Sustaining Development through Policing: Wa Municipality in Perspective

Samuel Marfo[1]

Abstract

The maintenance of public safety through a sound policing is a key enabler for development (economic progress, social welfare and political stability). In view of this the Ghana Police Service, an official agency responsible for ensuring public safety has been adopting various strategies in its operations targeting crime. One notable strategy has been the adoption of the police visibility concept in 2013 intended to reduce crime through deterrence. Arguably, the concept has been criticized as to its actual contribution to security by Ghanaians. Against this background, an exploratory study was conducted in the Wa Municipality, a beneficiary of the visibility concept; with the purpose of examining the perception held by the public on the visible police, and the actual effects the visibility concept have on the maintenance of security. Data gathered from 200 respondents through semi-structured interview revealed that the public perception on the visible police have been positive. Besides, the visibility policing have aroused public sense of safety and contributed to crime reduction especially, communities around the police visibility points in the Wa Municipality. This paper recommends a strong sectorial collaboration as a means of promoting public safety as enabler for sustainable development in the Wa Municipality.

Keywords: Wa Municipality, The Ghana Police Service; Police Visibility; Crime Statistics; Development.

Introduction:

Crime undermines the safety and development of countries. People throughout the world, in developing and developed countries alike, live under varied conditions of insecurity due to violence, international networks of terrorists and criminals, pandemics and natural disasters (Brown, Hall, Moreno, & Winkler, 2007; Commission on Human Security, 2003). Crime remains one of the greatest threats to individual and communities peace and security (Cawthra, 2003), which are essentially preconditions for sustainable development (Brown, Halle, Moreno &Winkler, 2007). For instance, the criminal activities manifested in the attack of America in 2001 led to the destruction of the World Trade Centre.

Like other countries, Ghana is not immune to criminal threats. According to the Wa Regional Police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Records (2015), between 2011 and 2014, the Upper West Region of Ghana alone recorded a total crime case of 4,950 ranging from murder, armed robbery, stealing, assault, human trafficking, causing harm, defilement and rape among others. These criminal activities undermine any sense of development in the country. Aning (2010) for instance, expresses that there is little information on the impact of firearms-related violence on tourism. He however asserted that an estimated 21,000 tourists were refrained from visiting Ghana in 2003 with the general perception of the country as being insecure. Insecurity in this sense was construed as criminal threat.

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[1]Department of Social, Political and Historical Studies, University for Development Studies, Wa Campus-Ghana. marfoms@yahoo.com

In an attempt to ensuring a sound security and sustainable development through control of crime and maintenance of law and order, Ghana has over the years through its legislative, executive and judicial functions instituted a number of interrelated bodies/institutions including the Judiciary, the Police Service, the Prison Service, the Armed Forces and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (Republican Constitution of Ghana, 1992). As indicated by Twumasi (1995), every community aspires to live in peace. In view of this, societies, either primitive or civilised, have at some stage or other of their development, formulated policies designed to reduce, if not eradicate, criminal tendencies.

Even though the fight against crime cannot be the sole mandate of one institution, and as such needs a multi-institutional or multi-sectorial approach, the police service can actually be deemed as the state institution that is primarily promulgated to spearhead the fight against crime in Ghana. The Ghana Police Service (GPS) derives its mandate from Article 200 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. In response to the changing security needs of Ghana, the Police Service has employed a number of strategies in dealing with the menace of crime and public safety in general which is a key enabler for development. One of such strategies has been the institution of the police visibility in 2013 which aims at increasing police-citizen contact; more personalized policing; more opportunity for community input and more information sharing between the police and the public, with the over-all view of controlling crime through deterrence. Arguably, the GPS has often come under the attack of the general public. According to Atuguba (2007), most Ghanaians are dissatisfied with the institution called the Ghana Police Service and perceive the police as among the most corrupt institutions. The visibility concept has equally been received with a mixed reaction from Ghanaians as to its actual effects on crime control and public safety in the country. As reported by the Ghana News Agency (2014),some stakeholders in the Wa Municipality criticised the police visibility as not beneficial to the people and described it as a 'police sleeping' concept.

