**VIGILANTISM AND CRIME CONTROL IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

**ABSTRACT**

The inability of the Nigerian Police to control the increasing wave of crime has led to proliferation of vigilante groups in contemporary Nigeria. This study was initiated to investigate the impact of vigilante groups on crime control in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State. Respondents were sampled from Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. Simple random sampling methods were used as the sampling techniques. The result indicated that Nigeria Police is ineffective with regard to crime control and vigilante groups in its current form sprang up to make up for this ineffectiveness. It also showed that vigilante groups are gaining prominence as agents of crime control in contemporary Nigeria, particularly, Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State. The result equally revealed that vigilante group members are recruited and monitored through their communities and that they are effective in crime control. Also, the result indicated that the best way of solving the problem of crime in Nigeria is by increasing the activities of vigilante groups.

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**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Provision of adequate security is a social pre-requisite for the survival of any society. Every society takes appropriate measures to protect the lives and property of people living within its boundaries. Business and social activities may not go on freely without adequate security. This fundamental essence of security may be the reason why societies from time immemorial made efforts to police their neighbourhoods in order to secure them from criminal victimization. Security has to do with the act of preventing and protecting in order to ensure that certain facilities, equipment, persons or activities are safe from damage, pilferage, destruction, murder or disruption. The history of crime control dates back to the period when public order was the responsibility of appointed magistrates, who were unpaid private individuals. At the fall of the Roman Empire and the subsequent anarchy that followed, kings began to assume the responsibility for legal administration by strengthening the night watch. Roberg and Kuykendall, (1993) also pointed out that in the twelfth century in England, through Frankpledge system which was based on an organization of tithings (ten families) and hundreds (ten tithings), men over the age of fifteen formed a posse comitatus, a group called out to pursue fleeing felons. Thus, the sheriffs who ensured that this Frankpledge system worked were responsible for policing the country. However, as societies became increasingly complex, social life was disrupted. Existing systems of law enforcement were inadequate to respond to the problems associated with these changes. As a result, night watch system was introduced. This system involved bellmen who walked round the city, ringing bells and providing policing services. The bellmen were later replaced by untrained citizens and much later by paid constables. However, in 1829, Sir Robert Peel established the first modern uniformed police force, the metropolitan police of London, whose primary responsibility was the prevention of crime (Roberg and Kuykendall, 1993).

Vigilantism is not a recent development. Before 1900, many vigilant groups were formed in frontier areas of the United States. In 1851 and 1856, concerned citizens in San Francisco organized vigilante committees that forcibly restored peace and order. (world book encyclopedia, u-v20:318, Encyclopedia Americana, vol.24:204). In South Africa, vigilante activity is frequently justified as ‘filling a policing gap’ due to police inefficiency, corruption and conspiracy with criminals, practical failing in the criminal justice system. In Sierra- Leone, vigilante activities have been explained in terms of police ineffectiveness in combating crimes (Brownyn, 2001). In Nigeria, vigilantism existed in the pre-colonial era.

Although there was no equivalent modern day structure at that time, some parallels can be drawn between these groups which were created by local communities for their own protection, and the more recently formed self -defense groups”. This is also true in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State where vigilantism was used as a means of both social and crime control before the advent of colonial rule. The proliferation of vigilante groups in contemporary Nigeria particularly in Udenu Local Government area of Enugu State is a response to crimes and criminality that have not only increased in degree, scope and volume but also have witnessed an unprecedented change in techniques, mode of operation and sophistication between 1998 and 1999 (wake of fourth republic) and the apparent failure of the Nigeria police to rise up to the occasion. Igbo (2001:219) has stated that “the apparent failure of Nigeria police to control the increasing wave of crime has led to unilateral public action against crime and criminals in some major cities of Nigeria particularly in the South east of the country”. This is true in Udenu Local Government Area, where, presently, vigilante groups are used as a means of crime control due to increasing crime wave and the inability of the formal agents of crime control to bring them under control. In view of this, this study examined the contributions of vigilante groups in controlling crime in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in Udenu Local Government area of Enugu State.

* 1. **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In recent years, many communities in Nigeria have witnessed crimes of various descriptions. Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State is not an exception. Thus, crime is becoming a serious problem in contemporary Nigeria. The police who are the primary agent in the fight against crime are ineffective. Their ineffectiveness may be as a result of the fact that they are under- staffed, under-equipped, corrupt and lacked public cooperation. These have created problem of under policing in Nigeria including Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. Thus, violent and property crimes are committed on daily basis without detection and prosecution. Many people are being dispossessed of their valuable property and others are killed or maimed for life by armed bandits. Hence, this situation of insecurity and lawlessness began to affect more than just the population of Udenu Local Government Area as traders from the neighbouring communities who come to Udenu to transact business in Obollo-Afor and Orie Orba, began to stay away from these towns out of fear. As a result, business and other social activities were paralyzed.

