

Mkpurumiri Abuse and Corporal Punishment: A Critical Analysis of Public Flogging as a Deterrent to Methamphetamine Abuse in South-Eastern Nigerian Communities.

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Abstract

The article examines the use of public flogging as a community-based intervention to curb methamphetamine abuse, specifically "Mkpurumiri," in Southeast Nigeria. Despite existing drug laws and policies aimed at reducing drug use, Nigeria continues to face high levels of drug abuse, particularly among its youth. In some southeastern communities, public flogging has emerged as a controversial strategy for preventing and treating methamphetamine addiction. The study uses a descriptive research design, combining case studies, interviews, and literature analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of this method. Data were collected from 59 participants, including drug abuse victims, law enforcement agents, vigilante group members, and community leaders in select local government areas of Imo and Anambra States. Findings suggest that while public flogging is seen as a deterrent, it often leads to negative outcomes such as trauma, fear, and shame, failing to bring about long-term behavioral change. The paper argues that flogging violates human rights and calls for a shift towards rehabilitation and counseling-based interventions, which have more sustainable impacts. Ultimately, the article concludes that public flogging is not a viable or ethical solution to drug abuse and advocates for the Nigerian government to align its practices with international human rights standards by promoting rehabilitative, rather than punitive, approaches to methamphetamine abuse.

Key words: Corporal punishment, Community-based intervention, Methamphetamine abuse, Public flogging, Rehabilitation

Introduction

In spite of the existing drug laws, policies and strategies designed to implement effective prevention, treatment and rehabilitation services that are evidence-based and targeted to reduce the demand for drugs and prevent the morbidity and mortality attributable to drug use in Nigeria, the scourge of drug abuse remains high.

Drug abuse is emerging as a global public health issue. The recent world drug report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that 271 million (5.5%) of the global population (aged between 15 and 64 years), had used drugs in the previous year (UNODC, 2019). Also, it has been projected that 35 million individuals will be experiencing drug use disorders (UNODC, 2019).

According to population projections by the United Nations for 2020, about 43 per cent of the Nigerian population comprised children 0-14 years, 19 per cent aged 15-24 years and about 62 per cent are below age 25 years. By contrast, less than five per cent is aged 60 years and above. This makes Nigeria a youthful population with a median age of about 18 years, which is lower than African and world estimates of 20 and 29 respectively (Ojiego, 2021)

In Nigeria, one in seven persons aged 15-64 years had used a drug (other than tobacco and alcohol) in the past year. The past year prevalence of any drug use is estimated at 14.4 per cent (range 14.0 per cent - 14.8 per cent), corresponding to 14.3 million people aged 15-64 years who had used a psychoactive substance in the past year for non-medical purposes. (UNOCD, 2018 p.12).

Among every 4 drug users in Nigeria 1 is a woman. More men (annual prevalence of 21.8 per cent or 10.8 million men) than women (annual prevalence of 7.0 per cent or 3.4 million women) reported past-year drug use in Nigeria. (UNOCD, 2018 p.12). The highest levels of any past-year drug use was among those aged 25-39 years. (UNOCD, 2018 p.12). More so, 1 in 5 person who had used drugs in the past year is suffering from drug user disorders (UNOCD, 2018 p.12).

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in recent statistics have revealed that 40 per cent of Nigerian youth between 18 and 35 years are deeply involved in the abuse of drugs. This high percentage of youths' involvement in drugs was blamed in poor parenting for the increasing wave of drug abuse in the country (The Premium Times, 2021) and this is a threat to the nations development as well as has negative impact on public health and safety.

While shedding more light into the distribution, one of the commanders of the agency noted that cannabis, popularly known as Igbo, is the most commonly abused drug in Nigeria with a population of 10.6 million indulging in it. He added about 4.6 million Nigerians had used opioids such as Tramadol codeine or morphine for non-medical purposes, while an estimated 376,000 Nigerians indulge in high-risk drug use. In addition, it is regrettable that one of every five Nigerians, who had used drugs in the past or at the moment is today suffering from one form of drug related health challenge or disorder (The Sun Newspaper, 2021). This has negative impacts on the individual drug users as well as on the Nigerian society in general.

Geographically, the highest past-year prevalence of drug use was found in the southern geopolitical zones (past year prevalence ranging between 13.8 per cent and 22.4 per cent) compared to the northern geopolitical zones (past year prevalence ranging between 10 per cent and 13.6 per cent) (UNOCD, 2018 p.12).

