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INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the Topic

Crime has become a major issue in the village of Shanty Town. During the past few months, there have been several reports of criminal activities at the homes of residents of Shanty Town. Some of these criminal activities range from the stealing of personal belongings to rape and death. This growing problem has attracted attention from governmental organizations such as the Police Force, agencies for crime prevention and also the ministry of national security. Many residents are aware of the situation and have also expressed their concern about this increase in crime rate in Shanty Town. Observation of the situation in Richland Park is the main factor that influenced the conduct of the study.

Problem Statement

The title of this study is “A Survey of the Effects of Crime on residents in the village of Shanty Town, Richland Park Saint Vincent.” Richland Park is a rural district found in the country of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines comprising of several villages. Shanty Town, one of these villages, is home to approximately two hundred and fifty (250) residents. It is known to be a peaceful village. However, there have been reports of several criminal activities at homes of these residents. The study seeks to ascertain what kinds of criminal activities are being committed? How often these criminal activities are occurring? Who are most affected by these criminal activities? Who commits these crimes and what solutions, if any have been put in place to solve this problem?

Educational Value

This study can be seen as one that has immense educational value. Crime is continuing to be a major problem in Saint Vincent. Gaining knowledge about the background of criminals and their criminal activities can give countless insights the reasons why these criminal activities are occurring. My study will therefore benefit Psychology, Law and Sociology Students. Government organizations such as the Ministry of National Security, The Police force and other persons who are involved in national security could also use my study to understand why the level of criminal activities is increasing. The study can also be used to develop plans and strategies to eradicate the problem.

Definitions of Terms

1. Crime: any action that is prohibited by law or a failure to act as required by law.
2. Residents of Shanty Town: People living in Shanty Town in January 2010.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In an effort to understand the effects of crime on residents of Shanty Town, a number of sources were examined. In order for one to examine the effects of crime, a definition of what crime is and what is considered to be a criminal activity becomes necessary.

According to Darrow (2007) in his book Crime: Its causes and Treatment, Crime can be defined as “an act forbidden by the law of the land, and one which is considered sufficiently serious to warrant providing penalties for its commission.” Another way in which he defines crime is ‘any illegal activity that involves breaking the law’. These definitions are both implying that it is the law itself that determines what is legal from what is illegal.

Lawson (1999) in his book Crime and Deviance suggested that any individual act being performed can be defined as crime or not-crime, but it depends on the circumstances surrounding its commission. He recognized that other factors are neglected and that those are the main factors that contribute to the illegal act. Some of these factors include the role of the law enforcement agencies and how both the victim and perpetrator contributed to that action being performed.

It was assumed that urban areas most likely retain a higher rate of criminal activities than the rural areas. This assumption was based on the fact that rural areas have a more homogeneous social structure, which is more cohesive and integrated than the urban areas. However, this assumption has gradually changed over the years. Deflem (1999) cited by Ann B. Denis (2009) *et al*, in their book ISA Handbook in Contemporary Sociology, has outlined several different types of planned criminal activities which occur in rural areas. Some of these activities includes: burglary, Con, fraud and robbery. In addition Donnermeyer (2002), in the said book, has listed some other types of crime which have been committed in rural areas. Crimes such as: theft, vandalism, trespassing and more so murder on “a small scale”, which are still occurring and are increasing in the rural areas.

Ann B. Denis (2009) *et al* has also pointed out that these criminal activities have an impact on residents who are living in that area. She pointed out that many residents will feel victimized and threatened in the location in which they are currently living. She added that many of these residents will then experience a force of globalisation and would want to migrate from that location to a place which is perceived as being safer.

But the question still remains. Why is it that rural areas have more criminal activities than urban areas? Jobes (2004) *et al*, cited in the book The ISA Handbook for contemporary sociology, has pointed out that social and cultural factors may be of more importance in the explanation of crime variations in rural communities than in urban areas. They began to say that the small size of rural communities can make them more vulnerable. Additionally, the fact that there are poorer educational facilities and fewer opportunities for employment in rural areas lead the young people living in the rural areas to turn to crime as an alternative. In light of that, crimes do vary according to the particular local; dealing with them is another questionable issue.