It is against this background that Wa Municipality, one of the first communities to have benefitted from the police visibility concept in the Upper West Region in particular, and Ghana as a whole, was purposely selected for this study. The paper argues that the maintenance of a sound and secure environment through effective policing is key to any sustainable development, for that matter, issues pertaining to policing should be one of the pre-occupations of Ghanaians. This paper therefore aims at finding out (1) the perception held about the visible police by the public and (2) the actual contributions of the visibility policing to the maintenance of crime and security in the Wa Municipality. To achieve these objectives, the study is structured into six broad sections. Section one looks at the introduction to the study. Section two captures the evolution of policing in Ghana. Section three critiques the conceptual explanation of the key terms police visibility, crime statistics and development. Section four is devoted to the method used in gathering the relevant data. Section five looks at the discussions and key findings while the last section, section six captures the conclusion and recommendation.

Overview of Policing In Ghana

Professional policing was introduced by the British Colonial Authorities to the Gold Coast, now the Republic of Ghana in 1821. Prior to that, policing or maintenance of law and order was organized by the traditional authorities such as the local headsmen and chiefs, who employed and paid messengers to carry out the executive and judicial functions in their respective communities. In 1894, the institution of police was formalised with the passing of the Police Ordinance which gave legal authority for the formation of a civil police force. In 1902, the force was split into General, Escort, Mines and Railway Police which was legalised by the Police Ordinance of 1904. The Marine Police was formed in 1916 but disbanded in 1942 and replaced by Customs Excise and Preventive Service(Gillespie, 1955).

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was formed in 1921 with the fingerprint section fully operational in 1922. In 1948, the Police Reserves Unit was formed to combat riotous mobs following the 1948 riots in the country. The Wireless and Communications Unit was formed in 1950 with the formal opening of the Police Information Room in Accra by the then Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke in June 1950. By 1952, a large number of Africans were enlisted into the Police Force as junior officers. The women branch of the service was then established to be responsible for juvenile crimes and offences committed by women. In 1958, the first Ghanaian police commissioner, Mr. E.R.T.

Madjitey was appointed to head the service (Ghana Police Squad Lesson Notes; Gillespie, 1955). The GPS has thus, undergone through a number of metamorphoses in response to the changing security needs of Ghanaians.

The operation of the Ghana Police covers the entire country. To ensure efficient and effective policing, the GPS has sub-divisions that deal with specific offences within the mandate of the service. The GPS operates in twelve divisions: ten covering the ten regions of Ghana including Upper West Region of which Wa the study locality is the Headquarters, one assigned specifically to the seaport and industrial hub of Tema, and the twelfth being the Railways, Ports and Harbours Division. An additional division, the Marine Police Unit, exists to handle issues that arise from the country's offshore oil and industry. Each regional command is divided into divisional commands. The various divisional commands are headed by Divisional Commanders, who are in charge of the district commands under them. The individual district commands are, in turn, headed by District Commanders.

The District Commanders have direct control and supervisory responsibilities over all police stations and posts under their jurisdiction. The twelve regional divisions/commands exercise oversight responsibilities over the divisions together with the district divisions under them. There are furthermore, specialised police units in all the regional divisions. The Regional Commanders have oversight over these units. These units include: Motor Transport and Traffic Department (MTTD), Highway Patrol Unit (HPU), Public Affairs Directorate (PAD), Courts and Prosecution, Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), National Protection Unit (NPU), Arms and Ammunition, Finance Offices, Audit Offices, Crime Offices and Research, Planning and ICT Offices (Ghana Police Squad Lesson Notes; Ghana Police Service Instructions)

Literature Review

Police visibility

The meaning of 'Police Visibility' is rooted in the twain terms 'police' and 'visibility'. Different conception is held about the term police. For instance, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995: 1088) defines police the noun form as the people who work for an official organization whose job is to catch criminals and make sure that people obey the law. The same dictionary in its usage as a verb (p.1089) defines police as to keep control over a particular area in order to make sure that laws are obeyed and that people and property are protected, using a police or military force. Adler, Mueller &Laufer (1995) write that the police are a multi-function service agency equipped to response to civic problems and to fight crime.

