

Evaluating current strategies in Response to burglary at residential premises

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History:	<p><i>It is in the best interest of the South African Police Services (SAPS) to assess the effectiveness of the current strategies which they are employing to respond to burglaries at residential premises in South Africa, this knowledge would assist in addressing burglaries more effectively in the future. This study aimed to contribute to this knowledge by evaluating the current strategies which the SAPS in the Newlands East policing precinct are utilizing to respond to burglaries in the study area. This was deemed necessary as residential burglary had been reported as the highest property-related crime in the study area for the five years (2015-2019) preceding the study. In ensuring that the aim of this study was achieved, the qualitative research design was used, which assisted the researcher to focus on exploring the views of the SAPS members on the current strategies they are employing to respond to burglaries. Data collection for this study was based on semi-structured interviews conducted on an individual basis with selected participants. It combined a set of pre-determined questions that enabled the interviewer to explore further particular themes and responses. The findings of this study revealed that the South African Police Service as well as the Community Policing Forum in the study area have implemented some viable strategies to combat burglary at residential premises. However, these strategies are not entirely effective due to limited manpower and limited vehicles allocated to the police station. These findings suggest that there is an urgent need for the government to intervene by increasing the SAPS budget so that more vehicles and manpower may be deployed to local police stations. This would assist the SAPS to effectively respond to burglaries at residential premises in the study area.</i></p> <p>KEYWORDS: property-related crime, burglary at residential premises, South African Police Services, Newlands East Policing Precinct</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Escalating incidences of burglary at residential premises, also known as housebreakings, is a severe problem in South Africa (SA) and will remain a problem as long as so many people face unemployment, poverty, and financial deprivation (Van Zyl, Wilson, and Pretorius, 2003 cited in Mpofu, 2019). Van Zyl (2006) states that burglary at residential premises is a property-related crime that is the most prevalent of all crimes committed in South Africa. The latest crime statistics released by Statistics South Africa (2019) revealed that 1.3 million incidents of residential burglaries occurred in the 2018/2019 period. Africacheck (2019), which published crime statistics for the period 2016/2017, concurs that more than 50% of all the crimes experienced by households in South Africa in that period were burglaries at residential premises.

Burglaries at residential premises have also been categorized as the most feared crime in South Africa by the South African Victims of Crime Survey (Statistics South Africa, 2017/18). This is not surprising as this crime has continued to be dominant in South Africa as it accounts for 54% of all household crimes in the VOCS (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Africacheck (2019) reports that as many as 220 865 house burglaries were recorded in 2019 with an average of 605 houses burgled per day. Individuals from all spheres of life are vulnerable to the threat of residential burglary (Van Zyl et al., 2003) as both the rich and the poor fall victim to this crime.

The high rate of residential burglaries in South Africa is a cause for grave concern, particularly as very few residential burglaries are resolved during primary investigations. According to South African crime statistics (Statistics South Africa, 2019), arrests occur in just one out of every five reported incidences of



residential burglary and just one in five individuals associated with residential burglary is convicted (Statistics South Africa, 2019). At the turn of the century, Oppler (1998:18) also argued that property-related crimes in South Africa, excluding shoplifting, were hard to resolve as between 80% to 90% of housebreaks went undetected. At that time, of the cases that eventually reached the courts a substantial proportion was withdrawn during proceedings as a result of insufficient evidence.

Residential burglary has a significant impact on individuals' lives as it negatively impacts their perception of feeling safe. Statistics South Africa (2019) states that such burglaries are amongst the most frightening and dangerous of crimes as they cause trauma because the perpetrators violate the private spaces of individuals which they regard as their sanctuary. Furthermore, according to a Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS) (Statistics South Africa, 2011), unlawful entry into somebody's home, irrespective of whether they are there or not,

can be traumatic for the victims and can lead to individuals and their families' becoming victims of multiple other crimes. It was against this background that the researcher deemed it necessary to evaluate the current strategies which the South African Police Service (SAPS), is employing to respond to burglaries in South Africa, this would assist in addressing this problem more effectively in the future.

The present study

Based South African Police Service and Statistics South Africa crime statistics reveal that residential burglary has consistently been rated as one of the highest crimes in South Africa since 2015, it is evident that the South African Police Service (SAPS) experiences challenges to fulfill its mandate to combat this particular crime in South Africa, but more particularly in the Newlands East policing precinct in the Durban area. The data presented in Table 1.1 below confirm this problem statement.

