

Challenges affecting the Effective Implementation of Community-Oriented Policing in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria

OWONIBI OLA ELIZABETH

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria

J.O. Ukawilulu

Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria

Abstract. This article examines the challenges affecting the implementation of community-oriented policing in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria. Over the years policing in Abuja has been confronted with problems like increased crime, terrorism and general insecurity. Despite, the adoption of community-oriented policing in April 27th, 2004 which was a welcomed strategy to deal with the crime trend, yet the crime is still on the increased. Community-oriented policing as a strategy is a proactive philosophy that promotes problem-solving, and problem oriented policing in tackling the crime and insecurity that affect the quality of life, and citizens fear of crime. It entails identifying, analysing and addressing the community problems at their roots. It also involves partnership between the police and members of public as co-producers of safe community. The method employed was survey; multi-stage sampling was used, while questionnaire and oral interview were used as instruments of data collection for 400 respondents. The study revealed that, community-oriented policing implementation in Nigeria is faced with series of challenges. These include misconception of the core value of community-oriented policing, police-public perceptions, and inadequate fund from the government, inadequacy equipment and technology to support services, corruption, and so on. The study recommends that it is pertinent for all the stakeholders to have a proper training in order to understand the concept of community-oriented policing for effective delivery of the strategy in the reduction of crime and fear of crime, for safety and security in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Keywords: Challenges, Community policing, Crime prevention, partnership, safety, security, strategy.

1. Introduction

The place of crime prevention and control in any society cannot be over emphasized. Traditionally, the maintenance of law and order in any civilized society like Abuja is usually the exclusive role of conventional police and other law enforcement agencies. In Nigeria, the police under the leadership of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Balogun Tafa came up with reform policy of 8-point agenda to tackle crime wave and insecurity. With his slogan “Fire for Fire” and the adoption of community-oriented policing in April 27, 2004 by the former President Olusegun Obasanjo, with the aim of combating crime and insecurity in Nigerian Communities. Community-oriented policing is collaboration efforts between the police and the members of the public, in fighting and reducing crime and insecurity in a community, (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2016). Despite the introduction of community-oriented policing over the years in Nigeria, the programme implementation was faced with security challenges in an effort to combat crime especially in Abuja (Osaro, 2013). Thus, the security challenges and the fear of crime faced by the citizens are worrisome and so demand urgent and workable solutions. Therefore this paper is an attempt to address those challenges facing the effective implementation of community-oriented policing for safety and security in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In spite of the tremendous successes of community-oriented policing to address the causes of crime reduce crime and its fears in other countries such as

Japan, USA, Britain and other countries. On the contrary this laudable effort and expectation of the community-oriented policing version in Nigeria, is the direct opposite leading to failure of the strategy in Abuja, due to the trend of crime presently, which shows that the community-oriented policing as strategy have failed to reduce crime. Researches evidence show that community-oriented policing as a strategy in Abuja was plagued with many challenges, such as unawareness of community-oriented policing, misconception of the core value of community-oriented policing, police-public perceptions, inadequate funding by government, shortage of manpower, corruption, lack of modern technology for intelligence gathering, and so on. Thus, it is pertinent to proffer solutions to these problems, in order to address policing strategies and to improve the quality of life in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study first is to examine the challenges faced by community-oriented policing as a strategy for crime reduction in Abuja. Second to how to improve the performance of community-oriented policing for effective crime prevention and crime control in Abuja.

1.3 Research Questions

It is important to ask some questions in relation to the study for the realization of its objectives; firstly, what are those challenges undermining the community-oriented policing in crime reduction in Abuja Municipal Area Council?. Secondly, how can the performance of community-oriented policing be improved for community safety?

2. Defining the Concept of Community-Oriented Policing

In understanding the concept of community-oriented policing, there are many definitions of community-oriented policing but for this presentation; the study relies on the definition put forward by the Nigeria police Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) which stated that, Community-oriented policing is a philosophy that guides police management styles, policies, strategies and operational performances. It requires an active partnership between the police and the community members. It ensures that police view their primary role as the provision of quality service to the community. It also entails that the police adopting a problem solving approach to their operations and

involves the public in deciding policing priorities (Balogun, 2004). Community-oriented policing as a strategy is a working collaboration between the community and its police agency. The core elements of community-oriented policing are partnership and participation by members of the community to reduce crime, deal with community problem-solving and improve the quality of life for the community. The strategy enables the citizens to cooperate with the police in dealing with incidence of crime, fear of crime, and other social disorder issues within the community. The community-oriented policing are anchored on a systematic relationship between the police and the entire citizenry (Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013).