The implication of the forgoing is that higher percentage of Nigerian youths are involved in drug abuse and different remedies have been put forward to curb the spread and effects of this deadly habits to both the individuals involved as well as the members of the wider society.

In the same vein, to arrest the negative development of drug abuse, most communities in the southeastern Nigerian devised a community-based intervention which serves as prevention and

treatment strategy in curbing the rise in drug abuse especially Methamphetamine (Mkpurumiri) which is corporal punishment – public flogging.

This paper will explore the prominent community-based intervention used by some communities in Southeast Nigeria in prevention and treatment of drug abuse especially Methamphetamine (Mkpurumiri) which is corporal punishment – flogging. Though there are divided opinions concerning this practice, this study will use descriptive research design with a textual analysis of literature and case study method to investigate and evaluate the credibility of the strategy. This is so because, an in-depth understanding of drug abuse in real-life contexts is needed. To achieve this, qualitative research methods like in-depth interviews were used.

Due to the sensitive nature of the issues addressed, the target population was delimited to 59 participants comprising drug abuse victims, the members of Law enforcement agents, members of town vigilante groups, President Generals of town Unions, President of Town Youths, Religious leaders, and family members of the drug abuse victims within Ihiala, Oru-East, Oru-West, Orlu and Orsu Local Government areas of both Imo and Anambra States of southeast Nigeria.

Non-probability method, snowball sampling technique was used to identify and collect data for the study. This is as a result of the sensitive nature of the issue at hand and this was used to identify other participants through respondents we already interviewed.

In addition, ethical standards were strictly followed while conducting the study. Verbal consent was sort with any of the participants before interviewing them and the issue of voluntary participation or refusals to participate did not affect the perception and relationship with any of the participants. Rather, participants were adequately notified about the essence of the research and were not coerced into participating in the in-depth interview sessions. In addition, confidentiality and non-disclosure of personal information was maintained throughout the study.

The research questions that guide the study are; why would communities use corporal punishment (public flogging) on drug addicts as the best means of preventing and treating the use of Methamphetamine? How effective is the use of corporal punishment in preventing and treating drug abuse and are there alternative methods (sustainable and best practices) of treating drug addicts?.

Review of relevant literature

In this section, we shall describe and explain what Methamphetamine is, its nature, components, physical appearances, what it does to the body when consumed, the different street names it has including that given to it in Southeast Nigeria. We shall also, look at some literatures on categories of corrections for drug abuse, Corporal punishment as a means of community-based corrections/punishment.

What is Methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine is derived from amphetamine (Anglin et al., 2000). Amphetamine is a synthetic, addictive, mood-altering drug, used illegally as a stimulant. Amphetamine has been used

broadly to refer to a group of chemicals that have similar, stimulating properties and methamphetamine is included in this group (Parsons, 2014).

Methamphetamine is a crystal narcotic hallucinogen (Ujumadu, 2021). It is a laboratory-made, white, bitter-tasting powder. Sometimes it is made into a white pill, or a shiny, white, or clear rock called crystal (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2017). Crystal Methamphetamine is a solid, crystalline form of the drug. It may look like shards of glass or clear-white rocks.

Methamphetamine is a stimulant drug (History.com, 2017). It is a crystallized form of methamphetamine. All methamphetamines are highly addictive stimulants that can boost mood, increase feelings of well-being, raise energy level, and elevate alertness (Michael's House Treatment Centers, 2022).

It has a molecular structure that is chemically comparable to amphetamine, a medicine used to treat attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and narcolepsy, a sleep disorder. It resembles glass fragments or shiny, gleaming glass shards with bluish-white boulders (Ujumadu, 2021; Banjo, 2021; Declan, 2021).

It is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. (Anglin et al., 2000; Ujumadu, 2021). It can be ingested orally, injected, snorted, or smoked (Anglin et al., 2000). The powder can be eaten or snorted up the nose. It can also be mixed with liquid and injected into the body with a needle. Crystal methamphetamine is smoked in a small glass pipe.

All methamphetamines produce affect the central nervous system by increasing the amount of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is a chemical that is produced and regulated by certain regions of the brain which are involved in body movement, motivation, pleasure, and reward (Michael's House Treatment Centers, 2022; Declan, 2021). Methamphetamines has the ability to swiftly release large levels of dopamine in the brain's reward centers powerfully encourages drug-taking behaviour. This increases the user's desire to continuously repeat the experience. (Declan, 2021). Thus, it produces a long-lasting, intense 'high' that can leave users "strung out" for days or weeks at a time. The initial rush of good feelings produced by methamphetamine gives way to gruffness, excitability, anger and/or fear on the back side of the 'high' (Michael's House Treatment Centers, 2022). Methamphetamine at first causes a rush of good feelings, but then users feel edgy, overly excited, angry, or afraid. This explains why the use of Methamphetamine can quickly lead to addiction.

