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## Environmental Policing: Impact of Community Policing in the Management and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources A Case Study of the Morogoro Region- Tanzania

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### ABSTRACT

*The study on the impact of community policing in the management and sustainable use of natural resources was carried out in Morogoro Region from March to May, 2013. The study covered 145 respondents both Police Officers and non-police. The main source of data collection was primary in nature where the main method of data collection was a field research survey using self-administered questionnaires within which a further Paper and Pen Interview approach was employed. The findings from this study indicate that the impact of community policing in the management and sustainable use of natural resources such as land, forestry, water and protection against environmental degradation was good. The study recommends that the Tanzania Police Force under the umbrella of Community policing programs should involve the widest possible range of policing agencies, formal and informal, in order that they are all speak the same language of sustainable environmental practices. It further recommends that the central government should increase the training budget in order to improve the training of police personnel especially in relation to the environment which is new area of interest in the policing functions in the country. Therefore, this paper outlines the possible strategic and philosophical contributions of Community policing by understanding the significance of involving communities in environmental policing.*

**Keywords:** Police, Community Policing, Community, Participation, Environmental Policing, Policing

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Problems of environmental degradation as far as sustainable use of natural resources is concerned, have been a top agenda in many media outlets. In Tanzania in particular there has been a drive to educate people on how to conserve precious resources.. As a result people are slowly are changing their attitude and behaviour toward the sustainability of the environment. Since it is a matter of protecting and enforcing environment laws, the Police Service has now started to intervene as part of their policing function (White, 2008, p.3). According to White, (2007c) (as cited in White, 2008, pp. 196-7) politicians and environmental activists across the world view ineffective use of natural resources as having a direct and grievous impact causing harm and lost lives. Whereas, the main duty of the police force is to protect lives and properties of the public, it is clear that the Police have a duty to intervene into this menace to contribute to the wellbeing of the people and the environment at large (White, 2008).

The prevalence of environmental crime has been seen as a major factor that faces the enforcement of environmental legislation. It is often difficult to identify the extent of environmental crime due its wide ranging national and some cases global nature. In these cases, it needs joint problem identification by involving many stakeholders to protect the available natural resources which are about to be depleted. This kind of joint action in policing falls within the remit of Community policing, as the offenders are from the very community where environmental crime is committed (White, 2008, p.197).

It is envisaged that in many countries there will be special unit within the police force or other agencies which will be dealing with environmental issues as a primary part of their duties. For effective environmental law enforcement these units need to partner with other environmental stakeholders. As pointed out by White, “illegal fishing often involves Customs Officials, Quarantine Officials, Federal and local Police Officers and sometimes the Navy. For many Police services, however, dealing with environmental harm is basically dealing with the unknown” (White, 2008, p.202). The author is optimistic that this kind of collaboration depends on the perceptions of the stakeholders that will be involved in the process because some will consider the deployment of police officers to such issues as inappropriate purely based on the notion that they are not experts in the field, something which in fact is often untrue..

The perceptions explained above push Gregg & O’Rourke, (2003) to define what is actually entailed in community policing, that;

‘Community environmental policing follows the example of community policing-CP in advancing a new philosophy of enforcement which privileges: shared responsibility for policing (as community members play a role in identifying problems and agencies respond to these community-reported issues); prevention (where the ultimate goal is

identifying and eliminating the source of a problem); and increased discretion and flexibility within agency and community stakeholder groups' (p. 386).

In realizing the value of this kind of partnership, the Tanzania Police Force- (TPF) established an environmental unit in 2012 to deal with environmental crimes. Furthermore, as documented by ISS, (2008, pp. 8-9) because environmental crimes are often multi agency security problems as they are regional and international transnational crimes, TPF launched a special desk at the INTERPOL country office within the headquarters in Dar-es-Salaam, for easy identification coordination and arrest suspects connected with environmental crime in collaboration with police from outside countries. (ISS, 2008), in an attempt to rise to the challenge of environmental policing, the study intended to investigate the impact of CP in the management and sustainable use of natural resources in Tanzania as the main objective of the current study.

## **2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1 Study Area**

The study was conducted in Morogoro region; it is one of Tanzania's 30 administrative regions. The regional capital is the Municipality of Morogoro. According to the 2012 national census, the region had a population of 2,218,492, which was higher than the pre-census projection of 2,209,072. For 2002-2012, the region's 2.4 percent average annual population growth rate was tied for the fourteenth highest in the country. It was also the 22<sup>nd</sup> most densely populated region with 31 people per square kilometer. Morogoro Region is bordered to the north by the Tanga Region, to the east by the Pwani and Lindi Regions, to the south by the Ruvuma Region and to the west by the Iringa and Dodoma Regions (URT, 2013).

