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Assessing the Role of Tamale Central Prisons towards reforming Inmates in the Northern Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to contribute to the debate on the role of the Tamale Central Prisons towards reforming inmates in the Northern Region of Ghana. A cross sectional design was used and triangulated with some qualitative data. One hundred and fifty prison inmates were randomly selected and both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered with instruments such as questionnaire, interview guide and observation. Data gathered were analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Product for Service Solution and descriptive statistics such as cross tabulation, frequencies and percentages were used to present the findings. The study disclosed that formal education, skill development training, information communication technology education among others were the main efforts directed at reforming inmates in the Tamale Central Prisons. The policy of amnesty and remission system were identified as key policies positively impacting the reformation of inmates at the Tamale Central Prisons whereas overcrowding and dwindling budgetary allocation were also identified as main challenges confronting the Tamale Central Prisons as an institution for reforming inmates in the Tamale Central Prisons. There is also knowledge gap regarding the role of the Tamale Central Prisons as an institution for reforming inmates. Even though the Tamale prison is bedeviled with many challenges, reformation of criminal is a reality and not a myth. The study recommends the relocation of the Tamale Central Prisons in the long term to moderately address the issues of overcrowding and the deepening of government commitment to reformation of inmates through adequate budget allocation.

Keywords: Reformation, Prisons, inmates, Institution, Recidivism

INTRODUCTION

This paper is structured around the introduction, theoretical bases and philosophy for establishing prisons, methodology, findings and conclusions. One major social dilemma confronting all countries is the fight against crime. The rate at which crimes are committed is on the increase with most developed countries experiencing most of the crimes in the world. Map of countries with the highest reported crime rates clearly indicates that countries in Europe and America are the least safe countries in the world in terms of crime. Asia even though not that economically sound is far safer as compared to the other countries. United States is the most unsafe country in the world in terms of reported cases of crime while India is considered the safest in terms of reported crimes (Info, base Ltd, 2013). Although one fifth of the world's population lives in Africa and more than a quarter of all countries in the world are in Africa, the continent is by far, the least documented region in terms of data and information on crime and drugs (UNODC 2014).

The Penal Reform International (2008) noted that during the 12th century, jails were mostly used as places for the confinement of persons accused of criminal offenses until they are tried by the king's court in England. However, imprisonment gradually became an accepted way of punishing convicted criminals. In the 19th and the 20th centuries, imprisonment replaced corporal punishment, execution and banishment as the chief means of punishing serious offenders. The Information Bases Limited (2013) also pointed out that prisons vary in nature and system of operation however, many of the prison systems segregate prisoners by sex and by category of risk. The establishment of the prison system has been founded on a number of goals and ideologies which includes; retribution, vengeance, retaliation, deterrence, reform and rehabilitation, removal from society and repayment to society which the paper seek to assess in the Tamale Central Prisons. The question is does the Tamale Central Prisons perform these roles?

Also, reforming criminals into law-abiding citizens is important for the survival of a civilization and the advancement of a society which justifies the current study of the Tamale Central Prisons. The former IPS officer of India Kiran Bedi said "prisons become a violent city without reforms" (Diligent Media Corporation Ltd, 2013). There have however been some schools of thought on the role of prisons as an institution for reforming inmates, one of such schools of thought expressed by UNODC (2013) is that, criminals should be encouraged to rehabilitate their inherent deficiencies.

This rehabilitation process may involve provision of education, vocational training, treatment for drug addiction, counseling, and/or an attempt to encourage socially acceptable behaviors. While some argue for this school of thought that the cost to society is offset by preventing crime in the future, others like Pratt et al., 2005, Garland, 2001 contend that it rewards those in jail with training that would not otherwise have been available to them.

Rehabilitation is part of several regional mechanisms designed to improve prison conditions throughout Africa. For example, the 2002 Ouagadougou Declaration on Accelerating Prison and penal reform in Africa calls for the promotion of rehabilitation and reintegration of

former offenders (Penal Reforms International, 2008). The Declaration's accompanying Plan of Action also indicated measures that governments and NGOs could take to increase the effectiveness of rehabilitation of offenders and pretrial detainees. Countries such as South Africa, Uganda, and Botswana have taken steps to improve their rehabilitation programs. Even though these countries face challenges in implementing their rehabilitation and reintegration programs, they strive to adhere to the Plan of Action. Their programs focus on educational and vocational training, psychological support, promotion of familial contact beyond prison, access to religious services, and integration of civil society in order to rehabilitate prisoners and reintegrate them into the community (Penal Reforms International, 2008).

The promotion of prison reforms has however been shown in the last decade to be of central concern for human rights institutions and the United Nations (UN). However, reports from these institutions have cited the insufficiencies and inadequacies of funds and resources in making prison reforms a success particularly within the developing countries, though the developed countries also have their challenges. Research has shown that "recidivism" (the percentage of former prisoners who are rearrested for a similar offense amongst convicted felons following release from prison is as high as (63%) and most of the inmates had arrest records and convictions prior to the incarceration of their current offense (Carson & Mulako-Wangota, 1989). In the USA, statistics show that within three years of release, 67.5% of prisoners are back inside prison (Langan and Levin, 2002).

On the 1st January 1964, the Prisons Department became autonomous and ceased to be part of the Civil Service and renamed Ghana Prisons Service (GPS). Subsequently, it was announced in 2007 that the Prisons Service would change its name to the Ghana Correctional Service, or Correctional Service of Ghana (GPS, 2013). The name however remains the same till date. Currently, there are 45 prison establishments in Ghana according to the 2012 Ghana Prisons Service Report. The Ghana Prisons Service was therefore, tasked with the safe custody of convicted persons from the courts as well as the provision of reformation and rehabilitation programmes for their successful resettlement into society (GPS, 2011).

Generally, the introduction of formal prisons as appears today was largely based on the conviction that man can always reform and remain useful to the community. Ensuring the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners by offering them opportunities to develop their skills through trade, training and moral education are good alternatives for prison services (UNODC, 2013). Approximately two-thirds of all prisoners are rearrested within three years (Pinard, 2006) and this has resulted in debate about the purpose of the prison service as an institution for reforming criminals in Ghana. Ensuring the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners by offering them opportunities to develop their skills through trade, training and moral education are good interventions for prison services (UNODC, 2013).

Theoretical Bases

The concept of crime and criminal reforms is complex because norms vary considerably across groups, times, and places. In other words, what one group may consider acceptable, another may consider deviant. A number of theories related to deviance and criminology exists. The paper looked at two broad categories from the sociological and biological perspectives that have been used over time to understand crime and criminality specifically; the Differential Association Theory from the sociological perspective and Lombroso theory of crime from the biological perspective were considered as bases for the study. The Differential Association Theory was originally put forward by Sutherland in 1939 in the third edition of his influential text, the Principles of Criminology to address the issue of how people learn crime (Sutherland, 1939). According to this theory, the environment plays a major role in deciding which norms people learn to violate. Specifically, people within a particular reference group provide norms of conformity and deviance, and thus heavily influence the way other people look at the world, including how they react. People also learn their norms from various socializing agents—parents, teachers, ministers, family, friends, co-workers, and the media. In short, people learn criminal behavior, like other behaviors, from their interactions with others, especially in intimate groups.

