

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REFORMATION AND
REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES OF THE PRISON
SERVICE IN THE SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA:
IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION
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Abstract:

The effect of inadequate reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners within the Nigerian prison seem to be contributory to the continuous increase in crime and recidivism within the Nigerian society. This study examines the adequacy of reformation and rehabilitation programmes of the Nigerian prison using three convict prisons within the southeastern zone of Nigeria. Three states within the zone with high inmate population were purposively selected. A total of five hundred and ninety-seven (597) respondents were selected which comprises three hundred and eleven (311) prisoners and two hundred and eighty-six (286) prison staff, using systematic and stratified random sampling methods. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using Questionnaire and Interview Guide. Quantitative data was analysed electronically using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) while content analysis was used in analysing the quantitative data. Findings revealed that lack of facilities and training materials, lack of skilled personnel, such as correctional social workers and the absence of after-care support systems were the major factors inhibiting rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners. These factors were found to be hinged on lack of funds, corruption and lackadaisical attitude of the government in the affairs of the prison and in the reformation and rehabilitation needs of prisoners. It was recommended among many others that there is the need to provide for more functional educational, skill acquisition/occupational and recreational facilities as well the most reoccurring challenges of the prisoners such as accommodation, feeding, clothing, medical, and all such other facilities. Social work has much to offer in a prison setting especially where prisoners' reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration is concerned, therefore, there is need for involvement of professionals such as social workers, psychologists, etc in the business of the prison in Nigeria.

Key words: Reformation, Rehabilitation, Prison, Programme, Social work.

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of crime and the judicial machinery set in motion to combat it create many problems for the modern society. This is essentially noticed in the mode of punishment and correction. The variables involved in seeking to comprehend crime and cope with the machinery for its control are extensive and complex that they embrace every major field of man's knowledge. This complexity is as a result of the intricate nature of human personalities as well as the interrelationship of these human personalities in different cultural settings.

Punishment, for instance has been an age-long correctional method for anti-social behaviours in every culture. This is because, in the traditional societies for instance, people who commit crimes are generally perceived as evil people, cursed, wicked, mad or lazy. Association with such people is very limited or avoided and therefore there were established ways of treating and punishing violators of the laws of the land. These according to Marfatia, vary from one cultural setting to another and range from one payment of fine, flogging, ex-communication, banishment among others. Punishment is thus an age long correctional method for antisocial behaviours in every culture (as cited in Ekpe & Mammah, 1997).

In the contemporary society, apart from the confinement function of the prison which is meant to keep away or detach the offender from his previous infectious group, as well as protect the law abiding citizens, the prison system serves the sole purpose of correcting the anti-social behaviours of those placed in its custody.

This is done through the various rehabilitation programmes that exist in the prisons and which are specially designed for this purpose. Reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners are designed to help them have a re-think and conceive a true and socially accepted view about crime and other anti-social behaviours and then go further to equip them with skills and knowledge that will help them achieve their life needs. This is in tune with the United Nations rules that prisons should utilize all the remedial, educational, moral, spiritual and other forms of assistance which are available and appropriate to achieve the individual needs of the offenders. Social work profession plays an important role in this whole process. It utilizes the knowledge and skills of the profession in a corrective manner to rehabilitate individuals and to help them help themselves, so that they can return and become part of the society and

also to guide them towards becoming comfortable with themselves and their associates (Skidmore, Thackeray & Farley, 1997).

Officially, the Nigerian Prison service runs educational and vocational training programmes with the purpose of equipping the prisoner with skills with which they could make an honest living after their terms of imprisonment. There is however a gulf between policy and practice. There is always this common story in every Nigerian prison of lack of basic training materials, obsolete and worn out tools and broken down machines. The prisoners do get some training but they are grossly inadequate as suggested by high rate of recidivism in the prisons. According to findings, except for Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison which has a school run by a church and ample facilities for training the inmates, in various kind of skills and trades, other prisons have little or nothing to train the inmates with. The Nigerian government has tried its best to institute these programmes, but the best it has achieved so far is still grossly inadequate to achieve the expected objective of reformation and rehabilitation. Johnson (1962) long observed that Nigerian prison experience shows that considerable bearing is on the fulfillment of the more important aim of criminal justice, which is the protection of the law abiding citizens through the incarceration of offenders rather than the modification of the anti-social behaviours of offenders. This observation seems to be true even in our modern day Nigerian prisons.