Table 1.1: Property-related crime (burglary at residential premises) in Newlands East Policing Precinct, Durban

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
380	310	407	325	394

Source: Crime Statistics South Africa (2019)

The table above shows the statistics for burglary at residential premises in the Newlands East Policing Precinct and it shows that for the past five years burglary at residential premises has remained relatively high. In connection to the provided five years projection of SAPS statistics; the objective of this study was to evaluate the current strategies which the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the Newlands area is employing to respond to burglaries. The study aimed to develop best practices to be employed by the local SAPS in reducing the level of victimization.

2. BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

The police techniques aimed at preventing crime, more specifically residential burglary in South Africa include the standard model of policing, community policing, problem-oriented policing, Compstat, and intelligence-led policing (ILP) which would be discussed below.

-The standard model of policing

Random patrols, rapid uninformed response, deployment of police officials to criminal investigations once an incident has occurred, and reliance on law enforcement and the legal system to minimize crime are all part of the standard model of policing (Ratcliffe, 2008). This model has been used for many years and continues to be utilized to this day by many law enforcement agencies in their efforts to combat crime and disorder. However, research has shown that, when this model is used exclusively, it is ineffective and limits the law enforcement powers and efficiency of the police. Regardless of whether the strategy that is employed includes preventive patrols, efforts to reduce response time to citizen calls, increasing the number of police officers, and/or conducting follow-ups on investigations, research studies agree that this model has failed to result in a

meaningful reduction in crime, disorder, and civilians' fear of crime (Ratcliffe, 2008).

-Community policing

According to Dlamini (2018), community policing is a policing philosophy that is defined by the programs that are linked with it. Community policing is usually associated with satellite police stations in neighborhoods, school visits, and established neighborhood watch units. However, it has been argued that this model of policing cannot be defined by the specific programs that are the most visible because these programs can change depending on the needs of the relevant community.

The goal of community policing, according to Ratcliffe (2008:67), is to increase police legitimacy and image in areas where residents have lost trust in them. The goal of community policing is to promote community satisfaction with the policing service while also increasing the legitimacy of formal local governance. According to Mishra (2011:7), community policing focuses on proactively preventing crime and diminishing the fear that crime creates, rather than simply responding to a crime after it has occurred. According to this model, the police need to better understand and communicate with the community. They need to be cognizant of and address the needs of the community and understand the factors that contribute to crime in a particular environment. To achieve the goal of community policing, the police must earn the community's trust and collaborate with all stakeholders, including community members, for the safety of all.

-Problem-oriented policing

According to Eisenberg and Glasscock (2001), the concept of problem-oriented policing has influenced how law enforcement organizations have responded to the communities they have served for the past two decades. This policing approach



focuses on addressing problems rather than simply responding to complaints, and it allows organizations to use the technique to address issues both inside their departments and in their communities. Problem-oriented policing is a notion that can be used to handle a variety of policing concerns and its principles mandate officers to delve deep into the underlying issues that threaten a community's safety and security. This compels the police to examine a wide range of data sources such as emergency services calls, recorded acts of crime, informants' contributions, and the attitude and level of support of the public. The focus of problem-oriented policing is thus on directing attention to the wide variety of issues that the community expects the police to manage, as well as issues that are exclusively police business and how they can be more effective in dealing with them (Ratcliffe, 2008).

Since Goldstein's initial proposal of this model in 1979, problem-oriented policing has affected policing and community safety in numerous countries (Chainey and Chapman, 2015). The problem-oriented approach is based on the principle that the fundamental unit of police work is a problem rather than an individual incident and that the emphasis should be on dealing with the underlying causes of these problems. Undertaking an in-depth investigation that identifies, characterizes, and diagnoses the problem thus involves these pivotal steps in problem-solving. It is also based on theoretical principles derived from several opportunity theories, including the routine activities theory of Cohen and Felson (1979) and the rational choice theory of Cornish and Clarke (1987) (Chainey and Chapman, 2013).

