

Assessment of Rehabilitation Services in Nigerian Prisons in Edo State

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Abstract

This study investigated rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons in Edo State of Nigeria. The study was aimed at determining the status of rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons in Edo State. To address the problem of study, two research questions were raised. The researcher adopted a survey research design. The participants were 147 prison inmates drawn from the six Nigerian prisons of Edo State. The instrument a checklist titled "Rehabilitation Services in Nigerian Prisons in Edo State (RSNPES)" was administered on the participants (prison inmates). The method of data analysis was simple percentage.

The study found that:

- *Provision for rehabilitation services is still neglected and not international best practices compliance.*
- *Prison inmates of these prisons prefer one rehabilitation service to the other. The most preferred rehabilitation service is recreational activity – football.*

Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that deliberate efforts should be made by the Federal Government and prison service providers to reform the Nigerian prisons and make it international best practice compliance. There is also the need to introduce more rehabilitation services, facilities and reformative programmes such as training inmates on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and giving adequate awareness programmes so as to rehabilitate prison inmates and stop recidivism.

Introduction

People perish for lack of knowledge and information. In a country like Nigeria, many of her citizenry are illiterates and those who manage to have the basic normal education do not have access to information regarding their day to day activities. The media's provisions are not the best for the neo-literates. Hence, criminal behaviours and delinquency are common occurrences in Nigeria. In recent time, armed robbery, kidnapping, drug trafficking, fraud, traffic offence, rape, murder and theft have become more serious to tackle as they have manifested with new methods and techniques (Omisakin, 1998). Today, the nefarious activities of the Boko Haram in term of bombing, hijacking and life threatening incidences are worrisome. These high rates of criminal behaviours and manifestation with new methods and techniques are of great concern to the society, rehabilitation social workers and other behaviour modifiers.

Convicted criminals are sentenced to prison for purpose of rehabilitation. In most cases, the providers of rehabilitation services are either ill-equipped or not at all to give wholesome services that can affect inmates' lives positively. Rehabilitation services are notable for their pivotal prison role in changing lives of the inmates; unfortunately these are either not there or grossly inadequate. Change is possible for everyone. Even prison inmates can change for the better and become productive citizens. However, changing for the better and becoming productive citizens need a little sacrifice from the prison inmates and a great help from government and concerned agencies. Prison rehabilitation services were established in Nigerian prisons for the purpose of reforming the inmates. For any meaningful rehabilitation to take place in prisons, rehabilitation services must first be improved upon; adequate provisions made and these should be accessible to the inmates.

Many rehabilitation services for prison inmates are widely available around the world. Each of these rehabilitation services targets specific groups of people with specific needs for reform. A rehabilitation service provides education in prison about various aspects of life. These are useful for getting inmates prepared for life outside the prison system.

The place of rehabilitation services in the reformation and transformation of prison inmates have continued to be on the front burner of public discourse in recent time (Tanimu, 2010). Leading this discourse are professionals like adult educators, counsellors, social workers, psychologists and medical doctors. These professionals seem to be at a consensus that rehabilitation programmes or services in prisons will help prison inmates acquire the much needed social skills, vocational training, attitudinal and behavioural changes, and education to be more useful to themselves and the society upon release. To achieve the above, rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons have been defined as services provided for prison inmates in order to restore them to fullest physical, mental, psychological, social, vocational and economic usefulness which they are capable (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1989).

According to the Nigerian Prison Service Manual (2011), the realization of one of the major objectives of the prisons service - the reform and rehabilitation of convicts are to be done through a complicated set of mechanisms consisting among others: conscientization, group work, case work session, recreational activities, religious services and adult and remedial education programmes, educational development project, skills acquisition programme, mid-range industrial production, agricultural service and after-care service programme. The prison's services providers should not only identify the causes of the prisons' inmates anti-social behavior but also endeavours to set them on the road to reform through induced self-rediscovery and eventual change for the better.

According to Federal Government of Nigeria (1989), some of the specific objectives of rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons are to:

- i. Ensure effective management of crisis situation of the prison inmates;
- ii. Ensure an appropriate training for the prison inmates in order to reduce dependency;
- iii. Promote the provision of adequate and accessible recreational and sporting facilities for the prison inmates.

Rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons therefore, should be aimed at increasing the educational and vocational skills of inmates, and their chances of success upon release. In order to accomplish these goals, prison inmates are encouraged to participate in rehabilitation programmes made available to them while in prison. This is crucial for prison inmates especially because many of them entered the prisons more socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged.