Methamphetamine is a stimulant (Winslow et al, 2007, p.1169; Ojiego, 2021; Okoli et al, 2021). Stimulants are a class of drugs that can boost mood, increase feelings of well-being, increase energy, and make one more alert. But they also have dangerous effects like raising heart rate and blood pressure, and use can lead to addiction. Methamphetamine's pleasurable effects can disappear even before the drug levels fall in the blood, leading people to use more and more, sometimes not sleeping and using the drug for several days (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2017).

It is a highly addictive stimulant drug, originally synthesized for therapeutic use but now found predominantly as a recreational drug of abuse (Patterson, 2002). It is a potent central nervous

system (CNS) stimulant that is mainly used as a recreational drug and less commonly as a second-line treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and obesity (Ojiego, 2021; Colorado Methamphetamine Brief August 2021). Considering that the drug's 'high' comes on and fades very quickly, users frequently take many doses in a 'run and crash' cycle, causing them to give up food and sleep, while continuing to take the drug every few hours for up to several days (Declan, 2021).

It is highly addictive, inexpensive, and easily available. It can be illicitly manufactured from over-the-counter pseudoephedrine (Winslow et al, 2007, p.1170). It is an illicit substance of abuse (Njoku & Thomas-Odia, 2021), this means that, it is not a drug that has been regulated for everyday use. It falls in the category of drug stimulants. With respect to its features and composition, it looks like glass fragments or shiny bluish-white rocks. The street name is hype or glass; it is a popular party drug (Dr. Gbonjubola quoted by Njoku & Thomas-Odia, 2021). Methamphetamine is classified as a Schedule II drug, meaning it has high potential for abuse and is legally available only through a prescription that cannot be refilled. It is prescribed by doctors in limited doses in rare cases for certain medical conditions (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2017).

Also, illicitly manufactured methamphetamine is available on the street with an appearance resembling translucent white or blue, shattered shards of glass. Street versions of the drug are available in pills or white powder and referred to as a long list of slang names like; crank / krank, beanies, brown, Mexican crack, redneck cocaine, speed, tweak, blade, batu, quartz, glass (Patterson, 2002), crystal meth, ice, and speed (Sato, 2008), trash, biker's coffee, shards, stove top, yaba, chalk, shabu (Declan, 2021).

Crystal meth is frequently smoked in a glass pipe. Most forms of meth can be crushed into powder form, which is then snorted, swallowed, or dissolved into solution or by injecting the powder that has been dissolved in water or alcohol (Declan, 2021; Patterson, 2002). It is important to note that any route of drug administration can produce a range of desired effects on the user that make tolerance, addiction, and dependence likely (Patterson, E. (2002).

Coming to the local description of methamphetamine in Southeast Nigeria, it is called Mkpurumiri in Igbo language which translates to seed of water (Ujumadu, 2021; Banjo, 2021). It is also known as 'Ice' because it looks like an ice block. It has a chalk-like crystal form and can sometimes be blue hence the name mkpuru mmiri (Banjo, 2021). It could be dissolved in water and consumed hence the Igbo name mkpuru miri. (Ulasi, 2021). It is also called Guzoro because of euphoria effect one gets after taking it (Ojiego, 2021).

Categories of corrections for drug abuse

Corrections of drug abusers fall into two categories; institutional corrections and community corrections (US Department of Justice, 2021).

Institutional corrections are the measures from an organised institution like the government carried out through her agencies using her institutional frameworks to prevent and cure drug abuse while the community corrections are correctional activities aimed at helping offenders becoming law abiding and discouraging potential offenders without any direct involvement of government. It

involves community members outside of institutionalized criminal justice agency, humane for offenders or would-be violators, and aim at making offenders useful to society (Gray, No date)

Community-based corrections are those strategies that complements existing conventional institutional corrections (Gray, No date). This goes a long way to the grassroots, from the family to the communities where the drug abusers were born, brought up and live.

Since every drug abuse victim is a member of the community, the communities in Southeast Nigeria believe that these victims are known by the members of the community and can be warned and corrected effectively by the members of the community.