Thus vigilantism seems to be gaining more prominence as agent of crime control in Udenu Local Government Area. Several vigilante groups now operate in both rural and urban areas in Nigeria. Residents see vigilante groups as an outfit they can always rely on in terms of security. Put differently, the public is skeptical about the ability of Nigeria Police to provide adequate security services alone without the involvement of the public. This study, therefore, aimed at finding out the impact of vigilante groups on crime control in Udenu L.G.A of Enugu state.

* 1. **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The broad objective of this study is to examine the contributions of vigilante groups in crime control in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. The specific objectives are:-

1. To find out the extent crime constitutes a social problem in Udenu L.G.A
2. To determine the extent vigilantism has help in controlling crime and the community perception of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A.
3. To determine if the formation of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A. is significantly related to people’s perception of the role of the police in crime control in the area.
4. To determine if vigilantism has not been effective in controlling crime in Udenu L.G.A.
   1. **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

**Hypothesis One:**

**Ho**: The formation of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A. is significantly related to people’s perception of the role of police in crime control in the area.

**Hypothesis Two:**

**Ho:** Vigilantism has not been effective in controlling crime in Udenu L.G.A.

* 1. **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. From the theoretical point of view, this study will add to the existing literature on vigilantism. It will also build up a data upon which future research can be based or serve as a point of reference for similar studies. From the practical point of view, this study will show the security gap created in both rural and urban communities and how vigilante groups have tended to make up for this vacuum. To this end, this may stimulate the interest of the government in providing adequate police services in both rural and urban communities or modify and assist vigilante groups to complement security efforts of the police. In another development, this study will be of great benefit to law enforcement agencies and other stake holders in their quest for police reform. In general, it will stimulate further research in vigilantism and policing.

* 1. **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This work is on the impact of vigilantism and crime control in contemporary Nigeria and is limited to Udenu Local Government area of Enugu State.

* 1. **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

In the context of this study, the following concepts have been defined as follows:

**COLONIALISM:** This refers to the period of British rule in Nigeria.

**CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA:** This refers to present day Nigeria.

**CRIME:** This means any act or omission that violates the criminal law of the state which is punishable by the state prosecution and conviction. **CRIME CONTROL:** This means all the steps and activities taken to prevent the spread and commission of crime.

**CRIME PREVENTION:** Often used interchangeably with crime control refers to all efforts made to ensure that crime does not occur or is reduced to the barest minimum.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:** This refers to state agencies that fight against crime. They are the police, court, prison, probation and parole services.

**POLICE:** This refers to the branch of criminal justice system that fights against crime and maintain law and order.

**POLICING:** Any effort aimed at detecting and preventing crime as well as protection of lives and property. It can be done formally by state agents or informally by private citizens.

**SOCIAL CONTROL:** This Refers to efforts made to ensure that people’s behaviour conforms to established norms and customs of the society.

**VIGILANTE GROUPS:** This refers to groups formed and funded by members of a particular community to fight against crime and protect lives and property of individuals.

* 1. **ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides background to the topic and justifying reasons for the study. The second chapter presents related literature that has been done on the topic. The third chapter, which is research methodology presents how to carry out the research, this includes research design, population of the study, sampling techniques, sources of data etc. The fourth chapter deals with data presentation, results and analysis. The fifth chapter, which is the final chapter, presents the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendation based on the finding.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**The Concept of Vigilantism**

The word vigilantism is of Spanish origin and means: “watchman” or “guard” but its Latin root is vigil, which means “awake” or “observe” (Johnston, 1996). According to Johnston, six elements of vigilant activity are

1. Minimal planning, preparation or premeditation.
2. Private agents acting in a voluntary capacity.
3. Activity undertaken without the states authority or support.
4. A reaction to the real or perceived transgression of institutionalized norms.
5. Aims to offer people the assurance that established order will prevail.

According to Chambers 20th century dictionary, vigilantism is an authorized body which in the absence or inefficiency of regular government exercises power of arrest, punishment etc. Dumke, cited in Encyclopedia Americana (vol. 28:113-114) says that vigilante is the name given to self-appointed law enforcement groups who appeared from time to time on the American frontier and occasionally in older communities where established authority seemed unable to cope with lawlessness and disorder.

In Nigeria, the term vigilante is used loosely to refer to a range of different groups, each with different motives. The term has been applied to groups such as the Bakassi Boys, who were initially set up with the purpose of fighting crime without an explicit political agenda, as well as to others such as Odua People’s Congress (OPC), the Yoruba ethnic militia active in south west of Nigeria. The OPC was initially created to advocate for autonomy for the Yoruba people. However, from 1999, the OPC changed its fundamental objective of seeking self- determination for the Yoruba people to crime fighting activities and the settlement of personal disputes. In some of the Northern States in Nigeria, there are other groups known as Hisba groups referred to as vigilantes, which are used to monitor and enforce the observance of sharia laws.

In Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State the term vigilante denotes a group of people formed by the members of the community to control and prevent crime due to the inability of the formal criminal justice system to bring the increasing crime wave in the local government under control.

