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How Prison and Society are Hardening Prisoners in Africa

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ABSTRACT

Prisons are tasked with the correction of the anti-social or criminal behavior of convicted prisoners and safe custody of awaiting trial inmates. This goal, if adequately administered, can reform prisoners and protect the society from criminals. However, the reality in Africa is that the society hardly accept and associate with released prisoners. This attitude, tends to push prisoners into more ravaging crimes, as they feel secluded and stigmatized. This has severe implications for increasing rate of insecurity in Africa. Although, African prisons have a long and chequered history, their services are marred by administrative challenges. To address this, reforms have been made, yet, the institution remained a potential source of hardening of prisoners. Drawing on qualitative document analysis method and systems input-output analysis and structural-functionalism theories, this article examines the extent to which the African society had contributed to hardening of prisoners. The findings expand discussion on the nexus between the release of prisoners from correctional service, society, and rising cases of insecurity in Africa. The findings also suggest means through which correctional service and society can contribute to reformation of prisoners and peaceful African society.

Keywords: Correctional service, criminality, development, goals, Sustainable.

Introduction

Prison is one of the tripods (police, court, and prison) of justice administration, charged with the responsibility of safe custody of offenders, rehabilitation and re-integration to the society. By these goals, it naturally occupies the output function of the justice system, which it performs, in forms of strictly enforcing court decision on convicted and pre-trial offenders. It ensures that justice, is served and enforced to the letters, mainly by receiving prisoners, providing services or taking them through rehabilitation and correctional processes, to correct and transform their behavior. However, the truth is that correctional institutions in Africa, hardly correct prisoners due to exposure to torture, excessive use of capital and corporal punishment, and deplorable prison conditions (Sarkin, 2008). These inherent problems, persists because, most prisons in Africa, still maintain colonial prison system that is largely based on the use of punishment that was used by the colonial government to punish indigenous, people against their imperialism (Sarkin, 2008). Today, prisons in Africa, are now breeding grounds for hardening of prisoners, who on release, return to their old criminal behavior (Agunyai et al., 2019).

Hardening of prisoners and reversion to crime, distort peace, disarticulate the justice system, and partly represent a sign of weakness of correctional institutions. These ugly circumstances, raise serious concerns about the possibility of Africa in accomplishing the SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) by 2030. For example, the African society is still continually battered due to the release of unreformed hardened ex-prisoners, its justice system suffers from delay and poor administration, and most of its social institutions including prisons are weak (Ugwuoke, 2015). It is no more new news that correctional institutions, aid and abet convicted prisoners and embolden them in crimes. Regrettably, some of the cause of this problem according to available evidence, includes overcrowding and officers' misconduct mal-administration (poor correctional programmes among others

(Obioha, 2011). These have made many prisons become veritable platforms that stimulate prisoners into dangerous crimes. It contradicts, the 'strong institutions' component of SDG 16, and portrays a strong indication that Africa may not be able to find peace, if performance of institutions (police, court, and prison) in charge of justice administration are weak.

To address this beldam, attempts have been made by African governments to strengthen correctional institutions and improve their performance. Specifically, reforms such as the 2002 Ouagadougou Declaration on Accelerating Prison and Penal Reform in Africa, which specifies the roles of government, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations can play in ensuring the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of offenders and pre-trial detainees, the Arusha Declaration on Good Prison Practice (Muntingh, 2007). Besides, legislation by receptive African state, which advocates for respect for fundamental human rights of prisoners and reforms were purposively established to increase budgetary allocations, approval of, and collaborations with private correctional service in terms of sharing of ideas, security technologies, and general well-being of prisoners (Agbakwuru, Ibe-Godfrey & Emi Maria, 2016). Moreover, there are calls for more reliance on correctional programmes than punishment among others (Onyekachi, 2016). Despite these attempts, correctional institutions, still remain as stronghold for hardening of prisoners (Awopetu, 2014). It was specifically revealed that lack of prompt implementation of reforms and effective follow-up on reforms contribute to the weakening of correctional institutions and limits their capacity to execute their functions and contribute positively to justice administration in Africa (Agunyai et al., 2019).