DATA COLLECTION SOURCES

Research Design

Applied Research will be used in carrying out this study. The study will collect data from residents of Shanty Town, Richland Park Saint Vincent on the incidence of crime and how it affects the community. Applied Research using Quantitative Methods is an appropriate method of studying the effects of Crime in Shanty Town because no qualitative data exists on the issue and the views of the residents are essential in determining the effects of Crime in the community.

Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection chosen is printed Questionnaires. A Questionnaire is a set of pre-set questions given to persons who make up the population of the study. A Questionnaire as a method of data collection is appropriate since it collects quantitative data. It is fairly easy to distribute and generalizations can also be made based on the data collected and applied in this case to residents of Shanty Town and other small villages in Saint Vincent.

A conventional questionnaire was designed to collect data from respondents. There were sixteen (16) closed-ended questions and three (3) open-ended questions. (**Appendix 1**)

Selection of Sample

Shanty Town has an approximate population of two hundred and fifty (250) persons. The population of the sample was chosen using the systematic sampling technique. Systematic Sampling is where the researchers selects every n^{th} household with 'n' being a particular number. In this study, every 4th household in Shanty Town, starting with the first house at the beginning of the village, was selected. One member of each household was asked to fill out the questionnaire, preferably an adult member of the household. A total number of eighty (80) households were selected. The sampling method systematically allowed for the village to be surveyed adequately hence, giving value to the validity and reliability of the sample size and the data collected.

Collection of Data

The study was conducted in January 2010. Three weeks in the month of January (January 4th – January 23rd) were used to collect data for the study. The questionnaires were distributed to residents in Shanty Town and the respondents were given three (3) days to complete the questionnaires and return them to the researcher.

Analysis and Presentation of Data

The data will be analyzed using graphic and tabular methods. Descriptive statistics will also be used in analyzing and presenting the data.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Figure 1: A Column Graph showing the different Crimes committed in Shanty Town

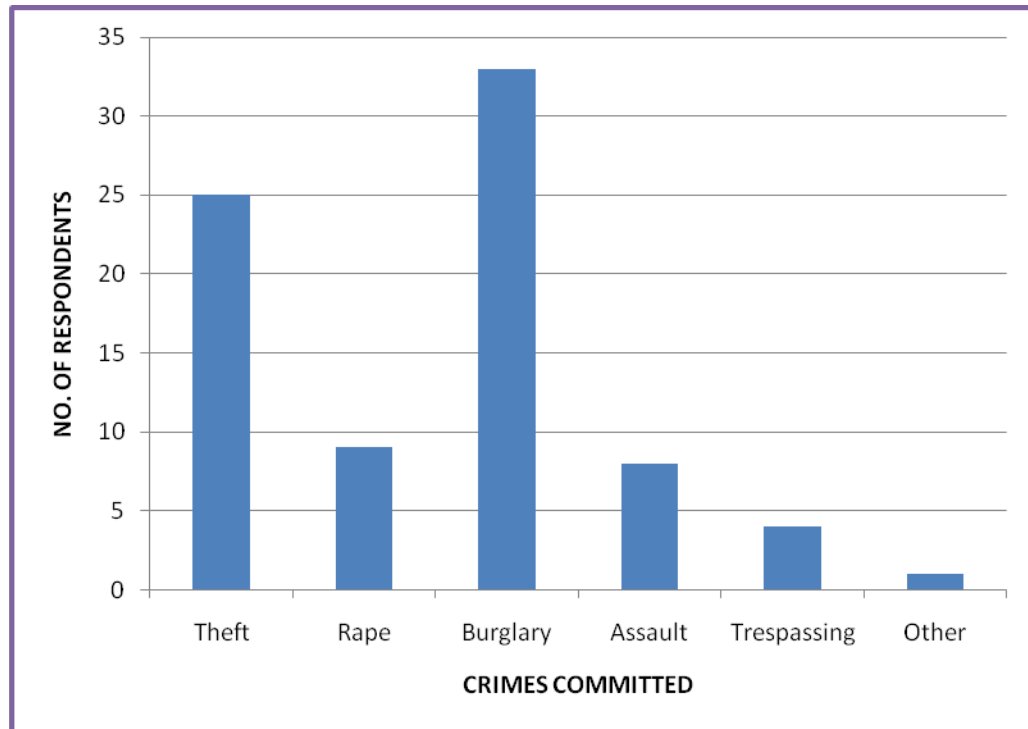


Figure 1 is a column graph that shows the number of residents who selected the type of crime that is mainly committed in the village of Shanty Town. It can be seen that thirty-three (33) respondents indicated burglary as the main crime committed while nine (9) respondents indicated rape as the main one. Theft can be seen as the second highest crime committed since twenty-five (25) respondents indicated this.