**Origin of Vigilantism**

As noted by Human Right Watch (HRW) and center for law enforcement and education (CLEEN), vigilantism and other self-defense groups currently operating in Nigeria have roots that reached deeply into the country’s history. Their study identified southeast (Igbo) states as the main areas where vigilante groups were predominant in the pre-colonial era. On the contrary and as the report from HRW and CLEEN testifies to, what we know is that the modern employment of vigilante groups in contemporary Nigeria is widespread and ranges beyond Igbo territory (legitimization of murder and torture. 2002).

The Nigeria police are ineffective and corrupt. This fact made the public skeptical about their ability to live up to expectations with respect to crime control. Harry Nwana’s account of the emergence of vigilantism in his home, part of Imo State was anchored on police collaboration and betrayal. According to him, “life was made unbearable by callous activities of armed bandits.

**Vigilantism and the Public**

Public tolerance of vigilante group is very high. After suffering years of violent crime, abuse by the security forces, and government inaction, people appeared to have given up expecting the government or the police to provide protection or security. As the center for law enforcement and education puts it, “when Bakassi Boys took on the task of fighting crime, they were hailed as heroes. The overwhelming feeling of many people was relief at being able to sleep with both eyes closed”. This is an indication that the emergence of Bakassi Boys in some eastern states of Nigeria was embraced by the public. The clause ‘being able to sleep with both eyes closed’ described post Bakassi era. (Eke, 2002). Indeed a sociology professor summed up the public attitude towards the Bakassi Boys and other vigilante groups: people tolerance of vigilante groups is very high even among reasonable people.

This general acceptance of vigilante groups has permeated many sectors of the economy. A judge in Anambra State described the situation in the following ways: “no one challenges the Bakassi, no one speaks up, and people just talk about execution as if it were something normal. Even the judiciary are accepting the Bakassi; even some lawyers don’t see what’s wrong”. (Eke, 2002).

**Policing and Crime Prevention**

The involvement of private individuals in law enforcement processes in Nigeria has generated different reactions from different scholars. Policing and crime prevention are inseparable. The essence of policing is to prevent or control crime. Policing is all about ensuring the security of people who reside within a particular geographical location; with acommon interest of protecting their lives and property and who have identified that certain acts are reprehensible to community well-being (Dambazau, 2007).

Every society has rules and regulations that guide the conduct of individuals. Violation of these rules calls for punishment or sanction by the society. Thus, the need to enforce the rules and regulations in the society gave rise to police. According to Roberg and Kuykendal (1993:53), “the history of police is the history of rule enforcement in a society, more particularly, the history of enforcement of those rules related to criminal behaviour”.Ried (5th ed.) has noted that “the history of policing began with informal policing in which all members of a community were responsible for maintaining order”. In other words, policing from the beginning of human history was carried out by private individuals, groups, associations and organizations in the private sector. Vigilantism is identified as one category of informal policing (Clockar, 1985).

Crime prevention has been defined as a pattern of attitudes and behaviours directed both at reducing the threat of crime and enhancing the sense of safety and security to positively influence the quality of life and to develop environment where crime cannot flourish (Dambazau, 2007).

It is a truism that one of the objectives of the police organization is crime prevention. It is also a truism that efficient policing depends on public cooperation and support. It is however sad to note that these cooperation and support from the public may be far from being achieved. Police brutality, corruption and criminality in the system have made worst the relationship existing between the police and the public. Talking about the relationship between the police and the public, US commission on civil rights cited in a journal: contemporary crises, law and social policy vol: II (1987) concluded “in 1970, the police subject Chicanos to unduly harsh treatment, including harassment and frequent arrests on insufficient grounds for investigation. As a result, police are viewed as a source of tension and fear by many barrio residents, where police cannot be trusted, some other group must serve as protectors of the community”. In the Barrio, he continued, this role falls to the young men.

In the 1980s, serious crime grew to nearly epidemic proportion, particularly in Lagos and other urbanized area characterized by rapid growth and change, by inadequate government services and law enforcement capabilities. Published crime statistics were probably grossly understated because most of the countries were virtually unpoliced–the police were concentrated in urban areas where only about 25 percent of the population lived and lack of public confidence in the police contributed to the underreporting of crimes (global security, 2008).

For decades members of Nigeria police force seem to have betrayed their responsibility to protect Nigeria citizens and have instead preyed on them for economic gains. Indeed, the relationship between citizens and the police is very often characterized by confrontation and exploitation. A research conducted in 2000 by the center for law enforcement and education (CLEEN), a Lagos based NGO, found that the use of violence by the police against the citizens in Nigeria was widespread. Of 637 respondents to a survey carried out in 14 states, percent said they had been beaten by the police 22.5 percent said that police had threatened to shoot them in the past and 62.7 percent said they had witnessed the police beating another person.

There is no doubt that the Nigeria police force is seen to be an unfriendly organization whose officers are generally high-handed and abrasive, always using their position to take unfair advantage of people in order to extort money from them. A glaring example is the killing by the police in Apo, Abuja of six young person’s falsely labeled armed robbers.