The explanations as given above may suggest that the police is an official agency or body responsible for crime control and the maintenance of public order which are essential elements underpinning safety and development. The importance of the police cannot be overemphasized. Adler et al. (1995) for instance, have asserted that no country or city is capable of ensuring an orderly secure life for its citizens unless it polices itself. Effective policing is critical for the maintenance of public safety and promotion of development. Adler et al. (1995) summarize the function of the police into three main thematic areas namely: the service function - which involves dealing with social outcasts, drug addicts, homeless and orphans among others; order maintenance function – involves the suppression of tension between individuals and groups in societies through what the paper terms preventive patrolling which has been reviewed as a component of police visibility; and the law enforcement function. The Law enforcement has been one of the core functions of the police. This aspect of police work is probably the best known and most widely publicized, although not necessarily the task to which most police time is devoted. The primary objective in law enforcement is the apprehension of law breakers and the collection of evidence that will lead to conviction in a court proceeding.

Section 12 of the Police Service Act, 350/70 of Ghana and the Ghana Police Squad Lesson Notes (p.3) for instance, outline five broad functions of the Ghana Police Service namely; (1) Protection of life and property, (2) Prevention and detection of crime, (3) Apprehension and prosecution of offenders, (4) Preservation of Peace and good order and (5) the due enforcement of all Laws and Regulations with which it is directly charged. In an attempt to achieve their stated objectives, various strategies including car and foot patrols and fixed or static duties are carried out by the police globally (Ghana Police Squad Lesson Notes; Karn, 2013).

In practice, it could be seen that the maintenance of public safety in any given country, is tied primarily to the work of the police even though they are not the sole providers of security.

In its usage as a noun, the term visibility is generally understood as the relative ability of an object or an entity to be seen conspicuous to the eye under given conditions of distance, light, atmosphere, etc. When visibility is qualified by police, then it may be construed as the situation where police officials are deployed to communities, streets and highways which provides a symbolic presence and proclaims a state of order and a conducive atmosphere for human activities. The visibility policing concept perhaps is grounded in the Routine Activities Theory which postulates that crime is likely to be committed when there is an intersection in time and space of a motivated offender and a suitable target in the absence of a capable guardian (Cohen &Felson, 1979 cited in Samaha, 1994: 85-6). By implication, when crime is made a high risk enterprise through the frequent physical presence of the police, a capable guardian, potential criminals may be prevented to commit crime.

One noticeable thing is that the police have always been visible in communities wherever they operate through the traditional reacting policing mechanisms of random patrol and response, stop and search, investigation and detection, and intensive enforcement (Karn, 2013). What makes visibility policing a 'new concept' especially in the context of policing in Ghana is perhaps, it is more problem-oriented and proactive rather than reactive approach to policing in response to emerging security threats and challenges confronting modernity which seeks to reduce crime and public fear of crime by announcing the frequent presence of the police in communities, whether by foot patrol, car patrol or by static patrol or sentry guard, as stated by Assistant Superintendent of Police, (ASP) AffiaTenge - the Greater Accra Regional Police Public Relation Officer (Daily Guide, March, 2014).

