

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA TO RESOLVE MISTRUST BETWEEN THE
POLICE AND THE INHABITANTS OF ABLEKUMA IN GHANA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I confirm that this long essay is my own work, and does not include any work completed by anyone other than myself, unless referenced. I did it in accordance with guidelines and directives from the Department of Research of Ghana Institute of Journalism and within the time limits set by the department. I am willing to make myself available for further clarification of my work, if the need arises.

.....

Obeng-Danquah Castro

.....

Date

SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this project work has been supervised by me according to the guidelines on supervision of project works as laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

.....

DR. FOSU MODESTUS

.....

Date

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this academic work to the memory of my late mother, Grace Paulina Obeng, popularly called Teacher Grace, for seeing me through secondary education when things were difficult. Without her perseverance and sacrifice, I would not have reached this far, God bless her.

Glory be to God, without Him I could not have completed this extensively programme successfully.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	
1.0 Background to the Study.....	1
1.1 Justification for the research.....	6
1.2 Research questions/Hypothesis.....	7
1.3 Significance of the study.....	7
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.0 Theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study.....	9
2.1 Review and critique of previous related studies.....	11
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY	
3.0 Method used to collect data.....	14
3.1 Highlight the chosen particular methodology.....	15
3.2 Highlight potential limitations.....	18
CHAPTER FOUR	
4.0 Conclusion.....	21
5. References.....	25

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Modern policing requires a good and friendly relationship between the police and the people in every democratic society. However, mistrust between the police and some inhabitants in Ghana continue to mar the needed cordiality hence the desire for this academic research work. According to Aning (2006), many Ghanaians appreciate the huge task and responsibilities of police officers, yet some also have a sense of mistrust in the way and manner the police provide services. Some studies have been carried out to assess how the public trust the police in Ghana. And most of the published studies looked at trust rather than mistrust of the Ghana Police Service, and an example is Trust in the Police; Analysis of Urban cities in Ghana by Boateng, {2015}

It is against this background that the present study seeks to explore the idea of the mass media playing a mediating role in eliminating mistrust between the police and some inhabitants of Ghana focusing on the Ablekuma community a suburb in Accra. Mistrust generally exists between individuals or group of people and institutions be it public or private. Additionally, it means the feeling that you have towards someone who you do not trust. According to Aning (2006), although the Ghanaian people fully agree with the important services being provided by the police officer, there are also reports of fear and mistrust in the police due to low public-police cooperation, Aning{2006}, and Boateng{2012} In the Ghanaian society, the two researchers acknowledge that there exists a deep mistrust between the police and the public. And what largely causes this mistrust stems from the unprofessional and misconduct behaviour and attitude on the part of some police officers according to reports of Afrobarometer {2012}

Members of the general public often complain or allege of unfair treatment meted out to them by some police officers in seeking out for justice. Some of the complaints or allegations include illegal arrests and detention, excessive use of force during arrests, conduct of illegal searches, brutalities, etc

Human rights reports initiated by US Department of State in 2010 corroborate some of these allegations against police officers in Ghana. Media reports and accounts of police misconduct equally give credence to the problem of mistrust between the police and the citizens, and some of them are the blatant violations of individual civil liberties and rights. The mistrust has resulted in suspicion, hatred, discontent, etc which makes the citizens often times take the laws into their own hands to seek justice or redress.

A typical example of what mistrust could lead to was the lynching of the late Captain Maxwell Adam Mahama at Denkyira-Obuasi in the Central Region of Ghana. He was part of military personnel of the Ghana Armed Forces deployed to the zone to curb illegal mining of gold by the youth in the area. He was mistaken to be an armed robber when the town people sighted pistol on him while taking his usual jogging exercise. Media reports had it that the people killed the soldier because of their lack of trust that the police would deal with the deceased.

According to the people, the town had been attacked and robbed by some armed robbers few days earlier before the deceased was seen in the community.

The *Daily Guide* of June 3 2017 edition gave a vivid reportage of how the people attacked and killed the soldier even when he had indicated he was a serving military officer sent to the area by the military high command. His plea was ignored and almost the entire people including women descended on the innocent captain and manhandled him leading to gruesome murder.