The differential-association theory like any other theory has some strengths and weaknesses, Church, Wharton, & Taylor (2009) also point out two significant weaknesses of the theory of differential association. According to Church, Wharton, & Taylor, (2009), the first limitation of Sutherland's differential theory stems from the concept of "definitions" in the sense that Sutherland fails to provide a precise definition of the concept. In addition, Sutherland fails to highlight how "excess of definitions" that are favorable to deviant behavior over unfavorable to criminal behavior can be operationalized. For instance, how many unlawful behaviors should one define as acceptable to result in "excess of definitions." Sutherland fails to provide a succinct definition of the same; therefore, how would one embark on measuring the concept of "excess of definitions that are favorable to violation of law"? The second limitation of Sutherland's theory pointed out by Church, Wharton, & Taylor, (2009) is that it fails to specify the learning process. In this regard, Church, Wharton, & Taylor, (2009) assert that the theory of differential association lacks a clue as regards to the specifics to be incorporated in "all the mechanisms involved in any other form of learning."

Notwithstanding these weaknesses identified with the differential-association theory, the theory is still relevant given its strength in criminal studies. Akers (2009) posits that although differential association theory has a number of anomalies, most criminological studies to explore crime have supported the main theme in the theory. Clinard & Meier (2010) conducted an analysis on the relationship between differential association and differential social organization and reported that learning from, and association with peers, family, schools and the community are significant variables that determine delinquency and that it accounts for both criminal behaviors at the individual level and the distribution of crime rates across different social settings. Since crime rates in a social setting are a summary of the frequency of individual delinquent behaviors, they are determined by the fraction of individuals who receive excess of delinquent behavior patterns via the process of differential

association. This paper therefore combine the differential association theory with the biological theory by Lombroso to explain crime and criminality in the society.

Lombroso's theory was the first to attribute criminal activities to one's biological makeup (Ellwood, 1912) He argued that criminality was a biological trait found in some human beings. The term atavism was used by Lombroso to describe the appearance of organisms resembling ancestral forms of life. He believed that atavism was a sign of inherent criminalities, and thus he viewed born criminals as a form of human sub-species. Lombroso believed that atavism could be identified by a number of measurable physical stigmata such as a protruding jaw, drooping eyes, large ears, twisted and flattish nose, and long arms relative to the lower limbs, sloping shoulders, and a coccyx that resembled "the stump of a tail."

The theory has ever since been rejected and considered unscientific, however, his theory puts forward the argument that if one is born a criminal then he must be put away from society to protect the society given that he may engage in the same criminal acts when allowed to be part of the community. Moreover, Lombroso's theory brings to mind the need for rehabilitation and reformation. Indeed, the rejection of Lombroso's theory induced further scientific studies of criminal minds which have come to be known as criminal anthropology.

Lombroso's version of strict biological determinism is no longer taken seriously. Today criminologist who suggests that crime has some biological basis also believe that environmental conditions influence human behavior. Hence the term biosocial theory has been coined to reflect the assumed link between physical and mental traits, the social environment and behavior. Many of the traits they assumed to be inherited are not really genetically determined but could be caused by deprivation in surroundings and diet. Even if most criminals shared some biological traits, they might be products not of heredity but of some environmental condition, such as nutrition or health care. It is equally likely that only criminals who suffer from biological abnormality are caught and punished by the justice system. In his later writings, Lombroso admitted that the born criminal was just one of many criminal types. Because of these deficiencies in his theory, the value of individual oriented explanations of criminality became questionable, and for a time these theories were disregarded by the criminological mainstream. Yet the theory is still very relevant to the analysis of crime and criminality. The two theories were therefore use as a guide to the study.

The Philosophy for the Establishment of Prisons

A prison is a physical structure in a geographical location where a number of people living under highly specialized condition adjust to the alternatives presented to them by the unique kind of social environment (Obioha, 2011). The above conceptualizations as advanced by scholars are limited towards an understanding that a prison is a physical environment, and could be described geographically or spatially. Quite different from the physical conception, there are other schools of thought that are based on function, framework and label. From the functional perspective, a prison is perceived as a place to

punish offenders, where criminals that are removed from the society are dumped to protect the society from further criminal activities of the offenders; and a place to rehabilitate, and teach offenders to be law abiding and productive after their release.

Prisons are also perceived as a total institution, from the perspective of framework. While Okunola (1986, cited in Obioha, 2011) sees a total institution as a place unlike free environment or community that houses those who are socially rejected, insane or mentally retarded, Goffman (1961 cited in Obioha, 2011) on the other hand conceptualized total institution as where there is a basic split between a large class of individuals who are restricted contact with the outside world and stereotypical behavioural pattern where social mobility is restricted. So from these points of view it could be conceived that the prison is a place for vagrants, who may pose actual danger to social life in the larger society, which presupposes that every person in the prison is a vagrant and irresponsible person (Obioha, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

Tamale is the regional capital of the Northern Region of Ghana with an inhabitant population of 537,986 according to the August, 2012 census of Ghana. The town is located 600km north of Accra. Tamale residents are moderate followers of Islam as reflected by the multitude of mosques in Tamale most notably the central mosque. Tamale grew from a conglomeration of towns where one could find an architectural blend of traditional mud houses and modern buildings. The Tamale Central Prison is situated in the Central Area Development Scheme-Tamale specifically by the jubilee park. The land size of the Prisons is one acre. The Prison structure is made up of 6 cell blocks, 17 cells and workshops in addition to an administration block. Prisoners admitted include lifers, high sentence, and low sentence and remand Prisoners (Regional Director of Prisons, Tamale).The Prisons was constructed on 23rd October, 1914 by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth to house and detain convicts and remand prisoners in Northern Ghana. Much later, the Yendi, Salaga, and the Gambaga prisons were constructed all in the Northern Region of Ghana to complement the role of the Tamale Central Prisons as the only prison facility in the Northern Region of Ghana for both male and female inmates.

The cross sectional study design was adopted for this study because it permitted the use of probability and non-probability sampling techniques and therefore, the selected sample was representative of the study population to a known degree of precision. In addition, this study design allowed the use of other instruments other than questionnaires in the data collection process. The case study method under the cross sectional study design was employed and the study was carried out in its natural settings. The Case study method is a research methodology and also an investigative tool that is commonly used in studying social phenomena (Babbie and Mouton, 2004). The study considers case study as a research strategy that facilitates investigation on a phenomenon within its real-life context. Thus, the Case Study method permits an in-depth investigation of individuals, groups, or events which may be descriptive or explanatory. This research design was therefore the most

relevant approach for collecting and analyzing data and reporting the results on Prisons as an institution for reforming criminal in the Tamale Central prisons.