Three fundamental features of the problem-oriented approach are listed by Newburn (2012): (i) Problems must be more precisely defined and broad legal categories like burglary and robbery should be replaced with descriptors that include details such as location, time, participant behavior, and motivation. (ii) Rather than relying on internal sources (police information) only, information concerning problems must be gathered from outside sources. This is because police officials who investigate cases have a great deal of information at their disposal that they rarely use. Businesses, other government organizations, and private citizens can frequently serve as sources of information that will fully illuminate the problem. (iii) Police investigators must conduct a broad search for answers and include alternatives to the criminal justice system. This is because the most effective remedy frequently involves collaboration with public and private persons as well as organizations that have a vested interest in the solution of the problem.

-Computer Comparison Statistics (CompStat)

CompStat is a police managerial accountability system (Ratcliffe, 2008) that is electronically operated. According to the paradigm of this model, mid-level commanders are held accountable to the executive level of the SAPS for the control of crime in their basic command units. It is thus envisaged that, by increasing responsibility at the local level, precinct captains and managers will employ regular, comprehensive crime intelligence to develop an acceptable crime reduction strategy based on

intelligence flow. CompStat's crime reduction mechanism involves four principles:

-Timely and accurate intelligence;

-Effective tactics.

-Rapid deployment; and

-Relentless follow-up and assessment.

Analysis statistics are utilized by CompStat to track data, which is an agency-wide technique for holding police managers accountable for the extent of crime in their precincts (Phillips, 2012). The usefulness of CompStat, according to Carter and Phillips (2013), is its ability to identify a crime series or trend and major crime tendencies within a jurisdiction. For instance, it can identify crime hotspots based on timely analysis of incident records. The analysis of data captured via crime reporting can provide valuable information such as geographical parameters and modus operandi, and this information can be used to forecast a potential range of crimes in a specific area in the immediate future, aid in problem-solving, and provide descriptive information such as behaviors, targets, and criminal instruments that operational units may use to apprehend perpetrators, disrupt criminal activity, or alter crime generating environments (Carter and Phillips, 2013).

-Intelligence-led policing (ILP)

ILP is an innovative technique for enhancing crime prevention initiatives (Phillips, 2012). It is a strategic, future-focused, and target-based strategy for crime prevention that focuses on identifying, analyzing, and managing persistently emerging problems and risks. The application of criminal intelligence analysis is known as ILP. It is an objective decision-making tool that makes successful policing techniques easier to reduce and prevent crime. According to Bowling and Sheptycki (2012), ILP is a technological effort to handle threats and risks and to strategically manage the policing mission.

According to Carter and Phillips (2013:337), ILP can be compared to other police models such as community policing, Compstat, problem-oriented policing, and the standard model of policing to acquire a better understanding of this new ideology. ILP integrates intelligence analysis into the police organization's entire objective range in a strategic way. As stated by Ratcliffe (2008), ILP is a new strategy that depends on crime research to enhance police systems and administration quickly. Scholars such as Ratcliffe (2008), Ratcliffe and Guidetti (2008), Carter and Carter (2009) and Scheider et al. (2009) and practitioners (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005; Fuentes, 2006) agree that ILP is not only new to policing, but that it is also so new that it necessitates a shift in police management, organizational structure, and even day-to-day operations. Furthermore, Scheider et al. (2009) characterize ILP as innovation and state that, while it is new to law enforcement, the lessons acquired from earlier policing innovations should be applied to ensure its success.

3. METHODOLOGY

To evaluate the current strategies which the South African Police Service (SAPS) is employing to respond to burglaries in South Africa, the researcher used a qualitative research design. Qualitative research involves "an in-depth investigation of knowledge" (Crix, 2004:119). Bryman



(2004:26) defines qualitative research as a “research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data”. The use of a qualitative method facilitates a more in-depth understanding of factors that would be difficult to get in a quantitative survey alone. Subjective factors such as opinion, attitude, personality, emotion, motivation, interest, personal problems, mood, drive, and frustration are relatively more complex, and hence more difficult to capture quantitatively than variables that can be empirically verified (Baumgartner & Strong, 1998:248).

Consequently, the qualitative research methodology enabled the researcher to explore the attitudes, opinions, perceptions, and views of the SAPS members on the current strategies they are employing to respond to burglaries. The qualitative design was suitable to elicit the participants’ views and perceptions regarding the topic under investigation as it facilitated a setting in which the selected participants could frankly and comprehensively explain and describe their feelings and experiences.