Justice is elusive, if institutions assigned to dispense it, are weak. The hardening of prisoners in crimes while in prison is a sign of weakness. The use of banned substance or hard drugs, rape, preferential selective care or treatment of some prisoners over others, conspiracy between officers and prisoners are indicators of

weakness of prisons in Africa. For example, prisoners are hardly reformed and on release, they reoffend and reconvicted back to prison. Reoffence or recidivism triggers insecurity situation, such as kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry, and others (Agunyai et al., 2019). Reconvicting them would not change matter, rather, it is going to worsen, as they are going back to learn more dangerous criminal tricks (Viljoen, 2005). This has created suspicion against the possibility of achieving peace, justice, and strong institutions by African countries. Peace and justice are scared to democratic societies, however, most societies in Africa suffer from lack of peace, injustice, and weak institutions.

Today, Africa is persistently rendered insecure by criminals, some of whom, were recidivists, hardened while in prison (Omale, 2013). But continue in their old criminal ways on release, because, while in prison, they were hardly exposed to correctional therapy, but suffer from being used as laborers for menial works that tend to toughen them. They also suffer from poorly governed prison, overcrowding, and officers' misconduct. For instance, poor supervision and lack of checks and control enable prisoners to engage in criminal interactions and moves unnoticed (Agunbiade, 2010). Similarly, overcrowding and limited space give room for the mixture of convicted and pre-trial prisoners in the same cell making it easy for pre-trial prisoners, who have waited endlessly, without access to lawyers, to learn criminal tricks from the convicted ones.

Misconduct and unprofessional attitude of staff in forms of excessive torture, punishment, and poor feeding system toughen prisoners, while lack of correctional programmes and life-changing training subject them to idleness (Sarkin, 2008). Idleness gives them enough time to strategize and plan criminal activities, cause chaos or riots in prison (Marcus, 2015). For example, most of the violence in prison, likely the ones between prisoners and officers were either caused by staff misconduct or idleness. Absence of vocational programmes, make them readily available for any criminal venture, either within or outside prison. It pushes them into crime that endangers the peaceful co-existence of people in the society. The society too, has not fared better in the handling of prisoners. The isolation of ex-prisoners by families and communities, poor reception after release or lack of after release programme, and stigmatization further hardened them.

The need for this article, which tries to examine the role played by the African society in hardening of prisoners. It specifically examines the role families and communities within society played in engendering hardening of prisoners in Africa. Evidence shows that the absence of 'after release care' for prisoners hardens and make them revert to reoffending (Stephen and Annie, 2005). Research in this direction will provide adequate, accurate, and reliable information on how to mitigate society's stigmatization and isolation of prisoners. This is because, if action is not taken, more ex-prisoners would revert to crime and the society can be overwhelmed by their criminal actions. Society needs to be enlightened to show affection to ex-prisoners after release, as this can accord them a sense of belonging and makes them useful to the society. This research is a step in the foregoing direction. It is a departure from previous studies that examined hardening of prisoners from the perspective of correctional institutions. Given this, the article intends to provide adequate information to how

society harden prisoners following these steps. First, it traces the application of input-output and structural-functionalism theories to correctional institutions and criminality in Africa. This is followed by factors causing the hardening of prisoners: correctional institution and society Perspectives. The impact of hardening of prisoners on the safety of African society and mitigation strategies to protect the African society precedes the conclusion.

Statement of the Problem

One of the goals of prison is safe custody of both convicted and awaiting trial persons (Marcus, 2015). Convicted prisoners are usually those who are found guilty of offence committed and are serving their punishment in the prison and awaiting trial prisoners are those, not yet found guilty, but are in the prison, while their case is being heard by a competent law court. Prison is expected mold, protect, reform, and reintegrate prisoners in the society. However, the reality in most prisons across Nigeria, shows that prison is a breeding ground for criminals. Apart from the fact that prison hardens criminals, it is a training home for most of criminals who threatens the society. Research has been conducted to sanitize prison in Nigeria, but evidence shows that most of these research have been too focused on prison's role in the hardening of criminals. This has created some limitations to blame the hardening of prisoners from the society perspective. Indeed, not all researchers or studies have realize the role of the society in the hardening of prisoners. In addition, the prison and not the society has always been blamed for hardening of prisoners, as it has been generally believed that the unreformed attitude of released prisoners, must have been as a result of the prison's poor capacity to reform them (Obioha, 2011). Little or nothing has been done to examine the role or perspective of the society in the hardening of prisoners.