The target population for this study was prison inmates of the TCP and the institutional framework that governs the prisons service in the Tamale metropolis. The unit of analysis for the study included prisoners in the TCP, Prison Officers and the administrative authorities of the prison service. The sampling frame for the study consisted of prisoners in the Tamale Prison, the Prison Officers, and administrative authorities of the prison service in the Tamale metropolis. The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting the Tamale Central Prison and the institutional frameworks that supports the prison in that region. This was because the TCP had 250 prison inmates convicted for diverse crimes who in the researcher's opinion can provide in depth information on the subject matter to answer the questions and to meet the objectives of the study. This form of sample is often used when working with very small samples such as in case study research and when you wish to select cases that are particularly informative (Neuman, 2000) thus it was adopted for this study.

The simple random sampling technique was furthermore used in selecting the required number of respondent. This sampling technique allows the researcher to select the sample without bias and also makes the sample selected to be representative of the whole population (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007). This sample technique was also used because there was accurate and easily accessible sampling frame that list the entire prison population in the Tamale Central Prisons. Each prisoner on the sample frame (register of the prison) was assigned numbers starting from one. The numbers assigned was then written on pieces of paper and put into a container and thoroughly shuffled and picked one at a time without replacement until the required number of respondents was obtained.

The choice of fairly representative sample for a study is critical for generating results that reflect characteristics of the entire population. The researcher, being guided by this fact, carefully selected representative sample that help to make generalization of findings.

Out of the total number of 250 prison inmates during the time of the study, 150 were randomly selected for this study. Thirty (30) officials including junior officers and senior officers, the Regional Director and his Assistant were also selected for the study.

Both primary data and secondary data collection techniques were used to gather information for this study. Primary data was gathered from the prison inmates, officials of the Tamale prison service and the stakeholders that support the reformation process in the Tamale prisons. The primary data collected includes the bio data of respondents including their sex, age, educational background, marital status, size of households among others. The perceptions of prison inmates and ex-convicts on reforming criminals in TCP were also gathered. Interventions aimed at ensuring reforming criminals and the challenges that militate against these interventions was also gathered from the perspectives of prison inmates, ex-convicts and the institutional framework within the TCP and other stakeholders.

Secondary information was gathered from archives, documents, articles, journals, text books, internet sources etc. The secondary information gathered includes the concept of prisons as an institution for reforming criminals all over the world. Case studies of reformed criminals and the challenges militating against the role of prisons as an institution for reforming criminal on the African continent and the world at large was also gathered.

The primary data was collected through participant observations, semi structured interviews and administration of questionnaires.

Gill and Johnson (2002) develop a fourfold categorization of the role a participant observer can adopt. These roles are: complete participant; where a researcher become a member of the group in which he/she is performing the research and do not reveal his/her true purpose to the group members; complete observer; where the researcher do not take part in the activities of the group and do not reveal the purpose of his/her activity; observer as participant; here the identity of the researcher is made clear to all concerned but he does not participate in any activity of the group; participant as observer, in which the purpose of the researcher is known to a group and he/she observes a group. For this study, the researcher played the role of a participant as observer. His intention was made known to the prison authorities and the inmates and he was permitted to observe what goes on in the prison yard and to make notes.

Semi-structured interviews using an interview guide was also used in gathering primary data from prison officers in the Tamale Central Prisons. This technique was used because it provided the researcher with the opportunity to 'probe' answers, where he wants his interviewees to explain, or build on their responses. Also, it affords each interviewee an opportunity to hear her or himself 'thinking aloud' about things she or he may not have previously thought about and further ensures personal contact (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

In addition, questionnaires were administered to the prison inmates to gather information from them. The questionnaire used included both open and close ended questions to ensure respondents provide in-depth information on the subject being studied. It was also structured into various sections to ensure clarity of information searched for and easy analysis of data. Questionnaire was chosen as an instrument for collecting data during this study because it offers each person (respondent) to be asked to respond to the same set of questions and provides an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample and provides the grounds for quantitative analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

Data collected was edited, coded and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Primary data gathered using the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively with the aid of the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS v.16). Descriptive Statistics such as cross tabulation, frequencies and percentages were used to analyzed and summarize the primary data gathered and the findings presented with the aid of tables. Content analysis was employed in analyzing the qualitative data gathered from the semi- structured interviews.

The content of the interviews was critically analyzed and discussed to support the quantitative data gathered. This was done by searching for ideas within the answers given and the major issues raised by the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic characteristic of a sampled population plays an important role in understanding the responses given by respondents in a survey and helps to place the study in the right perspective. A total of 180 respondents were used for this study. Out of this total number, 150 were prison inmates while the remaining 30 were officials of the Tamale Central Prisons [TCP].

Demographic characteristics of inmate

The study revealed that as high as half (50%) of the total respondents indicated they have not had any formal education. The lack of formal education by these inmates may be a contributing factor to their imprisonment given that people with no education have limited opportunities in life especially in relation to a decent work. About 60 percent of the unemployed in Ghana can be found in the 15-24 years age group. This makes Ghana's youth unemployment rate one of the highest in the world (Amankrah, 2000).

Given the high rate of unemployment amongst Ghana's youth coupled with hikes in prices and increasing cost of living, individuals who do not have a decent work may resort to any means of making a living without considering the consequences of their actions. For such individuals, 'survival' is the rule of the game and any action that puts money into their pockets is justifiable even when it goes against the rule of law.

Furthermore, the results of the study indicated that another 18.7% and 16.7% of the total respondents reported having had Junior High School and Primary school education as their highest level of education respectively. In addition, only 9.3% of the total respondents had been to Senior High School with 2.7% each of the total respondents having had tertiary and vocation/technical education as their highest education obtained. These statistics portrays the low levels of education of the prison inmates in the TCP. It can therefore be interpreted that the commitment of crime and subsequently imprisonment are mostly common among the uneducated and people with low level of education.

Unlike majority of the prison inmates with either no or low education, results from the study further indicates that 40% of the prison officers had tertiary education as their highest level of education with 23.3% having other qualification such as O and A level as their highest educational qualification. Approximately 16.7% and 10% of the prison officers also had primary and Senior High school education respectively as their highest level of education whereas 6.7% have been educated to the graduate level. Even though, comparatively the percentage of the prison officers with tertiary education are more than that of the prison inmates, that percentage is woefully inadequate given that more than half of the prison officers have not completed tertiary education. The level of one's education significantly affects performance and efficiency on the job thus the high number of the prison officers without tertiary education may limit the efficiency of the TCP as an institution for reforming criminals especially in the recent call for the education of prison inmates.

Majority (52%) of the respondents were also married with a considerable and 42.7% of the total respondents also being single. Only insignificant number of the total respondents were either divorced or widow/widower. Marriage as used in this study referred to both traditional and legal marriages which may account for why a little over 50% of the respondents indicated they were married. Making inferences from the statistics on the marital status of the prison inmate, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between prison inmates who are married and those who are single. This implies that both married and unmarried individuals commit crime and are imprisoned.