The responsibility of deviant behaviour lies on the community as well as conventional behavior since the community helps through her norms and traditions to shape morals and behaviour of her members. In the same vein, the importance of community-based prevention and corrections are from the fact that the environment we stay plays an important role in prevention of deviant behaviors. They also play a key role in protecting members from early substance use. Prevention efforts can be easily implemented by building coalitions and comprehensive strategies to reduce risk factors for substance use and addiction (Addiction Policy Forum, 2020).

The foregoing informs the community-based approach that the communities in Southeastern Nigeria adopted in preventing and cure of the abuse of methamphetamine (Mkpurumiri).

Corporal punishment as a means of community-based corrections/punishment

The culture of a people informs their way of life, their morals, and responses to events within their community. These cultural traits are handed down from generation to generation for the sustenance of the community. Culture is inseparable from its people and exerts tremendous influence on how children are raised, trained, and assimilated into the community. Some cultures accept corporal punishment as a good norm, while some others loathe it. According to Smith and Mosby (2003, p.360), "Culture guides parents' beliefs about child discipline, behavior management, and control".

Reliance on corporal punishment is embedded in the religious, social, and moral beliefs and understanding of life. In Nigeria, corporal punishment is used to make a person conform to a written or unwritten list of behaviors. These behaviors are all oriented toward controlling the person, making the person be the best and live healthy life within the community and most believe that the end justifies the means (Nwafor, 2021, p.2).

One of the community-based method of preventing drug abuse in Southeastern Nigeria is through public flogging. This is done when a drug abuse victim who has been identified and warned by the leaders of the community to desist from consuming dangerous substance(s) disobeys the community by continuing to consume the substance(s), the community through its youths arrests the person and gives him/her a public flogging. This is done to correct the person as well as serve as a deterrent to both the person and other who would want to indulge in such acts.

Encyclopedia Britannica (2022) describes flogging, also called whipping or caning, as a beating administered with a whip or rod, with blows commonly directed to the person's back. It was

imposed as a form of judicial punishment and as a means of maintaining discipline in schools, prisons, military forces, and private homes. In this case under discussion, flogging is done publicly in a place where the drug abuse victim is tied to a pillar and flogged at the back in the presence of people around and most times being filmed by onlookers.

It is a form of corporal punishment which is the infliction of physical pain upon a person's body as punishment for a crime or infraction. It is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort.

In Nigeria, corporal punishment like public flogging is used to make a person conform to a written or unwritten list of behaviors. These behaviors are all oriented toward controlling the person and other members of the community. Reliance on corporal punishment is embedded in the religious, social, and moral beliefs and understanding of life. Culture is inseparable from its people and exerts tremendous influence on how children are raised. Some cultures accept corporal punishment as a good norm, while some others loathe it. Cultural norms influence the way the members of the community live their lives as well as the way leaders, from family level to the village and town levels guide and protect the members of the community entrusted to them.

On the other hand, it is important to point out that, the culture of human beings differs from country to country, town to town, and group to group. If corporal punishment does not work in one area, that does not mean it will not work in other areas. No technique will work for the whole universe simultaneously. One community may adopt the corporal punishment approach, and it will be a perfect fit; some others will embrace it and find it disrupts its community rules and norms. The only way to understand corporal punishment is to study it and evaluate it within the context of a given community.

The Nigerian culture is very hierarchical and allows for the delegation of authority within the family from adults to children (Onwubiko, 1991). So, the children's birth order puts older brothers and sisters, and even cousins, as authority figures over the younger children. This applies to other members of the community. So, when anybody disobeys, the onus lies on the elders to correct or punish the person. This gives the President of town unions, youths groups and the Eze of various communities the authority to correct or punish any victim of drug abuse who is a member of or lives within their geographical area.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is based on Michel Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish*. The book examines medieval French society and its use of corporal and capital punishment on offenders (Foucault, 1995). It is a history of the modern penal system (SparkNotes, 2022), comparing and contrasting the origin of punishment, the uses and abuses, the effects on humans, and the abolishment of punishment on offenders (Nwafor, 2021, p.33).

Here, Foucault analyzed punishment in its social context, and to examine how changing power relations affected punishment. He begins by analyzing the situation before the eighteenth century, when public execution and corporal punishment were key punishments, and torture was part of most criminal investigations. Punishment was ceremonial and directed at the prisoner's body. It

was a ritual in which the audience was important. Public execution reestablished the authority and power of the King (SparkNotes, 2022).

Michel Foucault argued that, only a few hundred years ago, the picture was different. Suspects were routinely tortured during investigative processes, and convicted felons were cruelly and inhumanely executed in public as examples to the people and as a demonstration of a sovereign's will (Foucault, 1995).

