



PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE PREVALENCE AND EFFECTS OF STIGMATIZATION ON DISCHARGED OFFENDERS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

Punishments for crimes have always played out in human history. However, despite punishment for crime, most individuals who commit crime and have served their punishment or gone for correction are still stigmatized by the public and this stigmatization seem to have a lot of influence on the life of discharged offenders. Thus, this paper examined public perception of the prevalence and effect of stigmatization on discharged inmates on recidivism in Anambra state. Mixed methods research design was used for this study and the sample size of the study is 400. The questionnaire and In-Depth interview schedules were the instruments used for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used for analyzing the quantitative data while content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The study hypotheses were tested using chi-square (χ^2) inferential statistics. The study found very high prevalence of negative public perception towards discharged offenders. The study also found that discharged inmates are faced with social challenges as a result of stigmatization and these challenges include discrimination, stigmatization and isolation/rejection. The study further found that stigmatization of discharged offenders' leads to loss of community support for discharged offenders. The study, based on its findings recommended that public sensitization programs should be widely conducted to educate society on the importance of accepting and supporting discharged offenders as productive members of the community. The study also recommended that community programs should be established to engage discharged offenders in meaningful activities that benefit society as this will help in reducing the stigmatization of discharged offenders.

Keywords: Discharged offenders, Stigmatization, Public perception, Prevalence, Recidivism, Anambra State

Introduction

Globally, the perception of discharged offenders by their community varies depending on the crime committed and the context. However, discharged offenders are always faced with various challenges after their time in prison. In the United States, Mcphee (2022) opined that two of the biggest challenges African American male discharged offenders face while trying to obtain steady employment are the stigma of criminal conviction and the possible erosion of job skills and social ties to those who could provide employment opportunities. Prior re-entry or reintegration research of discharged offenders in some selected states have shown that public negative attitude toward them is one of the major barriers to reintegration efforts (Ike et al., 2023).

Within the domains of Africa, public attitudes towards discharged offenders inhibit reintegration as Boateng (2017) opined that poor environmental conditions of the prison results to negative attitude of the public towards discharged offenders as it is believed that the prison



do not change criminals but even make them harder. Moreover, Dummermuth (2019) reveals that when discharged offenders are not properly treated or accepted by their own people, they may re-offend and end up again in prison. Sakib (2022) further argues that trust is often the cause of failure within communities dealing with discharged offenders. Thus, tarnished reputation of discharged offenders leaves little hope for the future. Although global statistics are not available, data from individual countries confirm high rates of recidivism, reaching some 70% or more (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime UNODC, 2012) and this is partly as the result of negative public perception about discharged inmates. Thus, there is need for restorative justice and elimination of stigmatization towards discharged offenders.

The global and continental problems associated with unsuccessful reintegration as a result of public or communities' apathetic attitudes towards discharged offenders are also a common phenomenon in Ghana (Boateng, 2017). Ngeno (2018) argues that many discharged offenders are not well received at home and in the church because of suspicion of criminal activity or fear that they have not changed. Apparently, this kind of suspicion looming in the heads of the public makes reintegration of discharged offenders into communities a problem. In Botswana, it was observed that the perception of criminals is shaped by the orientation given by the state correctional facility to the people. That is if the people are not properly sensitized about discharged offenders, it will leave these discharged offenders with a bad impression to deal with and this is not really easy because of numerous social, economic and technological advancements that must have taken place when they are serving their sentence (Maboloko & Maripe, 2019).

In Nigeria, correctional services and procedures used by the Nigerian correctional facilities are poor and is not trusted by citizens to change a criminal and this plants a bad impression about criminals in the mind of the people and this impression is what the people display towards discharged inmates (Onyiuke, 2024). It was also observed by Onwuchekwe et al., (2023) that in order to give a community a positive perception towards discharged offenders, it is important that better rehabilitative facilities be provided in correctional centers and correctional officers gives the society proper orientation on acceptance of discharged inmates back as normal and changed persons. Despite the numerous bodies of research on this topic and similar topics as well as various recommendations made by scholars, there seems to be persistence in the stigmatization of discharged offenders as a result of negative attitude of society toward them. Thus, this study investigated the prevalence and effects of stigmatization on discharged offenders in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Anambra as a Southeastern state in Nigeria like many societies frown against crime. As such, there are severe punishment and facilities set out for criminals. After punishment, the public still seem to have negative attitude which leads to the stigmatization of these offenders; this negative attitude seems to be as a result of the mindset the public have towards crime and rehabilitative facilities in the state (Onwuchekwe et al., 2023). Thus, this research arises from the need to identify how stigmatization of the public affect the life of discharged offenders after leaving correctional facilities. This attitude seems to be influenced by the shortfalls of Anambra correctional facilities. Correctional facilities in Anambra State are in awful conditions and seem to lack basic rehabilitative and health facilities as thousands of inmates are attended to by few doctors, nurses and pharmacists. These conditions and others seem to have contributed to