According to Osaro (2013), community-oriented policing promotes and supports organizational strategies, to address the causes and reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services, which involves aspects of traditional law enforcement as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, change management, institutional training and partnerships. It equates reactive responses to calls for service with proactive problems-solving centred on the causes of crime and disorder. He maintains that community-oriented policing requires the police and the public to join together as partners in the course of both identifying, analysing and effectively addressing the issues of crime and security in the community.

2.1 Emergence of Community-Oriented Policing in Nigeria

The reasons for adopting the more proactive approach inherent in community-oriented policing in Nigeria are both philosophical and pragmatic (NPF Handbook 2018). At the philosophic level, any police organization that seeks to serve democratic and humanitarian ideals must be (and be seen to be) transparent, fair, apolitical, accountable and responsive to public perceptions and expectations. Such policing is characterized by the notion of police service rather than police force, where the most significant benchmarks of performance are public satisfaction, trust and confidence. At the pragmatic level, there exists a wealth of evidence to confirm that the traditional approach to policing, which tends to be reactive and exclusively law enforcement based, is ultimately not effective in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour within society. Further, a predominantly reactive policing style encourages an alienating police culture, whereby the police and public develop “them” and “us” mentality towards one another. The inevitable outcome is that the police

image suffers, public confidence declines, and citizens withdraw their voluntary supports and cooperation toward crime issues (Nigeria Police Force Operational handbook 2018, British Council DFID).

Furthermore, Finance provides another pragmatic and compelling reason to pursue a community-oriented policing style in Nigeria. Citizens and their elected representatives are entitled to ask how public funds are being spent and to demand value for money. In competing for their share of limited public funds, public sector organizations should be able to prove that they have spent their budget wisely and that resources have been targeted effectively towards social priorities. If the police can demonstrate, they are both operationally and cost effective in achieving results, as evidenced in service quality and public satisfaction, they gain a significant edge in the bidding for future finance and resources. These were the rationale behind adoption of community-oriented policing in 27th April 2004, yet these challenges are still much more present in the day to-day running of community-oriented policing in Nigeria. Thus there is an urgent need to address these challenges for workable solutions and effective crime reduction in Abuja.

According to Ogadima & Okunola, (2015) in Nigeria, community-oriented policing came due to concerns that the prevailing system has failed the traditional and professional policing approach as it were in abroad so also in Nigeria, often at times citizens that witnessed crime are not willingly to be involved in police bureaucratic protocols, thus, they refused to report crime cases to the police, more so due to lack of confidence and mistrust on the police agency. Also in the same vein George (1988) stated that in this dispensation when citizens are angry, frustrated and alienated from democratic government and its representatives, getting closer to the people by the police fulfils community-oriented policing mandate to build confidence, trust and peace with the consumers of their service. The overall goal of community-oriented policing is for the police and the public to become partners with communities, empowering them so that they can carry on with their own shares of responsibilities of making community safer. This collaboration should be enhanced and channel through proper community-oriented policing awareness and training in Nigeria. Most authors were campaigning for community-oriented policing as a means of fighting crime, while this study focuses on the challenges of community-oriented policing in Nigeria since inception.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings for this study are the Left Realistic theory and Broken Window Theory. The first theory is Left Realistic was popularized by Jock Young and others in 1984. The theory suggests that the police inability to quench the ever increasing wave of crime in Abuja and fear of crime was due to lack of cordial relationship between the police and the public members, the police ought to serve and protect. The theory believed that for police to be able to reduce crime and fear of crime in a community there must be partnership between the police and the public, for both should serve as co-producer of safety and security in their neighbourhoods. The theory emphasized that if the police neglect and refuse to partner with the public; there will be dry of information needed to solve most crime issues. The theory believed that in dealing with crime and policing problem, evidence from victimization studied and other sources like crime statistics show that 50-90 percentage of crimes known to the police are notified to them by the public. Most crime issues that are cleared up are also solved as a result of information received and gathered from the public (suspects, witnesses and victims evidences), Haralambos & Holborn (2013). However, if the public are not treated well or abused they will become unwilling to give the police vital information on crime issues, thus unable to solve crimes problems. Researches evidence that public trust and confidence in the police has decline, due to police professionalism that led to dry of information needed to solve crime issues. Therefore for crime wave and fear of crime to reduce it is pertinent for the police and the citizen to be in partnership that will help in reducing crime, safety and security in Abuja. Partnership as the core value of community-oriented policing is pertinent to its effectiveness to reducing crime within the community, especially in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

