

THE 10th UN CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION
OF CRIME & THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS
THE PROSPECTIVE OF THE CID OF THE GHANA
POLICE SERVICE

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Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

What used to be criminal activities enclosed in individual nations have now turned out to be structured in such a way that no one nation can claim to handle them fully without recourse to soliciting help from another country far or near. Individual persons have suffered from criminal activities of others in countries other than theirs; no country can be said to be independent so far as criminal activities are concerned. Within the past year the German Police had had to make over 50 requests from Ghana Police through Interpol network. These requests ranged from criminal checks on Ghanaians arrested in Germany for one offence or the other. The Canadian Police called for assistance in murder cases. The US and UK police sought

for the extradition of two Ghanaians for drug offence and rape respectively. These were granted and the Ghanaians were sent to face the law.

La Cote d'Ivoire over the past year reported the theft through armed robbery of over two hundred assorted vehicles. Out of these about 25 have been located in the streets of Ghana and turned over to Interpol Abidjan to be given back to their respective owners. There are six vehicles waiting re-shipping to Interpol Wiesbaden [Germany] to be given back to the owners.

Meanwhile, within the past two years, the Ghana Police Service had had to grapple with a soaring wave of crime quite unique; the incidence of murders in peoples home during armed robbery or in some cases under unexplained circumstances. Then came the gruesome murders of women under circumstances that we are yet to explain.

In the midst of all these criminal activities., it looked as if the Ghana Police Service is yet to find solution to the crime. It is in the light of this that we see this congress as opportune for us to present our experience while learning of innovations of other contributors at this congress. The emergence of new crime problems like Credit Card fraud, Computer fraud, Money laundering, etc., which are all related to social and technological advancement - being crimes which a developing country like ours - lack adequate resources to cope with. The incidence of armed robbery, rape, drug

trafficking and what appeared to be a serial Willing of women poses a real challenge to the Criminal Investigation Department [CID] of the Ghana Police Service.

The CID has the onerous task of unravelling these mysteries surrounding the murders and armed robberies. This called for rethinking as a result of which a few structural changes have been initiated. This includes the formation of Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU), the Scene of Crime Investigation Team (ISCIT) and various Interrogation Teams (IT).

These new structures have come about as a result of rather lack of thorough investigations into serious cases like murder,, thus creating the impression that even if one dared to commit an offence, he was not likely to be noticed so the action should be perpetuated.

It is now our belief that even if we are unable to prevent a crime from occurring,. at least the criminals should be arrested and brought to book after a thorough and painstaking investigation. - This will in the long run serve as a deterrent to criminal activities.

It may interest you to note that since these structures were put in place some of these so-called mysterious murders are being demystified.

We are optimistic that with the current intelligence report/data being gathered about the operations of the criminals,, we should be able to at least be at par with the modus of the criminals if not ahead of them.

Besides these new creations intensified and accountable patrols have been initiated involving Senior Officers and we must say that this is yielding dividend. It is disturbing to note that clues are leading to linkages in neighboring countries concerning some of these murders.

We must equally concede that it has not been very easy because we have tried to put behind us the problem of lack of adequate human resources,, logistics and equipment for effective operation. In a few occasions we have had to rely on virtually the same personnel for long hours of operational duties because there are not enough. Most of these few personnel available need re-orientation and training on modern trends of investigation and shaping of attitudes.

It is our hope that as we get the facilities., retain and reorient our men and begin to unravel the mysteries of the crimes, the public will also change its attitude and be Willing to give us the needed information for effective work.

We are also of the opinion that some churches and associations as well as social clubs are being used as sanctuaries for criminals -and criminal

activities. We shall implore all and sundry to help educate the members of these clubs and churches to expose such activities.

Our laws permit us to keep suspects for not more than 48 hours without putting them before a court of competence jurisdiction. The new instruction is that as much as possible, suspects be released on enquiry bail. The only ones usually kept and sent to court within the 48 hours are usually suspects in drug, murder and armed robbery cases.

Provisions are 'usually made for feeding of suspects in custody. It must be said here that the Ghana's Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice [CHRAJ] do periodic inspection of cells to ensure that appropriate care is being taken of them. Their recommendations are usually adhered to.

One major problem is that almost all our police cells were built during the independence era. So they may not meet the required standard but we are doing our best to maintain them in terms of basic hygienic condition.