### **2.2 Data Sources and Collection**

The study was conducted from March to May, 2013. The data used were primary data. The sample population covered 145 respondents. The main method of data collection was a field research survey using Paper and Pen Interviews and the completion of questionnaires with the aid of researchers.

### **2.3 Data Processing and Analysis**

The study used quantitative research method of data analysis. Then data was coded by assigning code numbers to questionnaires. Researchers edited all the questionnaires received from the field by checking the responses and filling in the respective codes. The raw data were then analysed by the use of Computer software- Microsoft Excel and Statistical Packages for Social Scientist (SPSS) IBM version 20 and interpretation was then completed through tabulation of the data.

## **3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Community Policing (CP) can be defined as the collaborative partnerships that exist between the law enforcement agents (e.g. the TPF), individuals and organizations that aim to develop solutions to problems such as crimes and increase trust in police (U. S. Department of Justice, 2009). Management of natural resource means controlling natural resources such as land, water, soil, plants and animals, with a particular focus on how this management benefits the quality of

life of the present without compromising the quality of life of the future generations (i.e. sustainable environment).

Table 3.1 indicates the perception of the respondents of the impact of CP in the management and sustainable use of natural resources such as land, water, forestry and protecting against environmental degradation. The respondents' perceptions are reported in frequencies and percentages where their perceptions are ranked from the lowest level (very poor) to the highest (very good), where the intermediate perception of the sample is reported as satisfactory.

**Table 3.1: Impact of Community Policing in the Management & Use of Natural Resources**

Level	Frequency	Percent
Very Poor	5	3.4
Poor	29	20
Satisfactory	44	30.3
Good	39	26.9
Very Good	28	19.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2013**

The table 3.1 above indicates that on the average 44.2 percent perceived that the impact of CP in the management and sustainable use of natural resources such as land, forestry, water and protection against environmental degradation was good, 30.3 percent was satisfactory while 23.4 percent perceived that CP had poor impact.

The results show divided perceptions on the impact of CP on the sustainable use of natural resources; these findings can be understood as the country is still facing a governance challenges in the management and sustainable use of natural resources despite of possible impact CP can make when tackling environmental issues.

The weakness and laxity of laws and their enforcement mechanism can be the reasons for the above perceptions which results in the misuse of natural resources in Tanzania. For example, in Ethiopia the study Mowo, *et al.*, (n.d.) found that due to weakness and laxity of environmental laws in Ethiopia and Uganda leaders are seems to be irresponsible if they enforce laws and even when they do, perpetrators of mismanagement of natural resources are seldom taken before the courts to face any kind of sanction for the actions (Mowo, *et al.*, (n.d., p. 11).

The lives of the current and future generation of Tanzanians depend on the fantastic variety of natural resources for their livelihoods (as a gift given by God??). This was confirmed by the report of the validation workshop by the ISS, (2008) that;

‘Tanzania is endowed with the highest levels of biodiversity in Africa. Statistics shows that the country has more than 11,000 plant species, 310 mammal species, 960 bird species, 127 amphibian species and 244 reptile species. Wildlife management is the second largest land use in Tanzania and covers 43% of the total land area. It has 15

national parks, 1 conservation area, 34 game reserves, 38 game control areas and 143 hunting blocks. 40% of the land is forest cover. The land uses are diverse ranging from developed areas to dense forests and massive water bodies' (p.3).

Based on the above statistics of the massive range of natural resources its depletion is progressing at an alarming rate. Better protection of these critical resources can only be achieved by a collaborative approach and now is the time to involve as many as stakeholders who will contribute their time and materials support to preserve them.

In this regard CP can assist to report or take action where natural resources are abused; in some places communities have been complaining and reporting the problems and action is taken against only some segment of the community, while in others actions are not taken at all or if taken it takes is not progressed efficiently and effective resolutions in court are never achieved. As reported by SEPA, (2012, p. 29), good governance is an answer for corrupt leaders only and only if the system is working. This requires each leader in his or her area of jurisdiction to act in accordance with the law that governs the environment as well as natural resources use is concerned (SEPA, 2012).

