

Perceptions of Residents and Police Officers on the Implementation of Community Policing Program in Nyaribari Chache Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to assess the effectiveness of implementation of community policing program as a crime prevention strategy in Nyaribari Chache Sub-County, Kenya. Effective implementation of community policing program in Kenya and Nyaribari Chache Sub-County specifically has not been entirely successful due to the poor relation between the police and the community who are key stake holder in the implementation of community policing program. In Kenya police reforms is a critical issue not only for community safety and economic development, but because there is intense popular demand for reduced crime and better police performance. The programme aims to improve relation between the police and the communities and to enable them to work together to find solutions to community safety concerns. However, there continue to be major obstacles to police reforms in Kenya, crime rates area still high, there is widespread corruption and policing approaches and actors are often politicised. These challenges alongside the uneven pace of reforms have limited progress in extending CBP. The study focus was on the effectiveness of the implementation of Community Policing program as a crime prevention strategy. The specific objective of the study was to examine the perceptions of residents and police officers on the implementation of community policing program in Nyaribari Chache Sub-County. This study was inclined on social theories of criminology that lay the basis of the study. The research methodology and methods covered the research design which includes descriptive and explorative research, variables, and area of the study, target population, sampling procedure and sample size, research instruments such as the use of questionnaires, interviews and focused group studies. It also covered on the pilot study, reliability and validity of the data, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis as well as data management and ethical considerations. This study aimed at finding out how community policing program implementation has impacted on crime reduction. The findings of this study are very crucial in formulation of policies and laying out of strategies that will greatly help in effective implementation of community policing which is very crucial in curbing of crimes in the society hence restoring order.

Keywords: Community policing, Community, Crime, Implementation, Perception, Ameliorating

Background to the Study

Community policing can be defined as the partnership between the police and the community an approach designed to ameliorating crimes and law disobediences in the community to promote safe co-existence which is based on concept of people having a say on how their community is policed(Munyasia *et al*,2016). The concept of community policing is built on the belief that people deserve and have right to say on how their communities are policed in exchange for their participation and support (Liou&Savage, 1996).For law enforcement officers to effectively investigate and win war on crime they have to bring on board the participation of the people they are policing, as police alone without the good will of the community may not achieve much in maintaining law and order (Terpstra, 2011). Hence the philosophy of community policing transform from being reactive in pursue of crimes and embrace the proactive approach. For that reason concept of community policing transform police from being an emergency squad in fighting crime into a proactive organization with ready solutions (Thatcher, 2001). According to Brogden, (2002) community policing seeks to transform the policing organizations from reliance on Criminal law and procedures to adopt consensual extra-legal strategies in problem solving, emphasizing participation and partnership with the communities in order to address security and other social order problems. More so, criminals are within the community and hence community members may have crucial information which may help in tracing of those criminals and subsequently charged according to the law (Palmiotto, 2011).

The social order in any society is a major co-production of community policing and is founded on two major assumption as highlighted by researchers such as (Goldsmith, 2005., Muller.,2010., Tenkebe, 2008).That first, the positive day-to-day encounters with the police are an important avenue through which the public image of the police can be enhanced and bring changes in the public reservations regarding police trustworthiness, and the second assumption is that improvement in the citizen perceptions of police trustworthiness and legitimacy will increase the willingness of residents to cooperate with the police and comply with the law(Mwaura,2014).

Community policing has been advocated from 1980s in United State of America and the United Kingdom to present on a view to strengthen the relation between the police and the community they are policing for effective fight against crime and disorder in the particular societies, as decaying neighborhoods bred crime and disorder hence to prevent crime, disorder had to be contained (Ruteere &Pommerolle, 2003). The perception of the public in Kenya towards the police image is poor hence hindering the effective implementation of the community policing program, as the public viewed police as brutal and malicious and hence at time of launching the program in 2005,there existed no concrete legal framework to support the approaches of community policing (Miller *et al*,2013).The level of trust between the police and public is low due to poor handling of information hence poor cooperation and also the public complain of not being adequately involved in security initiatives and access to justice(Larson,2010).