negative attitude and stigmatization of discharged offenders by the public and also made their communities unwelcoming after their release.

With the stigmatization held about crime, criminal, correctional facilities and discharged offenders in the state, there is urgent need to further explore the effects this stigmatization has on discharged offenders. It is on this note that this study investigated the prevalence and effects of stigmatization on discharged offenders in Anambra State.

Research Objectives

The study was based on the following objectives

1. To find out the level of stigmatization towards discharged offenders by the public in Anambra State.
2. To examine the effects of stigmatization on discharged offenders in Anambra State.
3. To find out possible solutions to eradicate the stigmatization of discharged offenders among the public in Anambra State.

Literature Review

Discharged offenders

The term discharged offenders in its simplest term refers to individuals who have completed their sentences and are released from correctional facilities back into society. This concept is grounded in criminal justice systems worldwide and emphasizes reintegration and rehabilitation to minimize recidivism and support offenders' transition to productive societal roles. Various scholars and legal frameworks have approached the notion of discharged offenders.

In other words, discharged offenders are individuals who have served their legally prescribed penalties, whether in the form of incarceration, probation, or parole, and are subsequently reintegrated into society. This transition involves a significant shift in personal and societal dynamics, as offenders navigate stigma, employment challenges, and the rebuilding of social networks. Their discharge is often marked by legal documentation or certificates of release, which might include conditions such as regular reporting to authorities or participation in rehabilitation programs.

From a sociological standpoint, discharged offenders are considered a vulnerable group that often faces systemic barriers, such as discrimination in housing, education, and employment (Zakaria et al., 2018). These barriers are exacerbated by public stigma and limited access to resources, making successful reintegration a challenging process. Consequently, their societal roles are often scrutinized, with emphasis placed on their ability to conform to legal and social norms.

Stigmatization of Discharged Offenders

The stigmatization of discharged offenders is a pervasive challenge that significantly hampers their reintegration into society. Stigma, broadly defined as a social process where individuals are discredited or devalued due to a particular attribute or status (Goffman, 1963), plays a critical role in shaping the post-release experiences of offenders. The stigma associated with having a criminal record or being identified as a former offender often results in discrimination, social exclusion, and limited access to opportunities, creating a cycle of marginalization that undermines societal reintegration efforts.



Scholars like Hatzenbuehler (2016) emphasize that stigmatization primarily manifests in three forms which are individual, structural and interpersonal stigma. Structural stigma includes policies and societal norms that limit discharged offenders' access to essential services such as housing, education, and employment. For instance, employers frequently conduct criminal background checks, often rejecting applicants with criminal records regardless of their skills or qualifications. Such practices restrict economic opportunities, making financial independence nearly unattainable for many discharged offenders.

Interpersonal stigma, on the other hand, is expressed through negative attitudes, prejudices, and behaviors from individuals within the discharged offender's community or social network. Moore et al. (2015) argue that interpersonal stigma is deeply rooted in societal perceptions of crime and punishment, where discharged offenders are often viewed as inherently deviant or untrustworthy. This leads to strained relationships with family members, friends, and neighbors, further isolating the individual.

In addition to societal challenges, stigmatization has profound psychological impacts. According to Baffour et al., (2020), discharged offenders often internalize stigma, developing feelings of shame, guilt, and low self-worth. This internalized stigma can hinder their motivation to seek employment, participate in rehabilitation programs, or build social connections, ultimately increasing their risk of recidivism.

Empirical Studies

Several studies have been carried out on discharged offenders, their integration and acceptance back into the African and Nigerian society. These studies are reviewed in this section.

