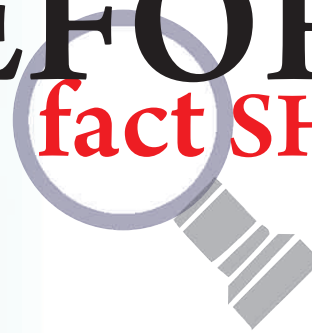


PENAL REFORM fact SHEET

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PRISON REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Oftentimes when the public think of prisons, they see it as an entity somewhat detached from the reality of their lives. Prisons perform very important function in the society regarding Peace Security and development. The core mandate of the Prison Service which is Reform, Rehabilitation and Reintegration comes into play as no society throws away its citizen for committing a crime. The target is always to

reform and correct.

Having identified the importance of prisons and rehabilitation of prisoners it becomes imperative that mechanisms be put in place to ensure that persons on detention are prepared for reintegration into the society upon release from prison. The socio-economic condition of inmates both before and after detention play critical role in their practical reintegration into society and due consideration should be given to this before



the release of any inmate.

Imprisonment is a penal measure aimed at reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders as stated in the Nigeria Prisons Service mandate. Having stated the importance of rehabilitation especially as it concerns ensuring that persons released from prison have means of livelihood to avoid recidivism, it becomes imperative that a lot of emphasis is placed on prison and community-based rehabilitation programmes to ensure a means of livelihood for ex-prisoners, reduce the rate of poverty and improve their level of employability.

POVERTY AND EMPLOYABILITY

According to the Prison Survey report, 76.36 percent of prison inmates prior to their prison custody, earned 50,000 naira (142.86 USD) or less per month. It was also found that prisoners are more likely to have little or no education and poor employment level. From these statistics we can infer that on release, it may be very challenging for them to become gainfully employed or to become fully productive members of society. It also means that they are more likely to re-offend and find themselves again within the walls of a prison.

Despite these numbers showing low economic statuses of prisoners, it has been found that for Ikoyi and Kano Central prison slightly above 50 percent of prisoners were single while slightly above 40 percent were married. This has implications on their spouses for those married and for the singles on the prospects of future marriage and child birth especially on the female prisoners. It also means that a good

percentage of the prison population are likely to have been breadwinners despite

CAPACITY 1,700		MEDIUM SECURITY PRISON			
INMATES LOCK-UP	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	INMATES MOV	
OPEN OUT	3278				
CONVICTED	355				
AWAITING TRIAL	2923				
DEBTOR	R.F.P.				
LUNATIC	CF ORDER				
LIFER	TRANS.FER.				
C.C.	DISCHARGE				
DETAINEE	ADMISS				
LODGERS	ACQUIT				
HOSPITAL	DEATH				
TOTAL					
FINAL LOCK-UP	3278				
REMARKS					

earning a low income.

Majority of the prisoners were found to be either self-employed or salary workers, thus more vulnerable to the impact of lost earnings due to their incarceration and disruption of education; for those who were students. In Enugu Maximum and Kano Central prisons, most respondents were self-employed before incarceration constituting about 64 percent and 65 percent respectively while 43 percent of the respondents in Ikoyi prisons were self-employed at the time of data collection and as high as 48 percent were salaried workers. These figures suggest a massive impact on the economic strain faced by families dependent on inmates before their incarceration. This is further compounded by travel costs they may have to incur in the course of prison visits as well as legal



representation charges. These costs are also not all economic. There are psychological, social and physical costs these families have to endure.

On release, there no sustainable structure put in place to properly reintegrate prisoners into society and there is a stigma placed on offenders who seek work. This means that imprisonment may proliferate the effects of poverty rather than seek to expunge it.

CONCLUSION

Imprisonment as a penal measure should be used only as a last resort. Fines and other non-custodial measures should be given where applicable. The Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015 put forth provisions urging the use of non-custodial measures when it comes to classes of offenders such as – first offenders, juveniles, drug users, mentally ill persons, pre-trial detainees and minor offenders. However, the full adoption of

this legislation by different states needs to be fully promoted and supported.

More efforts should be placed on tackling the root causes of imprisonment by addressing the social and economic inequities; focusing on education, creating jobs and positive social values. Poverty is a vicious cycle which creates a turnaround effect of higher crime rates and imprisonment. Also, if as a society we neglect our prisons and the rights of inmates, the consequences will be a more unjust, unsafe and destitute society for everyone. There is still room for comprehensive research to be carried out to support this data especially as regards examining the full cost of imprisonment on prisoners, ex-prisoners, their families, the primary and secondary victims, the prison officers, other criminal justice agencies, the community, the state and the country as a whole.