Implementation of community policing program was anchored on fact that traditional form of policing had failed to solve many problem of crime and disorder being faced by the community, level of violent crimes for instance had increased, police brutality was at its highest level creating lot of mistrust between the public and the police (Shearing & Johnson, 2013). Implementation of community policing program in rural setting was greatly triggered by the high crime rates in the region hence seen as a way of curbing it and also to beneficent for Kisii's over all over all socio-economic development (Project Plan, 2011). However, despite the introduction of community policing initiative, effective implementation of the program in rural settings such as Nyaribari Chache Sub-County is raising questions due to evident factors such as high crime rates (KIPPRA, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Crime is a major social problem in the world and crime rates have been increasing in most developing countries including Kenya. Previously, Kenya police force (now service) used traditional methods of crime management that entailed reacting to crime as it occurred. Today countries are adopting community policing in crime management. Community policing transforms the police from being an emergency squad in the fight against crime to becoming primary diagnosticians and treatment coordinators (Thacher, 2001). Community policing is a new concept being adopted against crime in Kenya and despite the government effort to implement the program after it was launched by Kenya Government in the year 2005, it has not effectively helped curb the problem of crime and disorder in the society. In Nyaribari Chache Sub-County despite the introduction of the program in rural set up, rates of crime has not shown any significant change.

Literature Review

Community policing is a proactive style of crime management which is gaining popularity all over the world. It is a method of sensitizing the community to the need of preventing the occurrences of crime, rather than waiting for the crime to occur and then calling the police. This is because security need of the community are well known to the community as the criminals are within the society (Crawford & Evans, 2017). Community policing is designed to enhance social cohesion and integration hence preventing crime through positive social influence (Fitzgerald, 1989). Establishing the perception for the both parties to implementation of the program, as the program is regarded as one of the more significant recent development in policing around the world (Maguire and Wells, 2002). Implementing community policing requires important changes in the ways that police departments are structured and managed as well as in the ways that their purposes and operating philosophy are understood (Moore, 1992). Community policing enhance partnership between the police and the community so that the public can seek assistance from law enforcement agencies. This lead to high level of police bureaucracy in conventional policing which largely regarded members of a community as total strangers in the process of crime prevention. This has greatly affected the perception of the community as it discouraged them from volunteering any information and facts that would help in management of crimes and maintenance of law and order (Brodgen & Nijhar, 2003) According GoK, (2005), community policing involves police working in accountable and partnership with the police, this way the community is directly involved in the process of policing hence working together with the police in mobilizing resources to promote community safety and support security initiatives on a long

term basis to incidents as they occur. Therefore for that reason as much as the public needs the police, the law enforcers also need the public just as much in dealing with crime. Unfortunately, police culture encourages police isolation rather than close engagement with community members (Moore, 1992). The police may view the concept of community policing as letting out official police functions to an informal entity which might be difficult to hold accountable (Woods, 2007). Thus the police may fail to reveal all details of community safety to members which may affect the community policing relationship. The study reveals the perceptions of both the police and community members and how this affects effective implementation of the program hence problem of crime in the society persisting. By failing to reorient themselves towards citizens and change their attitudes and culture within the force, the police have generally been distrusted by the public (Safer world: 2008). This has resulted in a very poor public image hence poor relationship with the public which hinders efforts to build sustainable partnerships between the two parties. The poor perception between police and communities emanated from historical relationships that were pronounced by mistreatment, blatant abuse of rights, the absence of the rule of law and inadequate service delivery. Due to the strained relation between the community and the police, community members fear to share information to assist in crime prevention due to possibilities of retaliation (CHRI, 2006:2). The public also regard the police as lacking integrity in dealing with crime and view them as not ready to accept their legitimacy as partners in dealing with crime. Lisutsa (2012) in his analysis of the 'Nyumba Kumi' concept recently reintroduced by the government, states that Kenyans see criminals colluding with police every day. Kenyans have been conditioned to fear and never to trust the police and that conditioning is reinforced everyday by what they see. Kenyans see police receiving bribes so that they do not arrest criminals or charge them in court. As a result, the concept community policing is not likely to succeed.

The ideal community policing is where the police and the community are working together in in partnership with community members in crime management where it involves integrating all the organs of the state with those of the communities in fighting crime (Manning,2015). According to Ikuteyijo,(2009) while discussing community policing he claimed that there should be better communication, understanding and transparency between police and public by encouraging more liberal and tolerant attitude toward the criminals. Mottiar and White observe that the relationship between the police and the community in the community policing is characterized by tensions over the extent to which the community should be allowed into 'police affairs'. The police want community policing to be restricted from 'intruding into the discretionary domain of the police 'while the community demands more involvement in decisions such as choosing police Personnel (2003). There is thus a 'tension and ambiguity' between the language of partnership as used by the police and 'their desire to maintain their established monopoly of the policing enterprise' (Marks, *et al.*, 2009). According to Bogden, (2005) while reviewing experiences of community policing in a number of developing countries, such as Uganda, Kenya, Pakistan, India and South Africa finds that police do not regard the aspect of partnership between police and the community as productivity as important, but instead expect the public to serve the goals set by the police.