The key to success in a free society for many of these socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged prison inmates is rehabilitation. There is no better way to help prison inmates re-enter the larger society successfully and break the in-and-out of jail cycle than provide them with skills that they need to succeed in the outside world.

It is disheartening to see that a crucial aspect of identifying inmates' needs is grossly neglected in Nigeria. This is the crux of the matter. For rehabilitation services to help prisons' inmates to develop social and vocational skills, keep them meaningfully busy, change their attitudes and behaviour so that they will have better understanding of themselves and the society, their felt needs must be addressed so as to enable them get employment and advance more educationally after serving their terms.

In view of the increasing global emphasis on rehabilitation services and programmes for prisons inmates, this study focuses on assessing the rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons in Edo State.

Research questions

In order to address the problem of the study, the following research questions were raised.

- (i) What is the status of rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons in Edo State?
- (ii) What types of rehabilitation services or programmes do inmates of Nigerian prisons in Edo State prefer?

Literature Review

According to the Health and Social Welfare Directorate of Nigerian prisons (2011), prison inmates are provided with adult and remedial education programmes (AREP); this section tries not only to identify the causes of the inmates anti-social behaviour but also endeavours to set them on the road to reform through induced self-rediscovery and eventual change for better.

According to Sutton (1993) there are three main immediate objectives of prison education at the basic level, reflecting differing views of the purpose of a criminal justice system:

- a. To keep inmates meaningfully busy
- b. To change attitudes and behaviour
- c. To enable employment, vocational skills and/or advance to further education and training

The general assembly of the UN basic principles for the treatment of prisoners was adopted on 14 December, 1990 (Resolution 45/111). One of these principles is that all prisoners should have the right to take part in cultural activities and education aimed at full development of the human personality (No.6). It emphasized that:

- (i) The educational level of offenders be considered if education is to be provided.
- (ii) The education must be of the appropriate type.

The importance of recreational activities to healthful living, particularly at this present age of technology, is no longer in doubt. In fact, literature is replete with the attributions of recreational activities to the maintenance of good health and longevity (Mgbor and Eneku, 2003). This is of particular importance to prison inmates as it will make them meaningfully busy.

The Inmate Training and Productivity (ITP) Directorate of Nigerian prisons is charged with the responsibility of training inmates specifically in prison farms and industries for the purpose of not only imparting self-sustaining skills on them but also in the process inculcating in them, the positive orientation of finding dignity in labour (ITP, 2011). There are also cottage industries which train inmates in mid-range industrial production. Some of these are furniture-making, soap-making, toilet roll production, manufacturing aluminum pots, and metal works fabrications and so on. These are geared towards giving the inmates practical skills that can help them live self-sustaining lives on discharge (ITP, 2011).

To address the spiritual needs of inmates, activities include worship services, religious courses, prayer services and scripture study courses. Some prisons provide chaplains to assist inmates with crises intervention and to assist them during times of personal crises (Tanimu, 2010). It is true that prison inmates can choose to change all by themselves, but giving them a helping hand is a lot better. Almost all prison inmates who are thinking about changing don't know how to start anew. By providing prison religious rehabilitation programmes, they will be enlightened that a brighter future still awaits them (PRT, 2001).

According to Eneku (2001) prison inmates prefer one rehabilitation service or activity to the other. This position was corroborated by Tanimu (2010) that rehabilitation or recreational activities prison inmates engaged in depends on whether they are in side or outside their cells and the one they prefer. He said when in their cells, prison inmates prefer games like draft, ludo and cards.

Correctional education has been linked as a factor in reduction of recidivism and post-release employment. Steutrer and Smith (2003) surveyed 3170 inmates from Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio prisons in United States of America to compare correctional education participants in three States- Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio on a number of key socio-demographic and outcome variables. Specifically, the study was designed to assess the impact of correctional education on recidivism and post-release employment. A quasi-experimental research design with a release cohort was used for the study.

The study showed that correctional education participants had statistically lower rates of re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration than non-participants. The effect of correctional education on recidivism varied across states with all the states showing a reduction in recidivism in the analyses. The findings of the study showed strong support for educating prison inmates.

Research methodology

The study was essentially designed to assess the rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons in Edo State. This study covered all the rehabilitation services in the six prisons in Edo State namely: Auchi, Benin, Ogba, Oko, Ozalla and Ubiaja. It is a descriptive survey research designed to gather information from respondents.

