

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**THE INVOLVEMENT OF ROYALHOUSE CHAPEL AND PRISONS  
MINISTRY IN REINTEGRATION OF EX-PRISONERS INTO SOCIETY**

**BY**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE CENTRE FOR  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, except for references to other people's work, which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is the result of my own research work, carried out at the Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Mr Paul Andoh.

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## DEDICATION

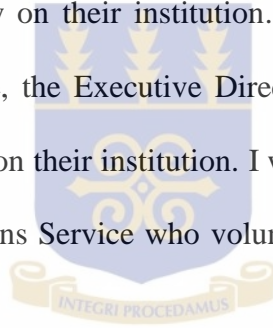
This work is first dedicated to God for His goodness and mercies. I also dedicate it to my dear husband Isaac and our three brilliant children, Jake, Sammy and Isaac (Jnr.)



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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the social support mechanisms(SSM) adopted by Royalhouse Chapel International (RCI) and Prison Ministry of Ghana (PMG) and how these interventions have facilitated ex-prisoners reintegration in Accra. The study was conducted on the premise that ex-prisoners were faced with myriad of challenges after their release that make it difficult to adjust to life and fit back into society. Some of these challenges were as a result of ineffective pre-released plan in the prisons and the lack of post-release support to cushion the ex-prisoners against livelihood shocks and the various vulnerability risks they were predisposed to. Other obstacles that the ex-prisoners were faced with emanated from their past criminal history and society's unpreparedness to receive them. Another reason for their predicament was the label "ex-prisoner", "ex-convict" or "ex-offender" imposed on them by society which limits their access to employment and other social supports. In order to assess how SSM for ex-prisoners facilitate their reintegration into society, the researcher selected 21 ex-prisoners under the care and support of RCI and PMG, and 18 others who were not under the care and support of the two organisations. Findings of the research revealed that those who received support and care or benefited from the SSM interventions of RCI and PMG had their situation improved in terms of access to job, accommodation and improved social acceptance levels. Among the 18 others, some had received some support from friends and families and others had no support and thus made reintegration very challenging for them. Some of the policy recommendations made include the need for a review of the Ghana Prisons Service policy on rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners and the need for a national policy on ex-prisoner reintegration. Also the state should provide technical and financial support to Faith-Based and Civil Society Organisations that are assisting ex-prisoners in their

reintegration to enable them scale up their activities. There is also an urgent need for public education on ex-prisoner reintegration issues to lessen or minimise the stigmatisation and exclusion they experience.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CSOs</b>	– Civil Society Organisations
<b>FBOs</b>	–Faith-Based Organisations
<b>ICCPR</b>	-International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>JHS</b>	– Junior High School
<b>NRCd</b>	– National Redemption Council Decree
<b>PMG</b>	– Prison Ministry Of Ghana
<b>RCI-SOR</b>	-Royalhouse Chapel International School of Restoration
<b>SHS</b>	– Senior High School
<b>SMR</b>	– Standard Minimum Rule
<b>SSM</b>	-Social Support Mechanisms
<b>UN</b>	– United Nations

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background to the Study

Rehabilitation of offenders and their successful reintegration into society are a major concern for policy makers all around the world (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). This is because incarcerated offenders are often faced with real challenges after their release that pose a threat to public safety, especially when offenders did not receive adequate preparation, supervision or support prior to their release. Life after imprisonment therefore remains a dreadful scare and trauma for ex-prisoners. They are particularly vulnerable during the first six to twelve months after their release. During this time they will be trying to re-establish links with their families, find accommodation, employment, and once again take up responsibility for themselves and adjust to life outside prison (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). This is because the period of incarceration may have impacted negatively upon many offenders. These include the loss of livelihood, personal belongings and accommodation for themselves and their families. The long period of imprisonment may have also damaged their social networks and important relationships (Borzycki & Makkai, 2007).

In the absence of interventions to cater for their physical, emotional, and social needs after their release from prison, ex-prisoners may go through a challenging moment living crime-free lives. This is further compounded by the fact that those who spend short-terms in prison as well as long years on remand custody have limited chances of going through a successful rehabilitation process to prevent future re-offending (Griffiths, Dandurand & Murdoch, 2007).

In view of this, societies must invest in social integration and reintegration programmes for offenders. This is because any investment in prisons, without a complementary investment in rehabilitation and reintegration programmes may further compound the problem of recidivism. The period of incarceration while offenders are under strict control, can be used to stabilize and rehabilitate them, but those gains are often short-lived without supported prisoner reintegration programmes. Interventions that seek to provide support for the reintegration of offenders before and after their release become crucial as it ensures the prevention of further crime by ex-offenders and also enhances public safety. Also, reintegration support to prisoners and ex-prisoners is very key not only to their individual progress, but also, to the reduction of re-offending and of the overall number of people imprisoned and the cost of maintaining them and the prison system (Martynowicz & Quigley, 2010).

Social reintegration of ex-prisoners is often interpreted as the support given to them after their release from prison. An expanded definition however, incorporates various social interventions embarked upon after an arrest, to divert the offender away from going through the criminal justice process to a restorative justice process. It also includes imposing community service punishment rather than incarceration with the aim of facilitating the eventual reintegration of the offender within the community, rather than exposing them to the detrimental effects of incarceration. For those who have been committed to prison, it includes comprehensive programmes in prison for rehabilitation and reformation of the offender and aftercare programmes after the release of the offender (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006).

The Ghana Prisons Service (GPS) is the only institution mandated by law to ensure the safe custody of prisoners in Ghana. The core functions of GPS are spelt out in Section (1) of 1972 National Redemption Council Decree (NRCD 46). These functions include the safe custody of prisoners, provision of their welfare needs and the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. GPS has several policies that are linked to its functions such as the policy on reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. The reformation and rehabilitation policy is executed by providing opportunities to prisoners to develop their skills through vocational training, moral and formal education to assist their reintegration when they are released and also to prevent recidivism. The formal education here involves running programmes for Junior High Schools (JHS), Senior High Schools (SHS) and Information Communication Technology (ICT) programmes. There is also the technical and vocational training that include catering, dressmaking, carpentry, electrical and basketry for prison inmates (GPS, 2010).

However, the work of correctional institutions in prisoner reformation and rehabilitation alone does not guarantee successful reintegration of ex-offenders into society after their release. Post-release support is therefore vital to help prisoners re-build their lives in a productive and positive manner to prevent them from reverting into crime (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). Furthermore, section 64 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rule on the Treatment of Prisoners also advocates that the duty of society does not end with a prisoner's release. There is the need for governmental or private agencies capable of lending the released prisoners efficient after-care directed towards the lessening of prejudice against them and towards their social rehabilitation. The Manual for Human Rights Training for Prison Staff in Ghana (2007) also emphasizes the need to make special arrangements to

prepare prisoners prior to their release especially for those who have served long sentences because their support structures within the community may have been broken or destroyed. However care must also be taken not to ignore those on short sentences. If this happens there is the potential danger that prisoners serving short sentences will return to prison again and again.

The Manual for Human Rights Training for Prison Staff in Ghana (2007) further emphasises that GPS cannot work in isolation and should therefore encourage governmental and non-governmental organisations to come into the prison to build relationships with prisoners before they are released. On this course, GPS collaborates with some Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as well as other international partners in execution of their policy on reformation and rehabilitation. Royalhouse Chapel International (RCI) and Prison Ministry of Ghana (PMG) are among such organisations that collaborate with GPS to provide care and support for prisoners before and after their release to help their reintegration into society. Some of these supports include counselling, skills training and job placement.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Imprisonment is a way of punishing offenders and also protecting citizens from their harmful behaviour. However, prisons do not offer inmates with permanent shelter rather one of the fundamental principles of the correctional systems is that of rehabilitation and reformation of the inmates to play active role and contribute positively to society after their release (Giddens, 1997). The expectation of society is that persons who come out of prisons become

transformed individuals so that they can be successfully reintegrated into our communities. Regrettably, that has not always been the case. On countless occasions, ex-prisoners have been re-arrested and sent back to prison for the same offence or other serious offences.

In Ghana, 7,840 and 6,642 prisoners were released in 2009 and 2010 respectively. The rate of recidivism also rose from 4.8 percent in 2009 to 6.5 percent in 2010 (GPS, 2009 & 2010). This means that even though offenders are taken through various rehabilitation and reformation programmes while in prison, the objectives of these programmes facilitating the reintegration of offenders after their release and the overall aim of reducing recidivism are not realised due to the numerous challenges ex-prisoners are faced with in their reintegration process (Samuels, 2010).

Ex-prisoners are often faced with significant social adaptation issues such as family and community stigmatisation and ostracism which make it difficult for them to lead law-abiding lives when they are released from incarceration. These have further negative impact on their ability to find jobs or housing, return to formal education, and build or re-build individual and social capital. Without the provision of help for them to face these challenges, they frequently get a cycle of failed social integration, reoffending, reconviction and social rejection.

A comprehensive crime prevention approach must take into consideration, the fact that public safety is affected by the large number of crimes committed by persons who have already faced criminal sanctions but have not yet desisted from crime. Without effective programmes, many offenders upon their release from incarceration fail to reintegrate into society as law-abiding

citizens. This is why effective social reintegration interventions are crucial because they are very essential ways of preventing recidivism and enhancing public safety, two very important social policy objectives in all countries (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2012).

Even though life is unbearable for ex-prisoners which often result in their failed adaptation in society and their eventual relapse into crime, RCI and PMG are among CSOs in Ghana who are collaborating with the GPS in providing care and support for ex-prisoners in society. This researcher therefore examines the support mechanisms of RCI and PMG and the extent to which they facilitate the reintegration of ex-prisoners. Also she reviews the policy of GPS on prisoner reformation and rehabilitation and examines the extent to which they reflect international standards. In view of this, the main research question posed by the study is; to what extent do support mechanisms for ex-prisoners facilitate their reintegration into society?

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to examine the support mechanisms employed by RCI and PMG in reintegrating ex-prisoners into society. These support mechanisms include counselling, skills training and job placement.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

In achieving the above general objective, the study sought to explore the following specific objectives:

1. To review the implementation of the Ghana Prisons Service policy of reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners.
2. To examine the extent to which RCI and PMG are able to implement their counselling programmes and the emerging challenges.
3. To examine the extent to which RCI and PMG are able to implement their skill training and job placement programmes and the emerging challenges
4. To examine the extent to which support mechanisms of RCI and PMG have contributed to ex-prisoners reintegration back to society.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

With the newly set-up Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in Ghana, a study of ex-prisoners' reintegration and its challenging issues must be highlighted to prompt policy makers to act and also develop policies to support their reintegration back into society. The findings of this research would also provide information to anyone involved in the criminal justice process, including policymakers, legislators, judges and law enforcement officials. This study would provide useful information and guidelines to the Ghana Prisons Service to review some of their policies and implementation strategies to meet current international standards as well as the pressing issues of ex-prisoner reintegration in Ghana.

A study of this nature would also provide useful information for RCI and PMG to review their implementation strategies where applicable and also scale up their activities on ex-prisoner reintegration. Other CSOs and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) who will want to initiate

programmes for reintegrating ex-prisoners into mainstream society would also find this study useful as it can provide a guide to their programme planning and implementation. Finally, Students and those in academia who want to do further research in the area of ex-prisoners' reintegration would find this study useful in that, it would provide literature for their studies in view of the fact that not much studies on the topic had been done in Ghana.