**Crime Prevention Control by Vigilante Group**

For any crime to occur, three major factors must come together which are as follows

* An individual or group must have the desire or motivation to participate in a banned or prohibited behavior.
* At least some of the participants must have the skill and tool needed to commit the crime and
* An opportunity must be acted upon.

For prevention of crime to occur, these factors have to be worked upon to reduce them to the best minimum or of possible, eradicate them completely. An idle mind it is said is the criminal tendencies are gain fully employed and engaged the desire to present its self because they now have something to lose when crime occurs, they will not want to act upon it. Also, persons with criminal skills can be used to tackle crime. For example a rehabilitated drug addict or use instead of been allowed to go back to his or her old neighborhood to mingle with old partners can be employed, even on a temporary basis to other teach and enlighten against drug abuse or even as a spy or investigation to bust drug rings. Also, the use of community policing is one very novel and effective way of crime control and prevention. The police force is not numerically capable of being everywhere at all-time have the need then, members of the community to also participate in policing their environment prompt reporting of suspicious activities and characters in the neighborhoods is one just because you own house is not affected by the nefarious activities going on does not mean you keep silent about it for tomorrow, it might be your turn.

Knowing your neighbor or a new addition to the community is another way of preventing crime in the neighborhood. Because he or she has the money to afford the rent, then all is well. There is a need to know who the person is, where they are coming from, what they do for a living e.t.c. these details we terms as minor go a long way in letting us who we are telling into the neighborhood to be with our families and friends. Increasing the risk of crime and reducing it rewards are also ways of preventing crime for example, in a locality where uncompleted building abound surplus no vigilantes, no security light, and persons of questionable characters reside, there are risks in crime commitment because the environment is already a criminal know he or she has to pass through the stress of taking out the properties the event of property crime or a venue for personal crime because there are no hiding places, he or she is not at home because one is looking responsible and the criminal stands out a sore thumb in the environment they will be found out.

**Preventive Methods of Crime by Vigilante Group**

Actually preventive measures are employed by the police or vigilante group to forestall or reduce the opportunity or avenue for committing crime this is in appreciation of the fact that it is cheaper to prevent crime than to detect it. The method usually employed includes:

* Feasible operational method of checking the menace of criminals.
* Surveillance on building and suspected criminal individuals. This method affords the police the motorized patrol and foot patrols including highway and border patrols. This remains the most opportunity to collate intelligence on criminals.
* Cultivation of information: - information is the key to all policing functional activities there is need to continuously gather intelligence reports about criminal individuals and associate receivers of loots operations. Information is vital and investigation must regard everyone they come in good act with as a potential source of information. Information received through this medium is useful in planning strategies to combat crime. Cultivating information is an essential part of police duty and this is achieved by building relationship as well as developing rapport with members of the public with good intention to assist the police , criminals in police custody and victims of criminals activities, every investigation has a moral professional and ethical obligation to safeguard the identity of an informers. Failure to do this may result in death, injury, or intimidation for the informer and/ or his or her family. As a general rule an informer should not be exposed unless he or she has agreed (for example if he or she is willing to give evidence in court).
* Decoy methods are strategies employed by the police to destabilize the set plans of the criminals. This is sequel to in intelligence gathered on the activities of the criminals and their preparedness to commit crime.
* Covert operations undertaken by the police to forestall criminal activities who are obviously of such operations until they are apprehended.
* Raiding of criminal hideouts to apprehend criminals and recover arms and ammunition.
* Arrest and interrogation of suspected criminals.
* Simulation of crime situation: the police create scenario by engaging in some activities aimed and selling dummies to criminals who mistakes such actions for real life situation and unwittingly expose their identities.

**Detective Methods of Crime by Vigilante Group**

Crimes that escape police preventive networks are subjected to rigorous investigation by detectives are guided by the following principles:

1. Ensuring that investigations are thoroughly and exhaustively carried out.
2. Ensuring that the facts about a crime and carefully assembled and closely examined.
3. Ensuring that suspects are painstakingly questioned and their statement obtained.
4. Ensuring that witness statement is properly recorded.
5. Ensuring that exhibits are properly collected, labeled and safety kept.
6. Ensuring neat compilation of case filers.
7. Taken the case to the appropriate security agency
8. Seeking legal advice where necessary.

**Detective Operations of Crime by Police**

Vigilante crime detection is an important part of community security work. Every Vigilante organization has detective unit in its various commands. In our study area there is not less than 22 divisions of vigilante groups in various villages. This important division is charged with solving or clearing reporting crimes to the relevant security formations. Then after taken the suspect or vital information to the police its traditions of police tradition, a detective or investigator interviews the victim of the crime and any witnesses, collected evidence and processes the crime scene (searches the scene of a crime for physical evidence collects the evidence and forwards it to the police laboratory for analysis). The detective or investigator also conducts canvasses (searches of area for witnesses), interrogate possible suspects, arrests the alleged perpetration and prepared the case with assistance of the district attorney or prosecution office for presentation in courts.

