



**Impacts of contemporary correctional service policy on inmates in
Bauchi custodial centre, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The policy was reviewed in the year 2019 due to the identified challenges of congestion; poor feeding and the need to re-brand the service in order to address new issues that were not covered under the repealed Act, categorically the rights of Inmates were also enshrined. Under the new policy, correctional service consists of custodial and non-custodial service. This paper examined the provision of the new Act and its impact on inmates in Bauchi custodial Centre, formerly known as Bauchi prison. In achieving this objective, data were collected through semi-structured interview with the informants that include the inmates and staff of the study area. Findings from the study indicated that there are many challenges face by inmates in the custodial Centre. Some of these challenges are congestion, inadequate feeding, poor medical care and frequent adjournment of cases. The introduction of non-custodial service, community service sentence, parole, probation, restorative justice is a welcome development as it will help in addressing some of the challenges bedevilling the criminal justice system in the country. The study recommends for proper training for correctional officers and relevant stakeholders such as Police, Court officials and Judges to ensure effective and full implementation of the new policy.

Keywords: Congestion, non-custodial, parole, probation, community service.

1. Introduction

The New Nigerian Correctional Service policy was signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari on the 31st July, 2019. It led to the nomenclature change from Nigerian Prison to Nigerian correctional service. The new policy was meant to address numerous issues that bedeviled prison system in the country. It provides for Custodial and Non-Custodial Service, it also establishes the structure and management of non-custodial measures (Longpoe & Longpoe, 2021). The main objectives of the policy are to ensure compliance with International human rights standards and good correctional practices; provide enabling platform for implementation of non-custodial measures; enhance the focus on corrections and promotion of reformation, rehabilitation

and reintegration of offenders; and establish institutional, systematic and sustainable mechanisms to address the high number of persons awaiting trial (correctional service Acts, 2019).

The origin of modern prison in Nigeria dates back to 1861 when Lagos was made the crown colony by the British colonialists. The noble goal of the prison services is the reform of those who pass through the prison gates and to protect the society from convicted felons. Many prisons have been established before and after independence in Nigeria. The prison has the duty to keep in safe custody persons legally sentenced to jail and identify the causes of their inherent anti-social behaviour and treat and reform them to become law-abiding citizens (Obioha, 2011). The inmates are trained in skills acquisition programmes in various



vocations especially carpentry, tailoring, painting, building and so on, in the course of serving their terms of imprisonment as part of rehabilitation programmes to help them become self-reliant after their release, (Ndukwe & Nwuzor, 2014).

Globally, efforts have been made to introduce new reforms in prison systems across the world in order to improve the living conditions and general welfare of the detainees. For example, In the United States, the Supreme Court ruled in May 2011 that prison overcrowding in California constituted cruel and unusual punishment. This decision revived a long-standing debate among scholars and policy makers as to whether should intervene to protect the well-being of the disfranchised, by forcing state to improve schools, prisons and mental institutions. This kick-started reforms in many prisons across the country (Boylan & Mocan, 2014).

In Africa, several countries have attempted to improve the prison conditions; by introducing reforms that target the rehabilitation of offenders but in most cases, they are still inadequate. Also, the prisons in Africa are characterized by severe overcrowding. In most cases the prison capacity is very limited and has not been expanded over time (Dissel, 2001)

In Kenya for example, the country inherited the penal system from the British Colonial government on its independence in 1963. The Penal Code and Kenya's constitution contain fairly liberal laws concerning prisoners. In addition, the country has ratified a number of international instruments protecting the rights of prisoners and detainees, including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. However, there is a large gap between the legal provisions and the actual conditions in prison. Moreover, various reports and studies have looked at the prevailing conditions existing in the prison systems in the world. More especially the challenges faced by both the prisoners and the Prison staff with regard to the

environmental conditions that exist in the prison system in Kenya and other African Countries. Hence, the need for reforms to address the issues mentioned (Nyaura & Ngugi, 2014).