The second theory is Broken Window model, it is a popular perspective of community policing was first described in 1982 in a seminal article by Wilson and Kelling. The theory suggests that the slippery slope to lawlessness begins when a community starts tolerating relatively major violations of public order-vandalism of abandoned structures, minor traffic violations, loitering and the like and that cracking down on such nuisances discourages more serious crimes such as robbery, burglary and assault. Since 1980s the 'broken window' theory has served as the premise for new policing strategies that aggressively focused on the any appearance of undesired behaviour and minor crimes such as drinking, using

drugs in public , prostitutes, vandals off the street, including traffic violations. Zero tolerance policing is known for its success in reducing crime in New York in 1994 and 2001. Its aggressive campaign restored order in the city and crime declined dramatically. According to document of community-policing Wikipedia, (the free encyclopaedia retrieved 01/03/2016) stated that community policing was derived from ‘Broken Windows theory since broken window is not against the law then it would be ignored by the professional police officers. However, it implies social disorganization that needs attention of the community oriented officers (Giddens, 2006; Haralambos & Holborn, 2013). Therefore the broken window theory can serve as a motivation for city leaders and officials to clean up neighbourhoods and take control of local crime. It can also motivate a city or neighbourhood to put funds towards youth programs that will give unsupervised teens and children a fun, activity-filled place to go. Parents may also be influenced to keep a better eye on their kids and the activities that take place outside their home.

3. Methodology

The area of study is Abuja municipality Area Council (AMAC), which is the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), in Nigeria. The population is made up with urban white collar jobs, business contactors and rural agrarian life, which is regarded as heterogeneous society. The estimated population of Abuja is 2,440,000. (Two million four hundred and forty thousand) (NPC 2014).The sample population selected for the study was 400, which consist of police personnel (240) and members of the community (160). The method employed was survey method, while the multi stage sampling technique was based on stratified and simple random sampling for the selection of the two categories of the respondents. The study instruments were questionnaire and oral interview for the collection of data. These were used to elicit information relating to respondents opinions on community-oriented policing in Abuja. While the secondary qualitative data compliments the above method. For data analysis the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse the data obtained.

4. Results

Table1: Challenges Encountered In the Implementation of Community-Oriented Policing of Respondents

Challenges	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Inadequate manpower	40	10
Inadequate fund from the government	72	18
Inadequate equipment to support service (intelligent gathering)	48	12
Lack of cooperation between police/public	82	20.5
Misconception of COP	86	21.5
Corruption	62	15.5
No idea	10	5
Total	400	100

Table 1 indicates that about (21.5%) of the respondents reported misconception of the COP, about (20.5%) indicates lack of cooperation between the police and the public. Also (17%) stated inadequate fund from the government to support community-oriented policing, about (13.5%) indicates corruption, while (13%) indicated inadequate equipment to support the services, while (10%) indicate inadequate manpower, while (1.5%) reported No idea. This implies that, community-oriented policing was characterized with challenges that hinder its effective implementation in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Table 2: Crime Reduction Strategies of Respondents

Strategies	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Effective patrols	128	32
Raids	30	7.5
Stop and search	40	10
Arrest of criminals	32	8
Partnerships with community	104	26
Intelligence led policing	50	12.5
Policing the community	16	4
Total	400	100.0

Table 2 above reveals that (32%) indicated effective patrol as most effective means of crime prevention strategies, while (26%) indicates partnership with the

community, about (12.5%) affirmed intelligence led policing. The (10%) indicated stop and search strategy, while (8%) stated arrest of criminals, and

(4%) answered policing the community. This is a clear departure from the orientation of traditional approach to policing which based on law enforcement, which is mostly on arrest of the criminals to community-oriented policing for police-public partnership to reduce crime. This confirmed to the statement made by Okeshola & Mudiare (2013).