Notwithstanding the fact that significant percentages of both married and single individuals were found in the TCP, the results of the study revealed that approximately 64% of the total respondents and 46.7% of the prison officers falls within the active working population of the country. That is, they were not above 35 years of age. This shows the youthful nature of the prison inmate as well as the prison officer in the TCP. The high percentage of youthful people in the TCP can be attributed to the high unemployment rate among the youth of Ghana. Moreover, it is the youth that have the strength and are more likely to engage in criminal offenses.

Moreover, results of the study disclosed that majority of the total respondents had a large household size. The results of the study showed that 33% of the total respondents had a household size of more than ten (10) while 29.3% and 24.7% had a household of between 4-6 and 7-9 respectively. The large household sizes of the prison inmate may be a contributing factor to their involvement in criminal activities and subsequently their imprisonment. This is because the large household size of the prison inmates means they had a high dependency ratio and given that it is the duty of men according to the Ghanaian traditional setting to provide for their families, the prison inmate may have come under strong pressure to provide for their households.

Economic Characteristics of Inmates

The economic characteristics of the respondents were considered to give the researcher a deeper understanding of the opinions shared by the respondents. The assertion that most prison inmates were unemployed prior to their imprisonment was diffused by the economic characteristics of the respondents in the TCP.

Table 1 Economic Characteristics of respondents

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Occupation	Unemployed	6	4.0
	Self Employed	116	77.3
Status	Civil Servant	8	5.3
	Private Sector Employee	11	7.3
	Casual Worker	3	2.0
	Student	6	4.0
	Self-Contained House	26	17.3
Residence	Compound House	90	60.0
	Uncompleted Building	23	15.3
	Stores/Shops	11	7.3
	Total	150	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

The study discovered as shown in Table 1 that 77% of the respondents claimed they were self-employed before being imprisoned. Majority of these inmate mentioned they were farmers while others reported they were engaged in petty trading. Out of the total number of respondents who reported to be employed, approximately 7% were private sector employees with another of 5.3% being civil servants. In addition, 4% and 2% of the total respondents were students and casual workers respectively. Notwithstanding the fact that majority of the prison inmates at the TCP reported being employed prior to their imprisonment, it can be inferred from the statistics that they were engaged in low income earning ventures which may account for their engagement in criminal activities to complement their meagre income. Majority of the inmates reported to be peasant farmers whom according to the Ghana Living Standard Survey are the poorest in Ghana (GSS, 2008). Those who reported being engaged in private firms were only casual construction workers given their level of education thus they were not earning much. It can therefore be interpreted from the statistics above that most prison inmates are not engaged in decent and high earning employment avenue. It can thus be concluded that criminal activities are mostly associated with low income and underemployed groups.

Efforts towards Reforming Criminals in the Tamale Central Prison

The purpose and justification of a sentence of imprisonment or a similar measure deprivative of liberty is ultimately to protect society against crime. This end can only be achieved if the period of imprisonment is used to ensure, so far as possible that upon his return to society the offender is not only willing but able to lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life (U. N. Standard Minimum Rules for The Treatment of Prisoners, Rule 58). Prisons as correctional facilities are to protect society by keeping prisoners in safe custody, reforming and rehabilitating them and returning them to their neighborhoods as law abiding and productive citizens (Awolugutu, 2012).

Prison inmates however come to prisons with peculiar problems which caused them to be imprisoned in the first place. Among these problems are the high rate of illiteracy among majority of the prison inmates, joblessness, marital problems, lack of accommodation, substance abuse, and alcohol abuse inter alia. The onus therefore lies on prison staff to identify these offending needs and properly addressed them before the prisoners are released into the outside world. The study therefore seeks to find out the efforts of the TCP directed towards achieving this mandates of the prison service.

Findings from the study showed that education and skill development training were the major efforts being implemented at the TCP to achieve their mandate of reforming prison inmates before they are discharged into their society. This was found to be in line with findings from different scholars (Steurer& Smith, 2003; Wilson, et al., 2000; Piehl, 1995) which established a strong relationship between education and reformation of prisoners.

The Presidential Special Initiatives [PSI] distance learning education under the umbrella term CENDLOS [Center for Nation Distance Learners for Open School] was identified as one of the important intervention aimed at reforming prison inmates at the TCP. Under this intervention introduced in late 2007 prison inmates at the TCP were taken through the Basic

School Certificate Examination [BECE] and West African Senior High School Certificate Examination [WASSCE] syllabus to prepare them to take part in these exams.

This intervention however was reported to have been halted by June 2014 due to funding challenges. According to an official of the TCP, funding to run the PSI program no longer comes from the PSI secretariat which explains why they have to halt that program for the time being. This finding shows the lack of commitment on the part of government to use education as a major tool in reforming criminals. Moreover, the halting of this intervention follows a common trend in Ghanaian politics where an incumbent government neglect the programs initiated and implemented by previous governments.

The CENDLOS intervention is a ground breaking intervention which would have greatly contributed to the total reformation of the prison inmates at the TCP. This is because the opportunity granted to inmates to take part in the BECE and WASSCE will increase their knowledge base and instill in them some self-worth and commitment to duty which will go a long way to help them when they are out of prison. Moreover, the high level of illiteracy even as shown from the demographic characteristics of the respondents will be reduced which will enable prison inmate on their discharge to take on meaning jobs or further their education given they would have been awarded certificates.

Furthermore, results from the study indicated that ICT education, non-formal training in *Dagbani* and English and skills development training in smock weaving, basketry, tailoring, shoe making, electrical works among others were among the other education and training efforts being implemented at the TCP to achieve their mandate of reforming prison inmates. The smock weaving, shoe making and tailoring skills training which engaged 8,7, and 11 inmates respectively as at the time of this research were reported to have been in existence over the past two decades and still ongoing just as the ICT training and the basketry training started in 2010 and 2013 respectively are also still ongoing.

In an interview with the Regional Director of prison, he indicated that efforts are being made to train inmates in rabbit rearing in addition to the newly introduced piggery rearing program. This intervention being implemented at the TCP aimed at reforming criminal is well applauded. It can be gleaned from this finding that this intervention is well fitted into the culture of the northern region and provides alternative source of livelihoods for the inmates which is very commendable. The northern region encompass majority of the poor and very poor and given that majority of the prison inmate are native people, the alternative livelihood training in basketry, weaving among others as being implemented by the TCP will contribute significantly to reforming the inmates on their release. Inmates who benefit from these skill development training may have a livelihood when discharged.

In addition, the study disclosed that the efforts aimed at reforming criminal at the TCP were complemented by other organizations. For instance, the basket weaving training was reported to be funded by a Non-Governmental Organization, HAVILAK under Bolga Basket Weaving Association based in Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region of Ghana which shows the commitment of other bodies other than the prison service in the reformation process of

the prison inmates at the Tamale Central Prisons. Confirming the role of other stakeholders in the reformation efforts of the prison service the Regional Director indicated as follows:

“Faith based organizations like the Presbyterian Church has developed half way housing for ex-convicts. After discharge, the church takes custody of the ex-convicts and gives them further training and counselling with integration as the main objective” (Fieldwork 2014).