He sighted some cases in Pakistan where the police expected village communities to help them nab culprits and restore normalcy in cases of violence, while in Uganda 'they tended to regard community policing primarily as a means of instructing local populations, rather than of listening to them. He concludes that community policing is dominated by the police organization and [as such] come to promote police goals not community goals.

The level of mutual trust between the police and the community is low due to lapses in handling information which result in low cooperation. On most occasion community members complain of not being involved per se in initiatives and access to justice (Larson, 2010) There has been incidences of sabotage of community policing by some middle level officers as a result of resentment of the independence of junior officers brought about by community policing (Tilley & Sidebottom, 2017). The implementation of the community policing program was based on the acknowledgement that traditional method of policing was not solving many challenges of maintaining law and order in changing societal setting. The level of violent crimes had increased, police brutality was on the rise hence increasing the level of distrust between community and the police (Shearing & Johnston, 2013).

The structure of the police organization also influences the level and quality of decentralization, which is fundamental to enhance working relations between the police and citizens (Davis et al., 2003). Pelzer (1999) discusses the significance of decentralization as critical in unleashing the creative potential of officers at the local level. According to the study conducted by (Goldsmith, 2015) on building trust between the police and the community they serve, the study indicate that building and maintaining community trusts is the corner stone of successful policing and law enforcement. Participants discussed the qualities needed in police staff and community members to cultivate mutual understanding and trust in their communities for police, these qualities included ethics, honesty, equality, approachability and effective communication skills (Sentas, 2014). For community members, these included looking out for neighbors, getting involved, abiding by the law, role modeling behavior and communicating effectively with the police. For both police and community members, the importance of examining one's own biases and fears of others were seen as critically important (Rosenbaum, Graziano, Stephens & Schuck, 2011).

Mutuku, (2003) investigating the role of trust on effective implementation of community policing, he found out that the police and the community ought to share responsibilities and decision making and sustained commitment from both the police and the community in regard with the safety and security needs of the community.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. The design was chosen because descriptive covers a wide geographical area and is representative of the whole study, (Singh 2010), hence enabling the researcher to generalize the findings to a larger population. The study targeted a population of 167095 people. It is population of Nyaribari Chache Sub-County as per the 2017 projected census (KNBS, Kisii 2012). The population was inclusive of all the respondents who included police, community policing committee and the civilians. The researcher adopted 10% of the total population for the police officers and the community policing committee to obtain their desired sample size. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample can comprise of 10-30% of the population provided it is sufficient. To get

the sample size for the civilian the researcher will adopt Krejcie & Morgan, (1970) table for determining sample size for a given population using the following formula.

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Since the population of Nyaribari Chache Sub-County as per the 2017 projected census (KNBS, Kisii 2012) is one hundred and sixty seven thousand and ninety five (167,095)

According to Krejcie and Morgan table a population over one hundred thousand (100,000) will have a sample size of three hundred and eighty four (384). Therefore to get the sample of the civilian, the researcher subtracted the sample size of the two respondents that is the police and the community policing committee from 384. The data obtained from the sample of various officers, members of community policing committee and members of public was analysed using descriptive statistics i.e measure of central tendency (mean, standard deviation and percentages). The data collected was further analysed by SPSS version twenty three which will be used to analyse the information on the implementation of community policing.