The paper bridges this gap by examining the role played by the society in hardening of the released prisoners. It was specifically noted that the isolation of released prisoners, discrimination against them in public service, lukewarm reception of released prisoners, distancing from them, among others, tend to harden prisoners and pushed them into crime (Ugwuoke, 2015). Society partly contribute to high rate of recidivism in Nigeria. For example, most of the re-offenders are pushed into criminal activities by the unfriendly welcoming by their relatives. The inability to land a job as ex-convict is another way the society is indirectly pushing them into crime (Ugwuoke, 2015). More importantly, the inability to trust and socially relate with prisoners, especially by members of society could also push prisoners into crime. Despite contributions of the society to the hardening of prisoners, the society is hardly blamed. This, however, motivates this research, which measures the hardening of prisoners' from the lens of the society.

Review of Related Literature

Prison

Prison is one of the security agencies or institutions saddled with the responsibility of safe keeping of legally convicted persons and those suspected to have committed a crime but yet to be convicted. Prison, just like the police or army protect the society

from the activities of criminals (Ikoh, 2011). As criminals are convicted legally by the law court, it is expected that other criminals may desist from crimes. This goes to show that prison protect the society from the onslaught of criminals through its punishment and deterrence functions. The punishment function of prison, if effectively and legally enforced, it deter other criminals from engaging in crimes, thereby, protecting the society in the long run. Prison, according to Onyekachi (2016) is an institution or place where people convicted of a crime are kept. It is also used for safe keeping of people awaiting trials. It is a place delimited and declared by the law of the state for restriction, detention, and custody of accused and convicted people, who have violated the criminal law of the state (Onyekachi, 2016). Imprisonment has universal functions such as protection, retribution, the prevention of crime, rehabilitation of inmates among others (Ikoh, 2011). Other goals or functions of prison includes promotion of justice and the reintegration of prisoners into the society after serving their punishment (Marcus, 2015).

Indeed, prison is expected to protect the society from activities of criminals. This can be done not only through implementation of law order, but by the safe reception of criminals and keeping them safely in custody to serve their punishment. As more criminals are retrieved from the society and their movement restricted through confinement in the prison, the grater the protection of the society (Ikoh, 2011; Obioha, 2011; Onyekachi, 2016). The detention of criminals or persistent non-violent offenders means that the society will be protected from them for the duration of their sentences. Thus, imprisoning criminals temporarily incapacitates them. Other than this, the expectation is that prisons will cause inmates to regret their criminal acts, and when they are released, will be deterred from committing further crimes (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2001). Incarceration of criminals may also deter other individuals from engaging in criminal behaviour due to the fear of punishment (Agunyai et al., 2019). Prisons are also called penitentiaries because of the belief that through solitary religious instruction while under confinement, prisoners would become penitent (remorseful) and reform their behavior. Different countries place different emphasis on one or more of the enumerated incarceration goals. Nigerian prison, according to the constitution, is expected to perform the following functions:

- (i) Keeping people who have been legally convicted by the law court in safe custody
- (ii) To ascertain causes of anti-social behaviour of criminals, treat and reform them to become disciplined and law abiding citizens of a free society;
- (iii) To reform, rehabilitate and re-integrate released prisoners to the society after their discharge of punishment;
- (iv) To generate funds for the government through prison farms and industries (Jama, 1999).

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that prison is a component part of security agencies in Nigeria that ensures that the society is free of crimes. Crime is inevitable in any human society, but it can be controlled and checked. One of the way to control it, is through prison, the more the prison is alive to this function, the greater the protection of the society from criminals. Apart from protection, the prison also revenges, reforms, rehabilitates, and reintegrates punished prisoners to the society. It

is expected that through reform and rehabilitation programmes of the prison, prisoners are expected to have a changed behaviour and character before going into the society. However, the extent to which, prisons across the globe and in Nigeria have performed this function is in doubt due to the increasing rate of re-offenders who easily revert into crime as soon as they are released from the prison. This point to the fact that prisoners are not really reformed and rehabilitated in the prison. This view had been buttressed by findings of studies such Dambazau (1999), Jarma (1999), Alemika and Chukwuma (2001) and Otite and Albert (2004), which revealed that the prison has been worst and constituted a theatre for more dangerous criminals.