In Nigeria Literature indicated that there were issues such as punishment culture, long detention of awaiting trial inmates, congestion, and frequent adjournment of cases in courts, dilapidated infrastructure, poor environmental hygiene, and poor feeding, among others. The above situation kicked-off campaign of relevant stakeholders such as the policy makers, media, Non-governmental Organizations, researchers, human rights activists among others on the need to repeal prison law and re-enact a new one in compliance with international human rights standard and good practices in prison administration (Igwe, 2017).

Bauchi custodial Centre is located in Bauchi metropolis. It was built in 1820 with the official capacity of 500 inmates, but currently housing 1,280 inmates the majority of the inmates in the facility are on awaiting trial (Statistics office, Bauchi custodial centre). Observation indicated that Bauchi custodial Centre is facing the challenges of congestion, poor medical care and feeding, prolong detention of awaiting trial inmates as well as inadequate bedding. The above-mentioned issues motivated this study and the general objective of this study is to examine the impact of the contemporary correctional service policy on inmates in Bauchi custodial Centre.

2. Literature Review

This section of the study reviewed relevant literature on correctional service policy, correctional service globally, in Africa and Nigerian context.

2.1 Custodial Centre

According to Ayo (2008) Prison or Custodial Centre is an institution designed to securely house people who have been convicted or are on awaiting trial. These individuals known as prisoners or inmates



are kept in continuous custody on a short- or long-term basis. Individuals who commit heinous crimes are sent to prison for more years. The more serious the offence, the longer the prison term imposed. Custodial Centres are formerly known as prisons, after the nomenclature change from the Nigerian Prison to Nigerian Correctional Service under the provision of the Correctional Service Act of 2019. The prisons are now known as custodial centres. Nevertheless, their functions remain almost the same, despite the fact that there was introduction of new measures that were hitherto non-existent (Ajiboye & Akinyemi, 2021).

2.2 Types of custodial centres

In discussing different types of custodial Centres in Nigeria, Ogwuoke (2021) stated that there are seven classes of Custodial Centres and they include: Maximum Security, Medium Security, Open custodial centre, Correctional farm centres, Satellite Custodial Facilities, Borstal Training Institutions and Female Custodial Facilities.

2.3 Correctional Service Globally

Obioha (2011) pointed out that the main aim of establishing the prison institution in all parts of the world is to provide a rehabilitation and correctional facility for those who have violated the rules and regulations of their society. However, the extent to which this maxim is true in practice has been a subject of controversy. Furthermore, in the Nordic countries where they are regarded as role models as far good and humane treatment of prisoners are concerned, the countries such as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden are somehow able to resist a current global move towards growing rates of imprisonment and tougher crime control policies. Nordic prisons are seen as beacons of humanity and decency in a world of ever-increasing penal populism (Ugelvik, 2017).

2.4 Correctional service in Africa

In Africa scholars such as Dissel (2001) pointed out that several countries have

attempted to improve the prison conditions; by introducing reforms that target the rehabilitation of offenders but in most cases, they are still inadequate. Mostly the prisons in Africa are characterized by severe overcrowding and the prison capacity is very limited and has not been expanded over time. Although the inmate to population ratios may be small, the impact of overcrowding on inmates is nevertheless severe. Coupled with this, many of the facilities are rudimentary in nature, and there are shortages of food, bedding, medical supplies and treatment as well as absence of recreation facilities. Ill treatment or torture of inmates was also reported for many of the countries. This indicated this kind of issues is not limited custodial centres in Nigeria such as Bauchi custodial centre and clamouring for prison reforms in Africa as whole has been in existence for quite a long time.

2.5 Correctional Service in Nigeria

In Nigeria studies like Obioha (2011) indicated that the main aim of establishing the prison institution in all parts of the world including Nigeria is to provide a rehabilitation and correctional facility for those who have violated the rules and regulations of their society. However, the extent to which this maxim is true in practice has been a subject of controversy. He also stated in his previous studies that this expected role of the prisons or Custodial Centres has not been realized to its maximum potential. On the general issue of imprisonment as an aspect of punishment, the retributivists and the deterrent philosophers stress that a deviant should be punished in order to pay him back for his actions and to deter him or others from committing crime. Imprisonment is most appropriately conceived as a formal perspective of inflicting pain on the individuals, which has been an aspect of the traditional criminal justice system in various societies in Nigeria (Obioha 1995; Obioha 2002).