The Ghana Police Service (GPS) is the main law enforcement agency in Ghana mandated by law to protect and preserve life and property. But it is not easy to trace as to when formal policing started in Ghana. However, policing in the country began during the colonial era.

According to historical records, the Police Ordinance was passed in 1894 which gave the legal backing to the establishment of a civilian police force in the then British colony. Before this period, professional policing had been introduced by the British colonial authorities in 1831 with the then Governor of the Gold Coast, Captain George Maclean, recruiting about 129 men to patrol the trade routes between the Ashanti Kingdom and the coast to protect colonial merchants.

Around 1902, the police service was divided into many units including general, escort, mines and railway, and was legalized by the Police (Amendment) Ordinance of 1904. Record has it that the Criminal Investigation Department was established in 1922.

The police administration has gone through several reforms in a bid to improve or bring the service into international standard of policing. This includes the establishment of Wireless and Communication Unit in 1950, Women's unit in 1952, and the opening of the Police College in 1959. Ghanaian police officers were trained in the United Kingdom before the opening of the college in the country. When the country opted and restored to constitutional rule, it adopted a national Constitution which set out all fundamental laws for the nation.

The 1992 Constitution (200) Section (3) states that:

“The Police Service shall be equipped and maintained to perform its traditional role of maintaining law and order.”

Further, Article(201) states that: “There shall be established the Police Council which consists of Vice-President, Interior Minister, the Inspector General of Police, the Attorney-General, representative of the Ghana Bar Association, representative of Retired Senior Police Officers Association, two members of the Police Service appointed by the President, and two members appointed by the President.”

The above provides the composition of the Council which is usually chaired by the Vice-President of the country.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) heads the police service, whilst regional, divisional, and district commanders follow in that order of hierarchy of police administration in the country.

The power to appoint the Inspector General of Police is vested, by country’s Constitution, in the President of Ghana in consultation with the Police Council.

According to the latest United Nations data in 2020, Ghana’s population is a little over 31 million, and the country has also been ranked most peaceful in West Africa by Global Peace index report published by National Peace Council of Ghana. This tranquility is due to the pivotal role of the Ghana Police Service plays in maintaining peace, law and order especially in a democratic dispensation. The cooperation between the inhabitants and the police is somehow encouraging, but deep mistrust continues to exist posing some challenges for effective policing in the country. Centre for Democratic Governance (CDD-Ghana) survey report of 2017 indicates between eighty one and eighty four (81%-84%) of all the key demographics such as age, gender, urban-rural, party affiliations, employed and unemployed status support the police to carry out their official duties in dealing with criminal activities in the country. This gives the Ghana Police an encouraging approval rate despite the general perception against the service by a section of the population.

Ghanaians are made up of many inhabitants including foreign nationals, but there many diverse ethnic groups with Akans dominating with 47% according to the latest World Bank and United Nations data published by National Population Council in 2020. Over 40 languages or local dialects are spoken across different parts of the country, also according to census and statistical publication in 2019. The people are culturally peaceful, hospitable, law abiding, and very accommodating in tolerating all kinds of opinions in every sphere of life. As a secular state, there is religious tolerance with two major religions namely Christianity and Islam living harmoniously with believers of lesser known religious bodies in the country. This peaceful co-existence promotes religious tolerance which ensures freedom of worship without fear of practice of one's faith or belief.

Most Ghanaians, according to Centre for Democratic Governance (CDD), perceive many police officers not only as corrupt but also not trustworthy in carrying out their official duties. This raises the issue of mistrust by some inhabitants of Ghana.

In the Afrobarometer survey report conducted by CDD in 2017, eighty two percent (82%), however, are of view that the police are trained to handle criminal activities, whilst fifteen percent (15%) thinks sometimes it is acceptable for citizens to administer instant justice to suspected criminals.

With the focus on Ablekuma in Accra, the inhabitants cut across various ethnic groupings with some foreign nationals living among the citizenry. The population within the area, according to latest population census, stands at about two hundred thousand (200,000) with the people engaged in all kinds of occupations. The area has three police stations, with two being divisional headquarters.