Mr. Chairman.

Yours Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To us, the most challenging phenomenon of these scenarios is how to ensure international co-operation in combating transnational crimes. Will other countries allow a team of investigators to collaborate with their investigators to break down international syndicates? Can countries especially third world countries afford sending such a team if the need arises?

Our contention is that, sometimes it is not so much of lack of requisite knowledge to tackle a particular crime or the other. but sometimes it is a pure case of lack of resources to deal promptly with a criminal or his activities. In a forum like this. we believe privileged nations could go a step further by putting some of their resources at the disposal of their less privileged counterparts to deal with these criminals wherever they find themselves. We need a concerted effort to close in on the criminals no matter where they may find themselves.

At this stage, I take opportunity on behalf of the Ghana Government to express my sincerest thanks to the government of USA for the immense assistance they have initiated for the CID. Before I left Ghana for this Congress, a training programme [ICITAP] has been initiated for the training of over eighty [80] personnel of the CID in areas of Basic Investigations, Sex Crimes and Drug Trafficking.

This will justify the saying that the world is a "global village". Let us prove it in the area of crime and justice in the 21st century. This should be the challenge ahead of us.

Thanks.

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TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS**

**REFORMING THE OFFENDER: GHANA'S EXPERIENCE
BY ADP W. K. ASIEDU**

1. INTRODUCTION:

Ghana has operated the formal penal system since 1841. Various philosophies and approaches prevailed over the period. Since independence in 1951 however, Ghana's penal system of some forty-three prisons and the juvenile facility, the Ghana Borstal institute has been guided by the great objective of reforming the offender with the view of rehabilitating him.

All over the world, this is the prevailing philosophy. Various measures and programmes have been instituted and adopted to realise this lofty aim of equipping the offender with new values and skills to enable him function as a useful, lawabiding member of society.

These mechanisms generally cover three aspects of the criminal justice process; pre-imprisonment, imprisonment and post-imprisonment. Ghana's experience has largely been confined to the treatment of offenders serving custodial sentences as pre-imprisonment and post-imprisonment measures and programmes do not virtually exist.

2. AIM:

This presentation aims at examining the measures and programmes, reforming the offender in Ghana and whether the measures are adequate and thereby capable of achieving the objectives of the reformation process. The evaluation of these mechanisms in practice would hopefully reveal their value and the soundness of Ghana's direction. Where there are shortcomings suggestions and recommendations would be made.

3. PRE-IMPRISONMENT PHASE:

Ghana has no measures or programmes for the offender who has not yet been prosecuted. NO such mechanisms exist at the trial stage either. This is in sharp contrast to what obtains elsewhere, especially in developed countries. Such countries operate diversionary measures like probation. many programmes spring

from probationary measures and they vary from country to country. For instance Japan gives the public prosecutor discretionary power to determine which offender to prosecute, and which offender to divert from the trial process and therefore admit to probation in order to give the offender a chance at reforming.

For many countries, the trial process itself dispenses measures like community service, suspended sentences, work release, restitution, alongside probation so long as any measure does not lead to imprisonment. The objective is that imprisonment of the offender, at this stage and in the particular circumstance must be avoided as the prison environment makes it more difficult for the offender to reform.

In Ghana, though probation reports on juveniles are written and presented in court by social workers, they are only relevant for aiding the courts in the determination of conviction and sentencing and not a programme for avoiding imprisonment.

FINES

Fines and bonds have been the only traditional alternative to imprisonment in Ghana. Attempts made at introducing Community Service as envisaged under the Public Tribunal law. (PNDCL 78) now replaced, were stillborn. The Courts Act (Act 459) 1993 introduces restitution as an alternative. This is seen as a cross between imprisonment and the payment of a fine. It is however dearly limited and could be abused as a tool for the rescue of the affluent. By operation of section 35 of the Act, where an accused person, after conviction for causing economic loss, harm or damage to the state or any state agency, is willing and able to pay compensation or make restitution and reparation, the court may instead of passing sentence on him, make an order for him to pay compensation, make restitution, or make reparation.

BONDS

A frequently used device in misdemeanour cases is the bond. This is usually upon the intervention of the communal heads. The accused persons are bonded over to be of good behaviour for periods normally not exceeding one year. If during the period the accused is found guilty of breaching the bond, he is given a prison term for the period he was expected to observe the bond.