The detective generally begins an investigation upon receipt of an incident report (complaint report) prepared by the office who conducted the initial interview with the victim. Theincident report contains identifying information regarding the victim details of the crime. As the detective begins the investigation, he or she maintains a file on the case using follow-up reports for each stage of the investigation. The incident report and the follow-up reports are generally placed in a case folder and serve as the official history of the crime and its investigation. The case folder is then used by the prosecution to prosecute the case in court. (To prosecute means to conduct criminal procedure in a court of law against a person accused of committing a criminal offence. The people performing this duty are generally called prosecutors, who are the police officers).

**Surveillance of Crime by Vigilante Groups**

Surveillance is one of one the oldest ways of detecting criminal activity. This method is used by vigilante groups when it has an information that a crime will take place at a specific location or when certain people are suspected of criminal activity. When a vigilante group make a surveillance suspected that a crime is committed or about to take place they quickly reported to closest and relevant security formation for necessary action. The first situation is usually handled by fixed police observation known as a stakeout: The second circumstance may require mobile observation as well, perhaps on foot or by automobile. Some situation may call for aerial observation (using aircraft) or electronic procedure (using surveillance equipment that monitors electronic communication.

The observation method must be legal. Surveillance techniques, for example may include placing personnel in strategic locations and equipping them with optical aids, such as binoculars or scopes with the capacity to detect an object illuminated only by moonlight or with electronic devices, sensitive to a conversation taking place at a considerable distance.

**Interrogation of Crime by Police**

Interrogation is purely a police work because it deals with some aspect some professionalism, the role of vigilante group is to report any crime case to relevant security formation and help them in collection of the witness. The information needed to further an investigation must be obtained from people who have some significant knowledge concerning the crime. Witnesses or victims are interviewed and suspects are interrogated. Eye witnesses to a crime to a crime are often asked to identify the perpetrator, although identification errors have prompted psychologist to explore the processes and pitfalls of memory, recall, and recognition. Experiments under controlled conditions indicate that jurors will convict four times as often if eyewitness testimony is offered, even when the visual activity of the witness is discredited. Interrogation is used when the information sought is not readily forthcoming, perhaps because of hostility or guilt. Often some key to the solution of a crime, such as the location of the weapon in a murder case is known only to the perpetrator. Without information provided by the suspects crime may go unsolved. Legal safe guard against abuse now surround this process before using any information obtained from an interrogation, the court must be assured that the suspect was advised of his or her right.

**Challenges of Nigerian Police Force in Crime Presention**

Like every other thing these responsibilities are not carried out without done challenges. One of such challenges is the non-availability of proper welfare and facilities for the police force. It is not on hand for police personnel to be without recommendation for as long as two or three months. Where are they supposed to find from? Even when these movies are paid how much are they? How is one expected to protect someone who lives in a mansion or their bedroom were on an air-condition flats while he or she is staying in a single room with their families? Or protecting a car when you don’t even have a bicycle? How can one do it efficiently? You find a police man on patrol at night with only a touch light and stick while he is expected to combat criminals with guns. These have contributed majorly to their lackadaisical attitude to work. The economic and financial crime commission in its 2014 annual report rated the Nigeria police force as the most corrupt establishment in Nigeria.

All these challenges tend to hamper the proper efficiency of the police.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Social contract theory**

The major proponents of social contract theory are Thomas Hobbes, John lock and Jean- Jacques Rousseau. The social contract is an agreement between the state and its citizens that spells out the relative rights and duties of both of them.

In the theory of social contract, Hobbes, pointed out that the citizens owe the sovereign absolute obedience in exchange for protection against domestic law violators (criminals or deviants) and foreign enemies. (International Encyclopedia of social sciences, vol. 13 and 14 :378–380). For Hobbes, order could be achieved if all citizens enter into a contract to surrender their individual powers to the sovereign in return for the protection of life and property. On the other hand, lock suggested a minimal and irrevocable government anchored on natural laws. Rousseau suggested a contract that is based on equality and democratic participation. This contract is based on “general will”. The general will rely on the coming together once a while of the entire democratic body, every citizen to reach a consensus on how to live together.

This theory was chosen for the study because in Nigeria, it is the responsibility of government to protect lives and property of citizens that obey the laws of the land by providing adequate security. Howbeit, Nigeria police who is the foremost state agent in the fight against crime seems to be understaffed and ineffective in many areas including Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State As a result, individuals came together to establish their own security organization: vigilante groups.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Research design**

The researcher used descriptive research survey design in building up this project work the choice of this research design was considered appropriate because of its advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design was suitable for the study as the study sought to find out the impact of vigilantism and crime control inn contemporary Nigeria, using Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State as our case study.

**3.2 Study Area**

Udenu local government area is located in obollo-Affor, Enugu state Nigeria.