This study therefore focused on assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing reformation and rehabilitation programmes within the Nigerian prisons, having noticed its apparent failures in turning out law-abiding citizens.

The Problem:

The modern prison system as practiced in Nigeria is designed to take an inmate into a continuous course of study. The inmate is taught a trade, skills, and participates in other educational programmes in an area he/she is interested in, participate in games and other activities including religious activities. These are designed systematically to save them from stagnation and mental paralysis while in custody. But today, most offenders are turned out of the prison almost psychologically and physically wrecked by disease, hunger and humiliation with no obvious skill and also stand the danger of facing blatant rejection by the society. This perhaps makes reintegration impossible.

As the available figures show, in 1983, recidivists accounted for 45,812 or 43.44% of total convict admissions in Nigeria. In 1984, their number rose to 66,377 representing 48.86% of all admissions. Although, their number fell to 26,239 accounting for 32.43% of all admissions in 1985, recidivism rose slightly in 1986 to 29,089 or 38.27% of all admission. In 1987, recidivists were 10,425 or 48.64% of an average national monthly convict population of 32,050. Their number rose to 14,875 in 1988, representing 45.75% of the population although it fell to 12,034 in 1989 and again to 6,753 in 1990 accounting for 53.69% and 51.80% of average monthly population for each year respectively (Nigeria Prison Annual Report, 1990). The 1999 Edition of Annual Abstract of Statistics shows that in 1990, no

fewer than 482 out of the 17,170 offenders were found to have been convicted 6 times, 758 were found to have been convicted 5 times, 1,017 were convicted 4 times, 646, 3 times, 1,252, twice, 2,598, once, while first offenders were 10,417. This leads to the question, 'is the prison service equipped to for any purposeful rehabilitation? What are the factors responsible for this incessant coming and going of prisoners?

Between 1990 and 2000, the awaiting trial persons constituted 70 percent (%) of prison population. From the year 2000 onwards, the population of awaiting trial persons was fluctuating around 62% of a total prison population of over 44,000. Between 2010 to date, out of a total prison population of 40,447, a total of 25,380 (63%) persons are awaiting trial. It was however noted that more than half of these awaiting trial persons as captured by the Annual Reports have been convicted more than once (Orakwe, 2011).

The reason may not be farfetched from the observation of Keve (1986) when he noted that there is a deliberate policy in the prison to keep lesser criminals away from their hardened counterparts, but gross inadequacy of space has generally aborted this policy. Evidently, burdened with the strains of congestions and lack of essential facilities, Nigerian prisons would appear like places officially sanctioned for convicts to rot away. This also has gone a long way to undermine the possibilities of adequate rehabilitation on the prisoners.

More still, a visit to some of the prisons shows that a systematic application of these programmes is not feasible owing to lack of fund or training materials. Again, some of the instruments and machines used in the workshops are either old, old fashioned, and needs to be replaced. It may likely be that Nigerian prison also lack qualified personnel to operate these machines and undertake the prisoners in any continuous course of training, and at the end the prisoner is discharged without being rehabilitated. Another related factor is that the government scheme of funding a discharged prisoner by way of establishing them on the skills learnt while in custody no longer exists, and this many a times renders the whole rehabilitation useless. These go a long way to explain the high rate of recidivism in our society today. Correctional Social work professionals who could serve as veritable tools towards achieving the general goal of the prison seem to be lacking in those key positions within the criminal justice system where their professional knowledge and skills could be put to use to effect desired changes. Instead, those positions are occupied by those who seem to have little or no knowledge of how best to provide professional services to prisoners. Giving the above situation in Nigerian prison, this paper has the broad aim of assessing its existing rehabilitation and reformation programmes in other to ascertain the factors that are rendering the programmes ineffective. To achieve this end, the specific objectives are as follows.