4. IMPRISONMENT AND REFORMATION

Ghana's reformation package for the offender is bed-rocked A the prison. Here various mechanisms and treatment programmes have been established and adopted to maintain the safe custody and welfare of

prisoners and whenever practicable to undertake the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners - section 1 of the Prisons Service Degree, NRCD 46, 1972.

By statute the Prisons Service is mandated to reform the offender who is incarcerated with a view to rehabilitating him. Obviously the former is a proper function of the Service. Rehabilitation, which understandably is a function in society and after incarceration, cannot be legitimately pursued by the Prisons Service. It is a fit and proper role for those concerned with the post-release phase of the odyssey of the offender.

MECHANISMS FOR REFORMATION

Criminal justice systems have different packages for the reformation of the incarcerated. They are sometimes country specific. Generally however, and this is a trend set by the advanced countries and championed by a liberal system like the Massachusetts Department of Corrections, programmes have been specifically tailored to treat particular offenders.

Ghana's idea of treatment of offenders as a means of reforming them, is a combination of formal and informal education, technical and vocational training in the walled prisons and agricultural training in the camp prisons. Strangely this combination constitutes the bedrock of the Massachusetts package for carrying out its mission of promoting "public safety by imprisoning convicted felons while providing opportunities for rehabilitation through a structured reintegration model"

THE JUVENILE SYSTEM.

The same approach has been adopted in the treatment of the inmates of the Borstal Institution. This facility houses young offenders who are not older than seventeen years. The dual themes of reformation and rehabilitation are embodied in the charter of the institution; "training for citizenship and a concern that the young and careless should be saved from a wasted life of crime".

The juveniles are for four years given formal education by prison officers who are professionally certified teachers. They are prepared for national examinations. There is an option for trade training and well-equipped workshops are provided for practical training. The inmates who opt for technical training are prepared for trade certification tests at the national level.

After serving the mandated years, no criminal records are kept on the former inmates of the Borstal institute. It is an offence to refer to the criminal record of these juveniles for any purpose. This is very important for their reintegration into society. As a result, a lot of former inmates occupy responsible economic and social positions in the country.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

The Industrial Unit of the Service carries out regular inspection and maintenance of its physical infrastructure. The Health Unit has responsibility for the maintenance of hygienic conditions.

The Ghana Prisons Service operates in an environment of close monitoring of its activities. As part of the Security Services of the country, the National Security Council, chaired by the President of the Republic, keeps an eagle eye on the activities of the Service. So does the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and the Interior.

The Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice has the constitutional duty of ensuring that the prisons of Ghana are managed in the best interest of prisoners and the society as a whole. All these check-mechanisms ensure that prisoners are treated humanely. We believe creating the right physical environment sets the right atmosphere for reformation.

The Government of Ghana, mindful of its constitutional obligations and the benefits of sound penal administration, has set up the Prisons Service Council for ensuring that the Prison Service performs its role efficiently.

The Prisons Service Council advises the President of the Republic on matters of policy relating to the organisation and maintenance of the penal system in Ghana. The Council appoints Prisons Regional Committees to advise the Council and the Director General on any matter relating to the administration of prisons in the region.

Regional Prisons Committees in turn appoint welfare committees for each prison. Each welfare committee consists of two or more persons and excludes the medical officer of the prison. The committee visits the prison at least twice a month to inspect all wards, cells, yards, solitary cells, kitchens, wash-rooms, toilets and every other part of the prison and to hear the complaints of the prisoners and to inspect the registers, books and records of the prison. Additionally, the Regional Prisons Committee visits the prisons in the region to inspect the facilities and records.

Giving prisoners sufficient quantities of good quality food ensures the health and welfare of prisoners. special diets are given to particular prisoners the medical officer recommends. Generally prisoners are allowed to supplement their diet by making their own arrangements, provided they go through the proper channels.

The prison authorities supply sufficient quantities of clothing, soap, bedding and other necessities to maintain the decency, cleanliness and good health of prisoners. The prisoners can arrange for the supply of special items of toiletries and have unrestricted chance to perform their toiletries.

Prisoners in Ghana have unlimited opportunity to perform exercises and to engage in games like volleyball, basketball, tug of war, football and table tennis. They also play indoor games like ludu, playing cards, draught, chess, scrabble and locally invented ones.