Figure 2: A Pie Chart illustrating the Causes of Crimes in Shanty Town

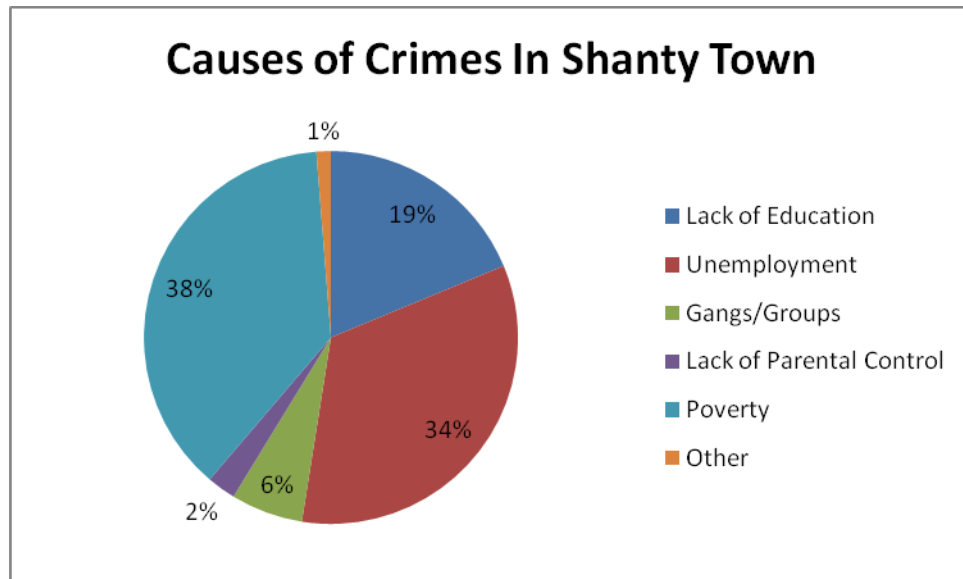


Figure 2 is a pie chart which shows the percentage of residents who selected the different causes of crimes. The main cause of crime in Shanty Town was Poverty which was indicated by 38% of the respondents, while Unemployment, the second highest, was indicated by 34%. Causes such as Gangs/Groups and Lack of parental control were indicated as the main cause by only 6% and 2% respectively of the total respondents.

Table 1: A Table indicating the types of Household Criminal Come From

Question Type of family type/household the criminals come from	RESPONSES	
	Amount	%
Single Parent	37	46%
Nuclear	12	15%
Extended	06	08%
Sibling Household	25	31%

The Table shows the types of household criminal live in. Single Parent and Sibling family households are the two major types of household that criminals live in. The table shows that nuclear families, which was indicated by twelve out of eighty respondents, and extended families, which was indicated by only six out of eighty respondents, produce criminal offenders.