Osayi (2022) in exploring the reintegration challenges faced by discharged offenders in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, and found that stigmatization—expressed through discrimination, marginalization, and overt hostility—is a significant barrier to their successful reintegration. This stigmatization negatively influences the attitudes and behaviors of discharged offenders toward society. Furthermore, the study highlighted several obstacles to reintegration, including unemployment, inadequate interpersonal and financial management skills, homelessness, poverty, and health issues, which collectively exacerbate the difficulties of re-entering society. To mitigate these challenges, the study advocates for a shift in emphasis from government efforts focused exclusively on prison facilities to more holistic post-release support. Recommendations include increased investment in formal education, skill acquisition initiatives, soft loan programs, and counseling services for discharged offenders as essential strategies for promoting successful reintegration and enhancing their quality of life.

Salihu (2018) in exploring the socio-cultural factors influencing the reintegration of discharged prisoners in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State, Nigeria, found a significant relationship between socio-cultural factors and the reintegration challenges faced by discharged prisoners. The study concludes that successful reintegration largely depends on society's willingness to receive and accept discharged prisoners. To address these challenges, the study recommends the development of coordinated public enlightenment programs to educate individuals and communities at both micro and macro levels. These programs should emphasize the societal responsibilities and roles in supporting discharged prisoners during their reintegration process. Osayi (2015) in examining the socio-cultural factors affecting the reintegration of discharged prisoners in Anambra State found that discharged prisoners are stigmatized both by societal members and existing laws. This study recommends that the government and other non-



governmental agencies must step up their efforts to recondition the debasing conditions of Nigeria prison as well as review relevant laws to ensure systematic post incarceration rehabilitation and reintegration of discharged prisoners into the society, so that they can contribute to growth and sustainable development of the society.

Onwuchekwe et al., (2023) examined public perception of ex-convicts' reintegration in Idemili-North LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria and found among others that residents had negative perception about ex-convicts which ranges from being criminals, unrepentant offenders to evildoers. The study also found that socio-cultural factors influencing such perception were the belief that once a criminal is always a criminal, that associating with ex-offenders could attract wrath of the gods, societal non-recognition of ex-convicts in social functions, societal silence over the affairs of ex-convicts after their release, and denial of the civic right to vote or hold public offices. This study concluded that perceptions hold by the people indirectly discredits the efficacy of correctional services given to ex-offenders and portends danger that could lead to recidivism.

Ike et al., (2023) in exploring public perceptions and attitudes towards ex-offenders and their reintegration in Nigeria, found a negative association between the level of education and reintegration. The study also finds a lack of confidence in ex-offenders' genuine reintegration coupled with the perceived role of community trauma, which collectively fuels a negative social identity against the ex-offenders.

Theoretical Framework

The sociological theory chosen to guide this study is Labeling Theory. Labeling Theory is a social theory that explains how certain behaviors, including criminal behavior, are defined as deviant and the consequences of these definitions for individuals engaged in such activities (Renzetti, 2008). The theory emphasizes that crime and deviance are relative concepts and that they are determined by observers and social factors. The theory also highlights the impact of being labeled as criminal, which can lead to a fundamental change in an individual's identity and potentially push them towards a criminal career.

According to the Labeling Theory, deviance is created by social groups in a society to establish social rules and when the rules are broken, the perpetrator, or the alleged perpetrator, is labeled a deviant (Nwafor, 2022). In this vein criminals in Anambra State including rapists, armed robbers, kidnappers, murders etc are seen as law breakers and are labeled outcasts in a way that living in their communities even after their release from prison become difficult as a result of the stigma of their crime which in turn shapes their community perception towards them.

Methodology

The area for this is Anambra state. Anambra consists of twenty-one (21) Local Government Areas and hosts some correctional facility like Nigerian prison services (Amawbia), Nigeria prison services (Onitsha), Federal prison (Aguata), Federal Maximum prison (Nnewi) and Ekwuluobia prison (Ekwuluobia). The study adopted mixed methods research design. Thus, both questionnaire and In-depth interview were used to collect data for the study. The sample size for the study was estimated using Taro Yamane statistical formula and the study adopted multi-stage sampling procedure, which includes systematic sampling and simple random sampling technique in selecting 400 questionnaire respondents for the study. The study adopted purposive sampling technique in selecting participants for the in-depth interview. Data



processing was done using SPSS version 21. However, the quantitative data collected from the field was analyzed using the descriptive statistics. Specifically, frequency tables and simple percentage tables was used for data presentation while the qualitative data was analyzed using thematic content analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The analysis of this study was done based on the 390 (out of 400) correctly filled and returned questionnaires. The data collected to address the research objectives were analyzed.