#### **1.4 Scope and Limitation of Research**

In this study, the researcher reviews the Ghana Prison Service's policy on reformation and rehabilitation of inmates and also examines the care and support programmes by PMG and the RCI for ex-prisoners and how they facilitate the reintegration of ex-prisoners. The study covers only Ghana to bring out cultural, administrative and policy issues that are specific to Ghana. Due to time and limited resources, the researcher interviewed 21 ex-prisoners who have benefited from the care and support initiatives of PMG and RCI. Another group interviewed was 18 ex-prisoners who have not benefited from the care and support initiatives of PMG and RCI. They were used as the control group for the study. In addition, 10 family members and 10 community members of the two categories of ex-prisoners were also interviewed. The views of other key informants from the GPS, RCI and PMG were also captured.

#### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

The use of theories in social science research is essential in that it equips the researcher with the capabilities to explain and also gives understanding to the findings of the phenomenon

under study (May, 2001). In view of this, the researcher applied the labelling theory which provided the basis for explaining and understanding the reintegration of ex-prisoners and what their experiences are as they go through the processes. It also enabled the researcher to explore some of the care and support initiatives provided them by RCI and PMG and how these social mechanisms facilitate their reintegration as well as the coping mechanisms or strategies adopted by those who are not affiliated with any organization.

### **1.5.1 Labelling Theory in Perspective**

This study is underpinned by the Labelling Theory which is one of the oldest and important sociological approaches to understanding deviant and criminal behaviours. Its foundations can be traced back to Mead's (1934) work on "Self-Concept" and Tannenbaum's (1938) work on "Dramatization of Evil". This theory has further been expanded and shaped by other social scientists (Becker, 1963). Labelling can be defined as a process whereby something or someone becomes fixed with a particular identity either positive or negative by society and how these labels influence the behaviour of that individual (Ulmer,1994).

Labelling theorists assert that deviance is common and usually of a transitory nature if ignored. When one is labelled, the individual internalizes the social audience's negative evaluation and then adjust his or her behaviour to match the expectations of those who labelled him or her and probably engage in a deviant career (Winnick & Bodkin, 2008). The foundation of the Labelling Theory is built on the fact that behaviours of individuals are deviant when the societies in which they live label them as such. Based on this, labelling

theorists interpret deviance as a process of interaction between deviants and non-deviants and not as a set of characteristics (Giddens, 2001). Labelling theory was the leading theory of deviance among sociologists in the 1960s (Goode, 1975) and was used in various social science research including the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill and the study of juvenile delinquency (Chambliss, 2000).

In spite of the fact that Labelling theory has been applied in various forms of deviance, it has been under-utilised in criminal justice studies in that most research in criminal justice are limited to juvenile subjects and rarely is Labelling theory used to help understand adults (Wellford, 1975). In recent times some scholars are, however, beginning to explore the issues of prisoner re-entry and are learning about the obstacles these individuals face when they are released back into a community marked with the label “ex-convict” (Travis, 2005). Studies have shown that few prisoners are afforded opportunities to acquire job training or skills while incarcerated and when released, the small amount of money given to them is only able to keep them for few days. Some also exit prison with no money, clothes, or even proper identification (Richards, Austin & Jones, 2004). Their relationships with loved ones and relatives, which is very crucial for re-entry may have become severely strained or destroyed (Travis & Wahl, 2003). Community members and friends who are law-abiding may be less welcoming and even suspicious of them. The only option left for them is street friends or people within their criminal network who are often less judgmental. Most ex-prisoners encounter employers who are less receptive or may offer less paid jobs not only because they possess poor job skills, but because ex-convicts are banned from filling some positions or applying for jobs in the public sector. Many will therefore seek support from FBOs who supported them while they were in prison (Travis, 2005).

The foregoing discussions, labelling theory is considered very appropriate for this study because the researcher in her interaction with ex-prisoners brings to bare some of the challenges they are faced with as a result of incarceration and its effects of being labelled an ex-convict or ex-prisoner. It also explores interventions that RCI and PMG have for people with the label ex-prisoners or ex-convicts.

### **1.6 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Ex-prisoner:** Someone who has been released from prison whether convicted or on remand custody. For the purpose of this study the word ex-prisoner is often used to include all those who have been to prison one time in their life whether they were convicted or remanded.

**Recidivism:** It refers to a person's relapse into criminal behaviour, often after receiving sanctions or undergoing intervention for a previous crime (GPS, 2010).

**Rehabilitation:** Refers to treatment programmes put in place by correctional centres to cure offenders of their criminal behaviours and providing them with opportunities to make them less susceptible to crime.

**Reintegration:** Refers to the objective of building the capabilities of prisons and the provision of aftercare interventions for prisoners after their release to enable them function normally in society upon release.

**Social Support Mechanisms:** This refers to the care and support provided to ex-prisoners to facilitate their reintegration into society. They include counselling, job placement, skill training and other forms of assistance.

## **1.7 Organisation of Work**

The research is organized into five chapters as follows. Chapter One focuses on the background to the study and it includes the problem statement, study objectives, significance of study, scope and limitation of the study and the organization of study report. Chapter Two also looks at the review of literature on the subject, which has been organized in five thematic areas in accordance with the specific objectives of the study. Chapter Three presents the methodology employed in the study. It provides information on how the research was done by going through the various steps that was adopted by the researcher in studying the research problem along with the logic behind them. Information is also provided on the study area with its key characteristics as well as the sampling methods used. The approach to data collection, management and analysis are also discussed. Finally, the chapter outlines the ethical considerations as well as the quality control procedures adopted.

Chapter Four on the other hand looks at the presentation and discussion of primary data with the view of addressing the specific objectives of the study. The discussion is interspersed with literature references that support key findings from the data. Chapter Five is the final chapter that presents a summary of key findings of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings and makes some recommendations for policy making and for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents in two parts a review of relevant literature and studies on ex-prisoner reintegration. The first part provides a review of studies conducted on the topic whilst the second part looks at a review of the GPS policy on prisoner rehabilitation and reformation. The chapter is organized under five thematic areas which include the concepts of reintegration, challenges of prisoner reintegration and national and international standards policy instruments.

#### **2.1 Concepts of Ex-prisoner Reintegration**

Reintegration has been conceptualized in different ways and it is important to review the many definitions given in the literature. Ridder, Beyens & Snacken (2012) define reintegration as the objective of enhancing the ability of prisoners to return to society and function normally upon release. This definition is seen as a more neutral term than the word re-socialization or social rehabilitation, which seems to suggest that all prisoners are de-socialized or present some forms of deficiencies (Smit & Snacken, 2009). Reintegration also includes actions taken to reduce recidivism after the release of the offender from incarceration or a systematic and evidence-based approach by which efforts are made to work with offender while in custody and after their release (Morgan & Owers 2001). Thus reintegration refers not only to the

moment a prisoner leaves the prison to return to society, but a lengthy process which starts before release and continues long after release.

The Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of offenders developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2012) defines social reintegration programmes to include rehabilitation, education and pre-release programmes offered in prison, as well as conditional release, post-release and aftercare interventions. These programmes are usually designed to help offenders who have been placed in an institution, such as a reform school, a detention centre or prison, a mental health institution or a residential drug treatment centre. The Introductory Handbook further classifies the social reintegration programme into two main categories. The first is programmes and interventions offered in the institutional setting itself before the offenders' release. This is to help them resolve issues, address risk factors associated with their criminal behaviour and acquire the necessary skills to crime-free and support themselves, as well as to prepare them for their release and re-entry into society. The second is the community-based programmes, sometimes part of a conditional release scheme, to facilitate the social reintegration of offenders after their release from custody.

## **2.2 Challenges of Ex-prisoner Reintegration**

Prisoners confined in correctional institutions are often faced with a number of challenges such as personal, social and economic issues that tend to become hindrances to a crime-free lifestyle after their release (Borzycki & Baldry, 2003). The sources of some of these

challenges are the offenders' past history and others are more directly linked to the consequences of imprisonment and the subsequent difficult transition back to the community (Borzycki, 2005). Some ex-offenders have poor inter-personal skills, little or no formal education, poor cognitive or emotional functioning that make them less competitive in society. There are also several challenges that they are faced with at the time of their release, including looking for accommodation with little or no resource, managing financially or maintaining family with little or no savings (Griffiths, Dandurand & Murdoch, 2007). Ex-offenders with history of joblessness are at high risk of relapsing into crime. Locating a stable, high-quality work can therefore provide an important pathway out of crime (Uggen, Wakefield & Western, 2005). One effective way to resolve this issue is providing a job opportunity to those who are re-released into society to facilitate their reintegration into the community.

The release of offenders into society after spending years in prison is a difficult process that must be handled much carefully. The risk involved at this point is not only for the offender, who has to begin a new life but also for the victims of the crime who might feel threatened by his or her release. The same applies to the community he or she is returning to where the level of insecurity and fear might increase. One effective way to resolve this issue is by providing a job opportunity to those who are re-released into society to facilitate their reintegration into the community and with that avoid the recidivism that both the victim and the community are afraid of (Isidora, 2007).

## **2.3 Reintegration Policies and Practices in Ghana**

One of the functions of the GPS as spelt out in the NRCD 46 is the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. This is done by offering opportunities to prison inmates to develop their skills through vocational training, moral and formal education. The purpose of the reformation and rehabilitation is to facilitate the effective re-entry of prisoners after their release from prison and preventing reoffending behaviour among ex-convicts. The programmes outlined under this policy include, Moral and Formal Education, Vocational Training, and Trade Training or Skill Development.

### **2.3.1 Educational programmes**

The relevance of the formal education is recognized as an opportunity for inmates to improve their knowledge and skills, and to realize that there are more options in life than to resorting to crime. In view of this, prisoners are taken through various educational programmes because, an educated offender is susceptible to correction than an offender who is not educated GPS, 2010). The programmes offered include, JHS, SHS and ICT programmes. Inmates are taught by Prison Officers and other inmates who have the requisite knowledge in the various subjects.

### **2.3.2 Vocational training and non-formal education for inmates**

Skill development helps people to be more active in their national and local economies and contribute their quota to development. It also equips them with skills to enhance their employability to make them less dependents and hence minimize their chances of resorting to crime. In achieving this aim, GPS collaborates with churches and Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs) to provide training for inmates in keeping up with its reform programme. Technical and vocational training programmes are also available for semi-illiterates and illiterates. The technical programme includes catering, hair dressing, dressmaking, carpentry, block laying and concreting, electrical, weaving and basketry.

The goal of rehabilitation therefore is to address the underlying factors that led to criminal behaviour and by so doing, reducing the likelihood of re-offending. However, it is precisely this objective that is generally not being met by imprisonment. On the contrary, evidence shows that prisons not only rarely rehabilitate, but they tend to further criminalise individuals, leading to re-offending and a cycle of release and imprisonment, which does nothing to reduce overcrowding in prisons or to build safer communities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). This perhaps calls for a review of the policy of rehabilitation and reformation in relation to international standards.

#### **2.4 The Rehabilitation and Reformation Policy: Ghana and International Standards**

GPS policy on rehabilitation and reformation is underpinned by 1972 National Redemption Decree (NRCD 46) which states that “it shall be the duty of the Ghana Prisons Service to ensure safe custody and welfare of prisoners and whenever practicable, shall undertake their reformation and rehabilitation”. This mandate is reiterated in article 205(2) of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana which states that the Prisons Service shall be equipped and maintained to perform its traditional role efficiently. The function of prisoner reformation and rehabilitation requires that the prisoner should be prepared for reintegration into society and provided with adequate social support when they are released. This means that at the

beginning of a prisoner's sentence, consideration shall be given to his or her future after release and they shall be assisted in ensuring their future reintegration into society. It is also important that all agencies and services responsible for the reintegration shall ensure that the ex-offenders have means and available resources to maintain themselves in the period immediately after their release (United Nations Office of the High Commissioners for Human Rights, 2007).

In addition to the national legal mandate, there are a number of international legislations that enjoin the GPS to have its prisoner reformation and rehabilitation policy. These include article ten (10) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which highlights that the treatment of prisoners should focus on their reformation and social rehabilitation. The United Nation's Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR) also makes it explicit that the period of incarceration is to be used to ensure that far as possible, that upon returning to society the offender is not only willing but also able to lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life (SMR, R.58).