By the turn of the eighteenth century in Europe, punishment as a public spectacle was no longer in vogue. Instead, a new approach to punishment became the norm. Now it was to take place behind closed doors and its workings were set to a timetable.

In the nineteenth century, the new penal style was codified in texts such as French politician Léon Faucher's rules "for the House of young prisoners in Paris." Thus, the origin of prisons (Foucault, 1995). Such a regimen indicated that the nature of punishment had changed. It was no longer a public indication of the will of sovereign governmental powers. It was now one in which bureaucratic penalties were fused with defined imprisonments and stringent schedules.

Where once corporal punishment and pain had been central to ideas of punishment, now the soul of the criminal was deemed much more important (Foucault, 1995). So, the purpose of punishment had changed. The objective was no longer to break the criminal's body. It was now to target hearts and minds, thoughts and will. A new system of punishment would have to be instigated. The watchword was "humanity," and it was to be the "measure" of a given punishment (Foucault, 1995).

However, by the end of the eighteenth century, power shifted from the sovereign to the public at large; punishment was now an articulation of public power. This was because the power of judgment held by a judge representing the sovereign had now been transferred and split between multiple authorities such as psychiatrists and psychologists. It follows that, a crime was now viewed as an offense against society at large rather than solely against the sovereign. Individual crime was a wound inflicted on the social body; the purpose of punishment was to cauterize.

Rather than targeting the body of the convict, his soul had become the object of punishment. The criminal was no longer the enemy of the prince but that of the people. He was reduced to a component part of a greater social machine. Observation and surveillance became bound up in methods of incarceration as society sought to produce disciplined individuals, ideally suited for the disciplined and regimented industrial age. So, punishment was abolished as a spectacle because "public punishment is now seen as a heart in which violence burst again into flame" (Foucault, 1995, p. 8-9).

Corporal punishments do not end crime or disobedience rather increase the culture of violence in society. Foucault (1995) further argues that after the punishment, the physical act leaves the domain of perception and goes into the abstract consciousness. When someone is flogged in public, the idea that someone can harm human beings in that way infiltrates the consciousness of the rest of the population. There is nothing good about corporal punishment; it brings shame and cowardice to the person. "It is ugly to be punishable, but there is no glory in punishing" (Foucault, 1995, p.

10). What do we see during corporal punishment? A person in pain, a person beclouded and traumatized by shame, and a punisher in rage, anger, and vengeance. The pain on the body does not address the mind where the learning happens (Nwafor, 2021, p.33). Actions start in the mind, so the solution should not be the punishment of the body. “The torture of the body should be avoided, the theatrical representation of pain excluded from punishment” (Foucault, 1995, p. 14).

The body-soul shift is central to Discipline and Punish. For Foucault, punishment no longer touched the body. If it did, it was only to get at something beyond the body, which is the soul. This is so because, there are limits to how you can punish the body, as the execution at the beginning demonstrates, but the soul allows new possibilities (Sparknotes, 2022). Firstly, it allows you to consider why the crime occurred; the motives that drive the criminal become knowable, and the subject of investigation. Secondly, it becomes possible to consider the criminal beyond the crime and its punishment. Instead of inflicting a painful penalty, or killing him, it becomes possible to supervise and investigate him. The shift from body to soul also marks the end of the public idea of punishment, because whilst the body has to be tortured in public, the soul is a private thing (Sparknotes, 2022). The penalty now addressed the soul. Although the definition of crimes changed, some elements remained the same. Judgment was now passed on the motives, passions, and instincts of the criminal, not only punishing but also supervising and directing the individual. So, crimes become objects of scientific knowledge.

The punishment, if any, should be focused on the correction of the mind. Foucault attempts to chart a move from a situation where the criminal's body is attacked, to one where we are all disciplined and controlled. Foucault says, the body is arranged, regulated, and supervised rather than tortured. At the same time, the overall aim of the penal process becomes the reform of the soul, rather than the punishment of the body.

Divergent opinions on the use of corporal punishment as community-based preventive and curative strategy in southeast Nigeria.

Today's societies have varying opinions on the use of corporal punishment. Some have banned it outright, while others allow it. From the data collected, there have been divided opinions on the use of this strategy to prevent and cure the abuse of methamphetamine.

Currently, some communities have waged aggressive war against the abuse of methamphetamine. They have started identifying those who peddle the drug in their areas and are banishing them, while their youths who were known to be taking it are publicly punished by flogging them in village squares (Ujumadu, 2021). Under this situation, youths who are identified as consumers of Mkpurumiri are publicly flogged by the youths organisation of the community as a deterrent to those who want to join in the abuse of the drug and also to flog out the demon that entices them to abuse the drug as well as make them not to take it again.