Officers keep a close eye on the health of prisoners as the death of a prisoner can have adverse consequences for the service. In this regard, every effort is made to procure prescribed drugs for every sick prisoner and the service bears the cost of any kind of surgery the prisoner has to undergo.

These facilities are maintained even if the prisoner is undergoing punishment for breach of prison regulations.

COMMUNICATION

Every convict prisoner is entitled to write and receive mail once every two weeks. Special circumstances would warrant an increase. Non-sentenced prisoners are not limited in the number of mail they can send or receive.

All categories of prisoners have right to unlimited correspondence with their legal advisers, the Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice and their religious advisers. These rights are entrenched and are without prejudice to any infraction of prison regulations.

The Department of Social Welfare and Community Development has welfare officers posted to the various prisons to help provide for the welfare needs of the inmates, in particular helping them seek redress at the courts and maintaining links with the families.

VISITS

While non-sentenced prisoners are entitled to visits at all reasonable times, the convict is limited to a visit once a fortnight except when he has a medical problem. In such situation the number of visits could be increased. Visits by his legal adviser are not limited.

At all times prisoners are allowed to receive food, provisions and medical supplies from their families, friends, benevolent societies and philanthropists.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

There is freedom of worship at the prisons; Ministers of all faiths are permitted to visit their adherents in prison. This is also an entrenched right. The administration does not interfere with religion and is conscious of its relevance to reformation. Religious leaders are encouraged to offer moral and religious instruction during their visits. Religious instruction is an important means of giving positive belief systems and values to the prisoner and thus helping him to reform. The Service has a Chaplaincy manned by ordained priests.

Generally prisons in Ghana are safe and clean. Escape rate in the same year was 0.026%. Given the state of the economy, the utmost is done to make life comfortable for the inmates. The feeding is adequate. Health care is provided by the state with a low mortality rate. The 1996 figure was 0.028 %.

With the strict supervision of the powerful organs of state and various interests, high standards are maintained.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

The major focus of the treatment programmes is education. By 1967, the Service had established schools for the inmates at all the central prisons, which hold the long-term prisoners who stand to benefit from long-term schemes like education. Libraries were also established in some of the prisons.

Following the recommendations of the Asafo-Adjei Commission in 1967, the Service intensified its efforts by recruiting more qualified teachers to undertake the urgent task of educating the mass of illiterate inmates.

Ghana has a large population of illiterates. This is naturally reflected in the prison population. It has long been felt that ignorance prevents a large number of the incarcerated from presenting their cases properly. Lack of education makes them largely unemployable. Giving them the chance of literacy, is a great tool of reformation as

education helps to broaden their outlook, gives them confidence and equips them to reintegrate properly on release.

An examination of the educational background of inmates in a given year confirms the startling situation. Although recent statistics are not available, it is safe to assume that the situation is unchanged.

TABLE A:

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF CONVICT PRISONERS, 1990.

<i>Illiterates</i>	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Technical</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Post - Graduates</i>
48%	39%	8%	3%	1.5%	0.5%

The Service has adopted measures to enable illiterate prisoners to learn to read and write and to afford teaching in preparation for advanced studies, to prisoners who may so desire.

Prisoners are permitted to engage in studying for self-improvement and are provided books and stationery by benefactors like the churches and the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education, which has extended its national programme to the prisons. The Service endeavours to provide books and materials. Prisoners are encouraged to prepare and sit for national examinations.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Vocational training, another component of the treatment package is backed Q Section 41 of NRC 46, 1972. The Prisons Service is specifically charged to " establish in every prison courses of training and instruction assigned to teach simple trades, skills and crafts to prisoners who may benefit from such training." The aim is to equip the prisoners with employable skills.

Vocational training is carried out in the walled prisons. These are the maximum and medium facilities. Major industries exist in the central prisons. Trades which are taught include: carpentry and joinery, cane and basket weaving, black-smithing, masonry shoemaking and repairing, tailoring and dress-making, textile-manufacturing ceramics, automobile repairing, electrical and electronic goods repairing. The Service relies exclusively on specialist prison officers for trade instruction and supervision of the industries.

Trade training is in the form of theoretical instruction and practical experience in the workshop or on the field where the inmates serve as apprentices.