Agbola (2019) pointed out that in Nigeria, the correctional institution like any other across the globe is now saddled with the sole responsibility of accommodating awaiting trial inmates as well as convicted inmates for the purpose of treatment and reform which are the whole mark of rehabilitation theory. At present, the contemporary correctional service policy is focusing more on reformation and rehabilitation of inmates than punishment because it is seen as the most effective mechanism for controlling recidivism.

Over the years, the provision of welfare services to inmates in Nigerian prisons have been far from satisfactory, many prisons do not meet up to the standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners while others violate the right to minimum feeding, allocation, accommodation, privacy, adequate lighting, medical services and the likes as stipulated by rule thirty-one (31) of the minimum standards of prison (Agozino, 2001).

2.6 Theoretical framework

The rehabilitation theory is adopted for this study. According to Dambazau (2007), rehabilitation theory posited that offender should be treated as an individual whose special needs and problems must be known in order to enable prison officials' deal effectively with him. The theory also argued that one cannot inflict a severe punishment or inhuman treatment to inmates in the prison and expect them to be reformed and reintegrate themselves into the society upon release. Although it is important to inflict punishment on those persons who breach the law, so as to maintain social order, the importance of rehabilitation is also given priority as it is the only assured way of ensuring that offenders do not return to crime particularly since they have acquired skills that will help them engage in productive activities upon release. The theory of rehabilitation therefore, seeks to reduce recidivism because it believes that through retraining programs for offenders, a more purposeful

life would be guaranteed to ex-convicts. Rehabilitation theory is the most valuable ideological justification for punishment. It promotes the humanizing belief in the notion that offenders can be saved and not simply punished. It recognizes the reality of social inequity.

The justification for the adoption of this theory is because with the introduction of the new policy, the focus of the service has now shifted from punishment culture to reformation and rehabilitation of inmates.

3. Methodology

This study adopted qualitative method using both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through semi-structured interview, while the secondary data was collected from the records of Bauchi custodial centre. The justification for the application of qualitative research approach became imperative due the fact that the researcher wanted to conducted in-depth interview with the informants in order to get the true picture of the phenomenon under study. According to Zorabi (2013) qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses on the way people interpret, and make sense of their experience to understand the social reality of individuals. Again, it is a type of scientific research that seeks to investigate, explain and understand given research problem by deploying procedures appropriate for the eliciting of information, responses and perspectives (Rahman, 2017). The study applied qualitative study design based on phenomenology in order to explore the perception of the interviewees and get relevant data from them in the study area. According to Asika (2009), research designs are often referred to as the structuring of investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationships to one another

The total number of inmates in Bauchi Custodial centre is 1, 280 and the number of Staff stand at 236. Therefore, the targeted population of this study is inmates and



correctional officers who work in the custodial centre. The sample size of the study was seven (7) inmates and four (4) staff, who were purposively selected from the custodial centre as the unit of analysis. Non-probability sampling technique was used in identifying the informants. In achieving the objective of the study, thematic data analyses technique was used to analyse the data collected for this study.

This section presented the results collected during the interview. The analysis is structured to highlight the findings based on the study objective. In lieu of this, the section analyzed the changes brought by the new correctional service policy and its impacts on inmates in Bauchi custodial Centre. The section is classified into different sub-sections in order to explain the analysis done and the findings from the interviewees that made up the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Profile of the Informants

Inmates

Informants	Gender	Age	Status	Years in custody	Qualification
i.	Male	35	Awaiting trial	7 Years	SSCE
ii.	Male	45	Convicted	10 Years	SSCE
iii.	Male	42	Convicted	5 Years	Diploma
iv.	Female	36	Convicted	9 Years	Primary
v.	Male	27	Awaiting trial	4 Years	SSCE
vi.	Male	40	Convicted	8 Years	Diploma
vii.	Male	50	Convicted	6 Years	Nil

Staff

Informants	Gender	Age	Status	Working Experience	Qualification
i.	Male	40	Staff	15 years	NCE
ii.	Male	38	Staff	13 years	Degree
iii.	Male	53	Staff	25 years	Degree
iv.	Male	45	Staff	33 years	MSc

The tables above explain the disposition of the interviewees, their sex, age, status, the number of years spent in custody and years

of experience of the staff as well as the qualification of both inmates and the staff.

