

# COMMUNITY POLICING IN COMBATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CRIMES IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF DAR ES SALAAM CITY COUNCIL

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of community policing in combating Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Dar es Salaam City Council. The sample size consisted of 196 respondents selected through simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The study utilized a mixed research approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. A case study research design was employed, and data collection involved the use of questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentary review. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive analysis, while qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that community policing played a significant role in combating GBV, despite encountering some challenges, such as insufficient funds and a lack of willingness among community members to participate in community policing activities. The study concludes that financial support, awareness creation, and community engagement are crucial factors that need to be addressed in order to enhance the practice of community policing as an effective approach to GBV prevention. Based on these findings, the study recommends the allocation of adequate financial resources to support community policing initiatives, raising awareness about GBV and community policing, and fostering community participation in these activities. By bridging these gaps, the practice of community policing can be strengthened and its effectiveness in preventing GBV can be improved. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners working towards eradicating GBV through community-based approaches.*

**Keywords:** *Community Policing, Community Participation, Gender-Based Violence, and Effectiveness*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Community policing represents a modern approach to law enforcement, aimed at fostering unity between the police and citizens within communities to enhance public safety and reduce or prevent crimes [1]. This concept embodies democracy in action, necessitating active participation from local government, civic and business leaders, public and private agencies, community residents, churches, schools, and social service teams such as healthcare [2].

The focus of community policing extends beyond traditional law enforcement, incorporating aspects of prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships to address crime and social disorder. Research suggests that strengthening the bond between police and the community can rejuvenate existing police forces, elevate social support levels, and bring about significant changes in police force structures and operations [3].

Globally, community policing, introduced by British statesman Robert Pell in the 19th century, gained traction in the 20th century. It spread to Western European countries in the 1960s and was subsequently adopted by African and Asian nations in the 1970s and 1980s. In the USA, it became a model for combating crime. Many developing countries, particularly in Africa, embraced community policing, engaging community members, businesses, non-profits, and others in joint problem-solving partnerships. Various approaches, such as tribal policing in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Bakassi Boys in Nigeria, were implemented, with East African countries like Tanzania utilizing militias like the "Sungusungu" as an additional tool of authority with the power of arrest [4].

According to [5] the creation of a department for community policing has significantly reduced crime throughout the country. This department operates on a philosophy promoting proactive partnerships with the public to address community safety issues such as social disorder and insecurity. Research underscores the potential of closer ties between the police and the community to revitalize existing police forces, increase social support levels, and facilitate far-reaching changes in police force structures and operations [3]

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a crime rooted in sex differences, affecting both men and women. Cases are often oriented towards females, reflecting unequal power relationships and vulnerability between genders. GBV encompasses physical, sexual, and psychological harm, with abuse of women by intimate male partners being the most pervasive form [3]. GBV cuts across all divisions of class, race, religion, age group, and ethnicity globally, with varying forms across cultures, countries, and regions. It significantly impacts women and girls compared to men and boys, manifesting through physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, cultural violence, and psychological violence [6,7,8,9]

In Tanzania, the gender and children's desks were established under community policing, informed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania Article 146(2)(b). This provision emphasizes community involvement in policing to prevent and reduce crime, decrease disorder, enhance safety feelings, improve community accountability, reduce corruption in the police services, and uphold human rights. Community policing operates at the national, regional, and district levels, with various programs to simplify its operation, including a program involving the Police Gender and Children's Desk. The Police Gender and Children's Desk, initiated in 2008 with the establishment of the Tanzania Police Female Network (TPF Net), responds to cases of gender-based violence. These initiatives aim to safeguard fundamental rights, ensure security, and maintain public order [10].