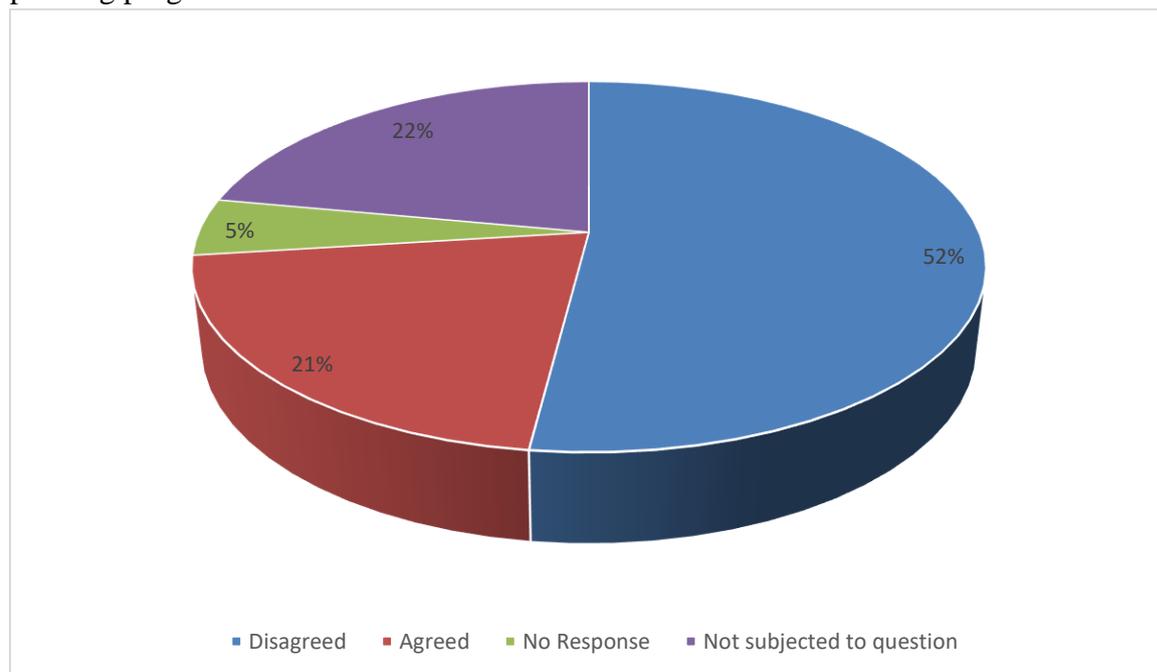
Findings

Due to insignificant changes in rate of crimes in Nyaribari Chache Sub-County the researcher sought to assess the perception of the implementation of the program from the major stakeholders that is the residents, police and the community policing committee.

The following are the questions posed to the respondents to assess their perception on issue of the implementation of community policing program.

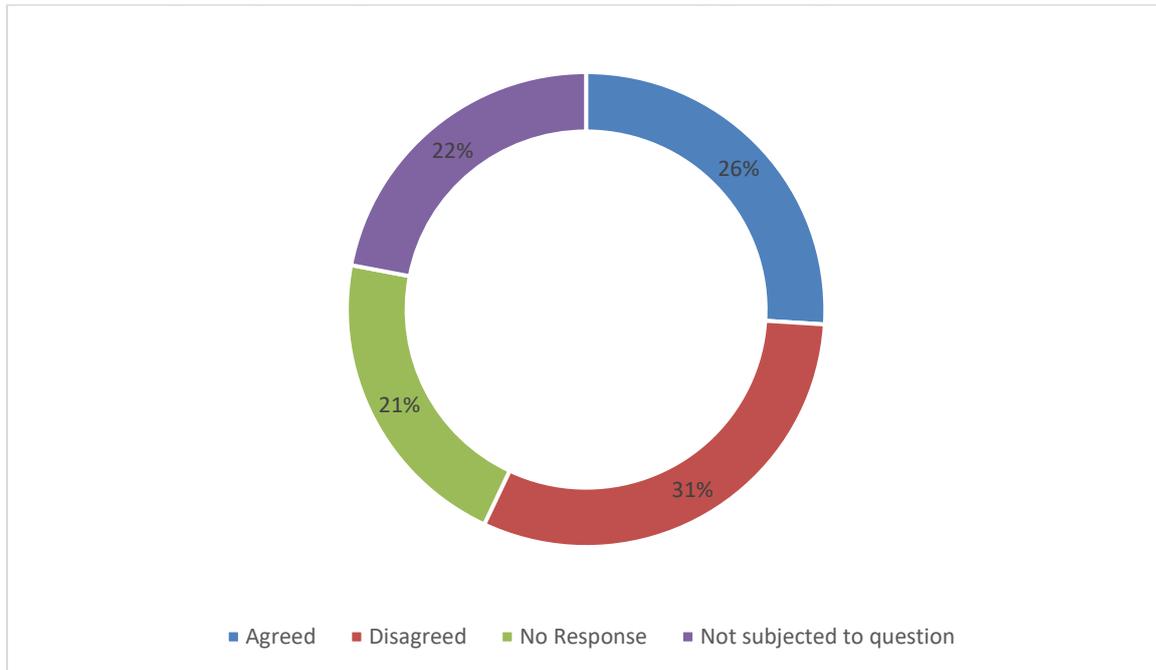
Has the community embraced concept of community policing as a style of policing?