Categorizations and Themes:

Category: The changes brought by the new correctional service policy.

Sub theme 1: Introduction of non-custodial service

Sub theme 2: Community service sentence

Sub theme 3: Introduction of parole and probation

Sub theme 4: Nomenclature change



The above categorization and themes highlighted the changes brought by the new correctional service policy. The changes include the introduction of non-custodial service, community service sentence, parole, probation and nomenclature change.

Discussions of Findings

This section of the study discusses the findings according to the views of the informants. The findings indicated that the new policy introduced attempted to address some of the main issues identified in custodial centres in the country. Both the staff and the inmates interviewed believe that the importance of full implementation of the policy cannot be overemphasized. Some of the important findings are as follows:

Introduction of non-custodial service

One of the most important aspects of the newly introduced correctional service policy is the division of correctional service into two faculties – the custodial and non-custodial service. The custodial service deals with custody of inmates. While non-custodial service handles community service sentence, restorative justice, probation and parole.

In an oral interview conducted with informant I (Inmate) as summarized below stated that:

The introduction of non-custodial service is a welcome development as it would go a long way in tackling many challenges associated with custodial centres especially congestion since not all those who have been sentenced would be sent to prison. Because of non-custodial measures or sentences, some convicts would be forced to do unpaid work as a penalty for their offences and be released. Unlike in the past where whoever committed an offence is sent to prison which contributed to the issue of congestion.

The above finding is supported by Edafe O (2019) who stated that Nigerian Correctional service Act2019 provided the correctional service with new faculties such as the custodial and non-custodial service. This has brought about important changes among them are reduction of congestions in many custodial centres as a result of non- custodial sentences.

Informant II (Inmate) revealed that:

The non-custodial service can encourage good conduct among inmates in the custodial centres because of the introduction of parole. Many inmates in their desire to enjoy the parole- a system where an inmate can be released before the expiration of his sentence based on certain conditions such as good conduct. Can bring sanity in the custodial centres because many of the inmates would become well behaved and law abiding in order to be among the beneficiaries of the parole.

This finding is also supported by Ayinde (2021) who pointed out that parole makes it possible for inmates to leave custodial centres before the end of their terms of imprisonment, and it is an essential component of prison law and correction mechanism for inmates. Parole is not a reduction in the term of imprisonment imposed on inmates by the court; it only allows inmates to serve the rest of their terms of imprisonment outside custodial centres. Inmates are released on parole for several reasons. First, parole can motivate inmates to conduct themselves well during their incarceration since good conduct increases their chances of being considered for parole.



Informant III (Inmate) stated that:

Non-custodial service can help in addressing so many issues in the custodial centres, some people if sent to custodial centres can develop mental health issues especially depression as a result of the imprisonment. Non-custodial measures which can make an offender perform community service instead of serving prison term could reduce the number of people suffering from mental health issues. Also, the issue of reoffending can drastically be reduced. In most cases custodial centres are breeding ground for hardened criminals. A person could be sent to prison for committing a minor offence, but as a result of interaction with hardened criminals in the yard, could be coached and recruited as a member of criminal gang upon release. All these issues that are very rampant in our custodial centres could be reduced with the introduction of non-custodial measures because the offender does not even go to prison in the first place, let alone being manipulated by the hardened criminals he could meet there.

The above finding is corroborated with studies like Obioha (1995), Adetula et al (2010) who indicated that contact with prison institution in Nigeria sometimes make the less hardened individuals to be more hardened in criminal activities upon release. It generates high frequency of recidivism. Therefore, if an offender is not sent to prison in the first place the possibility of mingling with hardened criminals would not be there.