## **2.5 Assessment of Prison Programmes in Ghana**

The core aim of the programmes implemented in prisons is to facilitate inmates' rehabilitation when they are released and also to reduce recidivism. Generally, the success of treatment programmes offered in prisons can be measured by the rate of recidivism (GPS, 2010). Ghana's recidivism rate rose from 4.8percent in 2009 to 6.5 percent in 2010. However, Ghana's comparatively low rate must not be taken for granted. This is because record-keeping is unreliable and there is no monitoring of discharged offenders and data on them.

Also some of the programmes seem not to be well structured to meet the needs of the different categories of prisoners (Asiedu, 1999).

From the forgone discussions and interactions with key informants of the GPS, the policy of rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners only begin and end in prison and does not incorporate aftercare support when they are released. The 1972 NRC Decree 46 also indicates that the duty of the Ghana Prisons Service is to ensure the safe custody and welfare of prisoners and whenever practicable, undertake their reformation and rehabilitation. The portion in this policy which says prisoner reformation and rehabilitation shall be undertaken by GPS whenever practicable must be looked at again to make it mandatory with all the legal provision and the state support it requires to make it workable.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology underpinning the study on the involvement of RCI and PMG in the reintegration of ex-prisoners into society. It provides details on how the research was carried out by going through the various steps that was adopted by the researcher in studying the research problem along with the logic behind them. Information is also provided on the study area with its key characteristics and the justification for selecting the study area. It further discusses the research design, the sample size and sampling techniques employed and the approach to data collection. The data analysis procedures adopted are discussed in the analytical framework and also information on ethical considerations and quality control procedures adopted are provided. A mixed research method was used, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently to help achieve the research objectives.

#### **3.1 Study Design**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed the use of mixed methods which involved a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Creswell (2009) asserts that the problems addressed by social science researchers are complex in nature and the use of either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone is insufficient to address these complexities. Thus the use of mixed methods approach helps utilise the strengths of both the quantitative and the qualitative research and also enables the researcher to understand the

research problem more completely and well as give a fuller picture and deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

From the discussions above and taking into consideration the topic of ex-prisoners' reintegration into society, a mixed method approach was more appropriate. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time in the field. One part of the study involved a survey, which was conducted using questionnaires involving open and closed-ended questions. This enabled the researcher to generate statistical information on the ex-prisoners whose information was not known to the researcher. The second part involved in-depth interviews which provided detailed account and a fuller picture of ex-prisoners reintegration processes as well as their experiences and their life stories.

### **3.2 Study Area**

The research was conducted in Accra, the capital city of Ghana located in the Greater Region. Ghana's population stood at 24,658,823 as per the 2010 population and housing census by the Ghana Statistical Service. Out of this total, Greater Accra was the second highest populous region with a population of 4,010,054 representing 16.3% of the total population of Ghana. Accra also serves as the economic, administrative, and cultural centre of the country. By the geographical position of Accra, it functions as a natural port to the Atlantic Ocean, which also makes it an important destination point for a number of trading industries. Greater Accra Region is also recorded as having one of the highest annual population growth rates of 3.1 % (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Inequality features heavily in the capital, with 80 % of the city population living in low income, high density population areas. The middle class is

occupied by 17% of the population and only 3% of Accra lives in high income, low density residential areas.

Accra was selected for this study because the Royalhouse Chapel School of Restoration for ex-prisoners is located Accra. Prisons Ministry of Ghana's head office is also located in Accra.

### **3.3 Sources of Data**

Data for the study was generated from both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was generated from field work by the researcher which included a survey, in-depth interviews and life stories. A survey was conducted by using questionnaires to interview 21 ex-prisoners who have or are currently benefiting from SM of RCI or PMG as well as 18 others who do not benefit from interventions of any of the two institutions. The researcher generated demographic data and other statistics on the study group. Moreover, six other ex-prisoners, that is, two from each of the respondent groups were also recruited to participate in an in-depth interview to generate qualitative data on the topic under study. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted for key informants of the Ghana Prisons Service, RCI and PMG. In-depth interviews were also conducted for ten community members and ten family members of the ex-prisoners to generate information on their perception of ex-prisoners reintegration.

Secondary sources of data on the other hand involved reviewing existing literature, thesis, journals and other scholarly works on the topic. It also comprised reports and publications of other policy actors such as the GPS, RCI and PMG.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The study population for this study included 21 ex-prisoners who were above eighteen years and who were being assisted to reintegrate under the RCI and PMG's SM for ex-prisoners. The second group of respondents consists of ex-prisoners who have not or were not receiving any care and support from any institution. Another group interviewed were ten family members and ten community members of ex-prisoners who were under the treatment group or the control group. Key informants of GPS, RCI, and PMG were also targeted.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

*Selection of the two institutions under study:* RCI and PMG were selected on purpose (purposive sampling method) because they met all requirements for the study. That is, they provided social support for ex-prisoners in Accra.

*Selection of ex-prisoners:* Given that ex-prisoners constituted a homogenous group, a purposive sampling approach was adopted to select 21 ex-prisoners from RCI and PMG. They were identified with the assistance of the leaders of the two organisations. The other 18 ex-prisoners, who were not with the two organisations, were also identified using snow balling technique. That is, respondents of RCI and PMG led the researcher to their various locations to recruit them for the study.

**Key informants:** Key informants, including leaders of RCI, PMG, as well as ten community members and ten family members were also selected purposively in the study. In addition to these, six respondents were purposively selected to participate in an in-depth interview. They comprised of four ex-prisoners with RCI and PMG and the other two who did not belong to any of these two organisations. Out of the six, three of them were purposely selected to provide their life stories. Table 1 below summaries the sample size based on the various classifications.

**Table 1: Sample Distribution Table**

Category	Quantitative	Qualitative	Total
Ex-prisoners	39	-	39
In-depth interview with ex-prisoners	-	6	6
Life stories of ex-prisoners	-	3	3
Family of ex-prisoners	-	10	10
Community members of ex-prisoners	-	10	10
Official – RCI	-	1	1
Official – PMG	-	1	1
Official – GPS	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>71</b>

*Source: Fieldwork, March 2013*

### 3.6 Data Collection Methods

Two types of data, namely primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Under the primary data, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

#### *Primary data - quantitative*

Primary quantitative data was collected using face- to- face interview with ex-prisoners through a structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was designed to capture key

variables on the socio-demographic characteristics of ex-prisoners and issues concerning their reintegration process such as: challenges faced by ex-prisoners in their reintegration process, employment and the type of care and support they receive.

### ***Primary data - qualitative***

Primary qualitative information was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with key informants using a list of questions as a guide. The key informants were drawn from the GPS, RCI and PMG. The interviews focused on the issues of reintegration of ex-prisoners and how it reflects on the Ghana Prisons Service policy on rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners. It also looked at the challenges ex-prisoners are faced with after their release and then explored the care and support being provided to them.

In order to complement findings in the study, in-depth interviews were conducted for six ex-prisoners, ten community members and ten family members of ex-prisoners. Also life stories of three ex-prisoners were also taken. Using a list of questions as interview guide, data was collected on challenges of ex-prisoners reintegration and as well as the care and support they needed or were being provided with.

### ***Secondary data collection***

Secondary data collection process involved desk review of GPS's policy on rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners and other relevant reports and policy document from RCI and PMG.

### **3.7 Data Management and Quality Control**

In order to ensure high quality data, the researcher employed the services of four research assistants. All the research assistants recruited were thoroughly screened and trained on the objectives of the research. They were also taken through the survey questions and the interview guide to ensure that they understood the study and what information was needed to be collected. Prior to conducting the survey, the questionnaire was pre-tested to check for errors and also validate the instruments and to test their reliability. Based on the results of the pre-testing, the survey instruments were revised. Also during the main survey, filled questionnaires were checked daily for consistency and follow-ups made where necessary. All checked instruments were later imported into the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software, 20<sup>th</sup> version for analysis. The data in the SPSS were edited and cross-checked for consistency and accuracy.

In quantitative research, reliability and validity of the instrument are very important for decreasing errors that could occur from measurement problems in the research. Before the statistical analysis of the quantitative survey results, screening of the data was conducted. Data screening helped in identifying potential multiple entries in the data. Recorded interviews with key informants were also reviewed after each day's session to compare notes and to identify key themes that emerged from the interviews. Two independent persons were used to transcribe audio data in order to avoid biases and errors where possible.

### **3.8 Data Analysis and Analytical Framework of the Study**

Primary and Secondary data gathered for the study were analysed using quantitative and qualitative analysis tools and were summarised in table 2 in the analytical frame work.

#### ***Primary Data - Quantitative***

Statistical analysis of the quantitative results was conducted with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences Software (SPSS) 20<sup>th</sup> version. Data collected on the socio-demographic variables of respondents were analysed using mainly descriptive statistics such as cross tabulations showing frequencies and percentages. Also the measure of central tendencies such as mean was used where applicable. Presentations of frequencies were also done using bar graphs and pie charts.

#### ***Primary Data - Qualitative***

The qualitative data gathered from the key informants were analysed using content analysis approach while data from the life history were presented as case studies in boxes. The results were used to support the quantitative data.

#### **Secondary Data**

Framework for data analysis was adopted to outline the different types of analyses carried out in the study in line with the research objectives. An analytical framework of the study is summarized in Table 2 below. The framework seeks to relate each study objective to the method in order to promote the reliability and validity of the study outcome.

**Table 2: Analytical Framework**

<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<b>Source of data</b>	<b>Type of Analysis</b>
(1) To review the implementation of the Ghana Prisons Service's policy of reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners.	(1) Primary (in-depth interview) (2) Secondary (annual reports, policy documents existing literature and scholarly works)	Content analysis Desk Review
(2) To examine the extent to which RCI and PMG are able to implement their counselling programmes and the emerging challenges	(1) Primary (field reports from survey, In-depth interviews) (2) policy documents of RCI and PMG	Descriptive statistics, Content analysis, life stories Desk Review
(3) To examine the extent to which RCI and PMG are able to implement their skill training and job placement programmes and the emerging challenges	(1) Primary (field reports from survey, FGD, In-depth interviews) (2) policy documents of RCI and PMG	Descriptive statistics, Content analysis, life stories Desk Review

*Source: Fieldwork, March 2013*

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Miles and Huberman (1994) specified that ethical considerations are necessary in studying people who have broken the law such as former prisoners. As such in dealing with them, researchers undertaking such studies need to be value neutral. Equally, in this study, the researcher had maintained ethical issues throughout the process (Kvale, 1996) because crime carry a negative connotation in society hence respondents needed to be assured that the information they had given would be treated as confidential and their rights were protected.

As a result, the following ethical procedures were strictly adhered to: First of all, permission was sought from the officials of RCI and PMG to study respondents. Also the researcher prior

to conducting the interview briefed respondents about the purpose of the study and also made known to them that participation was voluntary. Furthermore, respondents were informed that they had the option of answering or declining to answer any question after which consent forms were given to them to sign or thumb-print.

### **3.10 Limitations of the Study**

Due to the stigmatisation and the tag ex-prisoners are labelled with in society, it was not very easy to identify respondents except for those in recognised institutions like Royalhouse Chapel and Prisons Ministry of Ghana. The others who were not with the two institutions were very difficult to meet specially those who lived in slum communities or the ghettos. Several visits had to be made to their communities before interviews were conducted. Another limitation was getting female ex-prisoners to participate in the study. Even though on the average more men than women go into prison, female ex-prisoners are more stigmatised than their male counterparts, hence the researcher was able to get only three females to participate in the survey and one female for qualitative in-depth interview. Another challenge faced was getting the consent of the respondents prior to the interviews. It thus required more than a visit to get appointments which also had implications for the cost of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the empirical data and findings from the field as given by ex-prisoner respondents during one-one-one in-depth interviews and survey questionnaire administration. These findings are presented in relation to the research questions and objectives of the study. The chapter begins with a brief description of the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. It continues by presenting some of the prison experiences and challenges faced by ex-prisoners after their release. The chapter further provides information on an examination of the support mechanisms of RCI and PMG for ex-prisoners and how they influence their reintegration into society.