5. Discussion of the Results

This study highlights one of the major challenges faced in the implementation of community-oriented policing in Abuja, is misconception of the core value of COP, which is inadequate understanding of the concept of community-oriented policing, is common amongst the citizens of both in abroad and Nigeria. For instance, Casady a public safety director in LPD Homeland in America in 2017, described community policing as perhaps the most misunderstood and frequently abused theme in police management with little notion of what the phrase means. While in Nigeria the COP is being undermined and underscore the core value of its contextual meaning, Osaro (2013) observed that most significant problem is the attempt to define community partnership accurately for its shared values, interpersonal, and collaborative bonds by the police and the administrative areas. In this regards Table1, revealed that about (21.5%) respondents affirmed misconceptions of COP, which is an impediment to the effective implementation of community-oriented policing to reduce crime in Abuja.

This study also examines the challenges faced by community-oriented policing is police-public relations in Abuja which is about (20.5%) as revealed in the study Table1. The history of police-public in Abuja and in Nigeria generally has been described as frosty as the idea of policing imposed on the country by the colonial masters was a deliberate attempt to foster an antagonism between the policed and the police (Alemika & Chukwuma 2000; Onoja 2007; Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2016). These scholars explicates the reasons for the police-publics feuds in the colonial times, when police stood as the symbol off authority, which were responsible for enforcement of most government policies like the collection of taxes and enforcement of traffic regulation and arresting offences, they were usually at logger heads with members of the public. Unfortunately, this no-love relationship between the police and the public extends to the post- colonial era. This conformed to Ogadima & Okunola (2015) assertion that due to mistrust and lack of confidence between the police and the public led to not cordial relationships, thus

there lack of information needed to solve crime issues.

Furthermore, in this modern time the relationship are still largely Characterized by suspicion, prejudice, mutual disrespect, Conflict, violence and other heinous crime such as intimidation, rape, mass killing and extra judicial killings which are perpetrated by the same police against the citizens they ought to protect. This to a large extent had made it difficult for any police organization to succeed in its objective of maintains of the law and order without the cooperation of the people being policed. To solve this dilemma, therefore, there must be not only a cordial relationship between the police and the citizens, but also be a working partnership between them if the community-oriented policing strategy goals are to be achieved (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2016).

The general notion is that the police are corrupt, inefficient, ill-equipped and unreliable, which conformed to Dickson (2007) assertion that community policing as practised in the UK is definitely not applicable to the Nigerian concept without necessary adjustments due to the long-standing antagonism between the police and the public. He also noted some impediment to the successful implementation to community-oriented policing in Abuja which includes internal resistance by police men who benefited from the traditional policing and who prefer to maintain and remain with the status quo; thereby lacking commitment to the project by implementing officers; lack of support from members of the public; inadequate support from the government; and poor welfare package/incentives for police men. However, one of the major challenges to the success and effectiveness of community-oriented policing in Abuja is the hostile relationship between the police and the public. The more the police and the citizens cooperate in implementing community-oriented policing to tackle crime, insurgency and social order the more reduction in insecurity rate. On the other hand, the more the police and the citizens work apart in policing the more the increase in crime and social disorder (Osaro, 2013).

Table1, above shows that (17%) of the respondents affirmed that, without adequate funding from the government a laudable project like COP cannot see the light of the day. The failure of the government to commit a good recourse towards the implementation of the COP programme, that will assist the police to improve on its performance, its images among the public that will lead to cordial relationship between the police –public and eventually it will serve as avenue for providing crime information to the police

to be able to solve many crime issues thereby reduces crime in Abuja. More so, for the COP to be more effective in preventing and controlling crime in Abuja, the Nigerian government must improve upon the structure and functional operative management of the police organization and its personnel: there must be improvement on the quality and quantity of weaponry, communication and technological equipment, sufficient serviceable logistics, adequate housing accommodations service scheme and good remunerations; frequent up to date training programmes, adequate man power strength for more police coverage and police visibility. All these listed factors can be improved upon the Nigeria government and the organization will create more awareness for the police-public for partnerships in delivering effective COP to reduce crime in Abuja.