Police visibility is deemed to have a suppressive effect on crime and besides, boosts public sense of safety. Even though there are no randomized experimental studies on a large scale concerning the actual effects of visibility policing on crime reduction, yet, as noted by Koper & Mayo-Wilson (2006), studies conducted in US and Colombia suggested that directed or intensive patrols in high gun crime areas can lead to reduction in gun carrying and gun related violence. Telep & Weisburd (2011:37-8) have pointed out that studies conducted by Police Foundation (1981) and Ratcliffe et al. (2011) respectively suggested that directed patrols or increase patrol time especially at micro geographic area or crime hot spots help reduce fear of crime and violent crime. Jones & Tilley (2004) and Ratcliffe et al. (2011) (cited in Karn, 2013: 12) have equally pointed out that in the United Kingdom, foot patrols have helped reduce personal robberies, and in Philadelphia, targeted foot patrols were found to have significantly reduced violent crimes respectively. Results from the studies conducted in different social settings, especially in UK and US (known countries with literature works on visibility policing) on the actual effects of visibility policing vary (Karn, 2003). Nonetheless, the information available as discussed above may suggest that increase police patrol time or frequent physical presence of the police in a given crime spot or community, has the capacity to reduce crime and besides, boost the public sense of safety, a foundation for any sustainable development.

Crime Statistics

Crime over the years has had the attention of theorists, scholars, sociologists, psychologists and academicians. Crime is a subject on which the public holds stronger views. Perhaps it is because crime concerns the entire community (Adler et al., 1995). Regardless of it notoriety, crime has no universal accepted definition and generally is seen as a legal construct. As pointed out by Twumasi (1995), crime like many or almost all other terms or concepts in Juris-prudence suffers a precise definition. He defines crime as a legal term for any act or omission which is in contravention of the rule of conduct approved by the community, and which the community, as a party on the one side, seeks through its appropriate legal means to suppress by imposing a suitable punishment on the offender or dealing with him/her in any legally recognised manner. Schaefer (2005) refers to crime as a violation of criminal law for which some governmental authority applies formal penalties. He indicates that laws divide crimes into various categories, depending on the severity of the offense, the age of the offender, the potential punishment, and the court that holds jurisdiction over the case. Bohm & Keith (2007) equally defined crime as an intentional violation of the criminal law or penal code, committed without defense or excuse and penalised by the state. According to the Criminal Code of Ghana, Act 29/60, crime is any act punishable by death, or imprisonment or fine.

The discussions above may suggest that what constitutes a crime differs from country to country. However, one thing which is common in all the definitions is that crime is an act which undermines public safety, development and progress, and is unacceptable and punishable by law. Crime may exact fear, anger, distrust and lack of confidence.

This probably could explain why the police is critical about the maintenance of law and order. In Ghana for instance, assault, robbery, murder, rape, attempted suicide, causing harm, bribery and corruption, stealing, forgery and fraud among others are all acts of crime as espoused by the Criminal Code, Act 29/60.

The knowledge of individuals on crime is very essential. The fact is that information on crime commission in a given country, whether crime is increasing or decreasing are derived from official agencies including the police. There are various forms in measuring crime but many countries around the globe have relied on police crime statistics, crime rates and national crime victimization survey (Samaha, 1994). Given the objectives of this study, only police crime statistics is considered.

Statistics in general is the collection of numbers which represents facts or measurements. Crime statistics by implication is the collection of numbers of crimes committed in a stated period in a given social setting as per the police measurement. Crime statistic perhaps is the most common means of getting information or records on crime. However, it comes with certain difficulties. Critics including Samaha (1994) have asserted that statistics about crime and delinquency is probably the most difficult of all social science statistics to be relied upon as a measure of the prevalence of crime. They argue that a large proportion of crimes are undetected and as such crimes that are not detected obviously cannot be counted. They further asserted that some crimes may not be reported to the police for a number of reasons and consequently not likely to be counted. Besides, crimes that are reported to the police may not be officially counted by them or may be inaccurately recorded leading to what is generally referred to as the dark figure in crime.