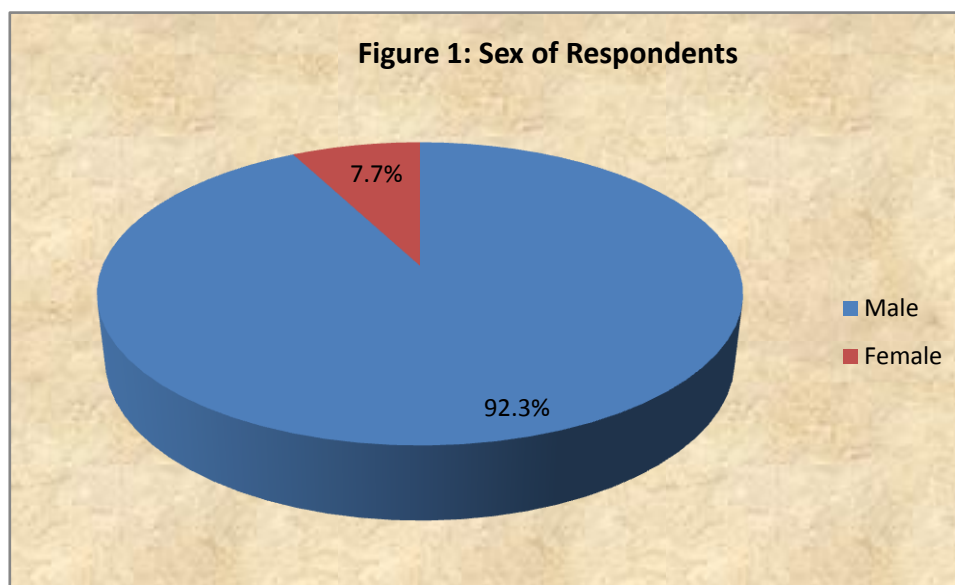
#### **4.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents**

This section is divided into two: The socio-economic characteristics of ex-prisoners which include information on the sex, age, area of residence, marital status, educational and employment. The other information presented include the type of offence respondents were charged with, the length of time spent in prison and their prison experiences.

##### **4.1.1 Sex of Respondents**

The sex of respondents was considered for this study to explore the gender dimension of ex-prisoners' reintegration. Out of the total number of 39 ex-prisoners who participated in the quantitative survey, 36 representing 92.3% were males and 3, representing 7.7% were females

as shown in Figure 1. The low number of female participation shows that on the average more males than females are incarcerated. All around the world, women form a small minority of imprisoned people. Yet they face peculiar problems on release from prison. The proportion of female prisoners is generally around 5 percent although a feature of the past decade has seen a steeper rise in the number of women in prison than in the number of men (The Manual for Human Rights Training for Prison Staff in Ghana, 2007).



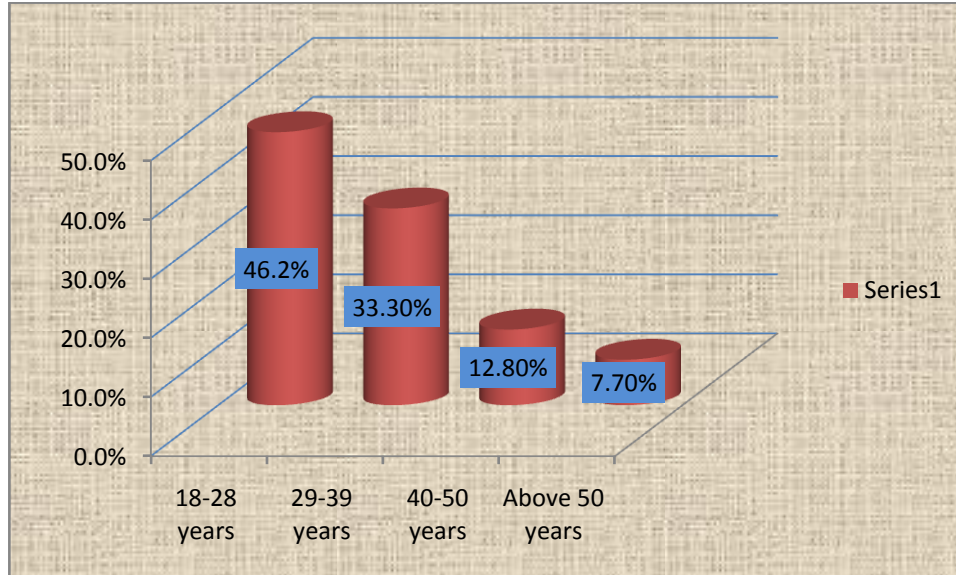
*Source: Field work, March 2012*

The findings is consistent with the 2010 Annual Report of the Ghana Prisons Service which indicted that, the average convict population for the year was 10,173. Out of this total, 9,986 representing 98.2% were males while 187 representing 1.8% were female convicts. Even though female ex-prisoners were of the minority, the researcher took their views and experiences as they go through the reintegration process because women are biologically different from men, they play a different role in society and also present more indicators of vulnerability and social exclusion than men. They also return from prison with special needs

and challenges relating to children and family issues, employment and substance abuse (O'Brien, 2002).

#### **4.1.2 Age Distribution of Respondents**

The age distribution of ex-prisoners is important to the planning of policies to target the age group that is particularly vulnerable and predisposed to crime as well as providing support for ex-prisoners. The survey revealed a mean age of 37 years with the oldest of the respondent being 61 years and the youngest being 21 years. The ages were categorized into four namely, 18 to 28 years, 29 to 39 years, 40 to 50 years and above 50 years. The first category which also had the highest number of respondents was 18 people representing 46.2 % followed by those of the age group of 29 to 39 years with 13 respondents representing 33.3%. The age cohort of 40 to 50 years had 8 respondents representing 12.8%.

**Figure 2: Age Distribution of Respondents**

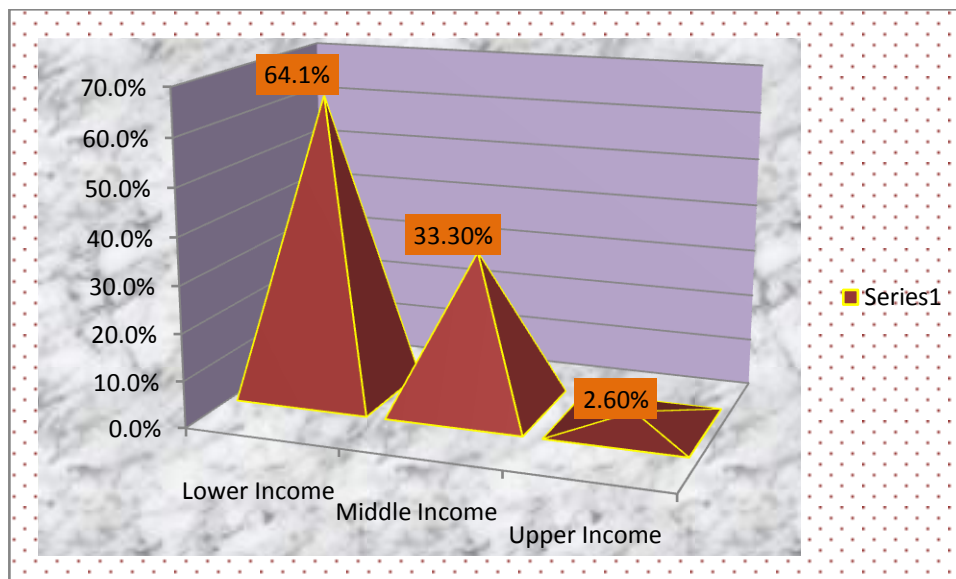
*Source: Field work, March 2012*

Only 3 respondents, representing 7.7% were above 50 years. The age distribution as shown in Figure 2 revealed that the age group of 18 to 28 years had the highest number of respondents followed by those within the bracket of 29 to 39 years. Similarly, the 2009 Annual Report of GPS revealed that the age group of 18 years to 25 years representing 46.5% was the highest followed by the age bracket of 26 years to 35 years representing a total of 31.2% of the total convict population in Ghana. The 2010 GPS Annual Report also indicate that the age group of 18 years to 25 years was the highest with a percentage of 42.49 followed by those who fall in the age bracket of 26 years to 35 years representing 32.8% of the total convict population. The field report of the age group of respondents shows a similar pattern as the age distribution of the total convict population in Ghanaian prisons as reported by the GPS annual reports of 2009 and 2010.

### 4.1.3 Area of Residence of Respondents

The study also collected information on the area of residence of respondents as shown in Figure 3. The areas of residence of respondents were considered as important for this study to inform policy planning in terms of targeting of interventions for ex-prisoners. The area of residence were categorized into three namely, low income, middle income and upper income. Those who lived in the low income areas included the slums or what is also known as ghettos. The response rate from the lower income residents was higher at 62%, followed by middle income residents at 34.5% and the upper income residents at 3.4%.

**Figure 3: Area of Residence of Respondents**



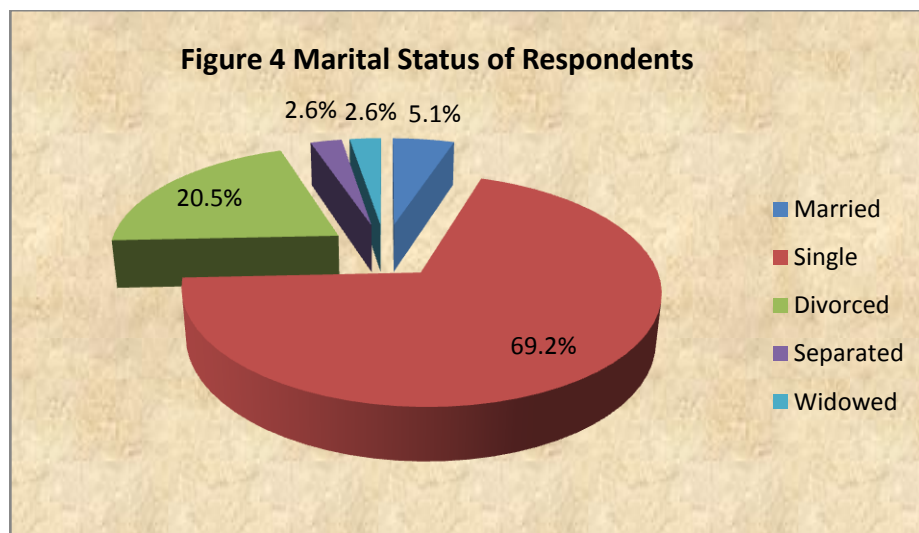
*Source: Field work, March 2012*

Qualitative interviews also revealed similar trends with 4 respondents living in the lower income communities followed by 2 respondents who lived in middle income communities and none living in upper income community. Among the 4 who lived in a lower income area, one

female lived in a ghetto. The in-depth interviews further revealed that some of the respondents had maintained their areas of residence before and after incarceration and a few others had changed locations due to stigmatisation and the consequences of labelling suffered by ex-prisoners.

#### 4.1.4 Marital Status

The marital status of respondents was also considered as important to the study to find out if incarceration in anyway had affected their marital status and how it had influenced their reintegration into society. Figure 4 which presents marital status of respondents shows that 69.2% were single, 20.5% were divorced, 5.1% were married, 2.6% were separated and 2.6% were widowed.