Study sample and sampling procedure

The population of the current study comprised all the SAPS officials at the Newlands East police station. As this population was far too large to include in the study, sampling was conducted to select appropriate participants. As a result, the study's population was limited to a carefully selected sample of ten (10) high-ranking and other recruited SAPS members.

To select the actual participants for this study, the researcher used purposive sampling as it was envisaged that these participants would possess rich information on the study subject and their experiences will be of importance in this study. Denscombe (1998) explains that with purposive sampling, the researcher already knows something about the specific people that are selected to participate because they are seen as a unit of analysis that will produce the most valuable data and they are selected with a specific purpose in mind.

Data collection techniques

To collect rich and relevant data from the participants, the researcher utilized semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Gray (2014:384) emphasizes that semi-structured face-to-face interviews are non-standardized and are used in qualitative analysis. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011:342) explain that researchers who use semi-structured interviews will gain a detailed picture of a participants’ beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of the phenomenon under investigation. This method gave the researcher and participant much more flexibility in asking and answering questions and it allowed the respondents according to Lichtman (2014:248) to tell their story in their own words.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, which was provided by the SAPS officials, the researcher used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data as it organizes and describes data in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006:18). The thematic analysis helped in sourcing out helpful data from all the aggregate data gathered and recognizing patterns of importance over the

information that responded to the research questions and objectives of this study. The researcher read the data multiple times, especially the unanalyzed ones, to become acquainted with its content. By doing such, the researcher distinguished vital components and topics of the information that were applicable to answer the problem, questions, and objectives of this study. The researcher then divided the information into themes and looked for common denominators and differences within and across the material and these common denominators and differences formed themes.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Utilizing the standard model of policing

The SAPS crime statistics (South African Police Service, 2016) confirm that burglaries at residential premises are rife in South Africa. This crime does not only have financial implications but can harm victims both psychologically and emotionally. Thus, there is a dire need for strategies to curb this scourge. The KII participants (SAPS officials) were thus asked if any strategies had been implemented in this regard. The responses of the SAPS participants were very similar. One stated:

“Vehicle patrols are being conducted. During the night blue light patrols are conducted. Stop and searches are conducted. Visits and inspections are conducted at second-hand shops [and among such] dealers” (KII-A: 01:01).

The methods of policing deployed by the SAPS to curb burglary predominantly consisted of the standard model of policing methods. The standard model of policing includes random patrols, rapid uniformed response, and deployment of police officials to crime sites once an incident has been reported (Ratcliffe, 2008). Research has indicated that this model continues to be prominent in the SAPS to combat crime and disorder. However, research has also shown that these traditional methods of policing are outdated and ineffective. Regardless of whether the police strategy is preventive patrols, efforts to reduce response time to citizen calls, an increase in the number of police officers, and conducting follow-up investigations, research studies have exposed a failure by the police to achieve meaningful reduction rates in crime, disorder, and civilian fear of crime (Ratcliffe, 2008).

Implementing community policing strategies

The SAPS also mentioned that a Community Policing Forum (CPF) had been established to combat crime. Community policing is usually connected with programs such as neighborhood satellite police stations, school visits, and neighborhood watches. Some key informant participants’ responses are presented below:

“We have established community patrols and neighborhood watches which all report to the Community Police Forum to assist patrol their neighborhoods” (KII: 03:01).

“We have neighborhood watches that fall under our Community Policing Forum (CPF) structure. We work hand in hand with the residents to establish these neighborhood watches as well as street communities to



patrol the streets in the area. We have also formed a partnership with security companies to assist in patrols, and the municipality as well as assisted by putting surveillance cameras in Castle Hill, which assists a lot” (KII-A: 01:04).

“We have community neighborhood watches, blue light patrols, WhatsApp groups, and street committees” (KII-A: 03:03).