Despite these efforts, GBV persists in various forms in Tanzania, posing a critical challenge to sustainable development and human rights implementation, both nationally and globally [11]. The study's major concern is to assess the contribution of community policing in eliminating GBV in Tanzania. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global phenomenon, affecting one in three women globally, involving intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, and harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage [12,13] Adolescents and young women in East and Southern Africa are particularly vulnerable [14]

GBV stems from gender norms and social and economic inequities privileging men over women, impacting agency and bodily autonomy. In Tanzania, GBV is prevalent, acknowledged in the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (2015-2016). The government has initiated several measures, including the establishment of the Police Gender Desk, under the Tanzanian Police Forces' institutional framework. However, despite these efforts and community policing, GBV crimes continue to rise in Tanzania. This study aims to assess the contribution of community policing in reducing GBV in the country.

## **2. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **2.1 Community Oriented Policing Theory**

A community serves as a common thread that binds people together, fostering advocacy and mutual support in the collective effort to overcome various challenges. Kenny and Connors [15] elaborate that community development is an approach rooted in empowerment, human rights, social justice, self-determination, and collective action. Consequently, the theory of community policing emphasizes collaboration between the police and the community to tackle issues like crime, social and physical disorder, and neighborhood problems. In this study, the researcher applied this theory to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of community policing in identifying and addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) crimes in Dar es Salaam City Council.

## 2.2 Social-Cultural Theory

Lev Vygotsky is most closely associated with sociocultural theory, wherein he argued that the social dimension of consciousness takes precedence both chronologically and substantively. Vygotsky posited that the individual dimension of consciousness is a derived and secondary aspect [16,17]. This theory underscores the significant influence of the social environment on individual development. It asserts that learning predominantly occurs as a social process, wherein development takes place through interactions with individuals possessing more knowledge. In the context of this study, the researcher aims to evaluate the knowledge and practices of police officers and citizens regarding the implementation of Community Policing. The study will employ sociocultural theory to examine whether the knowledge and practices of both police officers and citizens contribute to or impede the effectiveness of community policing in combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Additionally, the study will explore the impact of citizen trust in the Community Policing program on reducing GBV in the Dar es Salaam City Council.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

A research design serves as a comprehensive plan outlining the steps involved in conducting a scientific inquiry into a research problem [18]. The choice of research design is contingent upon the nature of the study and its objectives [19]. In this study, a descriptive survey design was employed. Descriptive survey is a methodology for gathering information through interviews or the administration of questionnaires to a sample of individuals [20]. The target population were community members, local leaders (Councilor, Ward Executive Officer and street Chairpersons), ward police officers (community police officers) as well as district commanding officers estimated to be 400 participants for the study. The study had participants from four wards which were Gongo La Mboti ward, Buyuni ward, Chanika ward and Zingiziwa ward.

### 3.2 Research Approach

The research approach encompasses paradigms and research frameworks, which can take the form of quantitative, qualitative, or a mixed approach [21]. In this study, a mixed approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, was employed. This choice was made to facilitate a detailed exploration of a specific problem rather than conducting a broad statistical survey. Additionally, the mixed approach allowed the researcher to gain insights into how participants interpreted their surroundings and how these interpretations influenced their behavior.

### 3.3 Data Analysis and Techniques

According to Coffey and Atkinson [22], data analysis is a systematic process aimed at identifying essential features and relationships. It serves as a method for transforming raw data through interpretation and analysis to render them more meaningful. In this study, quantitative data obtained through questionnaires were tabulated and converted into frequencies.

The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. For probability sampling, the researcher utilized a simple random sampling technique to achieve the desired sample size. The purpose of employing the simple random sample was to minimize potential human bias in selecting cases for inclusion in the sample. Consequently, the simple random sample provides a highly representative sample of the population under study, assuming there are limitations in missing data. Furthermore, as the units included in the sample were selected using probabilistic methods, simple random sampling provided a basis for generalizations, allowing for the possibility of external validity.

On the other hand, for the non-probability sampling technique, this study utilized purposive sampling to obtain pertinent information through key informant interviews from various workers. This specifically involved local leaders (Ward Executive Officer and street Chairpersons), ward police officers (community police officers), and district gender desk officers.