*Source: Field work, March 2012*

The percentage of those divorced and separated put together came to 25.7. In-depth interview explained that people who were married before incarceration and especially serving long

sentences either got divorced whilst in prison or came back to find out that their partners were co-habiting with other partners.

#### 4.1.5 Educational and Employment Background of Respondents

Information about the educational status of the respondents is also useful in that it enabled the researcher to find out if the ex-prisoners had the social skills to access various opportunities available in society and also compete effectively on the job market. Nsanze (2007) asserts that inadequate education makes a person have minimum social skills and self-management. When an individual lacks these life essentials, drug abuse or crime commission is likely to occur.

**Table 3: Cross tabulation of Education and Employment Status of respondents**

Educational Background	Employment Status		Total		
	Yes	No	Freq	%	
No education	0	1	1	2.6	
JHS	3	3	6	15.4	
SHS	13	15	28	71.8	
Vocational training	1	1	2	5.1	
Tertiary	1	0	1	2.6	
Non-formal education	1	0	1	2.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>48.7</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Source: Fieldwork, March 2013*

The lack of jobs or unemployment is also described as one of the contributing factors of criminality. Also an ex-offender with a history of joblessness is at high risk of relapsing into crime (Uggen, Wakefield & Western, 2005). From the survey, 2.6% had no education, one person representing 2.6% had non-formal education, 15.4% went to school up to JHS and 71.8% had SHS education and only one respondent representing 2.6% had tertiary education

as shown in table 3. Also 19 respondents representing 48.7% were employed prior to incarceration whilst 20 of them representing 51.3% were unemployed.

A cross tabulation of the educational and employment status further revealed that out of the total population of 20 people who were unemployed, 15 of them representing 75% had low levels of education at JHS. In-depth interview revealed that some respondents dropped out of school and could not complete their SHS education due to crime, peer pressure or abuse of drugs.

#### **4.2 Experiences of Ex-prisoners with Rehabilitation and Reformation Programmes**

##### **in Prison**

This session provides information on the respondents' type of offence and the number of years spent in prison. It also revealed information and some of the experiences they encountered. This information provided here also helped in comparing their experiences in fulfilment of the first objective of this study that is to review the GPS rehabilitation and reformation policy.

#### 4.2.1 Type of offence respondents were charged with and the number of years spent

##### In prison

Among the 39 respondents for the qualitative study, 74.4% were convicted and 25.6% were on remand custody. Table 4 below shows the offences respondents were charged with and the number of years spent in prison.

**Table 4: Cross-tabulation of type of offence and length of time in prison**

Type of offence	Length of time in prison				Total	
	Less than a year	1-3 years	4-6 years	Above 6 years	Freq	%
Armed robbery	0	2	5	9	16	41.0
Assault	0	7	0	0	7	17.9
Stealing	0	6	1	1	8	20.5
Rape	0	0	3	0	3	7.7
Fraud	1	1	0	1	3	7.7
Drug trafficking	0	0	1	1	2	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Field work, March 2012*

The number of years one spends in prison reveals to a large extent the effects of incarceration and the challenges the individual may be experiencing which could pre-inform policy planning and interventions tailored to their specific needs. The type of offence an ex-prisoner was charged with also reveals to some extent communities' perception and acceptability of that ex-offender after his or her release. In-depth interviews with some community members revealed that some offences like armed robbery, rape and murder were considered as serious crimes that were seriously frowned upon.

From the study, the offences respondents were charged with included rape, assault, armed robbery and stealing. As shown in Table 4, those charged with armed robbery topped the list with 41% followed by stealing with a percentage of 20.5. The least among the crimes

committed was drug trafficking which had a percentage of 5.1. A cross tabulation of the offence type and the number of years spent in prison also revealed that 41 % of respondents spent between 1 to 3 years in prison, 30.8 % spent 6 years or more whilst 25.6% spent less than a year. The mean years spent was 6 years with the highest being 21 years and the lowest being 6 months.

#### **4.2.2 Treatment Programmes in Prison**

One of the objectives of imprisonment is to reform and rehabilitate offenders to facilitate their reintegration into society after their release. The study revealed that 3 respondents representing 7.7% of the sample population had received vocation training or trade training. These 3 respondents were all convicted and not those on remand. Also those serving short sentences of 3 years and below were also excluded from such training programmes. Also 31 respondents representing 79.4% went through counselling. However respondents admitted that the counselling services received were mainly religious counselling. None of the respondents went through the discharge procedure to prepare them for their release.

Field reports discussed above showed that the respondents were not well prepared prior to their release. The manual on Human Rights Training for Prisons Officials in Ghana requires that prisoners should be prepared for reintegration into society and provided with adequate social support when they were released. The Prisons Service of Ghana also has the responsibility of promoting the eventual reintegration of prisoners into the larger conventional society through several means. Among these is the opportunities provided to prisoners to learn vocational skills or trade and gain education.

An After-Care Agent is to prepare a prisoner awaiting release from prison to meet the Discharge Board for the impending experience with the world outside the prison. This preparation is expected to begin three months prior to the release of the prisoners. All respondents admitted that they were not prepared well to enable them begin a new journey back into society.

#### 4.3 Reintegration into Society: Ex-Prisoners Challenges Encountered

There are a number of social, economic and personal challenges that ex-prisoners are faced with that tend to become hindrances to a crime-free lifestyle after their release and also form a barrier to their reintegration process. Some of these challenges result from offenders' past history and others are more directly linked to the effects of incarceration and the subsequent difficult transition back to the community (Baldry, McDonnell, Mapelstone & Peeters, 2003). Under this section, the researcher presents various issues the ex-prisoners were faced with after their release from incarceration prior to benefiting from any interventions from RCI or PMG as shown from the multiple responses in table 5. The session concludes with a life story of one of the respondents.

**Table 5: Number of Respondents who said Yes or No to these Challenges**

Challenges	Yes		No		TOTAL Number	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Lack of Family Acceptance and Re-union	24	61.5	15	38.5	39	100
Societal Stigmatisation and Rejection	19	48.7	20	51.2	39	100
Difficulty in securing a job	33	84.6	6	15.4	39	100
Lack of accommodation	28	71.8	11	28.2	39	100
Dealing with drugs and alcohol	14	35.9	25	64.1	39	100

Source: Field Work, March 2012

#### 4.3.1 Lack of Family Acceptance and Re-union

Lack of family acceptance and reunion is one of the challenges that ex-prisoners were faced with after their release. Even though relationships with family members are very critical to successful reintegration for most ex-prisoners, yet these relationships may have been severely strained or complicated by the offender's past criminal history. Many family members of returning prisoners are also suspicious about the return of their loved ones because they cannot tell if they have truly changed (Furstenberg 1995). From this research, 24 respondents representing 61.5% indicated that the lack of family acceptance was one of the challenging issues they were faced with in their reintegration process. In-depth interview also confirmed this as one respondent remarked:

*“You see... my family never bothered about me all the 11 years I was on remand.... My twin brother came there only two times to visit... all the money I used to appeal my case was raised by the gang I was hanging out with. So in fact by the time they released me... my friends were already waiting for me ... you know why? Those of us who have been to prison always come with new ideas for the gang so no problem. In this world, if you are an ex-convict. ...excuse me to say they treat you like a pig...your family will reject you and will not want to see your face, but as for friends they are always there”.*

Another respondent also narrated his experience:

*“When I was in prison nobody from my family visited me. My father said I have disgraced him and the family. For 9 years, I was there alone. I was released six*

*months ago and I don't know the where about of my only son. My girlfriend has married and her family is not ready to tell me where she has gone to live with my son. I know he doesn't know me because he was just three months old when I had my case... some of my friends are saying she lives in Kete-Krachie with her husband... I am trying to gather some money so I can go there and see my son.''*

This study discovered that isolating a family member because of his or her criminal past predisposes him or her to committing more crimes. Social supports given by families, relatives or friends to an individual whilst in incarceration and after release have positive influence in terms of drawing that individual back to live a positive life (Taylor, Peplau , & Sears, 2003).

#### **4.3.2 Societal Stigmatisation and Social Rejection**

Social rejection and stigmatization are among key challenges which further affect ex-prisoners' search for job and accommodation. From the study, 48.7% of the respondents said they suffered from stigmatization and social rejection. Society generally views ex-prisoners differently from other people. The rejection, mistrust and the label placed on them by formal and informal institutions slow their impetus to access important social assistance as well as supports available in the community (Nsanze, 2007). One respondent remarked:

*Prison is like hell... it is a place for those who have been rejected in society or the nation...it is sad to go through all these painful moments and when you are out then your own friends reject you.... The neighbors, everybody is scared of you.....so society becomes like a second prison and you still don't have your freedom''.*

However in-depth interviews with some community members revealed that people are ready to accept ex-prisoners if and only when they see a change in their lives. Society also is willing to forgive and accept ex-prisoners whose crimes were not that offensive like murder, rape and armed robbery.

#### **4.3.3 Difficulty in Securing a Job**

Difficulty in securing a Job or unemployment was ranked highest on the list with 84.6% of all the challenges ex-prisoners were faced with in their reintegration process. Field reports gathered for this research recognized that the lack of alternatives to crimes forced ex-prisoners recommitting crimes such as stealing and armed robbery to get their daily meals as well as other basic needs. One respondent through the in-depth interview remarked:

*“.....my friends go on stealing operations and bring me money. From the beginning they told me I didn't need to go with them but latter I was forced to go because they said they could not continue helping me... I had to help myself”.*

The efforts made by others to secure jobs were hampered by the label they bore as ex-convict or ex-prisoner. This was what a male respondent said:

*“I decided that everywhere I went to work, I would tell them that I was an ex-convict because I didn't want the situation that somebody who knew me before would tell them. So at my first place of work as a cleaner, six days after my employment, I told them of my past and since then all the workers changed their attitude towards me. One week after that the owner of the company told me that I should go home and they would call me when they needed me, but they never did.”*

#### 4.3.4 Lack of Accommodation

Ex-prisoners are a category of people that are vulnerable and at risk of staying without accommodation. Research has shown that, there is a close relationship between homelessness and crimes. Many ex-prisoners have also expressed how they resorted to stop abusing drugs with their fellow criminals soon after their discharge from prisons and they found no place to stay (Nsanze, 2007).

The study revealed 71.8% had issues with accommodation. If a person lived in a family house and was convicted of a crime, and sentenced into prison, the likelihood of coming back to meet the room vacant is rare. The room was either occupied by other members of the family or rented out. As a result of this, one had to search for a new accommodation or wait till the rent expired. The situation was even worsened by the fact that they had no money to rent a new place and even if they did, landlords often had refused to offer their houses or apartments to people who had criminal background. Other relatives or family members have one excuse or the other for not accommodating them especially if the crime the person committed had to do with robbery, theft, rape or murder. Another ex-prisoner said:

*“When I came from prison the first time, my elder brother had rented out my room. He said the family needed money to get a lawyer to fight my case so that was the only way to raise money. Since my other siblings were not ready to share their rooms with me, I went to the ghetto to live with one of my long-time friends till one day the police came on a swoop in the area and arrested all of us. So I went back to prison for another six months”.*

#### 4.3.5 Difficulty in dealing with Drugs and Substance Abuse

There were other challenges such as the use of drugs like marijuana and cocaine. A significant 35.9% of the respondents indicated they had to deal with drugs after their release from prison.

One respondent said:

*“You see, drugs will lead you into trouble... drugs will let all your money get finished then you have to steal to survive. Unfortunately for me I learnt how to smoke when I went to prison. My cell mates advised me that if I wanted to serve my sentence faster I should smoke so that I would forget about all my problems. Anytime I smoked marijuana I could sleep all day and wake up in the evening”.*

In summary, it can be inferred from the above that respondents were not well prepared prior to their release. The manual on Human Rights Training for Prison Officials in Ghana (2007) however requires that prisoners should be prepared for reintegration into society and provided with adequate social support when they are released. The Prisons Service of Ghana also has the responsibility of promoting the eventual reintegration of prisoners into the larger conventional society through several means. Among these is the opportunities provided to prisoners to learn vocational skills or trade and gain education.