Research Objective 1: To find out the level of stigmatization towards discharged offenders by the public in Anambra State.

Table 1: Respondents' views on prevalence of stigmatization of discharged inmates in Anambra State

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages (%)</i>
Very high	199	51.0
High	101	25.9
Low	67	17.2
Very low	5	1.3
I don't know	18	4.6
Total	390	100

Table 1 presents the views of respondents on the prevalence of stigmatization of discharged inmates in Anambra State. From table 1, it can be seen that 199(51.0%) of the respondents indicated very high, 101(25.9%) of the respondents indicated high prevalence of stigmatization of discharged inmates, 67(17.2%) indicated low prevalence of stigmatization towards discharged inmates 5(1.3%) of the respondents indicated very low rate while 18(4.6%) of the respondent don't know the prevalence of stigmatization of discharged inmates in Anambra State. Going by the data displayed in table 3, it can be observed a majority of the respondents is of the view that the prevalence of stigmatization of discharged inmates in Anambra State is very high. This result is in agreement with the response gotten from an IDI session as the respondent stated that:

People display various behaviour toward discharged offenders and these behaviours cannot be measured but can only be observed and then checked out to see if the same behaviour is seen in other people. Negative mindset and stigmatization towards discharged inmates is something that may not be measured but the display and behaviours people have towards discharged inmates in relation to their numbers is on the high side. Most people do not trust anyone who has gone against the rules of the society especially hardened criminals. Since most people people don't trust these criminals, their perception of them will be negative. Again, Igbos frown at crime and criminal behaviours and does not treat those who engage in criminal softly thus even after release and serving their punishments, most people still see discharged offenders as before their sentence. (49 years old, Civil Servant, Amawbia).

This response highlights a widespread negative attitude towards discharged offenders, marked by distrust and judgment. It also references the Igbo community's cultural stance against crime and the treatment of discharged offenders as well as emphasizes the general societal distrust of individuals with a history of criminal behavior, especially hardened criminals and also implies that societal perceptions remain static even after offenders have served their punishments.



Research Objective 2: To examine the effects of stigmatization on discharged offenders in Anambra State.

Table 2: Respondents' views on whether discharged inmates are faced with social challenges as a result of stigmatization

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages (%)</i>
Yes	377	96.7
No	-	-
I don't know	13	3.3
Total	390	100

Table 2 shows that 377(96.7%) of the respondents agree that discharged inmates are faced with social challenge, while 0(0%) of the respondents indicated that discharged inmates are not faced with social challenges. However, 13(3.3%) of the respondents don't know if discharged inmates are faced with social challenges in Anambra State. The result presented in table 2 implies that discharged offenders are faced with social challenges in Anambra State.

Table 3: Respondents' views on challenges faced by discharged inmates as a result of stigmatization

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages (%)</i>
Discrimination	43	11.4
Stigmatization	64	17.0
Isolation/Rejection	4	1.1
None of the above	-	-
All of the above	160	42.4
I don't know	106	28.1
Total	377	100

Table 3 showed the result from the responses given by respondents when asked the social challenges faced by discharged inmates as a result of stigmatization. From the result, 43(11.4) of the respondents indicated discrimination as the challenge discharged offenders face as a result of stigmatization. 64(17.0%) of the respondents indicated just stigmatization while 4(1.1%) of the respondents indicated isolation and rejection as challenge stigmatization pose to discharged inmates in Anambra state. Further, 160(42.4%) of the respondents indicated that discharged inmates in Anambra state face discrimination, stigmatization, isolation and rejection as a result of public stigmatization while 106(28.1%) of the respondents indicated don't know if discharged offenders are faced with stigmatization in Anambra State. The result in table 3 implies that discharged inmates are faced with discrimination, stigmatization isolation and rejection as a result of the stigma held by the public towards them in Anambra State.