The contribution of other organizations other than the prison service cannot be overemphasized, particularly given the financial, logistic and human resource constraints that bedeviled the institution in their efforts towards reforming criminals confirming the call of (Awolugutu, 2012) on civil service society and other bodies to assist in the efforts of reforming criminals.

Another effort being implemented at the Tamale Central Prisons aimed at reforming prison inmates as identified from the findings of the study was the permission granted to prison inmates to participate in religious activities. Church organizations and Islam groups were permitted by the prison authorities to come and share with the prison inmates on their faith. Christian and Islamic literatures are made available to prison inmates to study. This researcher believes this is directed towards shaping the mindsets of the prison inmates and giving them hope. Many of the prison inmates lack hope and feel rejected consequently the continual admonishment by the religious organizations contributes to their reformation process. This finding was in line with other studies by Johnson et al, 1997 and the US Department of Justice (1993).

According to the US Department of Justice (1993), religious activities was the most participated activity by prison inmates while Johnson et al, 1997 also observed that prison inmates that participated in religious activities were seen to have changed in a positive way though they could not conclude that such change will result in the prison inmates being “repented” and changed within completed. Moreover, results from the study showed that counselling of prison inmates was a measure put in place by the TCP to reform criminals. Some prison inmates have guilt feelings arising from the crime they have committed. Prisoners with such offences as defilement, rape, murder have deep emotional problems that are dealt with through the counselling sessions organized at the TCP. Professional counselors are trained to discharge the emotional burden of people and to sharpen the way of thinking of people through interaction.

Opportunity given to inmates to go through such counselling sessions will go a long way to contribute to reforming the prison inmates in the TCP. It must however, be stated here that the quality of counselling is dependent on the competence and knowledge base of the counsellors. Therefore, trained counsellors are the best for counselling prison inmates. Notwithstanding, the TCP could not boast of many qualified and trained counsellors which undermine to some degree the efforts of counselling aimed at reforming criminals at the TCP.

To confirm the efforts directed towards reforming criminals at the TCP, the opinions of the prison inmates were sought as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Cross Tabulation of measures put in place and reformation of inmates

		Would you consider yourself reformed			Total
		Yes	No		
Are measures put in place to reform prisoners	Yes	Count	144	3	147
		% of Total	96.0%	2.0%	98.0%
	No	Count	3	0	3
		% of Total	2.0%	.0%	2.0%
Total		Count	147	3	150
		% of Total	98.0%	2.0%	100.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

From Table 2, the results of the study disclosed that 96% of the total respondents attested to the existence of measures in place at the TCP to ensure they are reformed with only insignificant percentage (2%) disagreeing to the existence of such measures aimed at reforming criminals at the TCP. More so, all the respondents (96%) who agreed to the existence of the measures at the TCP aimed at reforming criminal also considered themselves to be reformed. The implementation of the skill development training program was cited by majority of the respondents as the main effort towards reforming criminals at the TCP with only few of the respondents citing the counseling and religious activities as other measures they consider ensuring their reformation. This finding can be attributed to the fact majority of the prison inmates did not appreciate the mental change that comes as a result of the counselling and religious activities but rather ascribed more of their reformation to the physical hand-on skill development activities.

Moreover, given that most of the prison inmates do not have any form of skill training, they appreciate the skill development training very much and consider that more as an intervention for reforming them. Also, skill development training is expensive outside the prison walls and given the low income status of majority of the prison inmate they cannot afford thus the opportunity provided them to engage in such were very much applauded as a measure for reformation. It was therefore, not strange when an officer intimated as:

“Some prison inmates who prior to their completion of their skill development training are discharged, intentionally engage in other social vice in order to be brought back to prison to complete their skills development training” (fieldwork 2014).

From the statement above, it be gleaned that in spite of the fact that the skill development training is aimed at reforming criminals, it comes with its own challenges which contributes to recidivism. Efforts must therefore be put in place to curb such unfortunate instances from happening thereby defeating the essence of the program. This could be done by considering the length of incarceration before attaching an inmate to any skill training and development programme.

The entire inmate who attested to the existence of the measures to reform them also considered themselves to be reformed. The opportunity given to develop a skill, belief in the existence of a supreme being, the hardship and deprivation experienced within the prison walls and the perceived changed of attitudes and unwillingness to go back to former deeds that brought inmate to the prison were some of the reasons given by the prison inmates for considering themselves to be reformed. Below are few statements indicated by the prison inmates confirming why they consider themselves to be reformed?

"I had no skills to live on before imprisoned, but now I can weave smock. This will enable me live when am discharged"

"I never believed in the existence of God but now I do and wish to go out to preach to others to repent"

"I was a serious smoker when I was outside prison but now I am no more smoking, I therefore consider myself reformed"

"I was imprisoned for defilement but I don't even have sexual edge again"

"I now know every offense has its punishment and I will not again wish to commit any offence. I have become soberer and remorseful. I have developed respect for others and learned how to deal with and live with people whom I didn't have before imprisoned"

One of the prison inmates that considered himself not reformed mentioned he had just started his prison sentence term and can as a result not say he is reformed. The remaining two (2) inmates stated that reformation is a process and do not consider themselves to be fully reformed till they are discharged. This statement by the two inmates is worth considering because the mere regret and decision to change may not necessary lead to reformation.

Moreover, the prison inmates may consider themselves reformed as long as they are deprived of certain things they used to engage in. In an interview with the Regional Director of Prison, he confirmed the fact that some prison inmates get reformed as a result of some of the interventions such as the skill development training and counseling session implemented by the prison service. He was however quick to add that not all the prison inmates get reformed before they are discharged. He said:

"Interventions reform some prison inmates but not all and conclusions on whether prison inmates get reformed is difficult because it is difficult to track the movements of ex-convicts upon discharge" (fieldwork 2014).

The second in command at the Tamale Central Prisons in commenting on the efforts of reforming prison inmates also had this to say:

"Reforming of inmates depends on the individual prisoner and prison inmates are not forced to learn any trade. However, the culture of the establishment makes individuals to change from bad to good while the deprivation inmates go through also helps in their reformation" (fieldwork, 2014).

From the foregoing discussion, it can be clearly seen that the Tamale Central Prisons have in place some measures to achieve its mandate as an institution for reforming criminals. Some of these measures align themselves to some accepted practices across the globe even though they are not comprehensive enough.

Also, a major component in the reformation process of criminal, that is, education, was not functioning due to financial challenges. The skill development training among other interventions was also identified to be hampered by some challenges as discussed further in this study. However, on the backdrop of this statistics and responses from the prison officers, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents attest to the fact that there are measures at the TCP to reform criminals; accordingly, the study rejects the null hypothesis guiding the study which indicates that measures at the Tamale Prisons do not reform prison inmates.