It consist of many communities and towns amongst which are; Ezima-Uno, Obollo-Affor, Ezima-Agu, Amolla, Igugu, Umundu Orba, Agbodo, Aba, Obollo etiti, Obollo-Eke, Imilike-Uno and Imilike-Agu.

**3.3 Sources of data collection**

Data were collected from two main sources namely:

Primary source and

Secondary source

**Primary source:**

These are materials of statistical investigation which were collected by the research for a particular purpose. They can be obtained through a survey, observation questionnaire or as experiment; the researcher has adopted the questionnaire and interview method for this study.

**Secondary source:**

These are data from textbook Journal handset etc. they arise as byproducts of the same other purposes. Example administration, various other unpublished works and write ups were also used.

**3.4 Population of the study**

Population of a study is a group of persons or aggregate items, things the researcher is interested in getting information regarding the impact of vigilantism and crime control in contemporary Nigeria. The target population was people who were aged between 18 and above, resident in Udenu local government area. This is so because, constitutionally, 18years below are regarded as under age and therefore have no capacity for rational thinking.

**3.5 Sample size determination**

A sample size of was constituted through multi-stage, cluster and simple random sampling methods.

A study sample is simply a systematic selected part of a population that infers its result on the population. In essence, it is that part of a whole that represents the whole and its members share characteristics in like similitude (Prince Udoyen: 2019).

120 respondents was selected while only 110 respondent of questionnaire was collected, interviews was conducted to the 3 Commandant’s of Vigilant Groups, HOD Community Development of Udenu LGA, representative of Nigeria Police Udenu Division, the Igwe of Udenu and active members of the Vigilante group from various units in Udenu Local Government, Enugu State.

**3.6 Instrumentation**

This is a tool or method used in getting data from respondents.

Questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedules were the other instruments of data collection used in this study. The questionnaire was used to collect data from members of the community while interview schedules were used to collect qualitative data from traditional rulers, chairman of Udenu Local Government vigilante group, chairman of vigilante monitoring group and some vigilante group members. Questionnaire is the main research instrument used for the study to gather necessary data from the sample respondents. The questionnaire is structured type and provides answers to the research questions and hypotheses therein.

This instrument is divided and limited into two sections; Section A and B. Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents while Section B contains research statement postulated in line with the research question and hypothesis in chapter one. Options or alternatives are provided for each respondent to pick or tick one of the options.

**3.7 Reliability**

The researcher initially used peers to check for consistence of results. The researcher also approached senior researchers in the field. The research supervisor played a pivotal role in ensuring that consistency of the results was enhanced. The instrument was also pilot tested.

**3.8 Validity**

Validity here refers to the degree of measurement to which an adopted research instrument or method represents in a reasonable and logical manner the reality of the study (Prince Udoyen: 2019). Questionnaire items were developed from the reviewed literature. The researcher designed a questionnaire with items that were clear and used the language that was understood by all the participants. The questionnaires were given to the supervisor to check for errors and vagueness.

**3.9 Method of Data Collection**

The data for this study was obtained through the use of questionnaires administered to the study participants. Observation was another method through which data was also collected as well as interview. Oral questioning and clarification was made.

**3.10 Method of Data Analysis**

The study employed the simple percentage model in analyzing and interpreting the responses from the study participants while the hypothesis was tested using chi square.

**3.11 Ethical consideration**

The study was approved by the Project Committee of the Department. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants before they were enrolled in the study. Permission was sought from the relevant authorities to carry out the study. Date to visit the place of study for questionnaire distribution was put in place in advance.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**PRESENTATION ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

**4.1** **Introduction**

Efforts will be made at this stage to present, analyze and interpret the data collected during the field survey. This presentation will be based on the responses from the completed questionnaires and interviews taking. The result of this exercise will be summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis.

**4.2** **Demographic Analysis**

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding.

120 respondents was selected while only 110 respondent of questionnaire was collected, interviews was conducted to the 3 Commandant’s of Vigilant Groups, HOD Community Development of Udenu LGA, representative of Nigeria Police Udenu Division, the Igwe of Udenu and active members of the Vigilante group from various units in Udenu Local Government, Enugu State.

**Gender distribution of the respondents**

TABLE I

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender distribution of the respondents** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 70 | 57.9 | 57.9 | 57.9 |
| Female | 50 | 42.1 | 42.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

* 1. **TEST OF HYPOTHESIS**

Two hypotheses were tested

**HYPOTHESIS 1**

“The formation of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A. is significantly related to people’s perception of the role of police in crime control in the area”

To test this hypothesis, variables such as what the respondents think led to the formation of vigilante groups in its current form in their area and their rating of police performance completed by the respondents were cross tabulated.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents by rate of police performance and cause of formation of vigilante groups in its current form**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rate Police Performance** | **Cause of Formation of vigilante groups** | | | | |
|  | **Police ineffectiv eness** | **Lack of police presence** | **Increasi ng crime wave** | **Don’t know** | **Total** |
| Excellent | 0 0% | 10.5% | 10.4% | 00% | 21.8% |
| V. Good | 42.6% | 2010.1% | 186.4% | 0% | 44% |
| Fair | 4831.6% | 5025.3% | 186.4% | 0% | 27.2% |
| Poor | 5265.8% | 5664.1% | 5686.8% | 0% | 0 |
| Total | 56100% | 20100% | 34100% | 0100% | 110100% |