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING

An off-shoot of working on the farms, agricultural training, is the Most popular activity in the prisons. Almost all prisoners have rural backgrounds and can easily cultivate crops and generally imbibe modern farming methods easily. The same approach - learning on the job - is applied in the fishing camps where prisoners fish alongside of officers.

UTILISATION OF PRISON LABOUR

Prison labour is used in two ways in Ghana. Prisoners are generally hired out for physical labour on farms and in industry. Skills are not required and the objective is to raise income for the state. For purposes of Taking, they are utilized on outdoor contracts especially for building construction. Prisoners are placed on the field and work alongside the officers on such projects. They acquire on the job-training skills.

Contracts are also taken for the manufacture of various items inside the prison, for instance, furniture and cabinets, tool, garment and baskets. Prisoners who already have skills are exposed to the practical side of their training. income generated through prison labour is distributed according to Government Policy 35% goes into Government chest; 30% goes into meeting the welfare needs of the inmates while 35% is given out to inmates as income.

In Ghana the problem is not getting prisoners to work. The issue is getting work for the prisoner.

EARLY RELEASE SYSTEM AS TOOL FOR REFORMATION

Ghana, like other countries operate an early release system in the belief that prisoners who have by conduct and industry shown signs of reformation, would use tile early release opportunities to reintegrate positively into society.

Early Release in Ghana is usually by the Remission System. Amnesty which is all annual affair and Medical Release are used in exceptional circumstances. Pardon is a rarity.

REMISSION

A prisoner serving a sentence of six weeks or more may by steady industry and good conduct earn a remission not exceeding one-third of his sentence. Some categories of prisoners do not enjoy remission; these are those:

- a) Serving a sentence of imprisonment for life
- b) Committed to prison for debt or
- c) Committed to prison for contempt of court
- d) Detained during the pleasure of the Head of state

(This covers offenders who were found to be mentally ill at the time of committing the offence. They are kept in custody while undergoing treatment and depending on their response to treatment, they may be asked to serve their term, or be released from custody).

AMNESTY

The Head of in exercise of his prerogative of mercy releases prisoners annually. Since 1996 the following criteria have governed the grant of amnesty:

a) **PRISONERS SENTENCED TO DEATH**

A convict on death row shall normally serve at least ten (10) years before his sentence is commuted to life imprisonment.

b) **PRISONERS SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT**

A person sentenced to life imprisonment shall normally serve a minimum of ten (10) years before the sentence is commuted to a definite term of twenty (20) years.

c) **PRISONERS SERVING THE PRESIDENT'S PLEASURE**

Prisoners serving the President's pleasure who are certified to be fit for re-integration into society should have served at least fifteen (15) years before being released.

d) **OTHER CONVICTS IN PRISON**

- i. Second and third offenders serving prison sentences are not to be considered for any remission of sentence.
 - ii. First offenders serving sentences of over twenty {20} years and have served at least seven U) years shall have their sentences reduced to ten (10) years.
 - iii. First offenders serving sentences of ten {10} years and not more than twenty {20} years and who have served more than one third of their sentences without remission shall have their sentences reduced by half except in cases of narcotic drug offenders, robbery or rape.
 - iv. First offenders serving sentences of less than ten {10} years and who have served one third of their sentences shall be released except those serving sentences for narcotic drug offences, robbery or rape.
- e) **RELEASE OF SICK PRISONERS ON RECOMMENDATION OF SPECIAL MEDICAL BOARD**
- I. Prisoners who are seriously ill, irrespective of age whose continued imprisonment will be detrimental to their lives may be released on the recommendation of a Medical Board.
 - II. Prisoners aged sixty (60) years and above shall on the recommendation of a Medical Board, be released on Health and Compassionate grounds.
- f) **PERSONS SERVING ADDITIONAL CUSTODIAL SENTENCES DUE TO THEIR INABILITY TO PAY FINES IMPOSED**
- Petitions from prisoners who were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in addition to fines, in default of which payment of additional prison terms were imposed, must have their cases examined and determined on individual basis.