Another problem that hampered the effective implementation of community-oriented policing in Abuja is corruption; about (15.5%) affirmed that in Table1. Corruption is the wide spread corruption which characterized the Nigeria police that trigger abuses of ordinary citizens, by unlawful arrest and detention and threat to their life, coupled with unlawful demands of bribes and human rights abuses against them as means of extorting money, torture, sexual abuses, violence and even extrajudicial killings as confirmed by Okeshola & Mudiare (2013). Corruption in the police organization is so endemic

that has eroded public trust and confidence they have in the police services. Therefore the police have taken a holistic approach to end or minimize the acts so that their image can be rebranded in face of the public, more for to build trust and confidence of the citizens for better collaboration to reduce crime and bring about safety and security in Abuja.

Another problem confronting the implementation of community-oriented policing in Abuja is inadequate technology to support the services especially in the area of intelligent gathering for information on crime issues. This evident in Table1 which revealed that (13%) of the respondents affirmed the assertion, that the police lack information needed to solve incidence of crime within the community and this conformed to Left Realist theory by Jock Young in 1984. As community-oriented develop the trust and confidence that the citizens have in police will consequently meet the people with diverse information through the use of technological gadgets, which may be useful and turned into police intelligence. This will promote a cooperative approach to policing and many of the solution to identified problem such as crime and disorder through the collection and analysis of information and enables a more fundamental approach to problem-solving in which resources can be tasked efficiently due to an accurate understanding of crime and incident problem.

In solving the challenges hampering the effective implementation of COP in Nigeria, there is a symbolic relationship between the police and the public set standards for policing ethics in Nigeria?

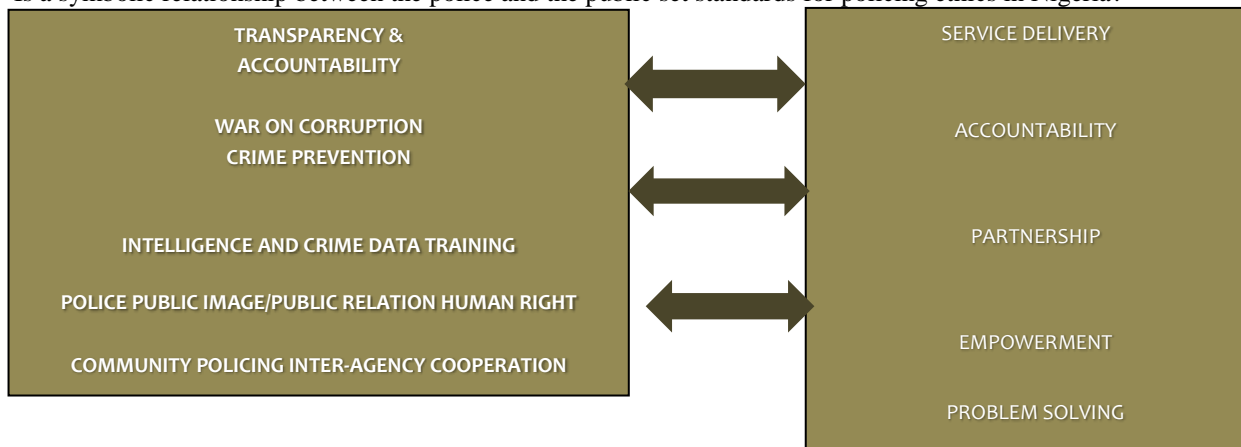


Fig.1: Prospects for effective implementation of community-oriented policing.

The above model is a combination of police ethics, the moral codes and the principles of Nigeria Police Force (NPF) with public partnership which have been set through community-oriented policing philosophy and strategy to address crime disorder issues for safety and security in the Nigerian communities especially in Abuja municipal Area.

