serve and the state government would increase their monthly salaries to living wages, it will go a long way in discouraging most of them in committing criminal acts and make them to willingly and effectively carry out their duties. This is necessary because most of the vigilante personnel have no other source of income except what they are paid at the end of every month as salaries from the state government and philanthropic donations from community members.

Constant provision of security working materials

Working materials are the tools which workmen used in their area of specialization. Without working materials, workmen cannot perform magic so it is for the security men. Effective security materials are sine-qua-non for effective security service delivery. A situation whereby security men without security materials go after criminals with sophisticated weapons (guns) is fatalistic. If security outfits are provided with effective

security materials, they would be sure of themselves that criminals can never overpower them. Hence, they will do everything possible to secure the community and its members. The criminals themselves will not dare to come because they know that the vigilante is highly fortified. If they try to come, either they are killed or arrested alive.

Conclusion

High rates of crime and insecurity are threat to societal survival. Again, there is no doubt that there is alarming and accelerating crises arising from rising crimes and escalating insecurity in Nigeria general and Anambra state in particular. Crime and insecurity challenges in Anambra state are more than the regular police and other security agencies alone in the state can handle for effective protection of lives, properties and business of the citizens. With regard to this, it became a basic necessity to provide alternative internal security outfit to complement the efforts of the regular police and other official security agencies in crime control and prevention in the state. Hence, the emergence of community policing outfits throughout communities of Anambra state for their own internal crime controls mechanism. These community policing units/outfits is known as Anambra Vigilante Group (AVG).

Community policing outfits in Anambra state began as pockets of vigilante groups in almost all the communities of Anambra state as a reaction to the rising rates of crime and insecurity in the community. Since the people were no longer sleeping with their two eyes closed and also having lost confidence in the ability of the regular police to provide them with effective security, they established

informal security outfit known as vigilante groups to be their internal communal security for effective crime and security management in their community. Based on its effectiveness in crime control at the

community level, it soon gained the legal backing of the state government and became a unified body known as Anambra Vigilante Group.

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