**Source: field work 2018**

X2=75.1; df=9; p= < 0.05; c=16.919

X2 calculated = 75.1

X2 critical (0.05,9) =16.919

**Conclusion**

With the X2 calculated (75.1) greater than the X2 critical value (16.919) at 0.05 level of significant, we accept the alternative hypothesis which states that the formation of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A. is significantly related to people’s perception of the role of police in crime control in the area. This is in agreement with the submission by communities in Harris (2001);”The apparent failure of the Police to control the increasing wave of crime has led to unilateral public action against crime and criminals in some major cities”.

**HYPOTHESIS 2**

“Vigilantism has not been effective in controlling crime in Udenu L.G.A.”

To test this hypothesis, we used respondent occupation to rate vigilante groups effectiveness in controlling crime in Udenu LGA were cross tabulated. See Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents on rating of vigilante groups effectiveness on crime control according to occupation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Occupation** | **Rating of vigilante groups effectiveness** | | | | |
|  | **Excellent** | **V. good** | **Fair** | **Poor** | **Total** |
| Student | 46 38.3% | 9747.1% | 6119.2% | 318.8% | 4731.4% |
| Farming | 86.7% | 115.3% | 237.2% | 16.2% | 436.5% |
| Trading | 58 48.3% | 8641.8% | 5644.3% | 637.5% | 3944.1% |
| Civil Servant | 54.2% | 83.9% | 8225.8% | 425.0% | 6015.0% |
| Professional | 32.5% | 41.9% | 113.5% | 9.5% | 203.0% |
| Total | 54100% | 30100% | 20100% | 6100% | 110 100% |

**Source: field work 2018**

X2=92.5; df = 12; P< 0.05; C=21.026

X2 Calculated = 92-5

X2 = critical (0.05, 12) = 21.026

**Conclusion**

With the calculated X2 (92.5) greater than the critical X2 value (21.026) at 0.05 level of significance, we accept the alternative hypothesis which holds that vigilantism has been effective in controlling crime in Udenu L.G.A. The researcher then concludes that perceived effectiveness of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A is related to one’s occupation.

**4.4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**

This part of data analysis deals with the interview schedules. Vigilant group members, traditional rulers, chairman of Udenu L.G.A vigilante group and chairman of vigilante monitoring group were interviewed to illicite information from them on crime, their mode of operation, their relationship with the police and their relationship with the public.

Semi–structured interview was the second instrument used in collecting data. The two interview schedules were used for vigilante group members and traditional rulers, chairman of Udenu L G A vigilante group and chairman of vigilante monitoring group respectively. Each of the interview schedules was analyzed as follows:

**Analysis of interview conducted with members of vigilante groups**

The interview was conducted with four (4) group leaders of vigilante groups and twenty ordinary members in Udenu.

**Personal data:**

**Sex:** All members of vigilante groups interviewed are males.

**Age:** The age range of members interviewed is 20 – 40 years

**Marital status:** Eighteen (18) of them were married while six (6) of them were not married.

**Educational Qualification:** Three of the interviewees held NCE. The remaining twenty one held either TC 2 or SSCE.

**Grade:** four vigilante group leader and twenty ordinary members were interviewed.

**Issues on vigilantism and crime control**

**Assessment of crime rate before and after the formation of vigilante groups in its current form**

The interviewees were of the opinion that crime rate was on the increase before the current vigilantism. They however said that crime started to decrease after the formation of current vigilantism. In any case, one would expect such response from them since the impression they were creating was that they were doing a nice job.

**Whether increasing crime wave constitutes a social problem**

On this issue, there was a consensus among the interviewees that crime constitutes as a serious social problem. They mentioned loss of lives and property, disruption of business activities, sleepless night as some of the problems caused by increasing crime wave.

**Cause of vigilantism in its current form**

There was also consensus among the interviewees that vigilantism in its current form started as a result of increasing crime wave in Udenu LGA and inability of the Nigerian Police to checkmate it. In their opinion the police men in Udenu LGA were collaborating with the criminals to perpetuate crime.

**Types of weapon used**

They mentioned automatic double barrels, matches, koboko, torch light, rope and whistle as the weapons they use. On further enquiry, they stated that certain crime requires giving the culprits some latches of koboko or tying him or her with rope. This findings suggests that severe punishment is part and parcel of their crime control strategy.

**Time for reporting to and closing from office**

The vigilante group members that were interviewed said that they reported to their duty post between 9 – 9.30 pm and closed between 5.30–6 am except two of them who were members of Udenu L G A vigilante group who claimed that they work round the clock (24 ) hours daily. The finding suggests that vigilante groups in Udenu L G A work mainly at night.