1. To examine how prison staff within the southeast region perceive the prison
2. To find out the various programmes available for prisoners' rehabilitation and reformation within the southeast prisons

3. To examine the effect of these programmes on the prisoners in the southeastern Nigerian prisons
4. To ascertain the problems militating against the effective application of these programmes on the prisoners
5. To identify strategies for effective reformation and rehabilitation process in the Nigerian prisons.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Prison System: An Overview

The concept of prison has been described by scholars in various ways but all seem to give an idea of what a prison is. The encyclopedia of social sciences described a prison “as a place where persons whose liberties have been curtailed by law are confined to assure successful administration of justice or the application of penal treatment”. Encyclopedia Americana also sees prison “as a place in which persons are kept in custody or confined pending trial or as a punishment after conviction.

The word “Prison” was derived from the Latin word ‘prendere’ to seize: the history of prison is a history of captivity, suffering, punishment and anguish. The Babylonian name for prisons was “houses of darkness”. The most notable of the prisons of antiquity were the great quarries of Syracuse which in the time of Cicero were used as places of safe-keeping of criminals from all over Sicily-that noted Island of organized Mafia.

In its earliest conception in England, prisons were places recognized for enforcing the payment of fines and under the Debtors Acts, as a place for the confinement of debtors until they paid their debts. The prisons were so unhealthy that it was estimated, that every quarter, prisoners died of Goal Fever; a virulent form of typhus which gave the typhoid fever. It was also stated that prisoners later transported to their colonies for work.

In England, the concept of imprisonment as a punishment did not seem to have been in general use until 1711 when magistrates were permitted to send people to the “bride well” or “house of correction” for punishment for minor offences and gradually became indistinguishable from goals. It was in 1773 when John Howard began his work as a prison reformer that the condition and treatment of prisoners in England changed a little.

In United State of America, as pointed out by Teckerary, and Farley (1997) and Lea (2004), apart from physical punishment of prisoners in form of leg-iron chains, brutal physical chastisements were meted out especially to black prisoners. This developed into psychological punishment based upon a conception of change of a person through solitary confinement, silence and darkness, resulting to madness for many victims. Later a system known as Auburn system was developed. This is a situation where prisoners were segregated at night and were made to work at day time in absolute silence in continual corporal punishment even for looking up from work (Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1968 & Shama, 2012).

By the 19th century the idea crept into Britain where there was succession of attempts to make man virtuous by making them miserable, through solitary confinement, toil of the thread mill and by boredom to the limits of sanity, with a view to deterring the criminals rather than reforming them (Shama, 2012).

A change of attitude in England to prisoners in 19th century led to the setting up of the Gladstone committee which in 1895 recommended that:

“The system should be made to be more elastic more capable of being adapted to the special cases of prisoners, and that prison discipline should be more effectually designed to maintain, stimulate or develop their moral instructs, to train them in orderly them out of the prison better men and women both physically and morally than when they came in”.

Within this period, a lot of bills were introduced and passed into law concerning the treatment, reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners in England. These included their proper classification, medical treatment, legal aids, greater facilities for learning skills and educational opportunities and also employment of social workers in prisons. This led to the abolition of death of death penalty in 1962 and the enactment of the first prison rules in 1964 which states that “the purpose of the training and treatment of convicted prisoners shall be to encourage and assist them to lead a good and useful life”. This was the state of affairs in the English prisons before their intrusion across the borders of Nigeria.