1.1 Justification for the study

There appears to be an ever-increasing lack of trust between the two, and clearly the mass media is one vital institution or industry that can help to resolve the age long problem. Ghana police is a key law enforcement institution, but unfortunately the public mistrust or distrust of policing system remains very high. A regional survey conducted by Boateng (2012) pointed to the fact that 53% of Ghanaians did not trust the Ghana Police Service at all whilst merely 35% held very low trust for the police. The public perception of police image is dependent on the services the officers render to the society, and experiences of some people, their families, friends, and those who come into contact with the police. These people often made complaints against the police especially illegal arrest, brutalities, unlawful detention etc which give them cause to mistrust the police.

In a similar research study, Boateng and Darko (2016) have argued that the trust or legitimacy problem facing the police today can partly be attributed to colonialism. Other factors were also identified including mode and period of training, code of professional ethics etc.

As stated earlier, this long essay is to look at how effectively to use the mass media in creating awareness and public education to improve or solve the issue of mistrust between and police and the Ghanaian people. The problems meant to be solved by the study include (i) To understanding the causes of the mistrust (ii) To find out how and when the problem came about (iii) How the mass media can be used to end or reduce the increasing mistrust between the two groups.

It will look at how much contribution or assistance the mass media have played in the past to ensure a healthy relationship between the police and the citizens. There will be the need to assess whether the mass media have the capacity or potency to address the mistrust problem between the two groups.

1.2 Research questions/Hypothesis

i. What are the causes of the mistrust between the police and inhabitants of Ablekuma community?

(ii) How do the inhabitants see police officers in the discharge of their duties?

(iii) In what ways can the mass media assist in resolving the mistrust?

1.3 Significance of the study

It is imperative for this study to explore the need for Ablekuma inhabitants to appreciate the work and responsibility of the police in the modern democratic society like Ghana. Agenda setting theory of the traditional mass media is going to be employed to help to create the awareness that security and modern policing are shared responsibility between the police and the people. Basically, this theory has strong media effects which says that there are three related agendas—media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda. In this long essay, media agenda type is the most appropriate in the sense that the mass media can choose to live up to the responsibility as the fourth estate of the realm in building some level of trust between the police and the people. Healthy and cordial relationship between the two are expected to be achieved using the mass media as vehicles or channels of conveying educational and information materials to the populace.

Within the broad framework of the Ghanaian people mistrust of the police, the focus will be on the inhabitants of Ablekuma enclave. In carrying out the research work, the appropriate method is qualitative approach using interviewing technique which will seek to solicit views from the relevant sides of the study on the thorny issue of mistrust.

Face-to-face interviews of sixty inhabitants or residents within the area randomly for their opinions, twenty police officers, and twenty media people. After the data and information collection, they will be processed and analyzed for the next stage of the long essay. Here, the findings are discussed to explain the views and information gathered from those who were interviewed for the research work. Definitely, interpretation is allowed and will not be left out.

Any kind or form of limitations that are likely to be encountered will be stated, which may elicit for further work by researchers. As expected, COVID-19 pandemic is likely to pose some setback to data collection for the long essay.

To sum up, it is expected that some recommendations and solutions will be provided in order to help establish a healthy relationship between the two sides, the police and the Ablekuma inhabitants

Section 1 (1) of the Police Service Act states that:

“It shall be the duty of the Police to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend offenders, and to maintain public order and safety of persons and property.”

Unfortunately, some officers within the service have created mistrust problem for the service, and this has over the years negatively affected the image of the Ghana Police Service which motto is, Service With Integrity.

CHAPER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study

According to Steven Coleman, media scholar and researcher, mass media can be defined as technology that is intended to reach a mass audience. In other words, they are communication tools or channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, and promotional messages are disseminated to large diverse audience. To Coleman, the most common platforms of mass media include radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and internet. However, with the advancement of media technology, digital media as a form of new media has the capacity to equally reach out to huge diverse audience.

Article 21 (1) (a) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana states that,

All persons shall have the right to freedom of expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media.

Additionally, article 162 (5) expressly provides and acknowledges the role of the media as a watchdog entity to hold in check state authorities and institutions. What this means is that the mass media is recognized by the national Constitution to uphold responsibility and accountability of the government and various public institutions including the police service. It is in this light that the power of the mass media is being employed to deal with the age long mistrust between the police and the inhabitants of Ghana with special attention or focus on Ablekuma people.