#### 3.3.1 Qualitative Data

Shank [23] contended that qualitative data pertains to nominal (named) data, focusing on qualities and non-numeric characteristics. In this study, thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data, where the determination of

thematic relevance was based on repetition across multiple instances, its surprising nature, or its association with a specific theory or concept. The identified themes were then presented in a narrative form.

### 3.3.2 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data pertains to information collected in numerical form. Quantitative analysis involves a systematic approach to investigations where numerical data is either collected directly or transformed from observed or collected information [24]. In this study, quantitative data underwent coding and entry into Statistical Programme for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20.0 software. The data was then analyzed to produce frequencies and percentages, facilitating the presentation of the results.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 169 respondents made up the study's target sample size. both male and female had almost equal proportion in data collection through questionnaires, that is male 69 and female 100. This was an effort to balance the two genders since the two genders thought and looked at things differently and normally had different perceptions and affected differently on community policing and gender-based violence respectively, whereby the issue of community policing and Gender Based Violence is a social issue that includes both genders.

### 4.1 Effectiveness of Community Policing in Combating Gender Based Violence

The study's findings demonstrated the effectiveness of community policing in addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV). This was evident through criteria such as the positive impact of community policing on enhancing community confidence in the fight against GBV. According to the data presented in Table 1, 163 respondents (83.3%) strongly agreed, and 33 respondents (16.7%) agreed that community policing played a significant role in boosting community confidence in combating GBV. This indicates that a majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the positive impact of community policing on community confidence in addressing GBV.

These results stand in contrast to Musa's [25] findings, which highlighted challenges such as a lack of public trust, respect, and confidence in the police during the implementation of community policing initiatives. Musa attributed these challenges to a long history of police complaints, including allegations of corruption, the use of abusive language and torture, poor customer care, false accusations, denial of bail, and delays in investigations. Maingu [26] further emphasized that some police officers solicited bribes from citizens, contributing to mistrust between police officers and the community.

**Table 1:** Effectiveness of CP in Combating GBV (n = 196)

Variables	Percentages				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
CP helps and improves confidence of the community in the combating against GBV	83.3	16.7			
CP as an effective way to mitigate GBV	87.5	12.5			
CP provide awareness to the community about GBV	75.0	21.9	3.1		
There is sufficiency knowledge of community policing among police officers and citizens	15.6	40.6	26.0	17.7	
There are clear practices to police and citizens on Implementation of CP in fighting against GBV	17.7	76.0	4.2		

Another criterion employed to assess the effectiveness of community policing in combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is viewing community policing as an effective means to mitigate gender-based violence. The results presented in Table 1 indicate that 172 respondents (87.5%) strongly agreed, and 24 respondents (12.5%) agreed with the notion that community policing is an effective way to mitigate GBV. This suggests that the

majority of respondents strongly agreed with the idea that community policing is an effective strategy for addressing GBV.

These findings align with Hassani's [27] research, which concluded that community policing is a mindset and organizational approach that enables the police and the community to collaborate in solving challenges related to crime and disorder. Furthermore, community policing is seen to contribute to enhanced public safety [28]. Belay [29] describes community policing as a "transformative model" that facilitates collaboration between the police and the community to address crime and promote democratic values within the police system. The Tanzanian government [30] has emphasized that community policing is a proactive and problem-solving practice aimed at enhancing effectiveness in addressing crime challenges, service needs, and improving the overall quality of life.

The majority of respondents strongly agreed that community policing provides awareness to the community about Gender-Based Violence (GBV), with 147 (75.0%), and 43 (21.9%) respondents expressing agreement, as shown in Table 1. These findings are consistent with Musa [25], who argued that community policing awareness campaigns empower community members to understand and undertake various proactive measures in fighting against crimes, including GBV.