Skill development and vocational training were only available to those who were convicted and served long sentences usually above three years. This research also revealed that out of the 39 respondents for the quantitative survey, those who served prison term of 3 years or less represented 43.6 % of the respondents. However in Chapter 21 under the section for the preparation for release of prisoners, the Manual on Human Rights Training for Prison

Officials (2007) cautions prisons officials not to overlook those serving short sentences. This is not just because they are in the majority but also for the danger that they will return to prison again.

Even for the others who served long sentences, not all of them went through the skill development or the vocational training. The survey recorded only 3 persons representing 7.7% of respondents who went through skill development or vocational training. In-depth interviews explored some of the reasons as to why respondents who served long sentences did not go through such training. One respondent remarked:

*“I was a fashion designer apprentice before I had my case..... I wanted to continue with my career while in the prison but the machines there were so old and also we did not have trainers who were so good in designing”.*

A female respondent also recounted the challenges she was faced with after her release from prison. This is presented in the life Case Box 1 below.

### **Life Case Box 1: Life Story of a Female Respondent**

*Growing up as a child, I saw the sufferings and the pain my mother experienced due to the untimely death of my father. My mother had to take care of us till she also passed away just when I completed Senior High School (SHS). I could not pursue my education so had to look for job to take care of myself and my two younger siblings. I finally had a job with one of the non-bank financial institutions until the unfortunate calamity...  
hmm... I was implicated in a case and was sentenced to three years imprisonment. I was told that my poor aunty who is a farmer came for my two sisters to go and live with her in the village. When I came out of prison last year, I was told one of my younger sisters dropped out of school at SHS Form Two because there was nobody to pay her fees. The youngest also qualified for SHS but because I was not there to help she has been at home for a year... You see life in Accra is not easy and going to live in the village is out of my plans because everybody there knows of my case...being an ex-prisoner is not a joke. Everybody immediately label you as a thief or a bad person. I am now perching in someone's kiosk. My only prayer is that it must not rain else the kiosk can get flooded. I now sell pure water (iced water) every day in order to eat.*

#### **4.4 Social Support Mechanisms for Ex-prisoners: The RCI and PMG Interventions**

##### **4.4.1 Profile of Royal house Chapel School of Restoration (RCI-SOR) and Prison**

###### **Ministry of Ghana (PMG)**

RCI-SOR was first conceptualized three years ago by the Most Reverend Sam Korankye Ankrah, the Apostle-General of RCI. RCI has over 300 local assemblies and foreign missions with Accra as its headquarters. RCI has a Compassion Ministry responsible for humanitarian services by providing comfort, care and support for the less-advantaged and vulnerable in

society. Prisons visitations and donations to prisons is one of such activities under the Compassion Ministry of RCI. RCI-SOR was conceptualized during one of the church's humanitarian programmes when the Apostle-General visited the Nsawam Prison and made donations to the prison and also feted the inmates. His passion for ex-prisoners was ignited when he thought of what next must be done for the prisoners after they were released, hence the need to set up RCI-SOR to reintegrate prisoners. Revered Mrs Rita Korankye-Ankrah is the Director of RCI-SOR.

### ***Aim of RCI-SOR***

As the name of the School suggests, the aim of the School is to help restore and rebuild the lives of ex-offenders. The school also helps transform and rehabilitate drug addicts, prostitute and other people with deviant behaviours in society.

### ***Mechanisms Employed***

**Counselling:** The school runs counselling services relevant for the emotional, mental and spiritual needs of its members. Some of the courses are forgiveness, the love of God, anger management, temperament, depression, team work and mentoring.

**Job Placement:** Members are employed by the church and others are recommended for placement with some companies owned by church members.

**Medical Care:** Members are registered free of charge to acquire the National Health Insurance card. Treatment of other ailments not covered by National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), are also paid for by the RCI.

**Financial Aid:** Members of the RCI-SOR are given regular financial aids to become less dependent on society. This initiative also includes regular food rations and clothes distribution to members. Some of the members are also given bicycles to make their movements easier. Others have also received motorbikes to enable them do regular visitation of new members.

**Educational Scholarship:** Most of the ex-offenders are school drop outs therefore the School makes available educational scholarship for those who would like to continue with their education. The package is also available for their children.

### ***Mode of Operation***

Students of RCI-SOR are admitted through the regular visits and interaction with prison where contacts are established hence when the prisoners are released they come to the school. Those who are successfully reintegrating also serve as role models in their communities and have referred other members to the school. All new entrants are made to fill forms to capture their bio-data as well as their visions and aims in life. The school is run two times in a week and members are expected to go through a one-year training programme for graduation. The researcher interviewed 14 of ex-prisoners who have benefited from the RCI supports.

The Prisons Ministry of Ghana (PMG) was founded in 1993 as a Christian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. It was later opened up to other churches that joined to sponsor its operations and management.

The mission of PMG is to visit prisoners, help provide for their physical and spiritual needs, rehabilitate them, restore their dignity and empower them to be productive. PMG also has as its vision for prisoners to be freed from the power of sin, to live in dignity and be productive.

### ***Mode of Operation and Mechanisms Employed***

The Ministry pays regular weekly visits to the inmates of the country's prisons to share the word of God to the prisoners and counsel them. The Ministry has volunteers who teach literacy classes at James Camp in Accra, and train the female inmates at Nsawam Prison to acquire skills in art and craft such as beads and ornamental art. As a result of the regular visits to the prisons and the relationship established with the inmates, ex-prisoners visit the offices of PMG for counselling, job placement and skill training.

**Half-Way Home:** The Ministry is constructing a Half-way home at Asutuare near Akuse in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. When it is fully operational, each year about twenty-five (25) reformed and discharged prisoners will spend a maximum of one year in residence to undergo training and practice in agro-forestry, food security, artisanal and various income-generating activities that will equip them with required employable skills and financial capital to ensure smooth integration into their families and communities to regain their dignity and livelihood.

The purpose of the project is to help re-integrate the ex-offenders into the society and to build capacity of social outcasts to be highly productive and be examples of healthy living to others. Currently while waiting for the project to be completed, some discharged prisoners come to the office of PMG in Accra to receive counselling and other supports. Some have also been

employed by the Ministry and others have been given seed money to start their own business. The survey interviewed seven ex-prisoners who have benefited from these interventions. A summary of services provided by RCI and PMG is presented in Tables 6.

**Table 6: Types of Social Support Mechanisms Employed by RCI and PMG**

Type of Intervention	RCI	PMG
Skill Training	No	Yes
Employment	Yes	Yes
Financial Assistance	Yes	Yes
Counselling	Yes	Yes
Educational Scholarship	Yes	No
Free Medical Care	Yes	Yes
Accommodation	Yes	No

Source: Field work, May 2012

Table 6 depicts a summary of the various interventions PMG and RCI provide for ex-prisoners. Of all the interventions, counselling, financial assistance, employment and free medical care, are common to the two institutions. From the survey, some respondents had benefited one way or the other from the free medical care and the employment opportunities provided by the two institutions. However, for counselling and financial assistance, all respondents had benefited from these initiatives. This means that, counselling and financial assistance are key as far as the interventions offered by the two institutions are concerned. On the other hand, skill training, accommodation and educational scholarship were not provided in common by PMG and RCI. From the survey, no respondent under RCI had benefited from skill training and also none of the respondents under PMG had benefited from accommodation and educational scholarship. A detailed examination of the various interventions is presented in Table 7.

## 4.5 Examination of RCI and PMG's Social Support Intervention Programmes

### 4.5.1 Skill Training and Employment

As shown in Table 7, a total number of 3 out of the 7 respondents under PMG representing 42.9% had benefited from their skill training programme. Table 7 also indicates that 12 out of the 14 respondents under RCI representing 85.7% had benefited from their employment programme. In the same vein, 4 respondents representing 57.1% of those affiliated with PMG had also benefited from their employment programme. The overall purpose of this initiative was to equip beneficiaries to be self-sufficient and less dependent on society.

**Table 7: Examination of Social Support Mechanisms Employed by PMG and RCI**

Type of Intervention	RCI (N=14)		PMG (n=7)		TOTAL Number (n=21)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Skill Training	0	0	3	42.9	3	14.29
Employment	12	85.7	4	57.1	16	76.19
Financial Assistance	14	100	7	100	21	100
Counselling	14	100	7	100	21	100
Educational Scholarship	1	7.1	0	0	1	4.76
Free Medical Care	14	100	4	57.1	18	85.71
Accommodation	3	21.4	0	0	3	14.29

Source: Field work, May 2012

### 4.5.2 Financial Assistance

From the study, all the 21 respondents consisting of 14 and 7 affiliated with RCI and PMG respectively had benefited from their financial assistance initiatives. The purpose was to help support their day-to-day needs and also provide start-up capital for those who want to start their own businesses.

### **4.5.3 Counselling**

From the study, all 21 respondents comprising 14 from RCI and 7 from PMG had benefited from the counselling services of the two institutions. The purpose was to help build ex-prisoners spiritually, mentally and socially to eschew some negative practices that would make them less accepted in society. The two organisations have facilitators and other resource persons with experiences including professional counsellors, clerics, psychologists, educationists, legal practitioners and medical doctors. With PMG, counselling is done as and when ex-prisoners walk in to their offices and follow-ups are made when necessary. RCI on the other hand meets beneficiaries twice on weekly basis for group counselling, teachings and one-on-one counselling sessions.

Helping ex-prisoners to reintegrate into society cannot be achieved without the support from the family or relatives of the ex-offender and the willingness of ex-prisoner. In this vein, the ministry schedules meetings with the family or relatives of the ex-offenders to let them understand some of the practical issues on the reintegration process and the emotional support, love and forgiveness the ex-prisoner may need from them.

### **4.5.4 Other Programmes**

There were other programmes that the ex-prisoners benefited from. These include free educational scholarship (7.1%), free medical care (100%) and accommodation (21.4%) for beneficiaries affiliated with RCI as shown in Table 7. For beneficiaries affiliated with PMG, 4 respondents representing 57.1% had benefited from the free medical care initiative as shown in Table 7.

## **4.6 Challenges Encountered by PMG and RCI**

### **4.6.1 Lack of Accommodation Facilities for Members**

The challenges encountered by the two organisations include lack of accommodation for the number of ex-prisoners who were released and walked straight to their offices but had nowhere to live in Accra. This is because RCI does not have accommodation facilities to house all such people and also PMG's half-way home project has not been completed. To resolve this challenge, PMG gives all such people counselling and financial aid, food and clothing. RCI also makes arrangements for some of them to stay with their friends who have been earlier supported with accommodation when they came. Some are also accommodated by the employers they were recommended to.

### **4.6.2 Unwillingness of some ex-prisoners to break away from old criminal networks**

Even though a significant number of ex-prisoners who come to RCI and PMG received support and made good use of the opportunities offered them, a few others were unwilling to break away from their old criminal network and life style. As a result, RCI lost 2 of such members who went back to crime.