The findings of the study showed 52% of the residents disagreed that the community had embraced concept of community policing, 21% agreed, there was no response from 5% of the resident’s respondents and the remaining 22% of the respondents were not subjected to this question. The outcome of the research proved that the concept of community policing program has not been fully embraced by the residents who were key stake holders. This agreed with the findings of (Fitzgerald,1989) regarding the implementation of community policing program.



Whether the community needs to partner with the police in dealing with incidences of crime and disorder in the society

The findings of the study showed that 26% of the residents agreed that the community need to partner with the police in dealing with incidences of crime and disorder in the society, 31% disagreed. There was no response from 21% of the resident’s respondents while the remaining 22% were not subjected to the question. The outcome of the research proved that a great number of the resident who were key stakeholder in the concept of community policing did not see the need to partner with the police in dealing with incidences of crime and disorder in the society. This contrasted the findings of scholars such as (Manning,2015) on their view regarding the implementation of community policing.



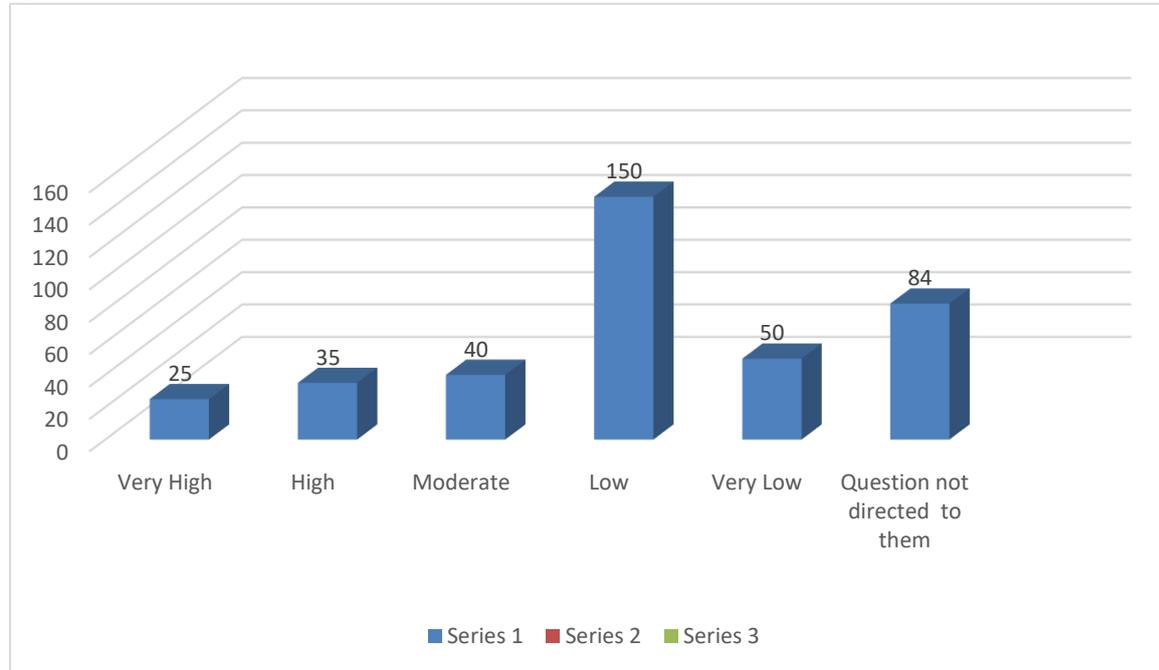
Level of public participation in community policing

The findings of the study regarding the level of public participation according to the resident’s respondents, 25 of them out of the total 384 respondents which is 7% responded that the level of public participation is very high,35 of them out of the total 384 respondents.

Table1: Level of public participation in community policing

S/NO	LEVELS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Very high	25	7%
2.	High	35	9%
3.	Moderate	40	10%
4.	Low	150	39%
5.	Very low	50	13%
6.	Question not directed to them	84	22%
	Total	300	78%

The outcome of the research proved that the level of public participation by the resident who are key stakeholders in the concept of community policing was low. This would hinder the effective implementation of community policing program as it is intended to bring partnership between the police and the community in fighting crime in the society. This may be greatly due to the way the members of the community view the police which is supported by scholars such as (Lisutsa, 2012).