On the other hand, the results indicated that community policing has been successful in reaching the community by providing legal education about sexual violence. For instance, the availability of PF 3 (police form number 3) at the hospital enabled victims to receive treatment, ensuring that it was filled out by a professional doctor for the use of evidence during testimony in court. This heightened awareness in society led to an increase in reported incidents of sexual violence, allowing the police force to investigate them through the gender and children's desk in collaboration with the community welfare office.

Contrary to these positive outcomes, Musuguri [31] argued that the contribution of community policing to reducing GBV crimes is generally poor. This is attributed to community members not being empowered to prevent or address GBV crimes using local techniques. Factors such as a lack of time among the public to participate in GBV issues, a lack of awareness, and a lack of mutual assistance among community members also contribute to the challenges. Additionally, the unawareness of the right place to report GBV issues and a lack of training hinder community policing efforts to eliminate or reduce GBV occurrences [11, 32].

The study findings presented in Table 1 also reveal that 31 (15.6%) respondents strongly agree, while 80 (40.6%) respondents agree that there is sufficient knowledge of community policing among police officers and citizens. However, 35 (17.7%) respondents disagree. These findings are in contrast to [33], who argued that a poor understanding of the role of community policing and the lack of performance measurement frameworks for community policing officers affect the implementation of community policing initiatives related to GBV crimes.

This suggests a potential misunderstanding of the concepts of community policing among both police officers and the community. This misunderstanding may lead to police officers disagreeing with their roles as community officers, while the community may not perceive police officers as helpers or advisors in solving crime problems [25]. The lack of training on how police can establish partnerships with the community, particularly in terms of community participation and empowerment to address GBV-related problems, contributes to this disconnect [34]

Additionally, 35 (17.7%) respondents strongly agree, and 149 (76.0%) respondents agree that there are clear practices for both police and citizens regarding the implementation of community policing in the fight against Gender-Based Violence, as presented in Table 4.5.

These findings differ from those of Walwa [35], who asserted that the number of police stations is insufficient to meet the security needs of community members nationwide. This limitation leads some police officers to communicate with the community primarily through phones, hindering their role as trainers, advisors, facilitators, and educators in all security and social matters within neighborhoods, including issues related to GBV [25, 36]. Walwa also highlighted reasons that discourage police officers from attending to their respective areas, such as unreliable transport, lack of working equipment, conflicting schedules with other responsibilities at police stations, poor cooperation with local leaders, lack of training, and a lack of political will.

#### 4.2 Respondents' Perception on the Effectiveness of Community Policing in Combating Gender Based Violence

In this study, in-depth interviews were utilized to gather detailed information about community policing and GBV in Tanzania. The interviews involved discussions with the Mtaa Chairperson, an influential figure in the respective street, Ward police officers, the Ward Executive Officer (WEO), and the Ward community development officer. The data obtained from the interviews revealed that the effectiveness of community policing in addressing Gender-Based Violence are currently improving. This positive shift is attributed to the awareness created within the community through the implementation of community policing, as stated by the Ward Executive Officer (WEO) of Gongo la Mboto ward.

*“Gender Based Violence events at present are diminishing due to information provided by community to police station compared to past time due to existence of community policing. In 2023 Gender Based Violence events are declining compared to 2021 that were 861 different Gender Based Violence due to helps and improvement has been doing in community” (WEO<sub>1</sub>, September 14, 2023)*

According to the WEO, there is a tangible reduction in Gender-Based Violence events due to the collaborative efforts facilitated by community policing. In contrast to the views expressed by Emmanuel [37], who questioned the contemporary relevance of community policing, the findings reveal a prevailing positive perception. The majority of participants perceive community policing as an essential and proactive strategy for fostering community security, preventing GBV, and fostering collaboration between law enforcement and community members.