Although media theories exist each with merits and demerits, the present study is using the media agenda setting theory, which according to (Mooij, 2014) is a theory that is not universally

applicable, and that it has indirect media influences. He stated a number of factors which dictate the choice of the theory such as culture, location, level of education, and above all accessibility. The mass media play significant role in shaping attitudes towards the police. The primary function of the mass media is to educate, inform, and entertain the viewers, listeners, and the readers. And history of mass media indicates that whenever and wherever this function has been executed professionally, the desired result was achieved. This is because mass media connect or serve as a bridge between organizations, and in this case the police institution, and the inhabitants of Ablekuma.

It is in recognition of this fact that the study wishes to employ the mass media to assist in resolving the ago long mistrust between the police and the inhabitants in the country. Public education and awareness creation are well noted to be carried out by the mass media through the channels of radio and television programmes as well as newsworthy information published in newspapers. Specific space and time can be allotted to both electronic and print to highlight positive information or news about the police activities in the country.

In the explanation of agenda setting theory by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw (2014), the theory prioritizes which news comes first as set by the media according to how people think and how much influence it will have among the audience. There are different levels of the theory but this research study will use the influence that the mass media can create on the inhabitants and to effect change in thought that people will have on the exposure to the information given by a media house.

2.1 Review and critique of previous related work

Reading through Imperial policing and Antinomies of power in Early Colonial Ghana looked at how the British colonial rule has impacted and left traces in the policing system of independent Ghana. It provides a vivid historical account of the formation of the Ghana Police Service, but failed to acknowledge and recognise the reforms the service has gone through after independence. In another research study on How to reduce police violence in US, the author traces police officers encounter with the people in the discharge of the official duties and some cases have resulted in violent and unpleasant clashes. According to Andrew Papa Christos, the author of the study, the violence is squarely hinged on lack of trust and suggested stricter rules against the use of force by police officers in dealing with the civilian population. The study, however, tried to paint a global picture of general policing without highlighting peculiar differences pertained in other parts of the world. However, according to (Aning,2006) the police have to live with the often unpleasant situation of having to negotiate complexities that arise from the inevitable conflicts between justifiable individual rights and uncompromised societal interests.

There is little and known study about the public perception of mistrust between inhabitants of Ghana and policing in general. However, some theorists used performance theory extensively to explain the causes of trust and distrust in police service in Ghana. This theory relates to wrong and correct performance of police officers as seen by the public they serve. Again, the performance theory assumes that trusting relationships between the police and the public have been carried out with data collection mainly from the developed countries. According to (Surette, 2007; Mazaev, 2004), the media consistently play vital role in shaping public opinions and attitudes toward the police. Interviews and face-to-face encounter are not considered option because getting accurate data and recorded information are not difficult to pursue by researchers in that part of the world.

This present study will adopt or apply different theoretical perspective or framework by employing the agenda setting approach or function of the mass media to help resolve the mistrust between the police service and the inhabitants of Ablekuma in the capital city of Accra. Agenda setting theory was formally developed by Dr Max McCombs and Dr Donald Shaw in 1968 when conducting a study on the American presidential election. Arnold (2009) postulated that agenda setting simply means the ability of the mass media to bring issues to the attention of the public and related issues, and that means if a news item is covered frequently and prominently the audience will regard the issue as more important. And this is what the long essay seeks to achieve, that the Ghanaian media can play the vital role of bringing harmony between the police and some inhabitants in a suburb of Accra.

Therefore, the role of the mass media is still relevant in finding solutions to problems. In recent times in Ghana, for instance, the mass media by its agenda setting function advocated and supported the ruling government (2017) to eradicate or minimize the canker of illegal mining (galamsey) of gold across the country. For once, the relevance and potency of the mass media were glaring to the general public. The whole nation rallied and bought into the idea of safe guarding and protecting the water bodies and the environment.

Another example is the immense contribution and role the mass media played in establishing democratic system of government in the country. This is the period the political system was transformed from military junta to constitutional democracy, and that ushered the nation into fourth Republican 1992 Constitution till date. Serving as agent of change, the mass media played vital role in mobilizing the populace to yearn and agitate for democratic system of governance in the country.