The population consists of all the prison inmates in the six prisons in Edo State. As at the time of this field work, Nigerian prisons in Edo State had a population of 731. A total of one hundred and forty seven (147) respondents (prison inmates) were selected through stratified random sampling of twenty percent (20%) of all the inmates in the six prisons in Edo State. As shown in the table below:

Table 1: Breakdown of the sample for the study according to prisons' location

S/N	Nigerian Prisons in Edo State	Number of prison inmates	Sample 20%
1	Auchi	48	10
2	Benin	209	42
3	Ogba	70	14
4	Oko	270	54
5	Ozalla	54	11
6	Ubiaja	80	16
Total		731	147

The instrument that was used to gather data for the study is a checklist titled “Adapted Rehabilitation Services in Nigerian Prisons in Edo State Checklist” (ARSNPESC). The instrument original was developed by Welfare Department of Nigerian Prisons Service (2011).

The instrument was based on a 2 point scale weighted on degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements or questions on the checklist. Yes = 1, No =0.

Findings and Discussion of results

The main purpose of the study was to assess the rehabilitation services available in Nigerian prisons in Edo State. The research sought to ascertain the status of rehabilitation services in Nigerian prisons in Edo State and ascertain the types of rehabilitation services inmates of Nigerian prisons in Edo State prefer. The discussion of the results obtained in this study is organized according to the research questions.

Rehabilitation Services Available In Nigerian Prisons

Table 2: Rehabilitation Services Available in Nigerian Prisons

S/NO	REHABILITATION SERVICES	YES	%	NO	%
A	Educational Programmes				
i.	Adult And Remedial Education Programmes	122	83	25	17
ii.	Educational Development Project	96	65	51	35
B	Skills Acquisition Programmes				
i.	Carpentry	106	72	41	28
ii.	Tailoring	122	83	25	17
iii.	Printing	0	0	147	100
iv.	Building	96	65	51	35
v.	Masonry	96	65	51	35
C	Counselling services				
i.	Educational /Academic service	96	65	51	35
ii.	Vocational/Career service	96	65	51	35
iii.	Social-personal service	147	100	0	0
D	Religious Service				
I	Christian Religious service	0	0	147	100
Ii	Islamic Religious service	147	100	0	0
E	Mid-range industrial production				
i.	Furniture making	147	100	0	0
ii.	Soap making	54	37	93	63
iii.	Toilet roll making	54	37	93	63
iv.	Manufacturing aluminum pots	0	0	147	100
v.	Metal works/fabrications	0	0	147	100
vi.	Shoe making	0	0	147	100
F	Recreational Activities	122	83	25	17
i.	Table Tennis				
ii.	Football	96	65	51	35
iii.	Volleyball	147	100	0	0
iv.	Badminton	112	76	35	24
v.	Indoor games (Card, Ludo and draft)	96	65	51	35
G	Agricultural Skills	147	100	0	0
i.	Farming Methods				
ii.	Animal Husbandry	25	17	122	83
H	Group Work Programme	25	17	122	83

The responses in table 2 showed the perception of prison inmates towards rehabilitation services available in Nigerian prison in Edo state. Adult and remedial educational programmes, and educational development project were available in 4 and 2 prisons respectively. This is in line with the position of UN (1990) that prison inmates should be provided with education necessary for their rehabilitation. These were done not only because of the interest but also because of the fact that classrooms or lecture rooms were available. Educational programmes were provided only in prisons with classrooms or lecture rooms.

Other rehabilitation services, carpentry and tailoring were in 3 and 4 prisons respectively. This could be as a result of the popularity of carpentry and tailoring in Nigeria and the ease of establishing carpentry workshop and tailoring shop as mentioned earlier. The non-existence of printing in any of the prisons and the availability of building and masonry in 2 prisons could be due to lack of the basic facilities, equipment/supplies which were provided in short supply in only a few prisons.

The availability of religious services (Christian and Islamic religious services) in all the prisons in Edo State was probably because of the availability of churches and mosques in some of the prisons, and the popularity of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. The availability of furniture-making and soap-making were only available in 1 prison may be as a result of the huge capital outlay required to establish soap-making industries. The availability of shoe making in 4 of the 6 prisons may be as a result of the availability of facilities for shoe making in the 4 prisons and the fact that a cottage shoe making industry does not need huge amount of capital to establish.