2.2 Nigeria Prison System

Nigerian Prison Act defined prison as any place or building in Nigeria declared by the Minister of Internal Affairs through an order in the Federal Gazette to be a prison and by the same or a subsequent order specify the area for which the prison is to be established”. Ugwuoke (2010) pointed out that a prison is an area or building mapped out by the government to keep custody of those the law and the society consider as social misfits and causing nuisance within the ambit of the society. Prison is meant to remand those who have broken the laws of the state pending trial and also serve as a corrective measure to those convicted as well as a deterrent to potential lawbreakers.

The prison system as found in Nigeria today was introduced by the colonial masters during the early part of 19th century. The enactment of the prison ordinance in 1876 led to the establishment of the first Nigerian modern prison in broad street Lagos in 1976 to accommodate a specific number of people. “The ordinance establishing the Nigerian prison was in nature and structure similar to the British prison system” (Nwadinobi, 2001). However, before the coming of the British, the people of the Eastern Nigeria, and more especially the Igbos, had no prison. The customary laws were stringent and widely respected and obeyed. Social misfits who broke societal laws, norms and ethics were properly punished. When however, the British came, they built and established prisons which were manned by Nigerian

prison officers who were trained and supervised by the British as the prison superintendents. The then Nigerian prison officials did not treat the prisoners with kid's gloves. They dealt with the prisoners especially in the remote areas under the native court system by way of punishment rather than by treatment or correction. It was the promulgation of decree No 9 of 1972 under Mr. Adpoyi Jomo the then Director of Prisoners that gave rise to prison welfare section in prison. The aim was to realize the actual rehabilitation of offenders in line with United Nations Minimum Standard Rule for treatment of offenders (Orakwe, 2011).

Anekwe (2011) noted that six major directorates exist at the prison headquarters and each directorate is headed, directed and supervised by a Deputy Controller General of prison service who is answerable to the comptroller General of prisons who in turn is responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the Nigeria prisons (Prison Act 1990, Cap 366).

. These directorates as part of the system were created in 1996 to work together to better achieve the objectives for which the Nigerian prison system was established. The directorates are as follows:

- i) Administration, personnel and training
- ii) Operation and inspection
- iii) Agriculture and industry
- iv) Medical and welfare
- v) Supplies and finance
- vi) Works and logistics

The Administration, Personnel and Training Directorate sees to the day-to-day activities of the Nigerian prison. This section carries out recruitment and promotion of prison officers, documentation, discipline of the staff, and compilation of Annual Performance Evaluation Report of the staff. Training and other duties as assigned by the Controller-General of prison.

The Operation Directorate has two major sections: Operations (intelligence and security) and Inspection (Planning, Research and Statistics). This directorate ensues the society of the inmates and collection of intelligence reports, collection of general data with respect to discharge of prisoners, conducting research and publication of prison journals, prison annual reports and other relevant books, which may be useful to the prisons. It also carries out other duties as directed by the Controller-General of prison.

Agriculture and Industrial directorate take care of the supervision and control of all the prison agriculture projects in the country as well as prison inmates' productivity. Prison industries, livestock farms, fishery sections, farming and guarding and so on exist in this directorate.

The Medical and Welfare Unit is one of the biggest directorates of the prison headquarters. The major sections are Medical, Nursing, Public Health and Welfare. An Assistant Controller-General of prison

supervises each section. The division sees to the health of the prisoners and staff and prison inmates, catering services and other functions relating to welfare and health.

The finance and supplies directorate takes charge of all financial matter and matters relating to supplies of all the necessary terms and materials. The division also prepares annual budget and workers' salaries while works and logistics directorate undertakes all matters relating to transportation in prison, prison mechanical workshops, prison factories and other matters of logistics.

Furthermore, to enhance effective administration and supervision, Zonal commands were established to controls activities of the state command, a situation where all the state Comptrollers of prisons in the 36 states take directives from Controllers-General of prison (Uma 2004). Each comptroller of a state reports to the zonal coordinator except in emergency cases. At the state level, each comptroller of prison makes regular supervision of all the prison under his command and sends monthly or quarterly report to the Comptroller-General of prison through the zonal coordinator designated as assistant Comptroller-General.