With these two successful examples, it is the hope of this long essay that the same mass media should be able to help resolve the mistrust problem that has existed between the police and the inhabitants of Ablekuma in Accra, Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Method used to collect data

Methodology is defined as a system of methods or principles used in a particular field of study or discipline, and follows orderly logical arrangement of procedures and methods. The present study, however, dwells method of qualitative approach which seeks to involve respondents and participants in the long essay. Primary data involves collecting views and information by asking participants questions through interviews and this is referred to as primary source. The direct encounter with respondents provides comprehensive conversation to give deeper understanding of the subject the research is about. The interview method will lead to conduct of interviews with Ablekuma inhabitants to solicit their views on the role the mass media should or can play to resolve the mistrust between the police and the inhabitants of Ablekuma in Accra using qualitative in-depth interviews through phones, face-to-face, designed to gather views on mistrust, and the role the mass media can help to bring cordiality between the some inhabitants and the police. The data or information for this long essay was collected between July and August, 2020, with respondents and participants with eighteen (18) years and above. One hundred respondents and participants were reached out to for the study and they include some police officers, media people, and ordinary residents within the enclave. Some face-to face interviews were also conducted. The respondents are made up of variables ranging from age, gender, length of residence through random sampling, but the final sample for present study consisted of one hundred (100) from the three constituencies within the Ablekuma catchment area.

3.1 Highlight the chosen methodology

The data collected for the present study was conducted within the Ablekuma enclave in capital city of Accra, Ghana. As a cosmopolitan area within the metropolis, the inhabitants are made up of different ethnic backgrounds including some foreign nationals. It also consists of three constituencies namely; south, north, and central with population over two hundred thousand (200,000) inhabitants. One hundred respondents and participants were reached out for this study out of which they all cooperated and responded. They included ordinary residents, media people, and some police officer, whereby their views were collected or gathered from July to August, 2020. The questionnaire consisted of four parts namely: the bio data of respondents, causes of mistrust, duties of police officers, and role of the mass media to resolve the mistrust between the police and Ablekuma inhabitants. To the police, citizens are both customers and clients that demand quality life in general and public safety in democratic societies (Alpert and Moore, 2000).

On the specific issues on mistrust and the role of the mass media for resolution, almost all the respondents of the inhabitants in the area under the study do not trust the police citing bribery and unprofessional conduct as some of the bad behaviours of some of the police officers. Realizing the power of the mass media, 60% of the inhabitants believe the most effective means to resolve the mistrust problem is for the media to carry out regular educational and informational stories about the police activities. Interestingly, the media people including newspaper publishers and media practitioners were of the firm conviction that the mass media can bridge the mistrust gap between the police and the Ablekuma inhabitants through constant informational reportage. In their view, serious attention should be given to coverage and reportage of good news about police activities instead of the penchant of just reporting crime stories and statistics from the police service. Negative reportage and stories tend to dent the image of the personnel of the service, and so some

of the journalist interviewed called for a change in order to improve the relationship between the police and the people or inhabitants of Ghana. The police officers interviewed disclosed that many people or the inhabitants lack clear understanding or do not appreciate the service they provide to ensure public safety, and to maintain law and order. They said often times relatives, friends, and family members of suspects expect some leniency from the police, and if they refuse to bend the law the police officers are labeled as biased and unprofessional. Another concern raised by these police officers was the periodic Afrobarometer surveys and or reports conducted by Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), which usually puts the police service in a bad light in the eyes of the general public. The reports continue to deepen mistrust against police officers across the country which demoralizes the good officers who carry out their duties diligently and professionally. To minimize or eradicate the mistrust, the police respondents said the mass media remains the most credible channels to carry out public education about police activities in an effort to bring harmonious relationship with the inhabitants. Many negative and fake stories are mostly reported through social media, but can be used responsibly by media houses who have professional and trained reporters to write factual, accurate, and reliable news stories rather than for citizens or inhabitants to report whatever they see or observe about the police in discharge of the official duties.

Mistrust of the police by inhabitants of Ablekuma in Accra.

Table 1

Variables	Respondents	percentage
Mistrust of police	50	84%
Don't mistrust the police	10	16%
	N=60	100

Table 2: Causes of mistrust of the police in Ghana, Ablekuma in focus

Variables	
Ablekuma inhabitants	bribery, illegal arrest, brutalities
Media People	infringement of human rights, bribery
Police Officers	ignorance of police duties, constant suspicion

Table 3 Can the mass media help resolve the mistrust between the police and Ablekuma inhabitants?