Influence of Policy Environment towards Reforming Inmates in the Tamale Central Prison

The Prison Service of Ghana is governed and influenced by a number of policies and statutes. These policies are either national or international in nature. Moreover, these policies may either be specifically related to the prison service or the general governance of the nation and adherence to international standards. For instance, the administration of the prison's service in Ghana is human right centered and must adhere to the universal standards on good prison practice such as free provision of transport to prison inmates on release, return of prisoners' property to them on release, right to preparation for release, right of remandees to wear their own clothing, notification of death, illness, transfer of inmates, petitions and periodical reports, right to read newspapers, periodical and books inter alia.

Results from the study reveal that some policies implemented both within and outside the prison circles impact positively or negatively on the reformation of criminals at the TCP. Among the policies deemed important by majority of the prison officers to positively impact on efforts of reforming criminals at the TCP was the policy on amnesty and the remission system. Amnesty is basically a pardon extended by the government to a group or class of persons to be freed from serving their full sentence. The remission system on the other hand applies to all convicted prisoners who are serving a term or an aggregate of terms of imprisonment exceeding one month.

All such prisoners are eligible, by good conduct and steady industry, to earn a maximum of one third of their sentence or sentences as remission. These policies motivate prison inmates to put up good behaviour and to follow the laid down processes and efforts aimed at reforming them. These policies also account for the desire of most of the prison inmate at the TCP to be leaders. It is worth noting that despite the fact that these policies positively impact on the reformation process of the prison inmates in the TCP, it cannot be exclusively concluded that prison inmates who enjoyed either amnesty or remission for good conduct are reformed. Some inmates can actually camouflage their true character to enjoy the provisions provided by these policies without being reformed.

In addition, the results of the study disclosed that policies on psychotherapy and medication for prisoners with emotional problems especially drug addicts, rapist etc.; education of inmates in line with what pertains in the free society and the skill development training were among the policies identified to be positively influencing the efforts of reforming criminals at the TCP. The prison inmates at the TCP were offered psychotherapy and medication free of charge and also participate in various skill developments training for free. These policies help to sharpen the thinking and behavioral pattern of the prison inmates which assist in their reformation.

In an interview with the Regional Director of prison it was disclosed that even though the prison authorities are now gravitating towards rehabilitation and reformation of prison inmates there is yet no legislation to support it. He stated that prison laws de-emphasize reformation as compared to ensuring safe custody. From this statement, it can be concluded that even though the TCP and other prisons across the country are implementing some policies aimed at reforming criminals, there is no legal backing and reformation of criminals is not yet a major focus of the prison administration.

This may account for the lack of commitment towards the implementation of the measures intended to reform criminals. A legal framework indicating the way forward in reforming criminals is eminent if that goal can be achieved. For instance, China's successful reformation of criminals imprisoned is predicated on their prison reform law (Prison Law of the People's Republic of China, Order No.35 of the President of the People's Republic of China, 1994)

Notwithstanding the policies discussed above which positively affects the reformation efforts of the TCP, the results of the study discovered the existence of some policies, rules and laws that hinder the efforts of the TCP as an institution for reforming criminals.

The study disclosed some institutional policies outside the purview of the prison institution that negatively affects the role of the TCP as an institution for reforming criminal. For instance, the results of the study identified that ex-convicts are prevented from being employed by state institutions. This is rather unfortunate as the state is the leading employer in the country and must therefore set an example for other private institutions to emulate. The refusal of the state to employ ex-convicts is an indication of their lack of commitment to reforming criminals because if the state has invested and believe prison inmates can be reformed, the refusal to employ ex-convicts cannot be explained. The inability of prison inmates to secure decent job opportunity is one of the main challenges hampering the efforts of reforming criminals thus the unwillingness of public institution to employ ex-convicts escalate the problem and results in high recidivism. It was disclosed by some prison officers that some ex-convicts deliberately engage in crime to be arrested and brought back to the prison yard to 'enjoy' the benefits such as regular source of food and the skill development training offered by the TCP because of their inability to secure a decent job or any form of livelihood. An officer commenting on the policies, rules and laws outside the prison walls which militate against efforts of the TCP as an institution for reforming criminals stated as follows:

“Some of the laws of the country in relation to prison inmates are obnoxious. Some prison inmates reoffend after being released in order to come back to prison because of the discrimination that pertains outside the prison walls against prison inmates. “Some inmates actually return to prison to complete their skill development training by reoffending” (fieldwork 2014).

Moreover, it was also discovered that institutionally, it is only after 10years that an ex-convict can be voted to represent his constituency in parliament. These policies and laws undermine the efforts of the prison service in totally reforming criminals. It is not clear why this policy exists because if ex-convicts have the right to exercise their franchise, they must also have the full mandate to be elected into parliament to represent their constituencies. The decision for ex-convicts to represent their constituencies should be solely left with the electorate and not any legislation. Finally, the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection was accused of being oblivious of enforcing the rights of criminals and ex-convicts.

Effects of culture on Inmates reforms in the Tamale Central Prison

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor, 1871). The way of life among prison inmates varies and is mostly different from what pertains outside the prison walls. Once an individual is confined under prison authority, he/she is obliged to obey the rules and regulations of the prison institution which can sometimes be stressful for the inmates.

This is because confinement of the individual in prison leads to many deprivations among which are loss of liberty, loss of autonomy, deprivation of certain goods and services, and lack of heterosexual experience. These pains of imprisonment coupled with other factors make the prison inmates to consider the TCP to be unsafe.

Table 3 Responses on safety of prison

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	124	83.3
No	25	16.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

As shown in Table 3 findings indicated that 83.3% of the total respondents considered the setting of the TCP to be unsafe while the remaining 16.7% of the total respondents thought otherwise. The acceptance by majority of the inmate of the safety of the TCP can be attributed to the fact that they have been prisonized as put forward by Clemmer (1940) theory of prisonization (assimilation process in prison where inmates take on “in greater or less degree the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary”). To cope with the “harsh” condition of the prison setting, prison inmates develop their own ways of living which is referred to by Awutulugu (2012), as inmate subculture. The purpose of inmate subculture is to soften or minimize the pains of imprisonment.

Results from the study disclosed that the prison inmates at the TCP had their own way of living and communicating which confirmed the statement of Awutulugu (2012) that prison inmates have their own code and value system coupled with their own rules and language that binds them together. This identified subculture among the prison inmate also agree with Sykes (1958) deprivation model which proposes that the way of life within the walls is as a results of the life and conditions within the prison wall itself rather than from outside the prison walls.

Life in prison differ from what pertains outside the prison wall thus to 'survive' prison inmates adapt to a way of life which sometimes impedes their reformation process. The study disclosed that the prison inmates at the TCP had their own sign languages and terms which they used to outwit prison officers. According to the Regional Director, the prison inmates at TCP socialize among themselves and initiate new inmates into their way of living. Those who do not conform to these cultures are considered as deviants and outcast.