This result is in line with the response given by an IDI participant who stated that:

Discharged inmates are humans like you and me and their mental and emotional health is largely affected by their physical and social environment. Their survival and life is shaped by what people give to them in their society. It is very difficult for a person to be labeled or looked at as an outcast or enemy of the society. Many people frown at crime and do not really believe in the justice and correctional system of Nigeria. Therefore, people punish discharged offenders unknowingly by distancing themselves from them. Man is a social animal that needs others for survival and a good life. If the bond, trust and interdependency between discharged inmates and their community members is lost, it will be very difficult for such a person to live in such community given that they will be treated like an outcast. In most cases, they leave their former environment for a



new one or engage in something else that may take them back to prison. Some might even get depressed or go mental (**37 years old female prison attendant, Amawbia**).

This response implies that the societal rejection of discharged inmates' stems from stigma, distrust in the justice system, and a lack of empathy and this rejection leads to adverse mental health outcomes and increases the risk of recidivism, perpetuating a cycle of criminal behavior. Another respondent stated that:

The way a community views an individual is very important as it goes a long way to shape the life of such person. The bad perception of discharged inmates by the public and their community affects their life without doubt because most people in Anambra don't associate with criminals even after their release because they are seen as those who betrayed their community and society thus they face lots of challenges in their financial life, social life and relationship with people because most people tend to avoid them and see them as people who may hurt them. It only takes a long time or a new community or a dramatic turnaround or change in the life of a discharged inmate for people to start associating with them again (**53 years old male, Civil servant, Oroma-Etiti**).

This response implies that societal norms and values label these discharged offenders as betrayers leading to social rejection and distrust. This stigma leads to financial, social, and relational challenges, as most people avoid associating with discharged offenders out of fear or prejudice.

Table 4: Respondents' views on the nature of human relationship lost by discharged inmates as a result of stigmatization

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages (%)</i>
Loss of family ties and support	18	4.8
Loss of spouse	53	14.0
Loss of community support	276	73.2
Isolation from family and friends	30	8.0
None of the above	-	-
Total	377	100

Table 4 shows the responses given by respondents when asked the nature of human relationship lost by discharged inmates as a result of stigmatization. From the data presented in table 4, 18(4.8%) of the respondents identified family ties and support as the human relationship lost by discharged inmates, 53(14.0%) of the respondents indicated loss of spouse, 276(73.2%) indicated loss of community support while 30(8.0%) of the respondents indicated isolation from family and friends as the human relationship lost by discharged inmates as a result of stigmatization. This implies that discharged offenders lose community support as a result of stigmatization towards them in Anambara State.

Research Objective 3: To find out possible solutions to eradicate the stigmatization of discharged offenders among the public in Anambra State.

**Table 5: Respondents' views on how stigmatization of discharged offenders in Anambra State be reduced**

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages (%)</i>
Orientation of the public on the acceptance of discharged inmates as fit for the society	77	19.7
Giving proper training and skill acquisition to discharged inmates before re-integration	32	8.2
Building an effective and efficient judicial system that serves the public with integrity	88	22.6
Engaging discharged inmates in community programs that will benefit their community	64	16.4
All of the above	129	33.1
Total	390	100

Table 16 shows that 77(19.7%) of the respondents indicated public orientation on the acceptance of discharged inmates as people fit for the society will reduce stigmatization of the public towards discharged inmates. 32(8.2%) of the respondents indicated proper training and skill acquisition of discharged inmates before integration, 88(22.6%) of the respondents is of the opinion of building an effective and efficient judicial system that serves the public with integrity as the measure to reduce stigmatization towards discharged inmates, 64(16.4%) of the respondents indicated engaging discharged inmates in community programs that will benefit their community while 129(23.1%) of the respondents indicated all the above option as the measure that will reduce stigmatization of discharged inmates by the public. This result aligns with the response of an IDI respondent who opined that:

One of the ways, discharged offenders can be seen in a good light is that as soon as they come out; they begin to do something that benefit the society and themselves. In Anambra, as long as you contribute positively to the society, you are given opportunities to thrive and people will come for your services as long as you are able to deliver and as long as you prove yourself to be trust worthy. But if it is by just letting discharged offenders out and believing society to just accept them like, it will not work **(53 years old male, Civil servant, Oroma-Etiti).**