Variables	Yes	No	Percentage (%)	Total
Ablekuma inhabitants	55	5	58	60
Media People	20	-	21	20
The Police	20	-	21	20
				100

As stated earlier the focus of this long essay is to find out how the mass media can assist in the resolution of the age long mistrust between the police and the inhabitants of Ablekuma in Accra. More than three thirds of the respondents in the area said the mass media has the capacity to bridge the mistrust gap and can also help to establish a cordial relationship between the two groups or sides. Only about five inhabitants do not agree the mass media can play that mediating role to bring to an end the mistrusting of the police. According to these few individuals, the mass media is very much interested in sensational news reportage rather than to give attention or embarking on public education and awareness of the police activities. Some of them mentioned radio and television as very effective means to bring the needed change of perception about some of the police officers. Their main source of information about police activities is through news reports on radio and television, which usually tend out to be negative stories or crime news. The same channels of mass communication can be utilized to improve upon on the strained relationship between the inhabitants and police officers. On the other hand, majority of the media people including media practitioners and scholars interviewed agreed that the mass media is always better place to solve societal problems or issues, and that the mistrust problem of the police can be minimized or eradicated through media reportage and coverage. Ordinary residents formed 60% who responded to mistrust of the police and the media's role to resolve the matter, followed by media people with 20% expressing their views on how the mass media can help bring trust between the Ablekuma inhabitants and the police as well as 20% of some police officers within the area who took part in the study by responding to questionnaire through interviews conducted.

3.2 Highlight of limitations

The findings point to the fact that the police service is unwilling to provide or offer information to the mass media due to bureaucracy and hierarchy of the structure of the service. The media people

believe that reporting positive stories or news will achieve a healthy relationship, and they also contend that internet or website publication cannot be left out in this period of new media. Various platforms of new media are another means or channels of information dissemination about the police interacting with the public. The police officers who responded to this study were of the view that the only effective remedy to fight the issue of mistrust against them is the usage of mass media whose practitioners have professional standards and code of ethics. To them, the mistrust stems from suspicion and lack of knowledge about the official duties of police officers in the country. The officers expressed worry that the new media (social media platforms) allows citizens and users, who are untrained, to put out fake or false reports about the police. This contributes to negative perception for police officers and deepens the mistrust against the entire. Despite these challenges, the police personnel for this long essay said the mass media has high level of credibility and reliability to solve issues confronting the state or public institutions including the Ghana Police Service in a democratic country such as Ghana.

First of the limitations encountered is the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which made it extremely difficult to collect data or information from the respondents or participants for the long essay. The second problem encountered was the usual unwillingness of respondents/participants to participate in the research by answering or volunteering information regarding the subject matter under the study. Thirdly, using personal resources became a burden that needed to be borne at all cost to meet or satisfy academic requirement in order to receive my certificate. There was special financial assistance from a friend, who has been earlier acknowledged in the table of content. Finally, it is worth to state that getting police officers to participate in the long essay by volunteering or giving information was difficult, but it took persistence get some of them to agree

to be interviewed. According to them, they usually seek permission from the top hierarchy of the service before speaking irrespective of whoever needs information or data from the police.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

4.0 CONCLUSION

The research work for this long essay points to some interesting dynamics, findings, and revelation. Transparency International corruption perception in 2016 carried out in over 176 countries in the world indicated that the police are perceived to be the least trustworthy public institution especially in Ghana. But in the present study despite these shortcomings, the inhabitants of Ablekuma generally believe the police provide vital public security services to the people, and agreed that without them crime rate and lawlessness will be the order of the day. The respondents seem to know and understand the official duties of police officers but were quick to add that many police officers often times take the people for granted by acting outside the purview of their constitutional mandate of maintaining law and order and keeping peace. More than half of the inhabitants interviewed mistrust of the police stems from the fact that suspects of crimes are brutalized, improper arrest and detention of offenders, unprofessional conduct or behaviour among others. Long stay at one particular police station also contributes to the lack of trust of some police officers as the people asserted that familiarity breeds or brings contempt. Interestingly, many of the inhabitants do not know the functions of the mass media but strongly believe that through radio and television the issue of mistrust of the police can be resolved. The respondents contend that the media has the capacity to highlight or report informational and educational messages to the people particularly by using local language such as Ga and Twi (Akan). For the newspapers according to the local respondents, they have the opportunity to listen and watch extensive reviews by radio and television hosts and presenters, and thus hardly patronize or buy the papers. Almost all of the