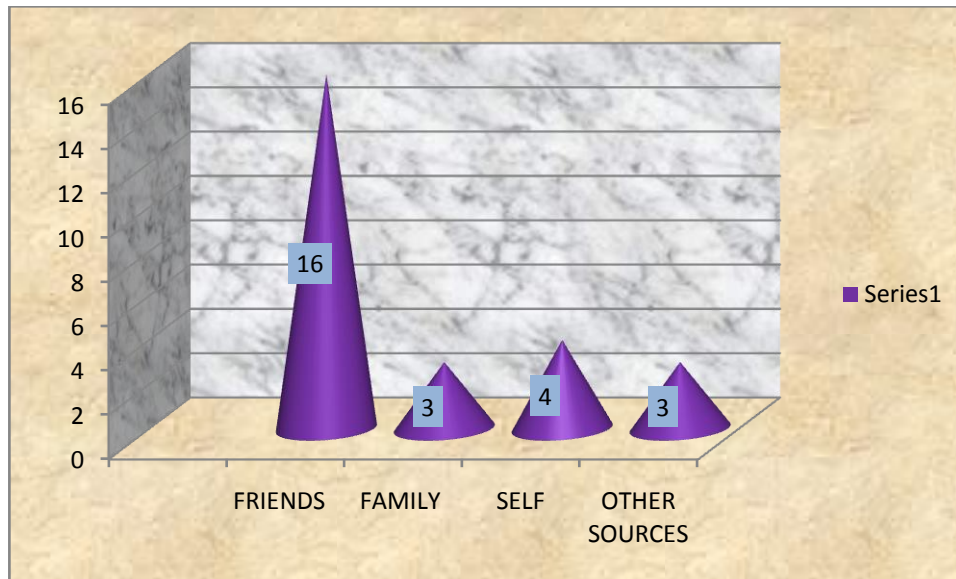
### **4.6.3 Inadequate Resources**

PMG depends on donations from partner churches for their operations. In the event of delay in the release of funds, which sometimes occur, PMG's operations are affected. RCI will also have to increase its budget to scale-up its interventions.

#### 4.7 Coping Mechanisms of Ex-prisoners without Support from PMG and RCI

The researcher also interviewed 18 respondents who were not under the PMG and RCI support initiatives. Field report as shown in Figure 5 displays the coping mechanisms adopted by them.

**Figure 5: Coping Mechanisms Employed by Those without Support from PMG and RCI**



*Source: Field work, March 2012*

Out of the 18 respondents, 16 (88.9%) of them received help from their friends, 3 (16.7%) received help or support from family members. Other 4 (22.2%) people said they work to take care of themselves and the other 3 (16.7%) received support from their churches or mosque.

#### **4.8 Analysis of Social Support Mechanisms for Ex-Prisoners and its Influence on their Reintegration**

This session presents analysis of social support mechanisms and its influence on reintegration of ex-prisoners conducted with respect to the challenges or obstacles they were faced with after their release from incarceration and their current situation and lifestyle. The session concludes with some life stories from some of the respondents about their reintegration experiences and the influence of the social support received.

The three indicators of successful reintegration used were employment, accommodation and social acceptance. These three indicators were selected based on the fact that the lack of employment or difficulty in securing a job was the first (84.6%) on the list of challenges indicated by respondents. It was followed by the lack of accommodation which was ranked second (71.8%). The lack of family acceptance, societal stigmatisation and rejection came third in the ranking with 61.5% and 48.7% respectively.

#### **Employment**

A cross tabulation of the current employment as shown in Table 8 revealed that out of the 21 respondents who were employed, 12 representing 85.7% and 5 representing 71.4% were affiliated with RCI and PMG respectively. There were also 4 respondents representing 22.2% who were not affiliated with any intervention institution. Also out of the total of 18 respondents who were not working, 14 of them representing 77.8% were not affiliated with PMG and RCI. Those affiliated with RCI and PMG who were not working were 2 representing 14.3% and 2 representing 28.6% respectively. This shows that PMG and RCI through their interventions boosted up the confidence levels of ex-prisoners to facilitate their

reintegration and also opened job opportunities for them. Some of the respondents were directly employed by the RCI and PMG while others were recommended for employment.

**Table 8: Name of organisation\* Employment Status Cross Tabulation**

Name of Organisation	Yes		No		TOTAL Number	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
RCI	12	85.7	2	14.3	14	100
PMG	5	71.4	2	28.6	7	100
OTHERS	4	22.2	14	77.8	18	100

*Source: Field work, March 2012*

### **Accommodation**

A cross tabulation of the current accommodation patterns as shown in table 8 indicated that 9 respondents of the total sample population lived in rented houses. These are ex-prisoners who are affiliated with PMG (57.1%) and RCI (35.7%). In-depth interviews with respondents revealed that the job opportunity offered them by PMG and RCI enabled them save and were able to rent their own apartment. Also others received temporal accommodation from RCI. The respondents who are not affiliated with PMG or RCI however do not live in their own rented apartment.

The survey also revealed a total number of 13 respondents living in their family houses. Six out of this total representing 42.8% and three representing 42.9% were those affiliated with PMG and RCI respectively. Four of the other respondents representing 22.2% had no affiliation with any intervention institution. In-depth interviews indicated a level of acceptance by their families which was not so at the initial stages of their release. Also there were 14 of the respondents who were perching with friends. Out of this number, 11 representing 61.1% were those without affiliation as against 3 respondents representing 21.4% who were affiliated with RCI. Those affiliated with PMG had no one in this category.

There were also respondents who were classified as squatters and they were 3 in number. All these 3 respondents were those who had no affiliation with RCI and PMG.

**Table 9: Name of the organisation \* Type of accommodation Cross tabulation**

Types of accommodation	RCI		PMG		OTHERS	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Rented	5	35.7	4	57.1	0	0
Family House	6	42.8	3	42.9	4	22.2
Perching with Friends	3	21.4	0	0	11	61.1
Squatting	0	0	0	0	3	16.7
<b>Total</b>	14	100	7	100	18	100

*Source: Field work, March 2012*

An in-depth interview to explore the reasons behind these figures showed that those affiliated with RCI who were still perching with friends were those who had been released in less than three months and had started saving hoping to rent their own accommodation. Those who were not affiliated also explained that the friends they were perching with were those they lived in “ghettos” with prior to their incarceration.

### **Social Acceptance**

The current levels of social acceptance of respondents were also measured as high, moderate and low as shown in table 9. Out of the total population of 39, 2 respondents representing 9.5% from PMG and RCI had their social acceptance levels rated as high whiles none from the non-affiliated group had high social acceptance but rather low social acceptance at 77.8%.

**Table 10: Level of Social Acceptance**

Level Ranking	RCI/PMG		OTHERS	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
High	2	9.5	0	0
Moderate	14	66.7	4	22.2
Low	5	23.8	14	77.8
<b>Total</b>	21	100	18	100

*Source: Field work, March 2012*

Those under the care of PMG and RCI also had 14 representing 66.7% whose social acceptance level was moderate as compared to 4 representing 22.2% of the non-affiliated. Through in-depth interviews, the social acceptance levels of the respondents were assessed both at family level and community levels. Those who had benefited from RCI and PMG interventions claimed that they felt more accepted than before. This they attributed to the counselling they had received from the RCI and PMG and also the fact that now they had jobs to do and they did not have to depend on friends or their families. Those without affiliation but also had their levels of acceptance rated as moderate attributed the efforts to some good friends they made while in prison who provided them with good advice and also supported them financially. This they said made them win some sort of respect in the community unlike before when they were released. Two male respondents shared their life stories of their experiences with RCI and PMG. The life stories are presented in the life case boxes 2 and 3 below.

**Life Case Box 2: Life Story of a Male Respondent**

*I dropped out of school in SHS one due to the influence of bad friends. I started defrauding people till I was arrested one day. I returned from prison to realise that I had lost everything and had to begin life from the scratch. I got so frustrated because nobody was willing to help. One day I attempted suicide. After this incidence, a neighbour introduced me to the RCI-SOR. When I joined the school and listened to other people's stories of how they have been transformed by the school, I was motivated and told myself that once I have life I can also make it. Whiles at RCI-SOR I was offered employment and out of it was able to save. I now live in a rented apartment and have started my own business. Today I am the bread winner of the family taking care of my mother and my siblings. I have also met a lady who loves me despite the fact that I have been to prison and we are preparing for marriage. I don't know where I would have been without RCI-SOR. Through the teachings and the counselling I received from RCI-SOR, I am now a changed person.*

**Life Case Box 3: Life Story of a Male Respondent**

*After spending 8 years in prison, I came back so confused and didn't know how and where to start life from. My wife divorced me when I was in prison so when I was released, I went to live with a friend for a while. I was so frustrated and depressed. I went to the office of PMG because I knew them when they came to the prison to preach to us. Through the counselling I received I decided to forgive my ex-wife and all others who had wronged me. PMG became like my second home because they really showed me love. Through PMG I had a job and now I go with them to visit the prisons and preach to them and to share my story with them. Today, I have re-married and I have also taken custody of all my children from my ex-wife. All I can say is that life after prison is hard... but when you decide that you will not go back to your old life style and also with the help of God and an organisation like PMG you can be transformed.*

From the discussions so far it is clear that social support and interventions given to ex-prisoners go a long way to facilitate their reintegration into society. Even though those without affiliation seemed to have made some progress, those who were affiliated with RCI and PMG indicated better progress in their reintegration. Respondents however added that it also took their personal commitment and willingness to make it work.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This is the final chapter of the study report and it provides a summary of the entire research. It also captures the conclusion of the study based on the findings and makes policy recommendations for ex-prisoners reintegration back into society.

#### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study was about the reintegration of ex-prisoners into the Ghanaian society using Royalhouse Chapel and the Prison Ministry of Ghana as case studies. The study was conducted on the basis that ex-prisoners are faced with numerous socio-economic challenges after their release from incarceration which pose a threat to their reintegration into society. Some of the obstacles they are faced with are as a result of the inadequate treatment programmes they had received in prison and lack of post-released interventions to facilitate their reintegration into society.

The researcher used using a mix method approach to research, which employed the use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis, to collect data and analysed the different socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and their implications on ex-prisoner reintegration. In addition some of the challenges ex-prisoners were faced with after their release from incarceration which often become obstacles to their reintegration into society were also captured. The study involved a total of 39 ex-prisoners consisting 36 males and 3

females selected for the quantitative study and also 6 other ex-prisoners consisting of a female and 5 males selected for the qualitative study through in-depth interviews. Other Key informants from the Ghana Prisons Service, Royalhouse Chapel and Prison Ministry of Ghana, 10 community members and 10 family members of ex-prisoners were also involved in the study. Three approaches were used in the data collection. They were face-to-face interview with respondents to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, desk review of secondary data and case study. Analysis of data was done using mean computations, frequency tables, cross tabulation and pie chart to describe key socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

The findings of this study revealed some unique patterns about the socio-demographic data of the respondents. The ex-prisoners socio-demographic statistics revealed that the youth between 18 to 39 years are mostly at risk of committing crime constituting 79.5%. This is explained from the study with those between the ages of 18 to 28 years and 29 to 39 years constituting the highest number of respondents with 46.2% and 33.3% respectively. Similarly, the GPS annual reports for 2009 and 2010 confirmed this trend. Also majority of the ex-prisoners are those with low level of education, they were mainly unemployed and were also single. Majority of them (64.1%) also lived in low income areas in Accra that are less developed and the residents in those areas are particularly vulnerable to livelihood shocks.

The study further revealed that some of the obstacles the ex-prisoners were faced with were as a result of the fact that majority of them were not well prepared prior to their release. Others suffered because of their past criminal history, stigmatisation, and society's unpreparedness to

receive them. Other respondents also cited the label 'Ex-convict or ex-prisoner imposed on them by society further hindered their access to jobs and accommodation. Hence, accommodation, lack of jobs and lack of social acceptance were their priorities on the list of challenges.

Another finding of this research was that the provision of post-release support that is tailored to the needs of ex-offenders is very crucial in facilitating their reintegration into society else they relapse into crime. Some of these social support mechanisms are what RCI and PMG are offering some ex-prisoners in Accra. Those without support from the two organisations adopted coping mechanism such as assistance from friends and family.