The responses in table 2 in respect of recreational activities show that table tennis was played in 2 out of the 6 prisons. This may be as a result of the unpopularity of the games in Nigeria and the non-availability of facilities for the games in some prisons. The availability of football and indoor games (card, ludo and draft) in all the prisons in Edo State may probably be as a result of the popularity of football and indoor games (card, ludo and draft) in Nigeria. It could also be as a result of the availability of the facilities for the games. It is also understandable why football is available in all the prisons as it is played with or without a standard football pitch and other materials as mentioned earlier. Other possible reasons are the preference of football in all prisons and the fact that football is the highest money spinner as far as sports are concerned. The responses on table 2 show that agricultural skills acquisition namely, farming methods and animal husbandry and group work programmes are only available in 2 prisons out of 6 prisons respectively. This may probably be due to the fact that the facilities were only available in prison farm centres. The perception of the society towards farming in spite of the obvious importance may probably be the reason for the low patronage in Nigerian prisons.

Prison Inmates' Preference of Rehabilitation Services

Table 3: Rehabilitation Services Preferred By Prison Inmates in Nigerian Prisons in Edo State

S/NO	REHABILITATION SERVICES	YES	%	NO	%
A	Educational Programmes				
I	Adult and Remedial education programmes	7	4.8	140	95.7
ii	Educational Development Project	4	2.7	143	97.3
B	Skills Acquisition Programmes				
i.	Carpentry	4	2.7	143	97.3
ii.	Tailoring	5	3	142	97
iii.	Printing	0	0	147	100
iv.	Building	2	0.7	146	99.3
v.	Masonry	0	0	147	100
C	Counselling services				
i.	Educational /Academic service	0	0	147	100
ii.	Vocational/Career service	0	0	147	100
iii.	Social-personal service	0	0	147	100
iv.	After-care Services	0	0	147	100
D	Religious Service	0			
I	Christian Religious service	14	9.5	133	90.5
ii	Islamic Religious service	0	0	147	100
E	Mid-range industrial production				
i.	Furniture making	2	1.4	145	98.6
ii.	Soap making	4	2.7	143	97.3
iii.	Toilet roll making	0	0	147	100
iv.	Manufacturing aluminum pots	0	0	147	100
v.	Metal works/fabrications	0	0	147	100
vi.	Shoe making	0	0	147	100
F	Recreational Activities				
i.	Table Tennis	5	3.4	142	96.6
ii.	Football	90	61.2	57	38.8
iii.	Volleyball	2	0	145	98.6
iv.	Badminton	0	0	147	100
v.	Indoor games (Card, Ludo and draft)	0	0	147	100
G	Agricultural Skills				
i.	Farming Methods	9	6.1	138	93.9
ii.	Animal Husbandry	-	0	147	100
H	Group Work Programme	-	0	147	100

The responses in table 3 show the services that prison inmates in Edo State prefer. Given the popularity of football in Nigeria, it is obvious why it is one of the recreational facilities (rehabilitation services) preferred by inmates in all the prisons under study. 61.2% of the all 147 prisons inmates for this study prefer football.

The probable reasons for this preference as mentioned earlier is probably that all that was needed to play a game of football was an open field without the necessary well constructed goal posts and nets. Football game is interesting and could also be played without the technical equipment and facilities required in such other games like table tennis, basketball, cricket, etc. And more importantly, it is a prestigious game and the highest money spinner as far as sport is concerned the world over.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Despite the importance of rehabilitation services to prison inmates and the level of interest demonstrated by inmates in Nigeria prisons in Edo State, provision for rehabilitation services was still highly neglected.
2. Prison inmates of these prisons preferred one rehabilitation service to the other. The most preferred rehabilitation service is recreational activities – Football.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

- The study revealed that rehabilitation services in Nigeria prisons in Edo State are not international best compliance. There is therefore an urgent need for prison reform generally in Nigeria and Edo State in particular with regard to inmates' participation in rehabilitation services. It is mandatory that Nigerian prisons should endeavour to meet the standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners because Nigeria was a party to the signatory of the resolutions 1990/20 and 1990/24 of May, 1990. Government should provide adequate rehabilitation services and facilities in prisons. Correctional education programmes should be implemented within and without Nigerian prisons.
- Rehabilitation services should include: Awareness Programmes Counselling Services, Information Communication Technology, Correctional Education, and Skills Acquisition Programmes among others. Moreover, schools should be established within the prisons, quality prison educational programmes should be incorporated to improve the educational qualification of the prison inmates so as to secure jobs after discharge. Educational programme is another way to educate offenders so as to prevent recidivism. In the same vein, vocational programmes such as welding, auto-mechanics, photography, hair-dressing, cosmetology, and printing should be implemented rather than training inmates toward traditional blue-collar employment.
- Since the study revealed that prison inmates preferred one recreational activity to other rehabilitation services, there is urgent need by the federal government to provide for more functional recreational facilities and services.

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