6. Conclusions

The above model has given clue to the challenges facing the community-oriented policing implementation in Abuja and the way forward. For instance the police and the public members must come together to form a synergy, to address the problem of misconception in community-oriented policing, and police-public relations, effective patrol by the police, intelligence gathering of information's, accountability must be the key watch word of the citizens. Also the government must be ready to commit substantive amount of fund and recourses to the programme to improve on the issues of mechanical constraints such as inadequate funding, logistics, inadequate man power, inadequate equipment and technology for intelligent gathering, corruption and other related issues. Furthermore the government and all the stakeholders should be committed to the programme for management implementation, for the COP as strategy to achieve its set goals of crime reduction, safety and security in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

7. Recommendations

The public remains an integral part upon which effective community-oriented policing revolves round. The public members run the institution and its structures. Thus their involvement and participation are necessary ingredients for community-oriented policing as a strategy for crime prevention and control in Abuja, this cannot be over emphasized. A community crime prevention effort encourages residents to know and recognise their neighbours. It also serves as eyes and ears of the police for spotting and reporting any unusual activity. The community-oriented policing strategy as a partnership between the police and public will helped in bringing about reduction in crime, improved safety and security in such areas as Abuja municipal area council.

Foregoing, there is an urgent need for all the stakeholders' partnership to be set up in order to generate the policing of resources towards a common goal. Also to build up partners working relationship through agreeing on the goals, objectives and core principle undermining the partnership, Also to explore appropriate structure management techniques for attaining and measuring the impacts and effective operation of community-oriented policing, output and outcomes in achieving the set of goals for crime reduction in Abuja.

The most effective way to solve these problems and the challenges facing the community-oriented

policing implementation is to integrate the capabilities of the country's police with the citizens at all stages and at all levels of policing through COP for better understanding of the core value of the strategy, transparency, accountability and intelligent gathering and organizational management for service delivery just like what happened in Japan, Britain, USA.

Also the community policing theories such as Broken Window theory of Zero tolerance policing can be adopted to serve as motivation for the city leaders, officials' youths and all the stakeholders to clean up neighbourhoods and take control of local crimes, thus, ensuring crime free, safety and security in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

References

- Alemika,E & Chukwuma,I (2000), *Analysis of Police and Policing in Nigeria*. Center for Law Enforcement Education and National Human Rights Commission, Lagos.
- Balogun Tafa (2004), *Community Policing Project Plan*. Garki, Abuja.
- Casady T, (2017), *Community Based Policing: Lincoln Police Department, Nebraska, and Washington*. Www. cops, us doj.gov030917193.
- Dickson, A. Y.(2007) *Community Policing* .in Ikuteyijo & Rotimi (2016), *Community Partnership in Policing: The Nigerian Experience*. Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- George, K. (1988), *Police and Communities: The Quiet Revolution, Perspectives on Policy* N01. J.F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Jerome H.B. Themes and Variation in Community. University of Chicago Press.
- Giddens, A; Duneier, M. & Appelbaum,R.(2006), *Essentials of Sociology*. New York. WW Norton, and Company Ltd.
- Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M, (2013) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives 8th ed*. London: Harper Collins.
- National Population Commission of Nigeria, (2014), National Bureau of Statistics.
- Nigeria Police Force Handbook (2018), *Nigeria Police Community Policing; Beat Duty Skill Course*. British Council, DFID, Abuja.
- Ikuteyijo, L. & Rotimi, K. (2016), *Community Partnership in Policing: The Nigerian Experience*. Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- Ogadima, C, & Okunola A. (2015), *Challenges Faced by Community, Oriented Policing*

- Trainees in Nigeria*. Retrieved (2015) 15, August
- Okeshola F. & Mudiare P. (2013) Community Policing in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects American *International Journal of Contemporary Research* Vol.3 No.7: July, 2013
- Onoja (2007), *Sustaining a Tradition of Policing through Alienation: An assessment of Recruitment and Training in the Colonial and Post-colonial Nigeria Police*. Afrika Zamani, No's 13 &14. 2005-2006.
- Osaro Ollorui (2013), *Addressing Nigeria's Security Challenges through Community Policing*. A paper presented at public lecture organised by Egbalor Youth Council. Egbalor
- Wikipedia, (the free cyclopaedia) Retrieved, 01/03/2016.