Rehabilitation

Prison is expected to engage convicted prisoners in order to identify causes of their criminal behavior. Rehabilitation is the provision of treatment against causes of criminal behavior in the society (Marcus, 2015). Rehabilitation is the connection between criminal behavior with abnormality or some form of deficiency in the criminals. It assumes that human behavior is the product of antecedent causes. The goal then, is to identify these antecedent conditions, understand the inadequacies, and be it physical, moral, mental, social, vocational and or academic. Once the offender's problems are diagnosed and classified for treatment, the offender can be corrected by appropriate psychological or physical therapy, counseling, education or vocational training, so that he or she can pursue an independent and legally accepted way of life on discharge. The training and re-training of convicted criminals in prison is an act of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation programs are generally offered to offenders who are incarcerated in either state prison or county jail, as well as those who are supervised in the community by state parole agents or county probation officers. The major goal of rehabilitation is reduce the rate of re-offenders. As criminals are rehabilitated, they tend to learn specialized skills from vocational training, academic programmes, and other developmental courses in prison. It helps to change the behavior of criminals and makes them repent of their old ways. With human capacity development programmes, purposively aimed at prisoners, will aid skills acquisitions, which in the long run, could make prisoners sober and regretful of their anti-social behaviour. Rehabilitation programmes are supposed to be readily available in most prisons, to educate, reform, improve, and add values to the prisoners, so that, when they leave the prison, they can conveniently compete for jobs in the society. One other goal of rehabilitation is to ensure that prisoners become very useful to themselves and to the country as a whole. On release, with the knowledge and skills garnered from the prison, prisoners can be relevant in the society. It will go a long way in the reduction of recidivism (Ikoh, 2011; Agunyai et al., 2019).

Recidivism

Scientific evidence from extent studies (such as Agunyai et al., 2019; Marcus, 2015; Onyekachi, 2015) have shown that due to problems such as congestion, poor managerial capacity of prison, lack of quality rehabilitation programmes, among others have tend to push more released prisoners into crime. Although, much of the blame are prison related, the society also contributes to the high rate of recidivism in Nigeria. Prisoners who are supposed to be

reformed and reintegrated amicably into the society, are hardly reformed because of lack of robust rehabilitation programme in most Nigerian prisons. This, according to Ugwuoke (2015), has been the cause of high rate of re-offending in Nigeria. Recidivism is the number of inmates that reoffend after their release. Recidivism becomes very popular because most prisons lack the capacity to engage prisoners in any meaningful rehabilitation programme. The reality in most Nigerian prisons is that prisoners are idle and lack access to quality vocational training that can improve their knowledge and attitude (Omale, 2013).

Methodology

The article utilizes the qualitative research method, sourced through desktop reviews of previous empirical studies on prison administration and justice system. Data were collected from journals, books, magazines, online materials, police reports, court orders records and prison movement books or records. Besides, data were also sourced from international documents and manuals, especially, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report on prisons in Africa. Data collected were thematically-content analyzed.

Analysis and discussion

Explaining the African Justice System and Hardening of Prisoners through input-output systems and Structural-Functionalism Theories

The input-output analysis is a segment of systems theory, mainly used in the explanation of the workings and the functioning of systems, especially, political and social systems. It can be borrowed, to explain and apply to how justice is dispensed and prisoners are hardened. According to Easton (1965), systems, consist of basics such as inputs, processes, outputs, feedbacks, and boundaries. Input-output systems analysis consists of three major elements, namely inputs, conversion/processing, and output segment. Inputs entail demands and supports fed into the system, after articulation and aggregation of complains or interests received from the environment. Demands are processed into output, after thorough discussion, analysis, and debate. Output is the product or outcome of fully discussed and processed demands fed into the system as inputs. It usually triggers positive and negative feedbacks (Fisher, 2011).

For the justice system, input-output analysis connects functions of, and actions from, different actors and their influence on decisions or outcomes. Input is fed into the justice system via demands and supports articulated and aggregated by police and other allied forces. For example, the input function, enables the police to carry-out arrest of offenders, based on demands from the people in the environment. Demands are made through calls and report of criminal activities to the police. After arrest by the police, it thoroughly investigates cases against offenders, in order to ascertain those to be prosecuted in court. The prosecution of offenders in the court follows articulation and aggregation functions by the police. For example, the random arrest of offenders following reports from the public, appropriately represents, articulation function, while the determination of offenders to be prosecuted, depicts the aggregation function.

The final presentation of offenders in the court for prosecution is still an input function fed into the justice system via demands from the people within the environment. However, offenders, remain innocent until proven guilty by the court. This prove, is usually in form of court ruling or decision and judgement. It is imperative to note that not every offender that is arrested and prosecuted at the law court are convicted or punished, some even get reward or compensation depending on the court decision (Ugwuoke, 2015). This stage represents what Easton described as the processing function, the court does this, through collaborative functions of relevant actors' such as prosecutor, lawyers, judges, plaintiff, defendants and witness(es). The court, sieves out, offenders that are guilty and determine their punishment before handing them over to prison for further processing.