It is worthy of note however, that there exist seven (7) classes of prison in Nigeria. These are Maximum Security Prisons, Convict/Medium Security Prison, District Prison, Prison Lock up, Open Prison, Costal Institution and Prison Farm Centre. It would appear that this classification determines the class of prisoners anyprison facility can hold. There are no open prisons properly so called. The facility at kirikiri prison which bears the closest resemblance to an open prison is a Bostal institution. "At present, the Nigerian prison system consists of 144 prisons, 9 mechanized farms, 5 poultry farms, 2 fish farms, 2 training schools, 1 Bostal institution and a prison staff college. It has an average monthly prisoner population of 60,000; its staff strength is about 22,000, (including non-uniformed workers)" (Osaze, 1996).

There are also broadly 3 classes of prisoners in Nigeria, namely convicts, Remand Prisoners, otherwise known as Awaiting Trial Persons (ATP), and Detainees. ATPs are sub-divided into Awaiting Trial Males (ATM) and Awaiting the Trail Females (ATF). Detainees are predominantly persons detained under the Preventive Detention Laws. These are persons who commit crime in circumstances of diminished responsibility such as insanity.

The prison as introduced in Nigeria by the colonial masters was built to detain and hold individuals in their custody to be punished for breaking the law. Modern prisons as obtain in Nigeria were built to detain and to heal, as their basic and primary objective. "Imprisonment itself is the commonest form of punishment given to an offender" (Ekpe & Mammah, 1997). It also goes further to heal by way of rehabilitation. This means an attempt to direct the offender's negative behaviours into law abiding channels, which will enable him, resume socially acceptable living and refrain from illegal behaviour.

The objectives of a prison are very apt and clear. Apart from imprisonment or committal of an offender to some penal institution or custody, the treatment process that follows is a core social work concern. This is because the total attempt to reorient and re-socialize the deviant potentials of one's personality which create a feeling of repentance and new will to correct oneself are embedded in social work profession.

Social Work and Rehabilitation of Prisoners

Social work as defined by a curriculum study sponsored by the council on social work education "seeks to enhance the social functioning of individuals, singly and in group by activities focused upon their social relationship which constitute the interaction between man and his environment" (Zastrow, 2008). These activities can be grouped into three functions; restoration of impaired capacity, provision of individual with social resources and prevention of social dysfunction. "Social work may be defined as an art, or a science, a profession that helps people to solve personal, group and community problems and enjoy satisfying personal, group and community relationship through social work practice" (Skidmore et al, 1997). The major focus is on reducing problem in human relationship and enriching living through improved human interaction. A social worker is able to effectively perform these functions by acting as "Outreach worker, Broker, Advocate, Evaluator, Teacher, Mobilizer, Behaviour Changer, Consultant, Community Planner, Care Giver, Data Manager and an Administrator" (Federico, 1973).

As a concept, rehabilitation as defined by Chambers 20th Century Dictionary means, "To reinstate, working order, propriety, to make fit after disablement, illness or imprisonment for earning a living or playing a part in the world". However, in the context of this research, rehabilitation is taken to be all effort towards training inmates in the prison yard so as to be able to be on their own in the society and earn a living honestly after discharge from the prison. It should be pointed out that reformation, training and other corrective measures, which take place within the prison, are positive preparatory measures towards the rehabilitation of prison inmates.

Fattah (1982) noted that "rehabilitation unlike punishment requires that the offender be treated humanely and with dignity and respect, be shown love, kindness and compassion and not cruelty, contempt and hate. Ekpeand Mammah (1997) also maintained that offenders should be rehabilitated with the ultimate aim of helping them become self-sustaining and disciplined citizen. This is based on the consideration that severe punishment is no answer to the problem of crime and deviance and the offenders of today may also be converted into good-doers of tomorrow. Gabor (1985) has however noted that "the apparent failure of rehabilitation to minimize the increasing crime wave in the Western countries necessitated the use of incarceration towards the middle of the twentieth century".