Community service measure

Community service is unpaid work performed by an offender as ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction as a punishment for committing a crime. It is part of the function of non-custodial service in the newly introduced correctional service act to ensure that those sentenced for community service perform the work accordingly. It is a punishment introduced to reduce congestion in the custodial centres, because if one is sentenced for community service the person would not be sent to custodial centre. And if he does not finish the task assigned to him he would return to his home and continue the following day until the work is completed.

Informant IV (Inmate) revealed that:

Community service despite its simplicity compared to imprisonment could reduce crime rate because some people would not to be seen in public performing a task ordered by a court because to them is an embarrassment considering their status in the society. 'Imagine me sweeping a street in my neighbourhood as punishment' it is not easy, I would rather be sent to prison. He added. And I believe there are many people with similar view in respect of this.

The above statement contradicts the findings of Yekini & Salisu (2013) who pointed out that majority of offenders prefers performing community service than imprisonment. According to the study majority of inmates if given choice they would rather stay at home and perform unpaid work daily at every location as punishment than being detained in custody with lots of restrictions as well as living in a deplorable condition in congested cells. Not to mention the poor medical service as well as inadequate food and bedding.



According to informant V (Inmate):

Community service sentence if carried out well would definitely reduce prison congestion as not all offenders would be sent to prison. The cells are already overcrowded with people; this led to inadequate bedding and other necessities in the custodial centres. You can find a custodial centre with a capacity of 500, housing more than 1000 inmates. That is why there are a lot of issues in almost all custodial centres in Nigeria. Although, like here in Bauchi more cells that can accommodate hundreds of inmates were constructed to address congestion and inadequate bedding. Despite that, introduction of community service is a welcome development.

The findings of this study corroborated the work of Igwe & Mgbolu (2020) who stated that the signing of the Nigerian Correctional Service bill into law by the President has been applauded in many quarters. But there is the need to critically examine some of the provisions of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act with a view to draw the attention of relevant stakeholders for the purpose of speedy implementation of the Act. It was discovered that despite some changes introduced by the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, there are still some areas which required further improvement if the desire to run Nigerian Correctional Centres in line with international best practices will be achieved. Therefore, the new policy introduced is a good development but all hands must be on deck for it to succeed.

Informant VI (Inmate) also revealed that:

Authority concerned must ensure the full implementation of the provision of the new policy, more especially community service and parole. He added that in Nigeria things work more on paper than in reality. Government can come up

with good policies that can bring so many good things to the people, but implementation is always the problem.

This finding is supported by the work of Igwe (2021) who indicated that the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019 establishes custodial and non-custodial service for the Nigerian Correctional Service. The Act has been viewed in many quarters as the beginning of a new era for the prison system in Nigeria. Our prayer is that the public and critical stakeholders in the administration of criminal justice system in Nigeria play their respective roles effectively to ensure its effective implementation. This shows that there is a fear among scholars that the implementation of the policy would always be a serious concern. As pointed out above so many policies made by government in the country are not fully implemented. In this case things need to be changed; otherwise meeting international standard for the treatment of detainees would remain a mirage.

According to Informant VII (Inmate):

As inmates who are under detention, we are not fully aware of what the new policy is all about. We only know that the name of the organization has been changed from prison to correctional service. We also noticed the change of uniforms and other things, but we don't have ideas about what the policy entails. We also heard about community service and parole because some staff are encouraging us to behave well in the yard and told us about parole and its benefits and how inmates can enjoy it if they meet the requirement especially those who are well behaved.

The above finding corroborated the study conducted by Enemaku (2020) who indicated the need to enlighten both the



inmates and general public about the new policy as most people are ignorant of it. What people mostly know is the nomenclature and uniform changes. This is not enough, workshop and seminars should be organized periodically especially for members of staff. Many of them cannot be able to comprehensively explain to someone about the new Act. If this is done the inmates and general public would be more informed about the policy and its benefits to the society. He further pointed out that one of the objectives of correction in recent times is the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates back into society. The Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 repealed the Nigerian Prison Act 2004. Apart from change of name, there are provisions for the Nigerian Correctional Service to comply with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Informant I (Staff) stated that:

What is needed in the custodial centres in Nigeria is beyond the change of name or uniforms for the staff. There are numerous challenges, and they are very obvious, whoever enters prisons would come face to face with so many issues that need urgent attention. Human rights violation is one of them. Issue of community service is for those who have not been sent to prison, it's a sentence that the judge passes in the court. So, whoever is sentenced to community service would serve his sentence outside the prison. Therefore, he would not be aware of the challenges inmates face inside the yard. Human rights abuses are very common in most prison in the country; if it's not addressed any policy made by the government would not be taken seriously.