The prison sees to the enforcement of court decision. For instance, if an offender has been sentenced to five years imprisonment, it is the duty of the prison to enforce the court ruling, which is done through safe custody of offenders for those five years. The essence of sending offenders to prison is partly for retribution and to dispense justice, likely to those who have been hurt (Marcus, 2015). This represents what Easton described as the output function. Justice is the outcome or output segment of the systems theory. Output usually generates positive or negative feedbacks. It is positive feedback, if the outcome or output addresses the crime situation in the environment, that is, if those who are hurt by the crime, get justice. Reverse is the case when the feedback is negative. The prison is to ensure that justice, in form of imprisonment is effectively carried out as ordered by the court.

However, justice in Africa, had suffered from actions of the three tripods or institutions (police, court, and prison). All the three interrelated components of the justice system have partly contributed to injustice and hardening of prisoners, especially, the awaiting trial offenders. For example, the unending detection of offenders in police custody, because of the inability to meet bail conditions is an injustice that can further harden offenders and creates suspicion (Odeyemi and Obiyan, 2018). In parts of Africa, especially, Nigeria, police engaged in illegal arrests of citizens, majority of whom ended up as awaiting trial prisoners (Madubuike-Ekwe, Ndubuisi and Obayemi, 2019). In a nationwide study conducted by UNODC in partnership with the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, the police are the most bribed institution in Nigeria. Besides, while in detention, they are not granted access to lawyers, even if they have access, majority of them cannot afford lawyers' fees or charges (Sarkin, 2008). Furthermore, the postponement of court sitting, unnecessary delays, and corruption by some judges contribute to hardening of prisoners in Africa.

In Nigeria, the deliberate attempt by some greedy and corrupt judges to substitute and punish innocent people for offence they did not commit, because of bribe could contribute to hardening of prisoners (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019). Prison mal-administration, overcrowding, and staff misconduct in forms of unequal relation between warders and prisoners also harden prisoners (Obioha, 2011). For instance, excessive use of punishment, violation of prisoners' rights, and lack of supervision, as well as idleness in prison toughen prisoners. Lastly, isolation and stigmatization of ex-prisoners by families and communities in the

society not only hardened them but pushes them to reoffend. The analysis above shows that all the institutions in justice administration contribute to hardening of prisoners.

Structural-functionalism theory believes that in any system, there are units or component parts or mini-structures that performs certain functions that keep the whole system effectively working, stable, and peaceful. That is, a system is the composite of interrelated parts saddled with functions to meet the social needs of people in the society. The society is a complex whole system of interrelated structures and units, which continually work to keep the society very healthy, stable, and peaceful. The inability of these structures to deliver on their functions exert pressure and disarticulate the system. Thus, the society becomes threaten and disorderly at the slightest failure of structures to effectively perform their functions (Agunyai et al., 2019). The prison or correctional institution is one of the numerous structures or interrelated parts within the African justice system. It is saddled with the function of taken away criminals from the society into detention and releasing same as changed and reformed persons useful to the society (Ashley, 2021).

The expectation is that prison, as one of the tripods of justice system, is the melting for the activities of security agencies (Ugwuoke, 2015). Prison receives the final product (sentenced prisoners), in the criminal justice process as one of its functions (Ugwuoke, 2015). A function is a recurrent activity performed by a part or an organ, within the complex whole, to keep the whole system very stable and functioning. For example, while the function of the police is to arrest and prosecute, the prison keeps the convicted offenders by the law court. The safe keeping of criminals is required to protect and keep the society very peaceful and free of criminal activities. It is believed that the admission of criminals in prison will make them feel sober for their crime and possibly change their ways through involvement in programmes and other laborious activities (Ayuk et al., 2013). The essence is to show prisoners, that there is dignity in labor and reward for being hardworking, in order to transform prisoners away from being deviant to more desirable, disciplined, productive, and patriotic to the society. Functions of the interrelated parts are classified into what Merton described as manifest and latent functions. While manifest function are possible outcomes expected from the effective discharge of duties by component parts in a social process, latent functions are unsolicited outcomes of a social process. Undesired and unwanted outcomes of a social process is called dysfunctions (Merton, 2003).