Those who advocate the use of public flogging like Ugezu J. Ugezu, a celebrated Nollywood movie actor and director, in a widely circulated video, supported what he termed 'Cane Deliverance' (flogging) and, specifically, urged all communities to adopt it to save Igbo youths. According to him, town unions should not wait on government but take the bull by the horns in tackling the problem. He urged all president-general of town unions to wake up from their slumbers and take

the bull by the horns. For him, any child that refuses to listen to good counsel, his body will listen to flogging (Ojiego 2021).

The concept of cane deliverance has both a spiritual, psychological, and social implications. On the spiritual aspect, most elders of communities are of the opinion that it will drive away the evil spirit possessing the person to act in an abnormal way by taking Mkpurumiri. Some would say flog the Beelzebub (evil spirit) out of their buttocks.

The social interpretation comes from the members of youths organizations. For them, public flogging is synonymous with public rebuke by the members of the community which would serve as a deterrent to others, public rejection of the act of taking drugs. For the village vigilante group, this may not be the best international practice, but it is pragmatic. Then, on the psychological sphere, it brings about public shame which will make the person not to go back to taking the drug and serve as a deterrent to others.

One of the religious leaders pointed out that, the background to public flogging as suggested by some of the participants is borrowed from the African Independent churches (Sabbat Mission) method of treating deviants and mentally ill patients by tying them to a tree or a pillar, flog them, counsel and monitor them a while. The time they are at the prayer center, they will not have access to the substances (drugs) so they would be normal, but the major problem is that they would go back when left to go back to their daily lives because methamphetamine is very addictive.

On the other hand, there are some voices and opinions against the use of corporal punishment as a strategy to addressing the menace of abuse of methamphetamine.

Under the democratic dispensation in Nigeria, this is unacceptable because the people who organized the flogging and the people who flogged the addicts are torturing the person and can be sued for aggravated assault.

Also, flogging identified users in public for most members of the families of methamphetamine abuse victim, does not highlight how effective this sanction is since most of them still go back to take the drug but this time in secret and will be careful not to be caught again. There is no quick cure or drug for the methamphetamine addiction. The only treatment is behavioral therapy which is not readily available in Nigeria.

In addition, flogging addicts in public is barbaric, stressing that beating the abusers would not stop them from taking the substance. The best method to prevent and cure this social misfit is enlightenment, awareness, and rehabilitation.

It is important to note that three of methamphetamine abuse victim pointed out that instead of flogging them publicly, the problem should be solved from the root causes which is going after the drug barons, arrest and prosecute them. Shame the known barons and dealers amongst in the society and if possible, ostracize them from the communities. This is so because, they are the ones who are being punished while those who manufacture and sell these substances to them are rich members of the community who are given special positions of honor in the society.

In addition, public flogging from the explanations of participants and the members of their family bring shame, trauma, depression, physical pain, fear and violence to the person and violence to the members of the society.

For the law enforcement agents, public flogging of drug addicts shows ignorance of the law, the best way out is to hand them over to the law enforcement agencies. Flogging them would do more harm to them and the society than good. A victim needs to know that he or she needs help because they are in a situation where they cannot help themselves. They need professional assistance; they have to go through the process of rehabilitation, isolation, detoxification, reintegration, and aftercare because when you recover, you cannot be allowed to go back into society just like that; the person will relapse.

Public flogging is anarchy, chaos, lawlessness at its peak. Inflicting pain, suffering and possible death to the addicts is not the solution. They should be assisted through therapy and not physical abuse. Public flogging gives a psychological trauma to both the addict and other members of the society. This may compound his/her problem instead of alleviating it. It must be hell living in an environment where addicts are flogged publicly without them having access to law enforcement agencies. It could lead to abuses of different sorts and even innocent people can be accused wrongly without investigation.

The leaders of the various communities also pointed out strongly that, families should be more involved in upbringing and training of children. Families should be involved in treatment than communities which may advocate for correctional measures that would cause more harm. In addition, law enforcement agencies should be proactive in clamping down on illegal meth laboratories and arrest drug barons, illegal drug manufacturers and traffickers alike.

Analysis of the use of public flogging as a community-based prevention and treatment strategy to curb methamphetamine abuse.

To understand the various views in the punishment of a crime, there are majorly four theories of punishment. These theories are the deterrent theory, retributive theory, preventive theory, and reformatory theory.