Regardless of the deficiencies associated with crime statistics, any record of crime such as offenses known to the police, arrests, convictions or commitment to prison can be considered readily available crime index or estimates of crimes committed which has security and development implications for a given community or country. A high crime condition is inimical to any meaningful development. Public safety, for that matter, security is intimately tied to development. For instance, the arbitrary bombardment, abduction and execution of people in certain parts of Nigeria by Boko Haram militants have rendered parts of the country insecure (Daily Graphic, 2015). This equally has derailed the development of the affected communities.

Development

Development is a contested term. Martinussen (1997) has pointed out that, there is no consensus on what the subject development research covers. The field of development is considered as an inter-discipline rather than a discipline. The reality is that, there are many theoretical pursuits about development, each theorist wearing the blinders of his subject.

Coetzee & Graff (1996) have pointed out that in the earlier times, development and progress were used synonymously. This they asserted was supported by the modernization theorists. Development was therefore defined from progress point of view, implying increase in the productive capacity of the economy over time, which results in, increase in the level of national income. Development was perceived primarily in terms of a continuum with 'traditionality' and 'modernity' at the two ends of the continuum. The assertion was that, in order for third world countries including Africa to develop or modernize, they needed to change their traditional (indigenous) methods of production and adopt that of the western world. This materialistic conception of development was supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the two key public financial institution of the world economy (Martinussen, 1997; Coetzee & Graff, 1996). The dynamics and complexity of society in no time proved that, economic emancipation alone was not sufficient to justify the term development. The subsequent claims and counter claims by other bodies including the critical structure and dependency theorists were a manifestation of the complicity and the multiplicity nature of development. Till today, development theorists and practitioners are grappling with what really constitute development. Regardless of the more specific definition, according to Martinussen (1997), there is a very widespread tendency to associate 'something positive, something desirable, with development'. This applies no matter whether development refers to society, regions or specific population.

Development could therefore be conceptualised as human-centered phenomenon, which begins and ends with humans. Development is conceived as any activity or change that affects the over-all interest of the masses without posing any immediate or long term danger to life, property and the environment. Development has far too long been largely defined without due reference to safety which calls for rethinking.

The fact remains that development cannot be de-linked from that of (public) safety as no meaningful development can take place amidst insecurity. As noted by Brown et al. (2007), progress is impossible in the midst of insecurity as institutions cannot function, people cannot plan for the future, and education and sanitation take a backseat. It could be deduced that effective policing strategies targeting public safety in any social setting, is bedrock of any sustainable development.

Methodology

The study locality

Wa Municipal Assembly is the only Municipal Assembly together with 10 District Assemblies that make up the Upper West Region (UWR) of Ghana. Wa is the capital of the Wa Municipal Assembly which also serves as the regional capital of Upper West Region. The Wa Municipal Assembly shares administrative boundaries with Nadowli District to the North, Wa East District to the East and South and the Wa West District to the West and South. (Wa Municipal Assembly Report, 2010). The 2010 Population and Housing Census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012) put the population of Wa at 107,124 with 80.4 percent of the people in the Municipality belonging to the Mole-Dagbani group which comprises the Waalas who are the indigenous people, Dagaabas and the Sissalas. Other ethnic groups found in the Municipality include the Frafra, Akan, Ewe, Ga, Dagomba, Grushi, Gonja, and Moshies. The strategic position of Wa makes it a pivot of economic activities. The structure of the economy of the Municipal Assembly was dominated by the agriculture sector. However, the 2010 Population and Housing Census showed the service sector employing the largest labour force of about 51.3 percent. This was followed by the agriculture 30.2 percent and industry 18.4 percent (GSS, 2012). Other key sectors of the economy are transport, tourism, communication and energy. The influx of people and the vibrant economic activities make the Wa Municipality a prospective target of criminal activities. This in effect calls for a strong security apparatus and institutional collaboration.