This theory fittingly applies to the explanation of correctional institution and societal induced hardening of prisoners in Africa. Prison is an interrelated part or structure of the African justice system, with functions such as safe custody of prisoners, rehabilitation and re-integration of prisoners to the society. These represent the manifest functions of the prison, that is, prisoners are expected to be reformed and properly integrated to, and add more value to society in terms of positive contributions, loyalty, and patriotic to the country. However, dysfunctions have been the case with most African correctional institutions, as more prisoners turned hardened while in custody. So many factors have been attributed to recurrent dysfunctions (such as officers' misconduct, shortage of committed staff, mal-administration and poor

governance, underfunding, growing suspicion against the prison service, among others) in correctional facilities in Africa (Marcus, 2015). It is no more news that African prisons are enclaves for nurturing of dangerous hardened criminals (Obioha, 2011). On release, they revert into recidivism (Ugwuoke, 2015). This has made many lose faith in the capability of correctional institutions to correct the anti-social behavior of prisoners in Africa. The latent function of prison includes the orientation of the public on warm reception and acceptance of prisoners. Although, this function is largely unsought for, but its effective enforcement can go a long way in enlightening the people in the society on how to receive prisoners on release. Until recently, the role played by the society in hardening of prisoners have remained dissociated from scholarly studies (Joan, 2000). The re-entry of prisoners into the society is hardly given a systematic and comprehensive attention by policymakers, this, could heightens crimes and insecurity in the community (Joan, 2000). Although research documents have repeatedly blamed correctional institutions for hardening prisoners in Africa (Anne, 2014). Studies and scholars on prison administration seem very loath to explore the links between the society and hardening of prisoners in Africa, with a few exceptions (Obioha, 2011). In the next section, how society and correctional institutions contribute to hardening of prisoners in Africa are discussed.

Socio-Institutional Perspective of Hardening of Prisoners in Africa

Prison Perspective

In the literature, evidence is enormous on how the prison, as an institution contributes to the hardening of prisoners who on release, revert into crimes capable of destabilizing the peace of the larger society (Sarkin, 2008). Research in prison administration in Africa shows that, comparatively while correctional institutions in the Global North fared better than those in the Global South, in adding values to lives of prisoners in terms of rehabilitation and re-integration to the society (Dirk, 2010). The inherent challenges faced by African correctional institutions, which includes underfunding, deplorable prisons infrastructures, congestion, poor staff expertise and commitment, inadequate rehabilitation programme and faulty re-integration process among others have severely limit the effective performance of prisons in Africa. Today, prisons in Africa are homes to hardened criminals, because, conditions in most of these facilities are deplorable and inhuman how could their criminal behavior be changed, when, according to African prisons are markets for banned substances or drugs? (Agunbiade, 2010) This goes to show that in reality, the goal of rehabilitation of prisons is hardly accomplished (Omale, 2013). They are breeding grounds for nurturing of criminals in the act of crimes. In fact, prison is a community of criminals, where lesser, moderate or awaiting trial offenders are trained by dangerous convicted criminals, as they wait endlessly for trial. The pain of pre-trial in African prisons is enough to harden prisoners. In Africa, pre-trial is a big challenge and one of the leading means through which prisoners are hardened. Prisoners wait endlessly for trial, without access to judge and others cannot afford the legal fee to secure the service of a lawyer. It invariably contributes to increase in prison population and congestion (Sarkin, 2008).

Congestion or overcrowding is another contributory factor to dysfunctions in the prison system in Africa. It is a challenge against the performance of prison administration, especially in countries like Rwanda, Cameroun, Kenya, Zambia, and Burundi as they are hosts to the world's most overcrowded prisons (Brian and Roy, 2001). The cause of this population explosion is partly rooted in colonialism, because, prison was used to punish and imprisoned more of the indigenous people, who opposed imperialism than the whites (Sarkin, 2008). Besides, the conditions of these prisons were precarious and their continual use in postcolonial era, worsened the conditions of prisoners. They are characterized by limited prison cells, small windows, poor ventilation, old building, and lack of good sewage system. This is further worsened by lack of police and judges, to prosecute offenders, thus, contributing to increase in pre-trial detainees (Sarkin, 2008). The increasing rate of prisoners' population makes it very difficult for staff to control and effectively manage them. This gives them the opportunity to engage in crimes that can hardened them while in detention.