The above discussion has given us an idea of what rehabilitation and reformation of prison inmates mean. Reformation has been widely supported and advocated for by most scholars as one of the best

alternatives when most other earlier approaches have failed us. Except for Gabor, who noted that rehabilitation of prisoners in the western states has failed to reduce crime wave, instances have been cited that probation and parole, which are still part of rehabilitation efforts, are working out well for them. Moreover, in the western states even when incarcerated, prisoner's rights and dignity are observed. They are provided with basic facilities to satisfy their basic needs, unlike Nigerian prisoners. These provisions make them to be more psychologically and physically disposed to have a re-think about their way of life in their solitude. And this is rehabilitative in nature.

Social workers are able to fit in into any human agency including prisons because of their high commitment to their professional belief system. The National Association of Social Workers in Zastrow (2008) identified the following broad based principles and values which form the basic tenets and beliefs of social work profession:

- i. Commitment to the primary importance of the individual in society,
- ii. Respect for the confidentiality of relationship with client,
- iii. Commitment to social change to meet socially recognized needs,
- iv. Willingness to keep personal feelings and needs separate from professional relationship,
- v. Willingness to transmit knowledge and skills to others,
- vi. Respect and appreciation for individual and group differences
- vii. Commitment to develop client's ability to help themselves,
- viii. Willingness to persist in efforts on behalf of client despite frustrations,
- ix. Commitment to social justice and economic, physical and mental well-being of all in society,
- x. Commitment to a high standard of personal and professional conduct.

The history of prison has been that of captivity and torture with no meaningful effort towards corrections. According to Compton, meaningful social work services first started with the effort of John Augustine in 1841 in Massachusetts who began to re-claim and save prisoners in Boston police courts by asking judges to put prisoners under his care, (as cited in Ekpe & Mammah, 1997). This was based on his supreme confidence in the ability of human being to influence another. He thus became the first probation officer. As offenders were sentenced to institution and were placed on probation and parole, various professional groups became interested in making these efforts as effective as possible. Social work was one of these.

Srivastara (1969) noted "that the changes that came into the prison followed the understanding which saw crime and deviation as complicated behavioural manifestations of a socially maladjusted individual". Based on this, social workers in correctional institutions take into consideration the custodial responsibility of prison and co-operate with it to effect a mutually supportive treatment. It is generally agreed that social workers can and do play important role in the rehabilitation or treatment of prison clients, although over the years, there has considerable controversy over the role of social work in correctional setting and whether social workers contribute positively to treatment efforts. The primary

functions of social workers towards prisoners' rehabilitation, as stated by Encyclopedia of Social Work, (1987) and Ekpe & Mamah (1997) include:

- i) Making social investigation through personal interview as concern offender's family, health, social agency, work place, criminal history and social relations
- ii) To help the inmates understands why they are where they are and help them adjust to prison life.
- iii) The prison social worker helps not only to make the inmates accept the life situation of the prison but equally accept and learn the type of trade that suit their purpose. This helps to re-socialize and re-orient them to make and live normal life when discharged.
- iv) The social worker helps to encourage group interaction among the inmates under supervision. This helps the inmates to learn and change from the experience of others.
- v) The social worker acts as a link between the inmates and their families, relatives, friends and other relevant persons and organizations
- vi) The prison social worker participates in pre-realize contact with those that will be useful in the prisoner's life outside the institution

Skidmore et al (1997) on the other hand sees social workers as playing an important role in the whole process of rehabilitation of inmates with the following intentions:

- i. To help the inmates understand themselves, their relationship with others and what is expected of them within the society in which they live,
- ii. To help the offender not to retaliate or to punish with the ultimate aim of utilizing the knowledge and skills of the profession in a corrective manner,
- iii. To rehabilitate individuals, to help them help themselves so that they can return to and become part of the society and to guide them towards becoming comfortable with themselves and their associates,
- iv. To change the values of client so that they become congruent in action with the values of the community
- v. To modify the environment in order to bring about more health social climate in which to live.