For the deterrent theory, the punishment is designed to avoid future crime both to the individual being punished and others, but in specific deterrence, punishment is designed such that it can educate the criminal. This is done by creating a fear that the punishment will be repeated (Toppr, 2022).

Retributive theory insists that a person deserves punishment as he has done a wrongful deed. Also, this theory signifies that no person shall be arrested unless that person has broken the law (Toppr, 2022).

Preventive theory is used as a restraint that an offender if repeats the criminal act is culpable for death, exile, or imprisonment. The theory gets its importance from the notion that society must be protected from criminals. Thus, the punishment here is for solidarity and defense (Toppr, 2022).

For the reformatory theory the objective of punishment needs to be reformation by the offender (Toppr, 2022). So, this is not a punishment virtually but rather a rehabilitative process. Thus, this process helps in making a criminal a good citizen as much as possible. Furthermore, it makes the citizen a meaningful citizen and an upright straight man.

Bringing these theories are into the analysis of the use of corporal punishment by public flogging to both prevent and treat drug abuse by deterring the abusers from taking the drugs and for others seeking to join them not to do so, there are fundamental issues that needs to be explained and settled.

The first is, the issue of creating fear to deter the victim and subsequently those intending to abuse drugs. The question is, can fear discourage crime? Can fear deter drug abuse? Proponents assert that punishment deters if it is administered with celerity (swiftness), certainty, and severity (CliffsNotes (2022)). This raises further question whether public flogging of methamphetamine abuse victims were done with swiftness, certainty, and severity. All in all, research evidence suggests that the deterrent effect of punishment is weak. (CliffsNotes (2022)).

For the retributivists, punishment should be dispensed according to the offender's moral blameworthiness (as measured by the severity of crimes of which the offender was convicted). Ideally, the harshness of punishments should be proportionate to the seriousness of crimes (CliffsNotes (2022)). In the case of abuse of methamphetamine, is public flogging commensurate to the crime? The shame, violence and abuse unleashed at the victim; are they proportionate to the crime? This goes a long way to show that in reality, it is difficult to match punishments and crimes, since there is no way to objectively calibrate the moral depravity of particular crimes and/or the painfulness of specific punishments. Retribution is a backward-looking theory of punishment. It looks to the past to determine what to do in the present. (CliffsNotes (2022)).

Deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation are all arguments that look to the consequences of punishment. They are all forward-looking theories of punishment. That is, they look to the future in deciding what to do in the present. The shared goal of all three is crime prevention. (CliffsNotes (2022)). But particular emphasis is paid to rehabilitation in the case of methamphetamine abuse, because it call for changing the individual's attitude through correctional interventions, such as drug-treatment programs (CliffsNotes (2022)).

International and National Legal Frameworks on corporal punishment

Corporal punishment violates internationally recognized human rights to freedom from cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, and freedom from physical violence. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 5 which states that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (UN, 2015, p.12) and the Convention Against Torture (UNCAT, 1984) also prohibit torture and "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment." Various United Nations organs, including the UN High

Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Committee, have made it clear that flogging amounts at the very least to cruel and inhuman punishment. Under Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (UN, 1966) all degrading treatment is prohibited. The foregoing apply irrespective of the nature of the crime that is to be punished, however brutal it may be, it is the firm opinion of the Committee that corporal punishment constitutes cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment contrary to Article 7 of the Covenant.

It follows that, no culture, custom or tradition that is inhumane can be defended on the basis of the right to religion, culture or on the basis of non-interference in national or domestic issues. So, any inhuman activity is subject to reasonable restrictions when it violates basic human rights. Corporal punishment is a violation of children's rights to respect for human dignity and physical integrity (Council of Europe, 2022) and indeed any member of the society.

With particular reference to Nigeria and her national legal framework, Nigeria operates traditions of law based on the legal systems of English common law, the Shariah (Islamic) and the customary laws. There are two separate codes; the Criminal Code for south, and the Penal Code for north respectively. Human rights provision is made in the Nigerian constitution under the Bill of rights in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Chapter IV contains an elaborated Bill of Rights (Constituteproject.org, 2011)

It follows that the legal system in Nigeria is a mix of Islamic law, English common law and customary/native law. In the southern states, criminal laws dating from before Independence in 1960 remain in force; in the northern states, criminal laws enacted during the settlement of 1960 are still in force, together with Shari'a laws enacted following the adoption of the 1999 Constitution.