The rehabilitation of prisoners is also affected by overcrowding, as the rising population of prisoners, makes it extremely difficult for prisoners to benefit from available programmes, if any. Besides, African prisons lack comprehensive rehabilitation programmes that are focused on skills acquisitions and technical education (Onyekachi, 2016). Much of what it is available as programme in African prisons are hard laborious ventures that contribute little or nothing to knowledge or skills acquisition (Obioha, 2011). They are mainly menial monotonous works that only hardened prisoners and does not add any value to them. This is because, most of the African prisons still maintain capital and corporal punishment which contribute to the negative outcomes of the African prison system, partly because, majority of prisoners leave correctional service more dangerous and hardened. Similarly, idleness or wasting-away is a big notable problem caused by overcrowding, that has also hardened prisoners in African prisons. It pushes prisoners into criminal actions such as gambling, the use of banned substances, rape, and same-sex (Ashley, 2021). These collectively contribute to negative outcomes of correctional institutions in Africa. They are reasons why prisoners remained unreformed and hardened, and on release from detention, they continue with crimes in the society.

Prison governance in Africa is weak, particularly in areas like functions, management, and administration (Agunyai et al., 2019). For example, several international declarations and consensus on international best prison practice in terms of management and administration of prisoners, that most African countries are signatory to, are hardly followed or adopted. This lack of compliance, has made many prisons suffer from mal-administration and bad prison governance. One way this has manifested, is in the area of recruitment of prison staff, which is mostly driven by favoritism and nepotism (Agunyai et al., 2019). Besides, lack of managerial skills and commitment to provide care and assistance to prisoners, without intimidation and torture are among the challenges, facing prison administrators in Africa. Further, shortage of trained personnel hinders effective governance of prisons in Africa, inexperienced and unskilled prisons staff affect mutual relations between prisoners and staff and exacerbate prison violence. Part of prison administration, are finance, publicity, welfare, education, healthcare, feeding, and re-integration of

prisoners. Each of this unit of administration is laden with one problem or the other.

Comparatively, African prisons are underfunded unlike those in developed countries (Sarkin, 2008). Inadequate funding, affects all sectors of the prison system. For example, if staff are not well-remunerated, it could push them to misconduct and lack of commitment to duty. Similarly, poor funding hampers adequate feeding and general well-being of both prisoners and staff. It affects rehabilitation programme, provision of prison facilities and infrastructures, healthcare of prisoners, among others. Good governance is essential, if correctional institutions are to accomplish their goals in Africa. This is because, it connects all sectors of the prison system. In fact, good prison administration is the antidote to effective correction of the criminal behavior of prisoners and their re-integration into the society. Regrettably, good governance is hardly found in most African correctional institutions. African prison institution, suffers from excessively politicization of administration and political interventions. For example, in the Nigerian case, the recruitment of staff is largely determined by politicians who submit names of undedicated and sometimes unqualified cronies to the prison administration for appointment. This undermines the entrance of highly committed, competent, and qualified staff into the employ of correctional institutions (Agunyai et al., 2019). And shortage of skilled staff, raises concerns for lack of educators, instructors, and teachers in correctional institutions for the rehabilitation of prisoners. This invariably accounts for the reason why most prisoners remained more hardened while in correctional service.

Lack of publicity or engagement in the orientation of the people in the society, in terms of regular updates about the admission and release of prisoners is part of administration that correctional institutions rarely undertake in Africa. This can go a long way to create an awareness and educate the society on how to receive and welcome prisoners. Prisoners have always been released from prison, and officials in correctional service find it difficult to help them cope and succeed in the larger society (Joan, 2001). A critical look at the view of Joan suggests that correctional institutions have no further plan to help prisoners cope and develop in the society. Part of the plan could have been providing updates, either in public or social media to educate the public about the changed behavior of prisoners and why the society should accept and welcome them well. This is important, as it will help eradicate the stigmatization of prisoners and boost the trust of the public in correctional institutions.

The Society Perspective

Just like correctional institutions, society also contributes to the hardening of prisoners in Africa. Although research in this area is scanty, but evidence shows that society, one way or the other, plays some roles in hardening of prisoners (Joan, 2001). Prisons and prisoners are at the margins of society. Prisoners and staff take what they learn from the prison to the society (Muntingh, 2007). This goes to show that society is at the receiving end of produce from correctional institutions. Generally, in African society, people stigmatize and isolate prisoners from prisons, they face serious social adaptation issues such as ostracism, negligence, and discrimination (UNODC, 2019). Since, society is made up of

families and communities, lack of love, care, and assistance to prisoners on release can drive them back into recidivism and crimes. It was specifically noted that prisoners can revert to reoffending, reconviction, and crimes, if the society fails to adequately welcome and support prisoners (UNDOC, 2021).