In most countries the protection of natural resources is done in partnership between the communities, government, Civil Society Organisations (CSO), and the private sector. Each stakeholder has a role in the control and management of the natural resources. This statement is supported by ISS, (2008, p. 9) which documents that the government of Tanzania through the slogan Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is committed to involve the general populace in the protection and effective use of the nearby natural resources without affecting the future generation for the benefit of the current generation (ISS, 2008). Working towards this end, Bass (2000 as cited in O'Rourke, & Macey, 2003, p. 386), outlines the view that community environmental policing "tries to advance both civilian oversight of and community participation in policing". By involving the community, the police will consider them as co-police officers who are significant contributors in the identification and prevention of environmental crimes. (before happening as a professional and modern policing this needs checking as it doesn't seem to read correctly) (O'Rourke, & Macey, 2003).

The current study is inconsistent with the study of Edwards *et al.*, (2007) (as cited in Mowo, *et al.*, n.d., p. 9) which revealed that in Uganda there was 'inadequate participation of the poor and civil society organizations in the implementation and evaluation of site and district level policies and programs'. For effective CP implementation, members and especially local leaders of a given community need to be fully involved in the prevention of the misuse of natural resources because if it happens and there is environmental degradation they are the ones who are to recognize the offenders as they live with them as part of the community (Mowo, *et al.*, n.d., p. 9).

It was observed from the field that, surveyed communities have been assisting the government in protecting the natural resources despite of some challenges such as lack of enthusiasm of some environmental stakeholders. This trend motivated ISS, (2008, pp. 10-11), to document that for effective CP democratic participation of all members in the society is imperative. The report further concluded that environmental policing in Tanzania is the duty of every individual within

the country and the neighbouring countries to ensure that all offenders involved in the breach of environmental laws are taken before the court (ISS, 2008).

As Mwanika, (2010 pp. 11-12) points out, a positive impact of CP involvement in the management and use of natural resources can be achieved by the involvement of civilian oversight institutions with vested interest in the protection of the environment, when used alongside the indigenous people who are a key source of information in relation to the identification local offenders (Mwanika, 2010). The authors are of the opinion that any security issues begin with an individual's self policing, and that such successes means he or she will be in good position to inspire others to become involved in similar cases of environmental policing by using their local knowledge and problem-solving techniques.

According to White, (2008, p.98) environmental crime differ from one geographical location to the other, therefore when intervening community policing teams needs a combination of local techniques and approaches for positive results. White states further, "in pursuing environmental law enforcement there is a need to include place-based and harm-based analyses that go to the heart of the issues at hand. .... the nature of harm needs to be accompanied by particular site or harm analysis" (White, 2008). In some countries they have tried to use local approaches in the protection and management of and use of natural resources. For example, as observed by Mwanika, (2010, p.11) that in Rwanda tends to use customary approaches commonly known as "umuganda" and "imudugudu", these approaches used to safeguard and ensure the sustainable use and management of natural resource in the country (Mwanika, 2010).

The current study therefore, recommends that successful natural resource management use requires the involvement and participation of all stakeholders in the control and management of natural resources. The Police alone cannot solve all related crime problems that affect human lives; therefore, collaboration with other key stakeholders in a modern policing is not only inevitable but desirable to ensure effective utilization of all possible resources.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

Problems of environmental degradation as far as sustainable use of natural resources is concerned, have been a top agenda in many media outlets and forums in Tanzania in particular, in an attempt to educate people on how to conserve these critical resources.. As a result people s are slowly changing their attitude and behaviour toward the sustainability of the environment and now police forces have now started to intervene increasingly as part of their policing function (White, 2008, p.3).

In Tanzania, the management and sustainable use of natural resources has been a long term problem. Prior to it becoming a policing issue it was seen as a sole function of the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC) and the Department of Environment (DoE). The joint partnership between the police and other environmental stakeholders under the umbrella of CP yields many positive outcomes and some of the areas and resources which were previously under threat are substantially safer after the joint problem identification of environmental crime.

The study finding indicates that 44.2 percent perceived that the impact of CP in the management and sustainable use of natural resources such as land, forestry, water and protection against environmental degradation was good, 30.3 percent was satisfactory while 23.4 percent perceived that CP had poor impact.

#### **4.2 General Policy Recommendation**

The TPF through the umbrella of CP programs should find ways to coordinate and involve the multitude of policing agencies, – formal and informal, so that they all speak the same language and work towards the protection of lives and properties of the community they serve as well as ensuring the effective use of natural resources (including renewable and non-renewable resources), for the wellbeing of the current generation without affecting the benefits of the future generation. This can only be achieved in collaboration with other environmental policing agencies such as the surrounding communities and government agencies such as Tanzania National Park (TANAPA).

Finally it is recommended that the central government increases the training budget in order to ensure the training of relevant police personnel in the enforcement of environmental crimes which is new area of involvement for the police Service in Tanzania.

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