However, the big issue in the Nigeria legal system is that it is a dual system whereby, international treaties and law can only become part of the legal system when adopted and enacted into domestic law by the national assembly. Also, some national law are not binding on the States unless adopted and enacted into the State codes of practice. We find in Nigeria a very complex system which makes enforcement of Law difficult as the states are not under any obligation to adopt all the national law into their codes (Temitope, 2013).

A major point is, when properly administered in accordance with the law and due respect for human rights and dignity, punishment in itself can serve as a reformatory or correctional tool, when it is not excessive. Many justifications have been adduced for the use of corporal punishment for purposes of correction of wrong-doing, punishment for breaking the law, reformation to respect and uphold cultural values (Temitope, 2013, p.7).

Despite the series of criticism on grounds of human rights violations and the global movement suggesting the total eradication of corporal punishment, on the claims it violates human rights, cultural relativist have argued to the contrary that the moral code of each society should be respected without the dominant culture assuming that, its own standard must always be followed without justification (Temitope, 2013, p.8).

While appreciating that cultural value should be acknowledged, universalism is the purpose and application of human rights principles. Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights argued that “Universality is, in fact, the essence of human rights: all people are entitled to them, all governments are bound to observe them, all state and civil actors should defend them. The goal is nothing less than human rights for all.” (UNDP, 2000, p.113)

In addition to the above point, any punishment that does not bring about a change in the behaviour is not a good one. Public flogging brings shame, trauma, depression, physical pain, fear and violence to the person and violence to the members of the society. It is a violation of international human rights, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Nigeria is a signatory. It also contravenes Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which state that 'no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'

Corporal punishment could amount to torture and also cross the threshold to become inhuman and degrading for the person on whom it is administered, regardless of age. So, although corporal punishment is legal in Nigeria, it is not in compliance with international law as many human rights issues are raised by the practice. The question arises whether Nigeria is oblivious of the situation or deliberately ignoring its obligations, under the various international human rights covenants it has signed.

Drawing insights from Michael Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment*, it is evident that public flogging is ceremonial and directed at the body of a methamphetamine abuse victim. It is a ritual which the audience was important which does not elicit change of attitude and the conviction not to take methamphetamine again from the victim. It simply reestablishes the authority and power of the leaders of the communities, the elders, Youths organizations over the individual members of the community instead of seeking ways to assist the methamphetamine abuse victim to change his/her behaviour, to understand the harm he/she is doing to herself and the community at large.

Corporal punishments do not end crime or disobedience rather increase the culture of violence in society. When someone is flogged in public, the idea that someone can harm human beings in that way infiltrates the consciousness of the rest of the population. Thus, it causes trauma, shame, depression, physical pain, fear and violence to the person and other members of the society.

By flogging the methamphetamine abuse victim publicly, it is pain that is central to the punishment and not empathy. But by following the best practice, which is therapeutic means of assisting the methamphetamine abuse victim, the soul of the individual concerned is arrested to change. The objective is no longer the body but the soul, the heart and mind, thoughts and will. This should be the case because, actions start in the mind, so the solution should not be the punishment of the body. So, “the torture of the body should be avoided, the theatrical representation of pain excluded from punishment” (Foucault, 1995, p. 14).

Consequently, correction of methamphetamine abuse should focus on the correction of the mind, which should avoid the use of punishment in all its forms, corporal and non-corporal. Punishment has more effects than just repressing the offender's bad behavior.

Public flogging is an aberration. It is cruel; it is barbarous. Corporal punishment aims to torture, and “torture rests on a whole quantitative art of pain” (Foucault, 1995, p. 34). Torture places two demands on the victim: first, to scar the body, second, to brand the victim with infamy (Foucault, 1995, p. 34). There is nothing about correction or teaching in torture.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that public flogging is not the best practice in prevention and treatment of drug abuse particularly meth abuse. It is not in the best interest of the victim and the wider society, rather it leads to trauma, fear, depression, shame, physical assault, it is torture and does not to the change of attitude of the victim, it does not touch the soul of the victim.

Corporal punishment may appear legal as backed by various laws, tradition, and culture in Nigeria; it raises a serious international concern as it violates the human rights of the drug abuse. It is therefore important that Nigeria conforms to its human rights obligations by abolishing it accordingly. So, Nigerian government need to rise up to the maintenance of its international human rights obligation by enacting and enforcing the relevant legislation.

To create sustainable impact to curbing methamphetamine abuse, the rehabilitation measures should be taken in prevention and treatment of the abuse victim. Communities should adopt this method to assist the victims because it has lasting impacts both on the individual and other members of the community.

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