According to research, establishing community safety networks that include neighborhood watches and street committees is one of the most effective ways of reducing burglary at residential premises. Consulted authors explain that neighborhood watches normally put-up prominent signs that indicate the active existence of such a vigilant program in the community. This often deters residential burglaries as it increases would-be offenders’ perception of associated risk while also aiding in the detection and apprehension of suspicious persons (Kesteren, John van, Mayhew, and Nieuwbeerta, 2000). Zinn (2010) records that the police district of Garsfontein noted a reduction of 36.5% in residential break-ins throughout the 2007/08 financial year resulting from community-centered crime prevention initiatives such as neighborhood watches. This was during a period when residential break-ins were increasing significantly throughout South Africa. The next participant also highlighted those areas that had implemented neighborhood watches and street committees experienced fewer burglaries:

“We have set up neighborhood watches and street committees in some areas. It is funny that in the areas where there are a lot of housebreakings, people do not want to come to the party and set up neighborhood watches; it is each man for himself. However, in the affluent areas, they have neighborhood watches..., proper security measures, and patrols, and people are contributing towards security patrols and staff, therefore there are few to no burglaries there. In terms of education of the public, from time to time we liaise with the councilor, especially in Westrich, monthly. We attend war rooms with the councilors and discuss issues of crime there. The community is informed through the local newspaper of the crimes which have increased, residential burglary included. We also go on the radio Zulu and inform the community. We also have a social crime prevention team that goes to the community and schools and [they] talk to the people on issues of crime in the area and try to set up neighborhood watches and street committees. There are CPF meetings monthly and the community is invited. You know, we have also written letters to the eThekweni Municipality Parks to do an environmental assessment in the area and clear the bushes there and in pathways near the houses and stuff which create easy access and pathways for suspects to flee. Also, when we bring it up, we bring it up continually. However, the council says it does not have money to clear those bushes. Until such a time something serious happens then they start acting. That is the

problem we are sitting with. It is so clear: create proper pathways, clear those bushes!” (KII-A: 06:06).

The above participant highlighted that there were efforts to communicate with and inform community members about crime prevention strategies. Stakeholders also used media platforms such as radio messages and local newspapers to get the message of vigilance and community support across. It was also apparent that the SAPS engaged different stakeholders such as Ward councilors and the municipality to do an environmental assessment of the area as they realized that the environment was not conducive for proper policing and community safety. One particular focus was to clear bushes in the area. However, these efforts were in vain due to a lack of municipal funds. Previous research has indicated that bushes provide cover for criminals as such overgrown spots could be particularly appealing to burglars to prevent them from being detected near people’s homes (Weisel, 2002).

A SAPS participant also mentioned that they had established partnerships with local security companies operating in the area. They conducted collaborative intelligence-led operations in hotspot areas and recruited informers:

“We have a partnership with some of the security companies in the area to assist us in increasing visibility, and [we also have] a Community Police Forum. Furthermore, we monitor suspicious vehicles and persons in the area. We also do awareness campaigns with the community where we warn them to be vigilant [and] not to create opportunities for criminals to exploit [them]. We encourage them to put burglar guards as well as alarm systems in their homes. We also tell them that if they are going away, they should inform their neighbors that they are going [so they can] look out for suspicious people or vehicles near the house. Moreover, we visit second-hand and pawn shops to check if they are not selling any stolen goods as they must comply with the law and not buy stolen goods. There are also stop and searches, random searches of vehicles, and even people walking around to check if they do not have any house equipment with them. Additionally, there are intelligence-led operations in hotspot areas. Lastly, we recruit informers. The informers inform us of where crime is occurring in the area and tell us if they have seen something in the community and we pay them for that information” (KII-A: 01:05).

Curbing community negligence

The participants also revealed that community members were sometimes negligent and created opportunities that criminals could exploit as they left their gates and windows open and did not put burglar guards on their windows. The community was often warned of the risk this causes through the media. Previous research has indicated that the most common method of entry by criminals is through a door or window. It is therefore imperative that community members strengthen security at these points as it can lower the likelihood of burglaries. One key informant particularly referred to social responsibility in crime prevention:



“There is a social crime prevention unit at the station which goes out to the community to do awareness and have meetings with the community just to sensitize them to be cautious when they are at home. At the station, we have discovered that at times there is carelessness among individuals as you would find that it is they that leave their doors unlocked, no burglar guards, and windows open which gives easy access for criminals. Also, this is very inviting to criminals. So, we are hoping that this eventually will have a positive impact” (KII-A: 01:03).

In consideration of all the above-mentioned responses, it is clear that the South African Police Service as well as the Community Policing Forum in the study area have implemented some viable strategies to combat burglary at residential premises. Examples of their strategies include a high police presence, stop-and-search operations, car patrols, community crime awareness programs, partnerships with local stakeholders, visits to pawn shops, and relying on informers.