Figure 3: A Bar Graph showing the effects of Crime in Shanty Town

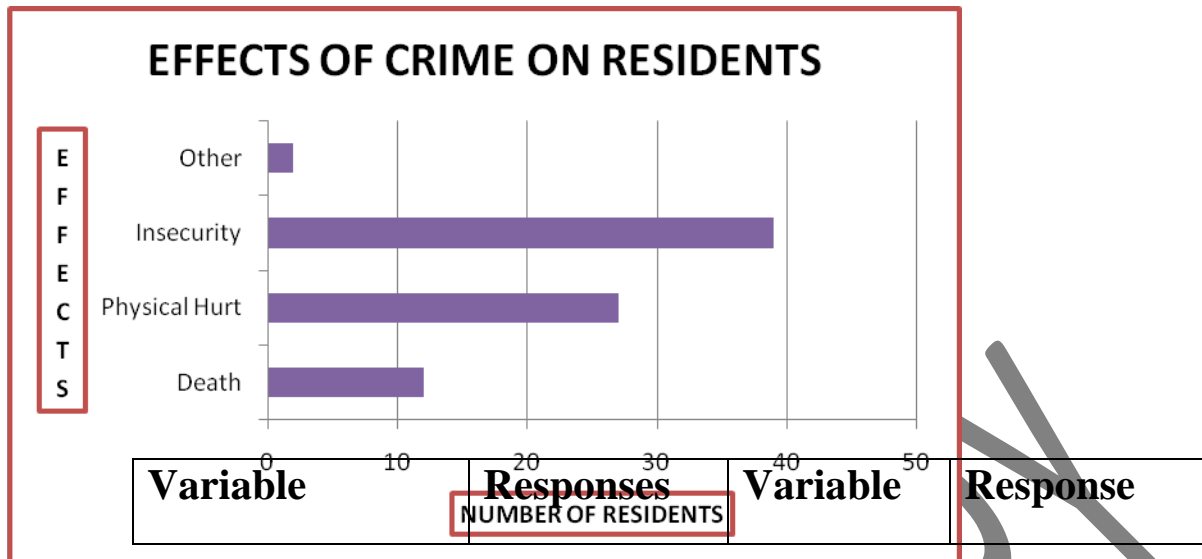


Figure 3 is a bar graph that shows the effects that crime has on residents in Shanty Town. Out of the eighty respondents that participated in the survey, thirty-nine (39) of them indicated that the major effect that crime has on them is the feeling of insecurity. Others felt that physical hurt is one of major effect of crime which was indicated by twenty-seven (27) respondents. Effects such as Death only saw twelve (12) indications and only two (2) persons indicated other effects.

Table 2: A table showing the demographic Data on Respondents

	No.= 80			No. =80	
	T	%		T	%
<u>Age Group</u>			<u>Gender</u>		
Under 20	10	12.5	Male	30	37
21 – 30	25	31			
31 – 40	20	25	Female	50	62
41 – 50	15	19			
Over 50	10	12.5			

Table 2 shows the Demographic Data of respondents. This includes the age group and sex of the respondents who have answered the questionnaires.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be deduced that in Shanty Town the population is mostly a youthful one. Out of eighty (80) persons questioned, 12.5% of them were under 20 years old. Residents in the age group of 21-30 make up 31% of the population and 25% make up the 31-40 age group. 19% of the population is between the ages of 41 – 50 years old while the oldest range of residents (over 50 years) represents only 12.5% of the total population.

The majority of crimes committed in Shanty Town are burglary and theft which was indicated by thirty-three (33) and twenty-five (25) respondents respectively. This is also evident from the fact that quite a large amount of residents have burglar bars at their doors and windows. There were nine (9) respondents who selected Rape as a crime committed while eight persons (8) selected Assault. Only four persons indicated that Trespassing was one of the main crimes committed in Shanty Town and one respondent selected “Other” as a type of crime.

When questioned about the type of household that the criminals would originate from 46% of the respondents indicated that they come from Single-parent families. 25% persons indicated that criminals would come from a nuclear type of family while 21% persons said Sibling Household. Few persons indicated that criminals would come from an Extended family type which was only 8% of the total respondents. It is quite evident from the study that the family household that does not have two or more parental figures are the ones where criminals originate.

According to the findings, the main causes of crime that are committed in Shanty Town are poverty and unemployment. Poverty, which was indicated by 38% of the respondents, is the main cause of crime. Unemployment is the second highest, which was indicated by 38%. It can be deduced that these criminals are very poor and may not have the necessary means to sustain life due to the fact that they are unemployed and so commit crimes.

When asked about the effects that crime may have on residents in Shanty Town, thirty-nine (39) persons indicated that they feel insecure in the location in which they are living. Twenty-seven (27) persons indicated that they have been physically hurt as a result of criminal activities committed while twelve persons indicated that death is a major effect that crime has on residents in Shanty Town.

Residents were asked if they would leave the community and move to a safer place to live because of the level of criminal activities committed in Shanty Town. 79% of those residents said that they would migrate while the remaining 21% said that they would stay.

On examining the responses made to the question “What do you think the residents of Shanty Town can do to help reduce crime in their community?” Some respondents said that they would purchase more burglar bars and place them onto their windows and doors along with locks. Some said that they would be more cautious with their houses, their property and also their surroundings. Others said that they can establish a neighbour watch system that would monitor criminal activities during

the night and day when most crimes are being committed. In response to what they think the Government can do to curb the issue of crime in Shanty Town, many respondents indicated that they can establish a new police station within the community, have guards and watchmen. Some indicated that they can implement fines on criminals who are caught committing crimes while others felt that they should be jailed.