inhabitants expressed the view that the mass media is only interested in giving adequate reportage or coverage of crimes or offences committed rather than seeking to inform the populace about police official duties and the professional conduct expected of them. They want the Ghanaian media start to pay attention to relationship issue between the police and the general public, stressing that in a democratic country like Ghana the police service plays very important role in ensuring peace, law and order. Many of the inhabitants do not know where to report or seek redress when their human rights are trampled upon or violated by police officers, and suggest the need to have a high body or authority to check misconduct of erring police officers. You can hardly get justice for reporting erring police officer to be disciplined by the same police institution, more than two thirds of the respondents said. Unanimously, the police officers spoken to for this long essay said that the mistrust between them and some inhabitants is rooted or can be traced to wrong perception since from colonial era. The findings also found out that over the years surveys and reports often carried out by Civil Society Organizations (CSO) have fuelled and deepen mistrust against the police service in Ghana. However, all the officers interviewed believed that the power of the mass media could be used to bring cordial relationship between police officers and the inhabitants of Ablekuma as well as the whole nation. In sharp contrast, some of the police officers interviewed equally blamed the mass media for taking delight in reporting negative stories or news about few bad nuts within the police service. Majority of the respondents, for instance, said some minutes of airtime can be allotted on radio and television for the police to engage the inhabitants of Ghana on a regular basis to try and erase wrong perception about police, and to help build or earn trust from the inhabitants they serve. On the whole, the respondents excluding the police officers have some trust for the Ghanaian police but only few pointed out there were some bad nuts among the service that cannot be trusted based on experiences of brutalities, disclosing

identity of informants, and taking bribe from the people to compromise professional standard of policing. Respondents from the media fraternity agree that the mass media can assist to bring healthy relationship between the police and the inhabitants by regularly publishing the duties of police officers in an effort to educate and inform the populace.

Positive reports such as professional conduct, swift response to reported crimes, fair and firm in discharge of duties etc., the media people, agree can enhance the public perception about the police service.

Police respondents unanimously believe that many inhabitants of Ghana including the Ablekuma residents lack or appreciate the official duties of police personnel and this leads to the persistent mistrust for the police service.

To conclude this study, it was found out that the mass media remains the only one of many channels the Ablekuma inhabitants obtain information on the activities of the police particularly those police officers stationed in the area. According to Afrobarometer media survey report in 2011, radio reaches more than 90 percent and television 82 percent in the country. This study can corroborate the said report whereby the inhabitants of Ablekuma largely depend on radio and television for receiving information and news reports on daily basis. Findings also indicate the people within the Ablekuma area prefer listening to news in local languages such as Ga and Akan (Twi). This aspect is worth considered in the message or information dissemination about the police operations and activities. For instance, positive information about policing and crime reporting can be broadcast through new media (social media platforms) and mobile applications for an effective communication between the police and Ablekuma residents especially to the youth in the current information era. Furthermore, the present study found out that the negative perception of the police

points to the sense of justice and treatment meted out suspects, and the findings of this study suggest that the police administration should pay attention to manage its public image in the mass media. Therefore, swift delivery of justice and fairness without fear and favour is very crucial to get needed cooperation from the inhabitants.

4.1 Recommendations

This study recommends the establishment of an independent commission to be responsible for handling complaints from the inhabitants against perceived erring police officers. This long essay wishes to suggest that the independent body, if establish, will help address the age long mistrust of the police, and to also minimize mob attacks, instant justice, lawlessness etc. Over concentration of reporting bad news about policing and police officer's ought to be minimized. There is the need for stiffer rules and regulations against the use of force, improve upon training of police officers, and regular or periodic transfer of police officers from one station to another location. Finally, further research can be carried out to improve upon identified gaps of this long essay beyond Ablekuma enclave on the mistrust between the police and the larger population in Ghana.

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