This finding is supported by the studies like Igwe (2017) who indicated that Nigerian

prisons are centres of human rights abuses and infrastructural decay. There are issues such as punishment culture, long detention of awaiting trial inmates, congestion, and frequent adjournment of cases in courts, dilapidated infrastructure, poor environmental hygiene, and poor feeding, among others. The above situation kicked-off campaign of relevant stakeholders such as the media, Non-governmental Organizations, researchers, human rights activists among others on the need to repeal prison law and re-enact a new one in compliance with international human rights standard and good practices in prison administration.

Informant II (Staff) revealed that:

We hope government would look in to our welfare as well, but from all indications they pay more attention to inmates. If you study the new policy well you will find out that its focus is on the inmates. As staff, there are so many things we need in order to improve our lives and our working condition. We need more training to be able to perform our duties well. But we have been neglected by the government. The salary of police has been increased, but we have not received any pay rise as if our work is not important. There have been talks of harmonizing our salary with that of police but it seems it's only a rumour because nothing has been done. With this kind of poor working condition how do you expects things to be normal? We hope government will remember us very soon.

The above finding is supported by the work of Ajah (2017) who reiterates that lack of promotion to eligible staff, neglect of staff welfare, as well as poor working condition and many other challenges face by the staff resulted to low morale, frustration and by extension low productivity in the Nigerian Correctional Service. Government should



also pay attention to the plight of staff as their happiness is central to the good treatment of inmates in the yard. Therefore, the welfare of staff should be taken seriously too.

Introduction of parole and probation

The new correctional service policy introduced parole and probation as part of the new non-custodial measures. Parole is a discretionary early release of inmates from custodial correctional centres by a parole board or the court, with or without conditions, with a possibility of re-incarceration if the conditions are violated. Inmates are released on parole for several reasons. First, parole can motivate inmates to conduct themselves well during their incarceration since good behaviour increases their chances of being considered for parole. Probation on the other hand is a court-imposed criminal sentence subject to slated conditions, releases a convicted person into the community instead of sending the criminal to jail or prison.

Informant III (Staff) stated that:

Parole and probation as non-custodial measures introduced in the new policy is a welcome development because it will help in tackling one of the serious challenges in Nigerian prison which is congestion. And any reform in prison system that cannot address congestion needs to be reconsidered. But if parole and probation would be implemented accordingly, congestion would become history. In Nigeria everything is politicized, if this would be left at the hands of the relevant stakeholders' things would change for good. Let us be optimistic the measure would be implemented without any prejudice.

This finding is corroborated by the work of Longpoe & Longpoe (2021) who indicated that the newly signed Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 may foster the desired

change in the system if it takes effect in practice. It further stated that many policies introduced are not implemented. Failure to implement it in its entirety renders the reform a huge failure. Also, parole, probation, community service, restorative Justice should be defined in the Act with clarity so that no one is left in doubt as to their meaning and purpose. Right steps are being taken in an attempt to ensure full implementation of the non-custodial measures. In all the state commands and FCT, non-custodial departments have been created and are in operation.

Informant IX (Staff) revealed that:

Workshops are supposed to be organized especially for courts officials, judges and other relevant authorities for them to fully understand the measures. There should also be collaboration between them and the correctional service to work out how it would be implemented well. General public should also not be left out in the enlightenment campaign. Because even some staff do not have full understanding of parole and probation, therefore a lot need to be done.