This response implies that reintegration of discharged offenders in Anambra depends on their ability to actively contribute to society and demonstrate trustworthiness. It highlights that societal acceptance is conditional, tied to visible, positive actions and the offender's ability to rebuild their reputation. The response also suggests that a passive approach to reintegration—relying solely on societal goodwill—will fail. Instead, discharged offenders must take proactive steps to earn trust and opportunities, indicating a merit-based path to acceptance in the community. Another respondent opined that:

The best way those discharged from prison can be accepted back is if they be of good behaviour after they have been discharged. A lot of time, the stigma of being a criminal never leaves a person. However, the level of stigma can be reduced if those who are discharged prove that they have totally changed **(37 years old female prison attendant, Amawbia).**

This response implies that societal acceptance of discharged inmates is largely behavior-dependent. It acknowledges the persistent stigma associated with a criminal record but suggests that demonstrating consistent good behavior and evidence of personal change can mitigate this stigma over time.



Discussion of Findings

This study in investigating public perception of the prevalence and effects of stigmatization on discharged offenders in Anambra State found that the prevalence of stigmatization of discharged inmates in Anambra State is very high. This finding is in line with the finding of Osayi (2015) who found that discharged offenders are stigmatized both by societal members and existing laws in Anambra State. This finding of the current study together with the finding of Osayi (2015) also aligns with the finding of Salihu (2018) who found socio-cultural factors to be a hindrance to the reintegration of discharged offenders. The current study also found that discharged inmates are faced with social challenges as a result of stigmatization and these challenges include discrimination, stigmatization and isolation/rejection. This finding aligns with the finding of Osayi (2022) who found that stigmatization manifest through discrimination, marginalization, and overt hostility towards discharged offenders in Anambra State. The current study further found that stigmatization of discharged offenders' leads to loss of community support for discharged offenders. On the other hand, this study found that the way stigmatization of discharged offenders in Anambra State can be reduced includes orientation of the public on the acceptance of discharged inmates as fit for the society, giving proper training and skill acquisition to discharged inmates before re-integration, building an effective and efficient judicial system that serves the public with integrity and engaging discharged inmates in community programs that will benefit their community. This finding supports Onwuchekwe et al., (2023) who called the need for adequate public sensitization to discourage the perception that ex-prisoners are criminals by the Nigerian Correctional Service programs in rehabilitating ex-prisoners through outreach in villages, markets, churches and even through the media.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide clear evidence that the stigmatization of discharged offenders in Anambra State is prevalent and poorly managed, posing significant challenges to their reintegration into society. It is also evident that discharged offenders, like any other citizens, have the potential to contribute to the socio-political and economic development of the state and the country at large. However, this potential is heavily dependent on the quality and success of eradicating public stigmatization and the challenges this stigma pose to them. The persistent stigmatization and rejection faced by discharged offenders not only hinder their ability to reintegrate but also pose a serious threat to social cohesion and national security. When these individuals are marginalized, discriminated against, and isolated, they may be driven to resort to criminal activities as a way to cope with poverty, unemployment, and societal rejection.

Recommendations

To address challenges stated above, the Government, non-governmental organizations, and the general public must take the reintegration of discharged offenders as a matter of urgent concern. Thus it is important that the government invest in programs that focus on skill acquisition, formal education, and counseling for discharged offenders. Additionally, a loan scheme with minimal or no interest should be established to enable discharged offenders to start businesses upon release, fostering financial independence and reducing the likelihood of isolation or recidivism. Also, improving the structure of correctional facilities by allocating adequate funds and implementing protective laws is crucial in ensuring the economic, social, educational, and political rights of discharged offenders. Further, public sensitization programs should also be widely conducted to educate society on the importance of accepting and supporting discharged offenders as productive members of the community. Furthermore, marginalization and discrimination against discharged offenders must be criminalized, and community programs



should be established to engage them in meaningful activities that benefit society. Lastly, the establishment of a welfare program specifically tailored for discharged offenders is necessary. This program can be managed by an independent body with the aim of assisting them in securing essential needs such as accommodation, employment, education, and legal services. By implementing these measures, the stigmatization of discharged offenders in Anambra State can be significantly reduced, ultimately contributing to full contribution of discharged offenders to the socio-economic and cultural growth of the state.

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