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

My research indicated that Shanty Town, a rural area, had an increase in criminal activities being committed on residents. This supported Lawson (1999) who assumed that criminal activities in rural areas would increase over a number of years. Shanty Town was known to be a peaceful and non-violent community, however during recent times there has been an increase in the occurrence of criminal activities in Shanty Town.

In addition, my research indicated that the majority of the crimes being committed in village of Shanty Town are burglary and theft as was said by Deflem (1999). The other types of crimes being committed are rape and assault. Donnermeyer (2002) also indicated that these crimes are just some of the different crimes that will be committed in rural areas. Others that he mentioned are vandalism, trespassing and more so murder on “a small scale”.

Crime has a negative effect on the residents in Shanty Town. Many residents would have suffered traumatic experiences as a result of criminal activities. From my research, it was indicated by the majority of respondents that they feel victimized and feel insecure in the area that they are living in because of the level of criminal activities being committed in that area. This is because they are uncertain as to when crime will occur. Some residents are very concerned about whether or not they will be affected by crime and how it will affect their immediate family members. This supported Denis (2009) who did pointed out that many residents will feel victimized and threatened in the location in which they are currently living and that they would experience a force of globalisation and would then migrate. Additionally, my research supported the latter part of that point. The majority of residents in Shanty Town did indicate that they are thinking about migrating from the area that they are living in due to the high level of criminal activities occurring and so would migrate to an urban area or another state which is seen as a safer place to live.

Denis (2009) also indicated in her book that residents will also feel threatened. My research also indicated that not only do these residents feel insecure but they are physically hurt. They are physically hurt when they try to protect their property. It can then be assumed that criminals, while entering the homes of residents to steal their personal belongings, physically hurt the residents when they try to protect their belongings from being stolen by these criminals.

Jobes et al (2004) pointed out that social and cultural factor can explain why these criminal activities are being committed. My research found that poverty, unemployment and lack of education are the three main factors of why crimes are committed in Shanty Town. This information can be seen as supportive of the point made by Jobes et al (2004).

Jobes et al (2004) also stated that poorer educational facilities and fewer opportunities for employment in the rural areas lead the young people living in the rural areas to turn to crime as an alternative. However, my findings do not support this view. This is because not only do the village of Shanty Town have nearby educational facilities that are of high standards such as Mountain View Adventist Academy and Richland Park Primary School, but there are many jobs available that

provide employment for residents living in Shanty Town like at the community centre, health clinic and all the schools. Some possible reasons why criminals still persist in committed criminal activities could be that they are lazy and chose not to work for what they want. They prefer to reap the benefits of other peoples work rather than getting paid after they have worked, the “easy living”. In addition, they also dislike going to and performing at school because they feel as if the demands and commitment that education requires are not worth it in the long run.

Other social and cultural factors that could explain the causes of crime are the type of household that these criminals originate from. My research indicated that most crimes being committed are committed by persons who come from single parent and sibling household families. There are the ones who are more likely to be poor persons since the two parental figures are not there to provide not only financial support but moral support – crime. This view was also supported by Jobes et al (2004) when they mentioned that these factors may influence someone to commit a crime. Also, some of these criminals who are living alone are not going to school and so may not have an education which is one of the key factors in getting a job.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study was a survey of the effects of crime on residents of Shanty town; Richland Park Saint Vincent. It sought to ascertain what kinds of criminal activities were being committed in Shanty Town, how often these criminal activities are occurring, who are most affected by these criminal activities, who commits these crimes and what solutions have been put in place to solve this problem. Based on the findings it can be concluded that there is a high level of criminal activities in the small community of Shanty Town; Richland Park, Saint Vincent. These criminal activities have a negative effect on the residents living there. Some of effects include physical hurt, loss of personal belongings, death and insecurity. The effects also contribute to the migration of these residents from an area which is seen as unsafe (their current location) to a place which is much safe (an urban area or another state). Some of the factors that contribute to crimes being committed by criminals are social and cultural factors such as the type of family household that these criminals come from, poverty, unemployment and a lack of education.