PAROLE

The place of parole in the penal system has been appreciated in Ghana and the constitution of 1992 enjoins the Prisons Service Council in Article 208 to provide for its introduction. A bill for parole is under consideration in Parliament.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMMES

No studies have been carried out as to the effectiveness of Ghana's treatment programmes. For instance no one can tell if the early release package has had an impact on reformation. In the absence of other objective measurements of the impact of the process of reformation carried out by the prisons, we are left with the recidivism rate as the barometer for testing the effectiveness of our methods,

Tables B and C show the recidivism rate for two years. The 1992 rate of 9.2% rose to 14.1 in 1996.

TABLE B
APES OF OFFENDERS 1992.

Quarter	First Offender	Second Offender	Recidivists	Total
First	6389	1494	704	8587
Second	6119	1240	854	8213
Third	6248	1249	724	8221
Fourth	5985	1321	749	8055
Total	24741	5304	3031	33071
Percentage	74.8	16.0	9.1	100

TABLE C
TYPES OF OFFENDERS, 1996.

	First Offender	Second Offender	Recidivists	Total
	6991	1904	1456	10351
Percentages	61.5	18.4	14.1	100

Though generally seen as the measure of the success of treatment programmes, Ghana's comparatively low recidivism rate, must be treated with caution.

Record-keeping is unreliable and the virtually non-monitoring of discharged offenders enable prisoners who relocate, to be tried for subsequent offences without knowledge of their previous criminal records.

As an observer-participant one is of the opinion that the programmes in place in Ghana are not structured and organized. A lot of questions have been raised as to the place of special programmes to treat the needs of some classes of prisoners, like sexual, substance and drug abuse offenders, prisoners with anger or psychological problems and psychiatric cases, who do not as yet have any programme to take care of their specific needs, in contrast with what obtains in advanced economies like the United States.

For instance, in Massachusetts, sexual offenders follow programmes tailored to change their attitudes. A private company, Justice Resource Institute offers therapeutic treatment at the Treatment Centre at Bridgewater.

Chemically dependant prisoners receive a mixture of psychological and sociological reorientation at the Chemical Treatment Plant at Kyle in Texas. Similarly, the Southeastern Correctional Centre at Bridgewater, Massachusetts takes substance Abuse inmates through a programme of supervised detoxification and attitudinal change.

Inmates with diagnosed mental problems are clinically treated at prisons designed to college-settings. There are programmes for Anger-Control, Psychological Adjustment and family life.

Ghana has not yet addressed specific needs. Many reasons account for this; our level of sophistication, economic situation, relevance and perhaps manpower. While some hold the view that such programmes are too alien and sophisticated for our situation, the question of affordability cannot be denied.

On the question of relevance, the crime rates for offenders jailed as late as 1998 show that Narcotic offences constituted 1.05% of all crimes, Rape/Defilement constituted 0.55%, Indian Hemp offenders was 155%. It would be difficult to justify programmes to address the specific needs of these offenders when the bulk of crimes is taken up by Stealing which constituted 47.25% of offences for the year 1998.

Yet these are the very groups whose need for treatment cannot continue to be ignored. The Ghana Prisons Service is moving ahead to address these issues. On the issue of manpower, the Service has a lot of professionals of the socio-psychological persuasion who can be tasked to fashion-out programmes suitable for the needs of these groups.

POST-RELEASE

TREATMENT OF DISCHARGED PRISONERS IN THE COMMUNITY.

In Ghana there is no programme of treatment outside the prison. On release, the 14 prisoner barely has sufficient money to live on He is only given transportation to his place of conviction. No state or non-governmental organization has a programme to help him get settled.

Though by law the only restriction on re-entry into the public service is in financial positions for prisoners with convictions for offences involving fraud and dishonesty, in practice there is no avenue in the formal sector for a discharged offender, no matter the offence. The private sector and society as a whole treat them like pariahs.

HALFWAY HOUSES:

There is no such facility in Ghana. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, in its Prison Ministry is committed to creating such facility and is preparing for housing and training of ex-convicts in various trades.

In the end the same persons constitute the recidivists of the Ghanaian penal system, always revolving through the prison gates because there is no Mere eke to go.

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT.

ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT.

The absence of national policies for the institution of alternatives to imprisonment, such as probation, work release, community service, suspended sentences, committal to drug and alcohol detoxification centres and psychiatric centres is a great disservice to the nation.

Most of the convict prisoners do not have to be in prison. Some offences are so trivial that community service could have been used. Many sentences are so short that it would have been better to convert them to any of the alternatives.