The effectiveness of the SAPS to curb burglaries

However, it seemed that despite all the methods implemented in the study area to combat residential burglary, this crime continued to be a problem. This begged the question of whether these strategies were adequate. The following question was thus posed to the participants:

Are the current strategies that are used...effective in responding to the crime of burglary at residential premises? Why do you think so?

This question was posed to assess the perceived effectiveness of current strategies to address the problem of residential burglaries more effectively in the future. The participants openly admitted that current strategies had not been entirely effective, and some even mentioned improvements that would make them more effective. They had the following to say:

“No. burglaries are still occurring” (KII-A: 03:02).

“I would say they are not effective, particularly for burglary. When we refer to the statistics they are not where we want them to be” (KII-A: 01:03).

“Well, I would not say it is adequate because I believe that if it were, we would not have such a high burglary rate in the area. There is still a lot that must be done, and some of those things are beyond the police's control. For instance, job creation is a good example. As a result, the government should support any enterprises that individuals can perform, such as car washes, so that they can get food and there will be fewer burglaries” (KII-A: 01:01).

“I believe that if we had additional vehicles and manpower assigned to the station, the strategies would be more effective” (KII-A: 05:04).

“Honestly strategies can be effective. The main problem is that we can't be everywhere at once in Newlands, but we could if we had the manpower” (KII-A: 01:05).

In general, the participants thought the strategies were not effective. They believed, however, that with job creation and more manpower and vehicles allocated to the police station, the

strategies would be more effective. This confirms the concern that the SAPS do not have adequate capacity to respond to residential burglary in the area of study. The following question was asked of key informants in particular:

Does the organization have adequate capacity to respond to a burglary at residential premises...? Why do you think so?

The necessity for sufficient human resources in the South African Police Service is non-negotiable. For the SAPS to function properly and carry out its duties effectively in terms of delivering efficient services to the community, the SAPS requires sufficient human resources, particularly at the police station level. Persistent resource constraints and rising demands for service delivery will make it increasingly impossible for the SAPS to function properly. When the SAPS officials were asked if they had adequate capacity to respond to burglaries in the Newlands East policing precinct, these participants felt that there were insufficient resources at the station, particularly in terms of manpower and vehicles, to respond to burglaries in the area:

“No, there is a huge shortage of manpower at the station” (KII-A: 01:01).

“In terms of human resources here at the station, there is a great shortage of manpower. The demarcation and population in Newlands are forever increasing; however, the manpower is not increasing. I must emphasize our manpower is not coping with the [extensive] population in Newlands” (KII-A: 01:03).

“No, there is not sufficient manpower at the station. Let me draw a picture for you. There are only twenty-four detectives at the station who must investigate all the crimes occurring in the area, residential burglaries included, and there are only eighty-one operational staff, including detectives and others allocated to different units such as crime prevention, etcetera” (KII-A: 01:05).

“No, in terms of the population ratio of police [to community members], they need to balance it. Let me give you an example. At our station at one time, we had about 140 members, but people died, resigned, and people went on pension. So now we are sitting at about, I think, ninety police officers to serve this area, but at the onset, when we started, we did not have number one: Westrich low-cost housing that was a further development, two: Riverhorse Valley that is another development. There is an expansion and when you have an expansion, the population expands, the infrastructure expands, and therefore you need to expand your police and not decrease the police. You seem like now, you have the new center mall on the top there, which is policed by us, and it just opened. However, we have had numerous shopliftings, and theft of motor vehicles in and around that center. So, you need to compensate for all of that, but hey, nothing has been changed” (KII-A: 01:02).

These responses suggest that the SAPS do not have the capability and resources to fight burglaries and keep citizens' property safe. The reasons are increasing areas of police operation demarcation with limited manpower, population



growth, and the need for better-developed infrastructure. It is thus noteworthy that, regardless of geographic and operational expansions, the manpower and vehicles allocated to the police station in the study area have not increased. This finding is in harmony with that of van Zyl et al. (2003), who argue that the SAPS finds it difficult to satisfy the needs and expectations of communities and fails to protect them against burglars and armed robbers as the organization has limited personnel and resources at its disposal to respond to residential crime successfully and effectively. The SAPS has also indicated that it is trying to overcome this challenge by mobilizing communities in the fight against crime as well as encouraging them to install security alarm systems. One key informant commented as follows in this regard:

“No, shame, the area is too big for policing, and we cannot cover it. These criminals know that once a police vehicle passes during patrols it will not come back since the area is too big. That is why the SAPS always encourages communities to establish neighborhood watches and for the community to be vigilant and report any suspicious activities in the area and phone the police. It is also encouraged that those who can install alarm systems must install them and if they know that they are going on vacation for a few days they need to come and report it to the police station so that there could be frequent visits by the police to that house” (KII-A: 01:04).