Limitations

Data collection was limited to administering questionnaires. Few observations were made, since the type of problem being investigated did not allow much observation to take place. The sample size is somewhat small and the findings apply only to the community of Shanty Town in Richland Park, St. Vincent and cannot be generalized to all rural communities across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines since the dynamics of small communities would not be the same everywhere. Shanty Town was used mainly because it was a growing community and it was known to be a peaceful place. However, over time, criminal activities and violence were out bursting significantly. Difficulty was experienced in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires since residents were most likely to be found on late afternoons when they are at home at which time they would be occupied with domestic chores and other affairs. Hence, the respondents took more time to answer and return the questionnaires. Another limitation is the validity of the information given from the respondents. Some respondents may not have given accurate answers because they probably feel it is best not to say anything. This would also affect the validity of the results.

Recommendations

In minimizing the negative effect that residents of Shanty town experience from criminal activities, the following recommendations were made:

1. According to the type of crime being committed, instead of imprisonment as a form of punishment, criminal offenders should be counseled and educated about the effects that criminal activities may have on residents. A trained counselor would be recruited to conduct counseling sessions. These sessions are conducted twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays for 2 hours from 4 – 6 pm. The counseling will take place at the Richland Park Government School in a small private classroom. Group counseling would also be offered once a week on Fridays from 4 - 6 pm. The counseling sessions will end depending on the how mentally healthy the criminal is.
2. Education about how to protect yourself from crime for the residents of Shanty Town. This includes safeguarding their personal belonging and their property. The community board can establish an annual crime awareness month campaign on crime and crime prevention. In this campaign, the community can come together at the Shanty Town Community Centre to listen to exciting lectures from special speakers who will be lecturing on crime and how to protect themselves from any criminal who may try to commit criminal activities. Also, ministers and other government representatives can come in and listen to what the community members have to say. Residents of Shanty Town should be given an opportunity to voice their opinions about what they are experiencing as a community and assist in whatever way they can to minimize the negative effects that the residents encounter.
3. High Fines and penalties for criminal activities committed by criminals especially when it involves residents and their personal belongings can be used when imprisonment is not practical.
4. The Government of Saint Vincent should implement a program that will provide employment to more persons who are unemployed and are more likely to commit criminal offences.
5. The implementation of a neighborhood watch scheme in Shanty town in conjunction with the district police for the Marriaqua Area. A neighborhood-watch scheme can incorporate the use of several security guards who will be patrolling the neighborhood at nights when criminal activity are more likely to occur. In addition, it can be a scheme that involves each neighbor looking out for each other and assisting in whatever way when a criminal tries to commit any crime.

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APPENDICES**Appendix # 1**

What gender are you? Male Female

What age group are you in?

- Under 20 years 21 - 30 years
 31 –40 years 41-50 years
 Over 50 years

How long have you been living in Shanty Town?

- 0-6 months 1 year – 5 years
 6 months – 1year 5 years and over

Do you think there is crime in Shanty Town? Yes No

In your opinion, is crime rate in Shanty Town increasing or decreasing?

- Increasing Decreasing

From what age group do you think the criminals in Shanty Town mostly come from?

- 13 and under 15 – 18 years
 13 – 15 years 18 years and older

Who are mostly likely to be the criminal offenders in your community?

- Males Females

Which type of crime is mostly committed in the community?

- Theft Rape Burglary Assault
 Trespassing Other

If you have chosen 'Other', give two (2) examples of crimes being committed in your community

At which time of the day are the crimes in your community mainly committed?

- Morning Afternoon
 Evening Late nights

From which family type do you think the offenders/criminals are mainly from?

- Single parent Nuclear Family
 Extended Sibling Household

What do you think is the main cause of crime in Shanty Town?

- Lack of Education Lack of Parental Control
 Unemployment Poverty
 Gangs/Groups Other _____

What is the main consequence of crime in Shanty Town?

- Death Feeling of Insecurity
 Physical Hurt Other _____

Would you report a crime to the police, whether or not it involved you?

- Yes No

If yes please move on to the next question. If not, then please continue from the following question.

How effective is the police force in the fight against crime?

- Not Effective Effective Very Effective

Would you consider leaving the community of Shanty Town and move to a safer community due to the level of criminal activities that are being committed on residents? Yes No

What do you think the residents of Shanty Town can do to help reduce crime in their community?

What do you think the Government can do to curb the issue of crime in Shanty Town?

- Make laws for harsher penalties with crime related offences
- Train the police on crime prevention
- Organize counseling session for criminals
- Provide Employment
- Other _____

What are some of the things that your community members have put in place to minimize the crime rate in Shanty Town?