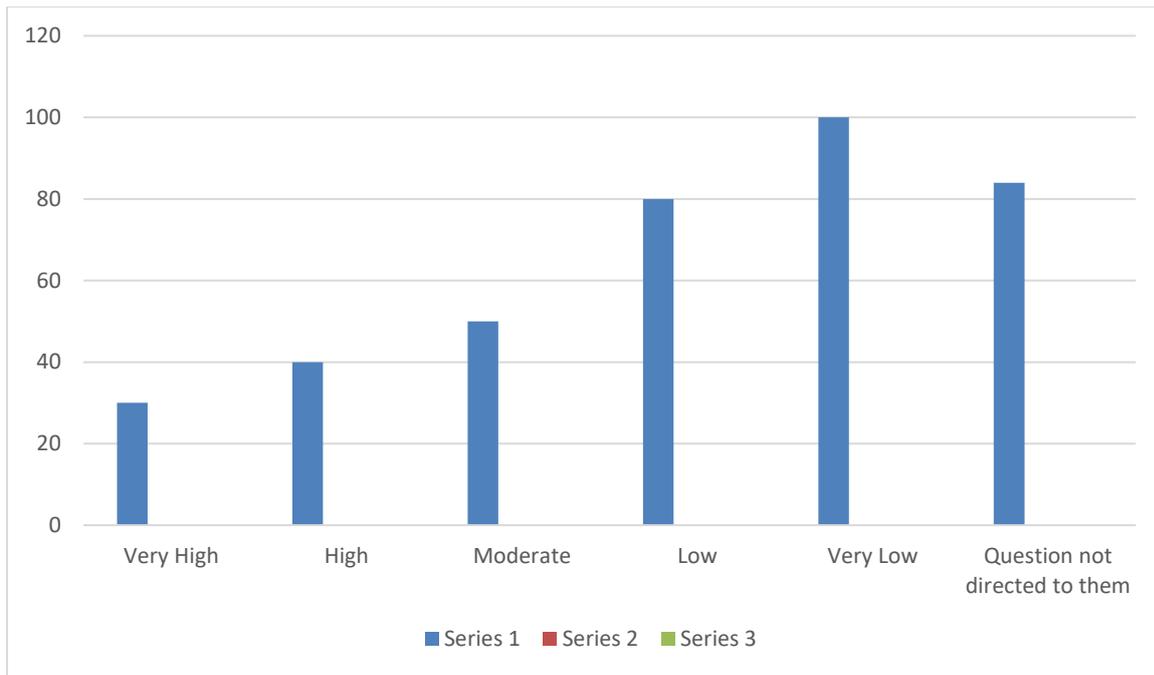
View of public towards the police

The findings of the study on the level of public view towards the police is tabulated in table 2

Table 2 Showing response by respondents on their view towards the police towards the police

1. S/NO	LEVELS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
2.	Very high	30	8%
3.	High	40	10%
4.	moderate	50	13%
5.	Low	80	21%
6.	Very low	100	26%
7.	Question not directed to them	84	22%
	Total	300	78%

The outcome of the research proved that the level of public view towards the police is poor hence jeopardizing the whole concept of community policing as they are the main stakeholders in the implementation of community policing program. This was in agreement with the findings of (Safer world,2008) on view of poor image by the members of the public due to historical relationship between the police and the members of the community.