This exploratory study targeted members of the communities jotted around the specific police visibility points (spots) in the Wa Municipality. Due to logistics and time constrains, in all 200 respondents from six communities considered as critical due to their location in the Municipality around 10 visibility points were sampled for the study. Given the fact that it was difficult to select specific respondents from such a general population, a quota sampling technique was used in selecting the 200 respondents consisting of 138 males and 62 females from the six communities given as follows: Konta-28, Market Center-40, Kumbiehi-32, Fadama-34, Kabanye-30 and kambali-36. The criteria for the selection were that the respondent should be (1) a resident of the community around the chosen visibility point, and (2) someone with an established business within the study community.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilised in the study. Primary data were gathered mainly through semi-structured interview supported with key informant interview. According to Marfo (2014), a semi-structured interview is a guided social conversation between a researcher and an individual or group of individuals with some predetermined topics or questions. It is a flexible technique and uses what is termed as a checklist but not formal questionnaire. The Semi-structured interview and key informant interview were carefully selected to supplement one another. Besides, they were utilised with the view to curtail cost, lessen problems relating to retrieval, and to ensure a high level of participation and response rate.

Secondary data were also accessed by reviewing literature from sources including: journal articles, police reports, published books and official reports and websites. These materials were utilised with the view to complement primary data so as to get a balance picture of the problem which motivated the study. Qualitative data were analysed by summarizing the findings into themes or thematic areas of the study. Where appropriate, a table was used to present quantitative data. In all situations, due cognizance was given to ethical issues pertaining to data gathering and analysis as advocated by social scientists. This study was conducted between February, 2015 and September, 2015.

Discussions and Findings

(a) Community perception of the Visible Police

A major issue with the Ghanaian populace is the perception they held about the police in terms of their ability to deal with crime and to be trusted in times of need. In responds to the question of awareness of the police visibility, all the 200 respondents responded in the affirmative.

This could imply that the frequent physical presence of the police might have attracted the attention of the public which is quite impressive. Asking as to whether the police can be relied upon in times of need, 124 respondents responded in the affirmative. Seventy-six (76) respondents however, had a contrary view. In furtherance to the above questions, respondents were asked as to how they feel with regard to their safety with the presence of the police, 148 respondents affirmed that they feel much secure with 62 respondents responding in the negative. In a similar question, 82% of the respondents indicated that the police can deal with crime. Thirty-six respondents representing 18% however perceived the police as not able to deal with crime. The high sense of feeling of safety as expressed by the respondents (74%) due to the frequent presence of the police supports a review study conducted by Dalgleish&Myhill (2004) which showed that increased levels of foot patrol were found to have improved the feelings and perception of safety among people in 22 evaluated police interventions in UK.

(b) Contribution of the police visibility to the maintenance of security

The study sought to know how the police visibility concept has affected the communities along the various visibility points. Ten (10) respondents declined to comment on the contributions of the concept. Ninety (90) indicated the concept has helped reduce crime in their communities, eight voiced out that the concept has ensured some level of discipline on the road. Four (4) respondents said the visible policing has helped the vulnerable in the communities through assistance in various ways, 36 people said the concept has improved the safety condition in the communities, 32 respondents associated the visibility with improvement in law and order. Twenty (20) respondents however registered their displeasure in the police visibility concept, saying the concept was of no contribution to the communities.

Response from majority of the respondents (90) indicated that crime has reduced in their communities due probably to the visibility policing. This finding is consistent with the review work of Telep&Weisburd (2011), which indicated that multiple quasi-experimental studies have suggested that directed police patrols reduced the level of crime and also boosted public sense of safety. Secondary data from the Wa District Police CID (2015) equally showed a downward trend in crime cases since the introduction of the visibility policing. According to the statistics, total crime in the Wa Municipality reduced from 1116 reported cases in 2011 to 1049 in 2012. It further reduced drastically to 450 in 2013 which was the year in which the visibility concept was introduced. However, total reported crime cases went up from 450 in 2013 to 838 in 2014 (See Table 1). Of course, the figure in 2014 was relatively low as compared to that of 2011 and 2012 figures respectively. The sharp increase of crime cases in 2014 perhaps could be attributed to a change in the modus of criminals or laxity in the part of the visible police. Notwithstanding the seemingly impressive nature about the level of crime reduction in the Municipality in general, the secondary data reveled that armed robbery, stealing, defrauding by false pretense, murder, defilement of a child under 16 years and abduction of a female under 18 years, have not recorded any significant reduction. These are critical issues which border on human development. This probably could explain why 36 respondents perceive the police as not able to deal with crime.