In conclusion therefore, Skidmore sees the rehabilitation process as the administration of penalty in such a way that the offender is corrected, i.e. his current behaviour is kept within accepted limit at the same time that his general life adjustment is modified.

Other authors like Hardler (1975) added that "social workers assist correctional inmates with behavioral changes particularly with the ones necessary to cope with the many day-to-day prison problems". Hatcher (1978) on his own noted that "although it is not possible to diagnose clearly the cause of any individual criminal behaviour, the social worker can help the inmates identify their maladaptive behaviours and their needs". The encyclopedia of social work (1987) also noted that social

workers assist inmates and families in the adjustment involved in the inmate's returning to their family and the impact of this event on family role.

Macswen (1970) summarizes this by saying that "social workers in the prison setting alleviates the problems of social functioning either through direct manipulation of the environment or by utilizing case work and group work procedures to bring about change in an individual's social functioning, particularly in his interpersonal relationship".

From the above discussion therefore, it is quite imperative that social workers' services in a correctional setting is invaluable. Its entry into the correctional institution came at a period when the correctional setting was in distress and in need of an answer or solution on how best to handle its inmates. It is therefore, the appearance of social work profession within the prison setting that gave it the hope of ever making a success in its rehabilitation programmes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Conflict and Rehabilitation Models were adopted as most appropriate for the study. The Social Conflict Theory posits that causes of crime emanate from the structure of the society itself. Merton (1968) argues that societal members share the same values, but the opportunity to realize these values are not the same since societal members are variously placed in different positions in the social structure. This produces gross inequality. In order to realize these sets of societal goals through the recognized institutionalized means, people not adequately favored by the social structure tend to reject this means and strive for success by any other available means. These sets of people are termed deviants. When they are caught, they are incarcerated for breaking the law.

The ways people react to the issue of crime situations depend upon their position in the class structure. The rich, the powerful, and the people who hold the means of production would want the violators of the law to be incarcerated in order to protect them (i.e the innocent citizens). This is because the laws that emanate from the society reflect their interest. In countries like Nigeria, the law makers have long been oriented towards punitive measure for offenders that they think less of the means to rehabilitate them. This is because they have nothing to remind them that the society is responsible for breeding criminals. If an offender is rehabilitated and given some measure of opportunity, he may become law abiding while earning a living in a legitimate way.

The rehabilitation model on the other hand, sees every offender as being "sick" and therefore advocates that the cause of the "sickness" be diagnosed and treated in order to bring the offender back to normal life.

Hypotheses

In this study, the following hypotheses were tested

1. There is a significant relationship between the availability of training materials and effective reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners.
2. Trained prison staff has better skills and understanding of prisoner's reformation and rehabilitation process more than staff without skills and education.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The study was conducted in three prisons within three states in the southeastern zone of Nigeria namely Enugu prison, Aba prison in Abia state, and Abakaliki prison in Ebonyi state. Maximum Security Prison Enugu is one of the oldest prisons in the country, established by the colonial Masters in 1826. At the time of this study, the Prison has a total of 222 staff, (167 males and 55 females). It is one of the ten Maximum Security Prisons in Nigeria, with inmate capacity of 638, but at the time of the study, is housing close to 703 inmates; 62 convicted inmates; 59 males and 3 females, 442 Awaiting Trial Persons (ATP); 436 males, (ATM) and 6 females (ATF). It has 50 condemned prisoners, 27 lifers, and 122 asylum inmates.

Aba prison was built by the colonial masters in 1910 at Ohia-Egbe bush to take in offenders from Aba and its neighboring villages. At the time of this study, the prison has a total of 168 convicted inmates, 165 males and 3 females. The ATPs are 489; 481 males (ATM) and 17 females (ATF). The staff strength of Aba prison is 234 with 2 Assistant Controllers.