The study concluded that those who received social support from RCI and PMG were reintegrating better than those without support. In conducting this analysis, three core indicators were used. They were job security, social acceptance and accommodation. At the end of the findings of this research, the following policy recommendations were made.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The main question posed for this research was, to what extent do social support mechanisms for ex-prisoners facilitate their reintegration into society? Precisely, the study sought to find out whether the provision of social support mechanisms for ex-prisoners after their release from incarceration facilitates their reintegration into the Ghanaian society. In a bid to provide answers to the research question, the researcher reviewed the implementation of the GPS policy on reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. Also an examination of the extent to

which RCI and PMG are able to implement their counselling programmes and the emerging challenges was undertaken. Furthermore, the researcher examined the extent to which RCI and PMG are able to implement their skills training and job placement programmes and the emerging challenges. Finally, an examination of the extent to which support programmes of RCI and PMG have contributed to ex-prisoners reintegration back to society was also carried out.

Incarceration serves a dual purpose of punishing and also reforming and rehabilitating offenders. However, on the basis of the findings of this research, it can be said that the policy of prisoner reformation and rehabilitation in Ghana, was not being implemented in an effective way to facilitate the social reintegration of the prisoner after their release. This is evidenced by the myriad of problems that ex-prisoners are faced with after their release which pose a threat to their reintegration back into society. Some of these obstacles which were identified included the lack of accommodation, jobs and social acceptance which are further compounded by the label imposed on ex-prisoners by formal and informal institutions. Sources of the challenges they are faced with were identified as the lack of adequate preparation and pre-release plan of the ex-prisoners whilst in prison. Also, the old problem of overcrowding at the various correctional centres coupled with limited resources they operate with have hampered the operations of the GPS in its quest to achieve its policy of rehabilitation and reformation. Furthermore, the lack of post-release support for ex-prisoners after their release also renders the little effort made by the correctional centres ineffective in that a number of ex-prisoners reoffend after their release.

The study further confirmed that ex-prisoners who receive post-release support reintegrate better than those who do not. However when such support systems are planned and delivered by institutions such as FBOs or CSOs the beneficiaries tend to benefit better than those who receive assistance from just friends or families. This is because majority of ex-prisoners are those with low social skills and those from poor families so over reliance on just the family or friends may not be enough to facilitate their reintegration. The study also confirmed that counselling provided by PMG and RCI play a vital role in facilitating the reintegration of the ex-prisoners in that it enabled their beneficiaries build positive lives and to overcome the shocks they were faced with which posed a threat to their reintegration back into society. Also those who received skills training and job placement opportunities also had their lives improved better than those who were not affiliated with RCI or PMG.

The main conclusions of this study can be summed up that effective reintegration of people who have been to prison is not only central to their individual progress to lead crime-free lives in society but also to promote public safety and also achieve the goal of crime prevention in our society. This is because an ex-prisoner who has not been well reintegrated has the tendency of relapsing into crime than the one who has been successfully reintegrated.

### **5.3 Policy Recommendations**

From the above findings and conclusion from the study and other research, the following policy recommendations are made:

### **The Need for a National Policy on Ex-Prisoner Reintegration**

The policy must incorporate how juveniles who come into conflict with the law reintegrate after their period of rehabilitation and reformation. This is because from the study, the in-depth interview showed that, some of the ex-prisoners started their criminal career at an early age and they had been in and out of correctional centres. The policy should not be drafted in isolation but be a coherent approach that will incorporate an assessment of the objectives, community involvement at every level as well as the families of the offender where possible. Also statistics on ex-prisoners are needed for effective planning and targeting of interventions for ex-prisoners.

### **The GPS Policy on Rehabilitation and Reformation should be reviewed**

The 1972 NRCD (46) that mandates the GPS to carry out its function of reformation and rehabilitation states that “It shall be the duty of the Ghana Prisons Service to ensure safe custody and welfare of prisoners, and whenever practicable, shall undertake their reformation and rehabilitation”. The phrase ‘whenever possible’ must be reviewed to make the policy more binding and also GPS more committed to carry out its functions. Strategies must also be put in place by all actors in the criminal justice system to reduce overcrowding in the prisons. Overcrowding in our prisons according to GPS Annual Report (2010) is one of the problems inhibiting the functions of the GPS. These strategies may include alternatives to imprisonment which includes diverting the offender away from the criminal justice system to a restorative justice approach being taken more seriously.

### **Introduction of the Parole System**

The parole system as practiced in the western world should be introduced to ensure the gradual re-entry of ex-offenders into society. The parole system will allow for the conditional release of a person convicted of a crime prior to the expiration of that person's term of imprisonment.

### **Intensive Public Education**

There is the need for strong community education on the role of individuals and the community in ex-offenders' reintegration and the dangers of stigmatisation and ostracism of ex-prisoners. This would help minimise the shame that ex-prisoners experience after their release from prison. Such community engagements can be added to the duties of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). The various District Assemblies, Traditional authorities and the Faith-Based Organisations should be involved at all levels.

### **The Need for a Comprehensive Crime Prevention Strategy**

A comprehensive crime prevention strategy should take into account the factors that cause the crime in our society. It must also take a critical look at the low income areas that are prone to crime. Also the age groups that are at risk of committing crime should be actively engaged and more opportunities enhanced for them to secure jobs.

**Collaboration among Agencies**

There is the need for collaborative among the various agencies such as the police, prisons officials, government agencies and community based organisations. The department of social welfare should also be strengthened to effectively implement its aftercare roles.

**Medical Care**

All ex-prisoners can be registered free on the NHIS so that they can access free medical care for some stipulated time before full reintegration.

**Incentives to employers**

The government must encourage companies to hire ex-prisoners to reduce their issue of unemployment created by discrimination. These incentives to companies could include tax rebates.

In conclusion, more research on the topic is needed and could be initiated between policy makers, social practitioners and academia.

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**SECTION B: EXPERIENCES IN PRISON**

7. Were you convicted or on remand custody? a) Convicted b) Remanded
8. What offence were you charged with? (Please tick as appropriate)
- a) Armed Robbery b) Debt c) Assault d) Murder e) Stealing F) Rape  
g) Fraud h) Other ( please specify) .....
9. How long did you spend in prison?
- a) Less than a year b) 1-3 years c) 4-6 years d) 6 years and above
10. Did you receive any training while in prison? a) Yes a) No
11. If yes, what kind of training did you receive? .....
- a) Formal education a) Non-formal education c) Skill training d) Vocational  
e) Others .....
12. Did you have access to counselling services whilst in Prison? a) Yes b) No
13. If yes, what kind of counselling services were they? .....

**SECTION C: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AFTER IMPRISONMENT**

14. What particular situation(s) were you faced with after your discharge? (Please tick as many as applicable)
- a) Lack of family acceptance and re-union  
b) Societal stigmatization and rejection  
c) Lack of employment or difficulty in securing a job  
d) Lack of accommodation

- e) Dealing with drugs and alcohol
- f) Others ( Please specify)-----

15. Are you currently working? a) Yes b) No

16. If you are not working, how are you surviving? ( Please tick as many are applicable)

- a) Family
- b) Friends
- c) Self
- d) Religious organisation
- e) Other (Please specify).....

17. Are you affiliated to any organisation that provides support?

- a) Yes
- b) No( Skip to Q20)

18. If yes, what is the name of the organization? .....

- a) RCI
- b) PMG

19. What kind of practical support or help does the organization provide for you? ( Please tick as many as are applicable)

- a) Skill training
- b) Employment
- c) Financial assistance
- d) Counseling
- e) Educational scholarship
- f) Free medical care
- g) Educational scholarship
- h) Accommodation
- i) Other (please specify).....

#### **D: ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR EX-PRISONERS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THEIR REINTEGRATION**

20. Are you currently working? a) Yes b) No

21. Indicate the type of accommodation you live in?

a) Own House b) Rented house c) Family house d) Perching e) Squatter

22. How will you rate your social acceptance level now?

a) Low  
b) Moderate  
c) High

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **1.2 In-Depth Interview Guide for ex-prisoners**

My name is Hannah Aba Yawson, an MA Social Policy student of the Center for Social Policy Studies. As part of the requirements of my study, I am conducting a research on (THE INVOLVEMENT OF ROYALHOUSE CHAPEL AND PRISON MINISTRY IN REINTEGRATION OF EX-PRISONERS INTO SOCIETY.) The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However the choice to answer any question remains yours. Thank you.

1. Please tell me about you self and how you ended up in prison
2. What were your experiences in prison? Any particular incidence you would like to share ?
3. In your view what challenges do ex-prisoners experience when they are released? Describe the challenges you experienced?
4. What is your advice do you have for others who are returning from prison?

## APPENDIX 3

### 1.3 In-Depth Interview Guide for Family Members

My name is Hannah Aba Yawson, an MA Social Policy student of the Center for Social Policy Studies. As part of the requirements of my study, I am conducting a research on (THE INVOLVEMENT OF ROYALHOUSE CHAPEL AND PRISON MINISTRY IN REINTEGRATION OF EX-PRISONERS INTO SOCIETY). The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However the choice to answer any question remains yours. Thank you.

1. What do you think about family members who go to prison and have to come back home?  
Are there any effects on the family?
2. What are some of the changes you noticed when your family member came out of prison?
3. Do you notice any change in their lives after prison?
4. What are some of these changes?
5. In what ways do you think family members can help ex-prisoners reintegrate into society?

## APPENDIX 4

### 1.4 In-Depth Interview Guide for Community Members

My name is Hannah Aba Yawson, an MA Social Policy student of the Center for Social Policy Studies. As part of the requirements of my study, I am conducting a research on (THE INVOLVEMENT OF ROYALHOUSE CHAPEL AND PRISON MINISTRY IN REINTEGRATION OF EX-PRISONERS INTO SOCIETY). The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However the choice to answer any question remains yours. Thank you.

1. What can you say about people who go to prison and have to come back to the community after serving the prison term?
2. What do people generally say about such people living in your community?
3. In what ways do you think community members can help ex-prisoners reintegrate into society?

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **1.5 In-Depth Interview Schedule for Ghana Prisons Service**

My name is Hannah Aba Yawson, an MA Social Policy student of the Center for Social Policy Studies. As part of the requirements of my study, I am conducting a research on (THE INVOLVEMENT OF ROYALHOUSE CHAPEL AND PRISON MINISTRY IN REINTEGRATION OF EX-PRISONERS INTO SOCIETY). The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However the choice to answer any question remains yours. Thank you.

1. What are your functions?
2. What is your policy on prisoner rehabilitation and reformation and how is it implemented?
3. What are some of the implementation challenges?
4. What treatment programmes exist at the various correctional centres?
5. What discharge plans do you have in place for prisoners before their release?
6. What aftercare services exist for released prisoners?
7. In what ways do you think Ghana Prison service can enhance its operations and contribute to ex-prisoner reintegration into society?

## APPENDIX 6

### 1.6 In-Depth Interview Schedule for Royalhouse Chapel and Prison Ministry Of Ghana

My name is Hannah Aba Yawson, an MA Social Policy student of the Center for Social Policy Studies. As part of the requirements of my study, I am conducting a research on (THE INVOLVEMENT OF ROYALHOUSE CHAPEL AND PRISON MINISTRY IN REINTEGRATION OF EX-PRISONERS INTO SOCIETY). The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However the choice to answer any question remains yours. Thank you.

1. What is the vision of your organization?
2. What prompted your organization to start an intervention for ex-prisoners?
3. How long has this intervention been in place?
4. What are the various programmes under this intervention?
5. What is the nature of your counselling programme?
6. What is the nature of your job placement/ skill training programme?
7. What is your experience like with ex-prisoners?
8. What are some of the implementation challenges?
9. What are some of your achievements?
10. What is the way forward?