#### Level of Citizens' Trust on Community Policing

In-depth Interview was used to collect detailed information about community policing and GBV in Tanzania. In-depth interview was done with Mtaa Chairperson and Ward police officers. Data from Interview added that, community's trust towards community policing has been improving due to cooperation provided by different stakeholders including police officers as well as social welfare officers towards awareness creation to community on combating Gender Based violence. This was revealed by Interviewee from Vikongoro Neighborhood Chairperson said that;

*“Currently, collaboration between citizens, police officers as well as socio- welfare officers are increasing that improve trust of community members to police officers, also the practices of gender desk raise trust among community members” (VCP<sub>1</sub>, September 16, 2023)*

According to the Vikongoro Neighborhood Chairperson, increased collaboration between citizens, police officers, and social welfare officers has positively impacted community members' trust in law enforcement. This collaborative effort, coupled with the practices of gender desks, has contributed to fostering trust within the community. The study highlights a shift in community behavior, indicating increased cooperation with community policing efforts to curb violence. Community members actively report incidents, signaling a departure from past practices, and engage with local authorities and police stations to address such cases. The awareness of the significance of bringing perpetrators of sexual violence to justice is recognized, further enhancing the effectiveness of community policing. This was revealed by Chanika Ward Police Officer said that;

*“Currently, collaboration between citizens, police officers as well as socio- welfare officers are increasing that improve trust of community members to report the GBV crimes to police stations or local government administrators within the community, also the practices of police officers to entering in churches and mosques to provide education on gender based violence makes them to appear to be loving people among community members” (CWP<sub>1</sub>, September 13, 2023)*

Chanika Ward Police Officer and the District Police Gender Desk echoed the sentiment that the collaboration between citizens and law enforcement has strengthened trust within the community. Initiatives such as educational

outreach in religious institutions contribute to the perception of police officers as caring individuals among community members.

Also, District Police Gender Desk added that;

*“Community trust on community policing are increasing due to action taken by Gender desk when they report complaints concerning GBV and we make sure the laws are followed by reaching to the court”* (DPG<sub>1</sub>, September 15, 2023)

While aligning with findings from Nalla et al. [29], which indicate that communities are generally willing to cooperate with police, this study recognizes the need for continued efforts to bridge gaps between police officers and communities. Instances of police distancing themselves due to safety concerns highlight the challenges encountered in building trust. The study suggests ongoing collaborative efforts and targeted community engagement strategies to fortify the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. In practice, police officers distanced themselves from community, to a point that they failed to command trust and cooperation from communities, which they serve [25]. One of the reasons that police officers distanced with community is, occurrence of incidents of attacks in the police station, such as incident of attack occurred in July 2015 at Stakishari police station located at Ukonga ward in Dar es Salaam region in which four police, two civilians and one district auxiliary police were killed [35, 38, 39].

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1 Conclusion:

The study findings underscored the significant impact of community policing in combatting Gender-Based Violence (GBV), as evidenced by the community's increased reporting of sexual violence incidents to local police stations. This surge in reported cases led to the initiation of legal proceedings, highlighting the tangible outcomes achieved through community policing initiatives.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the enduring relevance of Community Policing as a pivotal strategy in the ongoing battle against GBV in Tanzania. While acknowledging its effectiveness, there is an urgent call for collaborative efforts among the government and various stakeholders to bolster community policing. This collaboration should extend to social, political, and financial support, ensuring the sustained success of community policing endeavors in preventing and addressing GBV.

### 5.2 Recommendations:

In light of the study's revelations, the researcher offers targeted recommendations to optimize the role of community policing in preventing Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania. These recommendations encompass critical areas such as financial backing, awareness campaigns, and the cultivation of community engagement in policing activities, all aimed at fortifying the efficacy of community policing in GBV prevention.

The government, with a specific focus on the Tanzanian Police Force (TPF), should initiate measures to mobilize communities actively for participation in community policing activities. This necessitates a robust collaboration between police officers and community members. To facilitate this collaboration effectively, the government, through TPF, must address foundational challenges that impede police performance in community policing. These challenges encompass the provision of adequate resources, both financial and human, the supply of modern equipment, and improvements in working conditions and terms of employment for police officers involved in community policing efforts. Such comprehensive measures are essential for ensuring the sustained success of community policing in combating Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania.

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