Socially, families and communities within the society have contributed to the hardening of prisoners by deliberately discriminating against them in job opportunities, marriage, housing, and return to education (Aminu and Abd Halim, 2015). The point being made here is that prisoners tend to revert to recidivism, if they do not receive the care from members of their families and communities. It drives them into reoffending, which could also lead to their reconviction. This was described as poor resettlement of ex-prisoners after release (Ugwuoke, 2015). The hasty generalization that nothing good will come out of prison, due to public awareness of the recurrent hopelessness and deficient prison system across Africa. This was described as "skewed ideology of prisonization in part of Africa"(Ugwuoke, 2015). Families, friends, and communities within society have the general idea that prisons in Africa are enclaves of criminals, where dangerous crimes are perpetrated on a daily basis, hence, the blanket believe, that no prisoner will come out as reformed or changed person. This lopsided or stereotyped thinking is the reason why society show cold attitude to prisoners on release (UNDOC, 2021).

The public outcry against and isolation of anyone, families, and friends that associate with ex-prisoners, on release is enough to discourage other members of the society from welcoming and showing care to ex-prisoners into the society. This is common in some African countries, especially, in Nigeria, where, hate and stigmatization are extended to families and friends of ex-prisoners. For example, in some of parts of Nigeria, the mere confirmation that an ex-prisoner is from certain family, could make some people in the society begin to avoid and isolate such family. One area where such isolation is demonstrated is marriage. It may be very difficult for an ex-prisoner to easily get married like others in certain communities, except if such ex-prisoner moves away from the community. This unpleasant attitude raises feelings of rejection, depression, and hopelessness, which, sometimes can provoke ex-prisoners into reoffending.

One general implication of society and correctional institutions induced hardening of prisoners is that it pushed them into recidivism. Recidivism is reverting into crimes or recommitting an offence, after release from prison. Several factors are responsible for recidivism in Africa. It ranges from factors caused by both prisons and the society. For correctional institutions, they are blamed for hardening prisoners because of the following summarized factors: over-use of capital and corporal punishment for prisoners, overcrowding, poor funding, mal-administration in prison, officers' misconduct, deplorable prison conditions, deficient rehabilitation and re-integration programme, overreliance on the use of imprisonment as punishment, general poor welfare condition of prisoners, idleness, endless pre-trials cases, poor awareness programme to educate the society, among others. Society-induced hardening of prisoners includes stigmatization, discrimination, hostile relation, and lack of after-release programme, isolation, denial of rights to equal job opportunity, marriage, and association

among others. These factors, in the long run, contribute to insecurity and instability of the society. For example, most of the Boko-Haram insurgents, bandits, and other criminals terrorizing Nigeria are partly ex-prisoners who had either been hardened from the prison or by the cold attitude of the society towards them.

Conclusion

It is imperative to understand that prisoners including the convicted ones are humans and not objects, the fact that they have been imprisoned does not mean they should be ostracized, abandoned, and rejected. Their rejection on release by families and communities within society and torture by correctional institutions is injurious to human security and peace of the society, because, rejection and torture toughen and push them into reoffending. To address this problem, there should be a general understanding of the fact that prisoners are humans with fundamental human rights that must be respected. Even while in detention, their rights should be respected by prison officers. Their punishment while in prison, should be within the confine of fundamental human rights and should not be used to violate their rights. On release, the society, should not despise but receive them warmly.

People's rights to equal job opportunities, social services, association, marriage, among others, should be protected and respected. Similarly, gaps in prisoners-community or society relations, can be eradicated by joint action and whistleblowing roles involving religious organizations and civil society, leveraging on the use of smart phones to report to appropriate authorities (police, public complaints commission) people discriminating against ex-prisoners. Reporting to appropriate authorities, enables the cross-fertilization of knowledge in which, complainants expose the discrimination and infringements against prisoners in their neighborhoods and support for actions that safeguard prisoners' rights and dignity, which are important elements of good prison governance. Reforms and after-release care on the part of the prisons and public openness and support committed to safeguarding the rights of prisoners, will combine to reduce the degree of negative inputs and the consequential pressure on the prison system, and can adequately contribute to effective correction of their criminal behavior and make them disciplined, patriotic, and fully changed for safer society in Nigeria.

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