Prison subculture influence and impacts on efforts aimed at reforming criminals both negatively and positively. From Table 4.5, the study discloses that, 66.7% of the total respondents (prison inmates) responded in the affirmative that the way of life (culture) at the TCP affects efforts aimed at reforming them while the remaining 33.3% did not agree with that assertion. The prison inmates who agreed to the assertion that prison culture affects their reformation process cited various reasons. Majority of them cited the opportunity to engage in some skill development training program as a major culture within the prison yard that promotes their reformation. Notwithstanding, it was also cited by some of the inmates that there are aspects of the prison subcultures that impedes efforts aimed at reforming them. One inmate indicated that:

"The culture within the prison yard hardens them and even prevents them from participating in the skills development training"

This was confirmed by the Regional Director who stated that:

"The culture within the prison settings makes inmates more hardened. The norms of the prison settings must be internalized by inmates which are negative thereby affecting the reformation efforts of the institution. Some convicts learn smoking from the prison. Furthermore, poverty and deprivation make some inmates vulnerable to the bad influence of other inmates which hinder the efforts directed at reforming them" (fieldwork, 2014).

Commenting on the influence of the prison subculture in the TCP, the Public Relations Officer also had this to add:

"Prison culture does lead to inmate riots and refusal to obey prison regulations and authority which sometimes impede their reformation process. To avert this often times the harden criminals and ring leaders are identified and disciplined and also transfer to other prison establishment to break the socialization of criminals among inmates" (Fieldwork, 2014).

The results of the study further reveals that as part of the subculture in the TCP, prison inmates had their own leadership. This was agreed to by both officials and prison inmates. 99.3% of the respondents attested to the fact that there are inmates among them who serve as leaders and whose roles they all agreed to be acceptable with the exception of one respondent who thought otherwise. The inmate leader serves as a liaison between the prison authorities and their fellow inmates. They assist in ensuring law and order in the prison yard by controlling inmates, assisting in checking rolls call, maintaining discipline and ensuring the cleaning of the prison environment. These leadership positions were held in high esteem by most of the inmates and it was observed that it was the desire of most of the prison inmates to be appointed as leaders given some of the benefits that come with it.

Furthermore, Homosexuality, formation of core criminal groups which was attributed to deprivation of heterosexuality and criminal socialization from outside before imprisonment were identified as some of the subculture within the TCP which hinder the reformation process of inmates.

Challenges Affecting Inmates Reforms in the Tamale Central Prisons

The mission statement of the Ghana Prisons Service as one of the agencies of the Criminal Justice Administration in Ghana is to maintain an efficient, effective, humane but security-oriented prison system that will reform and rehabilitate prison inmates for their reintegration into society as law-abiding citizens on their release. As stipulated in the NRCD 46, the Ghana Prison Service as a whole has the policy objective to ensure the safe custody of prisoners, welfare of prisoners, reformation and rehabilitation of prison. The fulfillment of these mandates is however not without challenges. These challenges are normally related to the prisoners themselves and the prison service as an institution on the other hand. As part of the study, the challenges confronting the TCP as an institution for reforming criminals and the perceived and real challenges faced by prison inmates during and prior to the discharge from prison were assessed.

Overcrowding was identified as one of the major challenges confronting the TCP as an institution for reforming criminals. During the study, the TCP had a total inmate population of 347 comprising both males and females. Out of this total population, 271 were convicted inmates while the remaining 76 were on remand. The study disclosed that majority of the prison inmates selected considered the TCP to be overcrowded. As shown in Table 4.7, 88% of the total numbers of respondents affirm the overcrowded situation of the TCP while the remaining 18.2% did not.

The study observed that the prison rooms originally meant to accommodate between 2-5 inmates had as many as 22 -28 inmates attesting to the overcrowded situation within the TCP. The overcrowded situation as observed in the TCP is similar to most of the prisons in the county and in other West African countries which compromise on the comfort of inmates and deepens the negative subculture developed among the prison inmates. These findings give credence to the research work of Ogwezzy (2011) of the Nigerian prisons. Overcrowding in the prison cells results in poor sanitation conditions and its consequent effects on the health of the prison inmates. The Regional Director attesting to the overcrowded situation within the TCP indicated that the situation is mostly compounded by the large numbers of remand prisoners. The overcrowding situation as seen in the TCP

hampers reformation efforts given that prisoners are not grouped as indicated by one prison officers during the study. The officer indicated as follows:

“There is no categorization of prison inmates. Those imprisoned for murder, stealing, rape or defilement, petty offense among others are all put together and given the large numbers in a particular room those imprisoned for lesser offense in their quest to survive become hardened criminal by learning from the hardened criminals” (Fieldwork, 2014)

The inefficiencies and long procedural approach of the judiciary can be identified from the responses of the prison officials regarding the overcrowding situation in the TCP. The delay in justice and the long procedural approach of the judiciary increase the number of remand prisoners in the TCP as well as other prisons across the country compounding the already challenging accommodation problems in the prisons. Efforts must be geared towards solving this issue to reduce the burden on the prison service.

The overcrowded situation at the TCP also translate into poor sanitary conditions as observed during the study and confirmed by 45.3% and 9.3% of the total inmate respondents who considered the sanitation condition of the TCP to be bad and very bad respectively

Approximately, 45% of the total respondents also considered the sanitation situation within the TCP to be good notwithstanding the poor sanitation situation observed by the researcher during the study. This brings to bear the issue of subjectivity and confirm the theory of prisonization. They have been prisonized by adapting to the stench and poor sanitation situation that persist in the prison walls. Moreover, the response of the respondents who considered the sanitation within the TCP to be good can be attributed to the fact that they lived in similar situation before being imprisoned and thus do not consider the sanitation within the TCP to be a problem. This can be gleaned from their background as most of them mentioned their place of residence to be shops and kiosk, abandoned uncompleted buildings, ghettos inter alia. The poor sanitation conditions observed at the TCP have the potency to affect the health and in general the reformation process of prison inmates.

Furthermore, it was acknowledged that dwindling budgetary allocation was another major challenge confronting the TCP as an institution tasked to reform prison inmates.

Dwindling budgetary allocation was cited by the Regional Director of Prisons as inhibiting the expansion of infrastructure and reform programmes in the TCP. It was indicated that:

“The quality of programmes aimed at reforming prison inmates is sometimes compromised because of funding challenges. For example, the TCP had to abandon an educational programme for lack of motivation to teachers (Fieldwork, 2014).

This challenge was further confirmed by majority of the officials of the TCP who mentioned that the dwindling budgetary allocation translate into inadequate equipment for training prison inmate, lack of adequate logistics for the smooth running of the operations of the TCP

among others. The dwindling resource allocation to the TCP is an indication of the level of commitment of the government towards the reformation process of prison inmates. Reforming criminals is an expensive venture that requires the full co-operation and support of governments if it can be achieved.