Fines are usually so unreasonably high that most convicted persons in Ghana invariably, serve prison terms. A lot of the drug-related cases need clinical help, not imprisonment where the offenders deteriorate mentally. The same goes for alcoholics.

In the event the prisons are full of offenders who could legally be serving their punishments outside the prison and thus avoiding the overcrowding in the prisons. For alternatives to imprisonment do not mean avoidance of punishment and recourse to amnesty is not a long time panacea for the ills of the system.

PUBLIC ATTITUDE

The public perception of the ex-offender is so negative that there are no employment avenues open to them. This is no incentive for reformation. The offender prefers the prison conditions and the officers to the hostility of society and is eager to reenter the prison.

TREATMENT IN THE PRISON

CONGESTION

It certainly is difficult embarking on any meaningful programme with a bloated constituency. While the very short-sentenced inmates cannot be offered any meaningful treatment the presence puts tremendous pressure on existing facilities, the time and energy of the officers which could otherwise be deployed on treatment programmes for the long sentenced inmates.

With a reduced inmate population, some of the buildings could be used as classrooms, libraries, workshops and rooms for group therapy.

FINANCING

Until the beginning of the 1998 Financial Year, there was no budgetary allocation for treatment programmes in the Service. The paucity of the allocation does not give room for comfort. Massive investment must be made in terms of repairs of machinery and the provision of new machinery and raw materials where necessary.

The Prisons Service has for long been the orphan of the public service and funding for its activities has traditionally been poor. Yet the service has a great potential of bringing in large revenue if its resources are properly utilized.

TREATMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

Supervision

In the absence of a well thought-out supervisory system as provided by the institution of a parole system, supervision is highly ineffective. The understaffed and overworked police have no time to monitor the licensee.

Moreover in Ghana it is difficult to track down people, as large parts of the country are virtually inaccessible. Record keeping is very poor and there is no national identification system. unless somebody identifies the offender as a previous offender in the course of the trial, he can always get away with his previous conviction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The factors preventing the adoption of a systematic approach can be over come by a commitment of the Prisons Service Council and the prisons administration to the ideals of reformation and rehabilitation.

The Service has been obsessed with security as it forms part of the Security Services of Ghana and perhaps a re-designation to a socially - oriented ministry like Social Welfare or Justice would reshape the direction of the Service.

It is also plausible to amend the charter of the Service which requires it to "ensure the safe custody and welfare of prisoners and whenever practicable to undertake tile reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners" by removing "whenever practicable" and making it mandatory to perform the two tasks.

The Prisons Service Council has a major role to play. By its composition it is a very powerful and influential body which should be able to influence policy-making at tile highest level.

The 1992 Constitution charged the Council with the responsibility of introducing a parole system. With the Bill before parliament, the Council has to exert pressure to get it paved. Its passage would reduce the problems of post-release prisoners to a large extent The Council would do the penal system of Ghana a world of good by Promoting the adoption of non-custodial sentences. This would revolutionize the system and pave the way for real reformation and rehabilitation programmes.

The council would have to use its influence to secure adequate financing to enable the scheme take-off. The Financial Administration Regulations must be amended to allow the Service to reinvest its self-generated income as initial capital for growth and expansion It would also be necessary for the Service to intensify its income generating activities by taking in jobs which can be undertaken inside the prison, for instance, assembling small components for outside companies.

Finally all personnel who administer criminal justice must be re-oriented and sensitized on the need for reforms. This would involve holding refresher courses for prison officers in particular, and generally, police officers, social workers, the judiciary and the staff of the Attorney -General's Department.

Given the place of treatment in Ghana, immediate focus must be on alternatives to imprisonment and programmes inside the prisons. A step by step approach would have to be adopted in considering post-release programmes.

CONCLUSION.

Ghana can learn from many countries, which have designed and successfully implemented programmes for the treatment of offenders at all levels of the criminal justices system. While it is true to say that the treatment methods reflect the level of sophistication of the various countries, it would require the adaptation of commendable programmes for local situation.

Alongside the goal of reaching a middle income country by the year 2020, must be a recognition of changing trends in the society and their possible effects on the penal system. The adoption of reforms now would in addition to solving a lot of problems preempt a future situation when the system can no longer respond to the needs of society and the incarcerated.

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