This finding is supported by the study conducted by Igwe & Mgbolu (2020) who stated that the signing of the Nigerian Correctional Service bill into law by the President has been applauded in many quarters. But there is the need to critically examine some of the provisions of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act with a view to draw the attention of relevant stakeholders for the purpose of speedy implementation of the Act. It was discovered that despite some changes introduced by the Nigerian Correctional Service Act, there are still some areas which required further improvement if the desire is to run Nigerian Correctional Centres in line with international best practices will be achieved



Nomenclature change

As a result of the introduction of the new policy, the name of department was changed from Nigerian prison to Nigerian correctional service. This is part of the policy that general public are aware of. The prison name was also changed to custodial centre. And prisoners are now referring to as inmates. This was done in order to show that the facility now is more of a rehabilitation centre than a punishment ground. And the focus of the service has shifted to reformation rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates back into the society as law abiding citizens.

Informant III (Staff) revealed that:

What they need at the moment is not just change of prison name; they have more pressing issues than that. They want to see changes on ground not on paper. Although in Bauchi custodial centre there are newly built story buildings to accommodate more inmates. Still there are many issues such as lack of bedding, inadequate food, poor medical care and so many others. If the reforms cannot tackle the aforementioned challenges is of no use. He added that he does not care if the place is called prison or custodial centre, all he cares about is the welfare of staff and the inmates.

This finding contradicts the study conducted by Edafe (2019) who pointed out that the introduction of 2019 correctional Act is a step in the right direction. He also stated that despite its shortcomings and fear of lack of its full implementation, the signing of the Act is a welcome development and can address numerous challenges facing Nigerian prison system.

Informant II (Staff) also revealed that:

Just like the way the name was changed we hope that so many things will also change not just the name and the uniform. The nomenclature change is like

scratching the surface, without touching the things that are hidden underneath. Look at the way NEPA was changed; it does not end the problems of power. We don't want that kind of change; there is the need for a total overhaul of the whole system for us to have hope of the needed progress.

The above informant's view is supported by the work of Ajiboye (2021) who stated that in 2019, the Nigerian government came up with the rebranding, reforming and repositioning the institution to meeting modern correctional institutions. Part of this policy invariably led to the change of name from Nigerian Prison Service (NPS) to Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS).

However, a close shave and look at the institution suggest an event of putting 'old wine in a new bottle'. That is, the institution has in the past and even now has all its focus on the punishment and deterrence aspect of the mandate leaving out the most important aspect (reformation and rehabilitation) which has to do directly with the society. With the reforms recently carried out, one would have expected that the reforms should have led to the drastic reduction of inmates in the correctional centres.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study was conducted to examine the impact of the newly introduced correctional service policy on inmates in Bauchi custodial Centre. The policy attempted to address numerous challenges associated with prison system in the country. Some of these challenges include congestion, inadequate feeding, poor medical care, lack of bedding, dilapidated infrastructures and so on. These issues are also found in the study area. Therefore, in order to reduce the menace of recidivism, which is also another serious issue bedeviling criminal justice system in the country, and also to improve the lives of the



inmates generally, there is a need for correctional service to prioritize rehabilitation programmes such as educational, religious and vocational training programmes, as well as provision of adequate healthcare services in the custodial Centres in the country as a whole. By addressing these challenges being faced by the inmates and implementing evidence-based solutions, the positive impact of the new policy will be reflected in the lives of the inmates of the custodial Centre. In addition, by addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour and providing inmates with the necessary tools for successful reintegration, it is possible to break the cycle of recidivism and improve the welfare of inmates not only in Bauchi custodial Centre, but across the country.

Recommendations

This paper recommends that the policy makers and other relevant stake holders should ensure that the policy is implemented fully and without delay. If it is fully implemented, its positive impacts can be felt by the inmates of Bauchi custodial Centre. Furthermore, there should be proper training for the staff of the custodial Centre as well as relevant stake holders such as police, court officials and judges on the new policy in order to ensure that they understand it well and it is implemented accordingly. In addition, relevant authority should ensure that adequate bedding was provided in the newly built cells in the custodial Centre so that inmates can move in to the cells to reduce the issue of congestion that is very serious in the custodial Centre. Finally, more medical staff should be posted to the clinic in the custodial Centre and adequate drugs should also be supplied in order to meet the ever-increasing medical needs of the inmates.

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