Table 1: Wa District Police Crime Statistics for the Period 2011-2014

OFFENCES/YEARS (PERIODS)	2011	2012	2013	2014
Assault	333	391	105	212
Indecent Assault	0	0	1	0
Stealing	433	373	172	396
Offensive Conduct conducive to breaches of the peace	47	41	9	17
Threat of Harm	24	50	17	29
Causing unlawful Damage	33	31	19	22
Threat of Death	63	26	13	22
Causing unlawful Harm	36	13	5	9
Defrauding by false pretense	34	28	21	29
Unlawful Entry	3	4	3	0
Possessing forged document (counterfeit)	0	1	0	1
Possession of Narcotic drugs	6	0	0	1
Attempted Stealing	0	3	3	8
Act tending to disturb the peace	6	3	1	6
Trespassing	0	5	19	1
Robbery	9	12		10
Murder	7	3	3	3
Cruelty to animal	1	1	1	1
Rape	3	8	6	7
Escape from lawful custody	2	0	0	7
Illegal Possession of offensive firearm	2	0	0	2
Defilement of a child under 16 years	13	14	15	24
Obstruction	1	0	0	0
Incest	0	0	1	0
Impersonation	0	0	0	0
Abortion	1	0	2	1
Rioting	0	0	0	0
Causing public nuisance	0	0	0	0
Abduction of a female under 18 years	10	10	13	17
Inquest	0	0	0	0
Loitering	2	2	0	1
Arson	2	1	1	0
Being on premise for unlawful purpose	2	0	1	2
Forgery	0	0	3	0
Other Crimes	43	29	16	10
Total	1116	1049	450	838

Source: Wa Police District Police CID Report, 2015

Conclusion

Visibility policing, a more proactive system of policing is quite infantile in the Ghanaian community, which was instituted in February 2013 at the Police Headquarters, Accra and same replicated in all the regional capitals. Wa, the study locality had its conception in July 2013. The visible policing concept though very young (to be evaluated for its overall success or otherwise), nonetheless, this study has showed that the visibility policing has contributed to the reduction of crime, and besides, boosted public sense of safety especially communities along the visibility points in the Wa Municipality, which are critical issues underlying any development. Notwithstanding its moderate gains, the criticisms from a section of stakeholders in the Wa Community that the concept is not beneficial and describing it as a 'police sleeping concept', and 18% of respondents perceiving the police as not able to deal with crime is an indication that the police have to step up their operations to meet the security needs of the people.

On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that;

1. More police personnel should be recruited into the visibility department in order to enable it to extend its operations to other communities (critical locations) in the Wa Municipality. This recommendation is based on the fact that the visibility policing have found to have actually contributed to public safety in this study, yet there were only 20 visibility points throughout the Wa Municipality leaving various communities unattended due to inadequate police personnel.
2. The visibility department has to be resourced in terms of motorbikes, patrol vehicles and bicycles to make it more viable. As indicated by a key informant, inadequate logistics in general and lack of mobile vehicles in particular, have reduced the whole visibility concept to a static patrol. Demand for more police personnel requires huge sums of money and logistics which calls for collaborative funding. As noted by (Karn, 2013), meeting the demands of a more globalised, culturally diverse and technological connected society with fewer resources represents a significant challenge to the police. Effective crime control as a way of ensuring public safety, and enabler for development, requires institutional or sectorial collaboration. It is suggested that Industrialists, the government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should all support the visibility department both in cash and kind to make it more vibrant to provide the needed security and enabling environment for a sound development in the Wa Municipality.

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