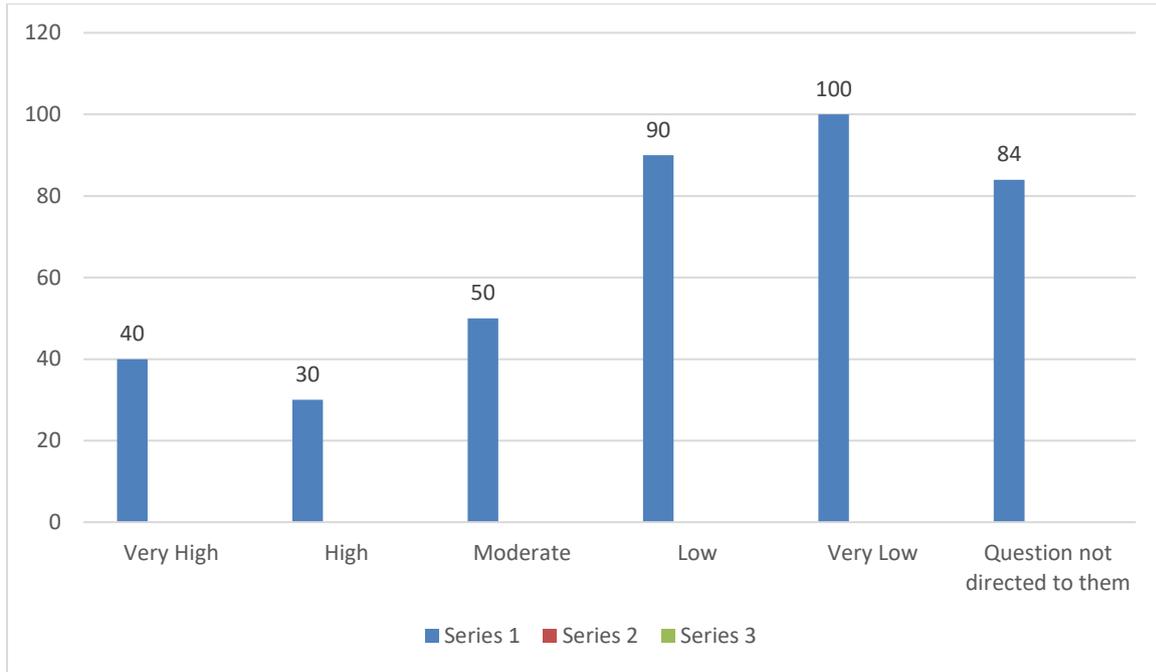


Level of integrity of police according to the residents respondents

The findings of the study on the level of integrity of police is tabulated in the 3 Table 3 Showing response by respondents on level of public participation in community policing.

S/NO	LEVELS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Very high	40	10%
2.	High	30	8%
3.	moderate	50	13%
4.	Low	90	21%
5.	Very low	100	26%
6.	Question not directed to them	84	22%
	Total	384	100%

The outcome of the research proved that the level of integrity of the police according to the resident’s respondents is wanting. This would affect the partnership between the police and residents who are the main stake holders in the implementation of community policing program. This was in agreement with the finding of (CHRI,2006).



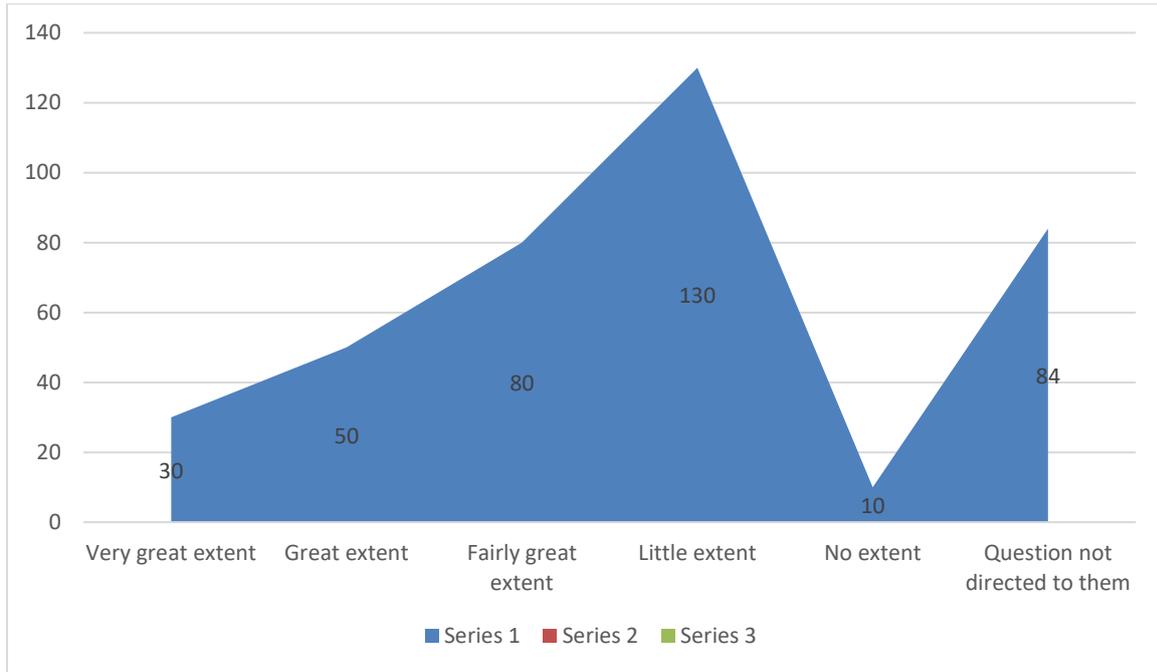
Regard on the extent of the implementation of community policing program

The findings of the study regarding the extent of the implementation of community policing program is tabulated in the table 4.