In consideration of the responses associated with the current theme (i.e., the effectiveness of police operations), there is an urgent need for intervention by the government to increase the SAPS budget so that more vehicles and manpower may be deployed to local police stations that experience unexpected expansions in their areas, such as in the Newlands East policing precinct. Only then will it become possible for these overburdened law enforcement units to combat crime more effectively?

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Various strategies are in place to respond to residential burglaries in the study area. One of these strategies is the execution of the standard model of policing which includes random SAPS patrols, rapid uninformed response, the deployment of police officials to crime scenes, the recruitment of informers, intelligence-led operations in hotspot areas, and the establishment of a Community Policing Forum (CPF) which conducts awareness and preventive programs such as neighborhood mini-stations, street committees, school visits, neighborhood watches, and partnerships among different stakeholders (e.g., the SAPS, private security companies, local Ward councilors, and the Municipality). However, despite all these strategies, the high rate of residential burglaries remains a problem in the study area as none of the devised strategies are effective either singly or in combination with others. Proposals for improvement included the deployment of more SAPS manpower and vehicles. The lack of resources at the police station was viewed with considerable dissatisfaction by the participants. Furthermore, the participants believed that job

creation (particularly the advancement of small businesses) and the enhancement of community support would assist in better driving the battle against burglaries at residential premises.

Recommendations

Recommendation One: Both the literature and the participants highlighted the fact that the SAPS is often unable to perform its mandate due to limited manpower and equipment. Crimes are thus not prevented by merely noting and investigating them after the event, and investigations are often ineffective as criminals, if they are caught, are often back on the streets in no time. Criminals and burglars are intensely aware of this fact, and this serves as a powerful incentive for those who rationalize their chances of being apprehended. It is therefore highly recommended that the government pulls out all the stops to assist the SAPS in the study area by allocating more vehicles and manpower to increase police investigative capacity, and visibility, and to render investigations more effective. Given that the SAPS is responsible for preventing, combating, and investigating crime as well as for protecting and securing South Africans and their property as stipulated in the Constitution section 205(3), they need enough manpower and resources to perform their core duties effectively.

Recommendation Two: Community members are urged to take responsibility for their safety as no single entity can effectively deal with burglary at residential premises on its own. Residential burglary is a crime that requires active community participation as a critical element of a safe and secure society. Therefore, the community should be taught that fighting crime is the responsibility of every individual within the community. It is recommended that community members be encouraged to join or establish a CPF, but more particularly neighborhood watches that serve as the eyes and ears of the community. Active participation in such structures is crucial as only then will community members be mindful of their roles and responsibilities. Many will also better understand the challenges that the SAPS encounters in trying to respond to residential burglary. It is imperative that residents, young and old, view themselves as role players in the fight against crime and that they engage in joint efforts to take responsibility for building a safer community. Furthermore, it is recommended that the local SAPS top management structure and the CPF executive members encourage other members to attend all the meetings where issues regarding crime in the community are addressed. Active participation in these meetings will ensure the effectiveness of partnerships in policing.

Recommendation Three: It is recommended that the local SAPS also do foot patrols as an effective measure to minimize crime, particularly residential burglaries, as many experts believe that this kind of policing is more effective than vehicle patrols.

Recommendation Four: The local municipality needs to intervene by improving street lighting and clearing overgrown vegetation.

Recommendation Five: It is recommended that social crime prevention programs be urgently implemented in the study area since high unemployment is rife. The aim of this should be to address the socio-economic conditions that are linked to the

causes of crime in the area. These programs should integrate the efforts of law enforcement agencies, local authorities, welfare departments, and the private and business sectors. The primary focus should be on job creation for the unemployed as

governmental allowances merely perpetuate the problem of loitering. Programs should also include skills development and training for the unemployed.

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