Another important challenge confronting the mandate of the TCP to reform criminals identified by the study was the lack of space (land) to expand the facilities such as the accommodation, workshops and the programmes currently being implemented by the TCP. It was observed that the location of the TCP was within the heart of the Tamale Metropolis which restricts it from being expanded. This is because the land occupied by the TCP is surrounded by the police quarters and the police station impeding any expansion programs. It can be gleaned from this, that the location of a prison institution is vital in its role as an institution for reforming criminals. This finding also brings to the fore that the TCP was not planned well taking the future into consideration.

Lack of quality staff, professional counselors and psychologists were also identified as factors hindering the role of the TCP as an institution for reforming criminals.

The process and procedures for handling criminals is becoming complex and requires up to date skills and competence if reformation can be achieved. However, the study found out as many as 57% of the prison officers have not had any refresher training in the last five (5) years and beyond with approximately, 32% of the total number of the prison officers having had no refresher course since their enrolment into the service.

The prisons officers indicated that the last time they attended a refresher course was between two to four (2-4) years ago. This situation is very frightening and questions the preparedness of the prison institution to actively fulfill their mandate of reforming criminals. This is because criminals have become very sophisticated in their approach and dealings compounded by the advancement in technology and thereby the need for constant training cannot be overemphasized.

Prison inmates on the other hand face a multiplicity of challenges when the time is approaching for them to be discharged. For some it is an exciting experience because they are going to get their freedom back but for some others, is a stressful period since they do not know what life would be like in the free society having spent many years in prison. Financial setback was considered by majority of the inmates as a major challenge that will confront their reformation when they are discharged. They cited the perceived financial challenge to implement the skills development training they have had during their imprisonment. Majority of the prison inmates stated that they may not be able to raise the required income to purchase the required tools and equipment needed to put their skills into practice. The fears and concerns expressed by the prison inmates are legitimate given the hardship that pertains outside the prison wall and the limited opportunities available to ex-convicts in the real world. This calls for proper reorientation of prison inmates before they are discharged; however, this was not the case in the Tamale Central Prisons. According to one inmate, on the day of their release prison inmates are just cautioned not to indulge again

in activities that may bring them back to prison and only given enough money for their transportation on their day of release.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be acknowledged that though the TCP has some measures in place to reform criminals, the institution is plagued with many challenges that impede their activities. Most of these challenges are similar to those other Sub Saharan African countries and most developing countries are also grappling with it. However, these challenges are also among some of the challenges that other developing countries such as China, India have managed efficiently to transform their prison. There is therefore hope if the required prison reforms are put in place and commitments toward reforming prison inmates adhered to by all stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Tamale Central Prisons play key roles in reforming criminals. Majority of the prison inmates identified the roles of the institution in reforming criminals by attesting to the existence of reform measures and also considering themselves to be reformed. The implementation of the Education Skill Development Training interventions among others by the TCP are also in line with what other developing countries including China and Indian practice and developed countries like the United States and United Kingdom have embarked upon this measure to reform their criminals. Notwithstanding the existence and implementation of highly recognized interventions for reforming criminals at the Tamale Central Prisons, the full benefits from such interventions have not materialized due to the myriad challenges the institution is plagued with.

Tamale Central Prisons as institution for reforming criminals has in place well accepted international measures for reforming criminals but commitment of governments towards the implementation of these interventions is inadequate to translate such interventions into greater outcomes. Furthermore. The reformation of criminals is greatly influenced by existing national and international prison and general laws especially those bordering on human rights. These laws either promote or hinder the efforts of reforming criminals. For instance, the law that exclude ex-convicts from being employed in the public sector as well as the one that prevents ex-convicts from standing for parliamentary election till after a certain number of years impedes the reformation process of criminals. The paper finally concludes that until the necessary and relevant laws are put in place and laws limiting the potentials of ex-convicts are amended, reformation of criminals will be a farce. The following recommendations are made to improve Tamale Central Prisons:

- The number of convicted criminals keeps increasing which will ultimately aggravate the issues of overcrowding in the Tamale Central Prisons. Given that the TCP lacks land for expansion, the study recommends the relocation of the TCP in the long term to moderately address the issues of overcrowding. The study further reveals that all categories of Prisoners like those serving short and long term sentences as well as remandees are often lumped together. Re-location of the TCP will therefore go a long way to address this challenge. This would ultimately make it possible for the institution to achieve its mandate as an institution for reforming criminals.

- The government of Ghana must deepen their commitment to the reformation of criminals by increasing budgetary allocation to the TCP to enable them meet the needs and provide the necessary equipment needed in their reformation efforts. It was clear from the study that all the workshops meant for training of inmates were ill-equipped and the infirmary remains without adequate medicine and equipment. This obviously could compromise the quality of training of inmates. It came to light that the Presidential Special Initiative (PSI) on education in the TCP could not be continued because of the problem of lack of funds to motivate Officers handling the programme. It is the researcher's belief that using educated Prisoners to voluntarily teach less educated Prisoners could be a valuable option worth considering to reducing cost of managing the programme within budget of the TCP.
- Policies on employment of ex-convicts and election of ex-convicts into parliament together with other such institutional policies must be critically looked at again. The current ongoing constitutional review must take into consideration some of these laws to deepen the efforts of reforming criminals at the TCP and other prisons in Ghana. Conscious efforts should be made by the State to launch a nationwide campaign against ex-convict stigmatization.
- Condition of service of Prison officers should be improved considerably to attract Professionals like Psychologists, Sociologists and Counsellors to the Prison Service. Prison Officers need to be constantly abreast of modern trends in Prison administration. Refresher courses are therefore recommended.
- There should be a radical shift of emphasis from deterrence and custody to reformation and rehabilitation of offenders and this should necessitate the provision of a legal framework in that direction by parliament. Non-custodial sentence is a means by which the problem of overcrowding can be addressed to a large extent.
- The role of a particular Prison establishment in the reformation of inmates cannot be glossed over. The Prison authorities at the national level could engender competition among Prison establishments by introducing award schemes for best performing Prisons with reformation of convicts as a determining factor for nomination of award winning establishments. It is believed that such a policy could go a long way to encourage innovation in reform efforts nationwide.
- It should be realized that if jail services in respect of reformatory schemes are improved and facilities given, they can do a very important constructive job of rehabilitation. Developmental activities of the prison department, particularly in respect of welfare and production should be incorporated in all inmate reformation plans. The need for introducing radical changes in legal and administrative procedures to prevent long detention of under trials has always been stressed. Legal aid to needy prisoners should also be given due importance. There should thus be a clear trend to reduce the number of under trials and to expedite their trial in recognition of their human rights.
- It has been noted by (Lyles-Chockley, 2009) and (Nielson, 2012) that reasons for recurrence of recidivism is that Prisoners are released "with only the clothes on their backs - no money, no transportation, no clothing, no housing" and experience general economic distress through joblessness. Having undergone successful skill training programmes, it was expected that the state would assist in settling them by

providing financial assistance to those desirous of utilizing the skills learnt. This is often not the case resulting in ex-convicts seeking re-admission into the prison institute. The Government of Ghana could set up a revolving fund for ex-convicts with skills training to enable them establish their workshops.

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