Table 4 Showing extent of the implementation of community policing program

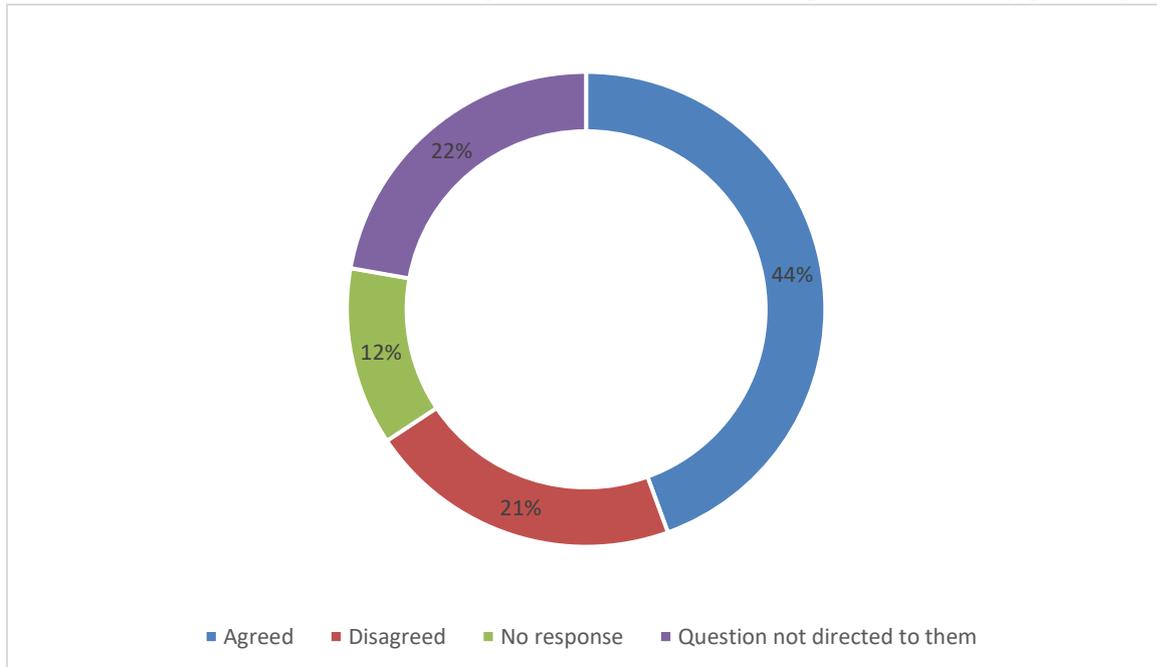
S/NO	LEVELS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Very great extent	30	8%
2.	Great extent	50	13%
3.	Fairly great extent	80	21%
4.	Little extent	130	34%
5.	No extent	10	2%
6.	Question not directed to them	84	22%
	Total	300	78%

The outcome of the research proved that the extent of the implementation of community policing program according to the resident’s respondents is little. This would affect the effective implementation of the community policing program. Et involved in the process of policing hence enhancing. The findings contrast proposition by the (GoK,2005) that community policing involves police working in accountable and partnership with the police.



Whether community policing promote good relation between the police and the public

The findings of the study showed 44% of the residents agreed that the community policing program promote good relation between the police and the residents, 21% disagreed , there was no response from 12% of the resident’s respondents while 22% of the respondents were not subjected to this question. The outcome of the research proved that the concept of community policing program if embraced by the stakeholders that is the police and the members of the community it play a great role in promoting their relationship in the partnership towards fighting crime and disorder. The findings collaborated with the observation of scholars such as (Brogden, 2002) on the concept of community policing.



Conclusion

The findings of this study will be very crucial in formulation of policies and laying out of strategies that will greatly help in effective implementation of community policing which is very crucial in curbing of crimes in the society hence restoring order. The outcome of the research proved that the level of integrity of the police according to the resident's respondents is wanting. This would affect the partnership between the police and residents who are the main stake holders in the implementation of community policing program. This was in agreement with the finding of (CHRI,2006).

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