**Financing of vigilante group members**

With the exception of two interviewees who were members of Udenu L G A vigilante group, the others said that they were financed by their communities. According to them, each village was grouped according to families and men kept vigil in turn. However, they said that men above 45 years and some other persons who were engaged in essential duties paid some amount of money for the upkeep of the guards in terms of provision of torch lights, battery, cutlasses, double barrels, whistle etc.

They however said that they were not paid anything since each male member of the community contributed to vigilantism in one way or the other. This finding affirms the opinion of majority of community members who held that the members of the community formed and financed vigilante groups. The two members from Udenu L. G .A vigilante group interviewed said that they were financed by the local government authority in addition to the money they collected from business men and women as part of the payment they make for security.

**Their relationship with police**

Most of the vigilante group members interviewed agreed that they had cordial relationship with police. They held that the Nigeria police force inaugurated them and when arrests were made, the offenders were handed over to the police for prosecution.

This finding agrees with the opinion of most community members who held that the relationship between the police and vigilante groups was cordial.

**Whom they are working for**

Most of the vigilante group members interviewed said that they were working for the community. The other two members from Udenu L.G.A vigilante group said that they were working for the Local, Communities. This finding suggests that vigilante group members worked for the interest of members of the community.

**Major problems in the performance of their functions**

Vigilante group members interviewed pointed out that lack of fire arms, poor funding, lack of patrol vehicle were among the major problems confronting them. The above finding suggests that vigilante group members were confronted with some major problems which affected their operation in a negative way.

**How best can the problem of crime in Nigeria be solved?**

While some members of vigilante groups were of the opinion that the problem of crime in Nigeria could be solved by providing employment opportunities to our youth, others believed that the vigilante groups should be funded properly and also giving incentives to enable them combat crime adequately and effectively. This finding suggests that the problem of crime could be solved through provision of employment to our youth and proper funding and incentives to the vigilante groups.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY CONCLUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**5.1 SUMMARY**

This study was undertaken to examine the impact of Vigilantism and crime control in contemporary Nigeria. The study opened with chapter one where the statement of the problem was clearly defined. The study objectives and research hypotheses were defined and formulated respectively. The study reviewed related and relevant literatures. The chapter two gave the conceptual framework, empirical and theoretical studies. The third chapter described the methodology employed by the researcher in collecting both the primary and the secondary data. The research method employed here is the descriptive survey method. The study analyzed and presented the data collected in tables the hypotheses were tested using the chi square and data from the interviews where analysed qualitatively while the fifth chapter gives the study summary and conclusion.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The followings are some of the major findings**

* 1. Vigilante groups exist in various communities in Udenu L.G.A
  2. The rate of crime was high before the formation of vigilante groups in its formation
  3. The rate of crime was low after the formation of vigilante groups.
  4. Armed robbery and burglary were crimes committed frequently
  5. Increasing crime rate led to loss of life and property as well as disruption of business activities and sleepless night.
  6. Police in Udenu L.G.A had performed poorly.
  7. Increasing crime wave and police ineffectiveness led to the formation of vigilante groups in its current form.
  8. Vigilante groups were perceived to be effective in controlling crime.
  9. Community members believed that vigilante groups should be given the responsibility to control crime.
  10. The formation of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A is significantly related to people’s perception of the role of police in crime control in the area.
  11. There is no significant relationship between people’s level of education and their reliance on vigilante services in Udenu L.G.A.
  12. There is a significant relationship between people’s occupation and their perceived effectiveness of vigilante groups in Udenu L.G.A.
  13. Difficult terrain, illiteracy on the part of some respondents were some of the problems encountered by the researcher in the course of this study.

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of vigilante groups on crime control in Udenu L.G.A of Enugu State. The proliferation of vigilante groups in contemporary Nigeria and the controversy surrounding its existence necessitated this study.

The data collected indicated that vigilante groups exist in Udenu L.G.A. It also showed that the rate of crime was high before the formation of vigilante groups in its current form. However crime rate was low after the formation of vigilante groups. It was also discovered that high rate of crime and police ineffectiveness led to the formation of vigilante groups in its current form. More so, vigilante groups were perceived to be effective in crime control. So, community members believed that vigilante groups should be given the responsibility to control crime and so on.

The following recommendations are made

Vigilante activities should be carried out by well trained, able bodied persons recruited from the community with support of conventional security formations.

1. State government should encourage vigilante activities. Incentives and adequate logistics should be made available to vigilante groups. This is to ensure effectiveness in their operation.
2. To enhance the relationship between the police and vigilante groups, there should be adequate legislative frame work for the operation of vigilante groups.
3. Vigilante group members should be trained in aspects of crime detection and knowledge of the law. This is to enable them to operate within the provision of the law.
4. Security committees should be set up at the Local Government level and should also be headed by the Divisional Police Officer (D.P.O.). The committees should organize periodic meetings to discuss security issues.
5. Finally, the researcher recommends that further research be carried out on vigilante group, joint Police/Army Patrol and Law Enforcement in Nigeria.

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