Abakaliki prisons could be traced back to 1902. It is located in 1221 Local Government Area of Ebonyi State along Udensi streets by Ugah. The prison capacity after its expansion in 1960s rose from 48 to 300. It has at the time of this study, 81 prisoners; 77 males and 4 females, 388 Awaiting Trial Persons (AIP); 369 males (ATM) and 19 females (ATF) and one male lifer, giving it a total of 470 inmates in its custody. The staff strength is 115.

Study Population

Table 1: Total Staff Population of Enugu, Aba and Abakaliki Prisons

	ENUGU	ABA	ABAKALIKI	TOTAL
Male	167	156	103	426
Female	55	78	12	145
Total	222	234	115	571

Table 2: Convicted Prisoner’s Population of Enugu, Aba and Abakaliki Prisons

SEX	ENUGU	ABA	ABAKALIKI	TOTAL
Male	59	165	77	301
Female	3	3	4	10
Total	62	168	81	311

Office of Deputy Controller (Records), Enugu Federal Prisons, Independence Layout Enugu

The population for this study comprised all the 571 prison staff and all the 311 convicted prisoners of Enugu, Aba and Abakaliki federal prisons, bringing the total study population to 882.

Samples Size and Sampling Procedure

The three states that formed the study area were chosen through simple random sampling. Eventually, the states represent fully the unique cultural and linguistic similarities and diversities of the entire southeast zone. Interestingly the prisons in these states have the highest prison population within the southeastern zone. The sample size for this study comprised the entire convicted inmates of the three prisons, i.e. 311 together with 286 prison staff who were systematically chosen from the rank and file of the three prisons giving a total sample size of 597 persons.

The Questionnaire and In-depth Interview Schedule were employed as two major instruments of data collection. Two different sets of questionnaires were prepared for the two categories of respondents; prisoners and prison staff. The questionnaires consisted of simple close and open ended questions. Data gotten from respondents included their sex, age, marital status, educational background, knowledge about rehabilitation programmes in the prison and views about the adequacy and effectiveness of these programmes which was electronically analysed to determine the frequency and degrees of occurrences as well as the relationship among variables.

Data Presentation and Findings

Variables showing sex, age, educational qualifications, ranks and length of service for staff, crimes committed, length of stay and occupation before conviction of prisoners were the key socio-demographic concerns of the research. Issues like staff perception and definition of a prison, existence of reformation and rehabilitation programmes and facilities available for prisoner’s training, inhibitions to effective and adequate reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners and ways through which they can be improved and maintained formed the substantive issues of the research. Other substantive issues like prisoner’s awareness of the existence of reformation and rehabilitation programmes in the prison, the frequency of their participation in these programmes, factors that militate against their progress and their perception about the general effect of prison condition in their lives were also discussed. Some of these were presented in frequency tables using percentages. Major findings obtained from the In-depth interview were reported in prose form.

Table 3, presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the prison staff

Table 3: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Prison Staff(N=286)

Variables	Frequency (Frq)	Percent (%)
Sex		
Male	212	74.1
Female	74	25.9
Total	286	100
Age		
No answer	2	7
21-25	8	2.8
26-30	42	14.7
31-35	64	24.1
36-40	50	17.5
41-45	40	14.0
46-50	47	16.4
51-55	20	7.0
56-60	8	2.8
Total	286	100
Educational qualification		
F.SL.C	15	5.2
GCE/WAEC	107	37.4
DIPLOMA	54	18.9
NCE	14	4.9
HND	28	9.8
FIRST DEGREE	66	23.1
MSc	2	1
Total	286	100
Rank of staff		
No answer	4	1.4
Officer	109	66.4
Non officer	92	32.2
Total	286	100
Length of service		
5 years and below	44	15.4
-10 years	82	28.7
11-15 years	25	8.7
16-20 years	36	12.6
21-25 years	35	12.2
26-30 years	64	22.4
Total	286	100

Department/unit		
No answer	24	8.4
Medical	43	15.0
Industry	29	10.1
Technical	23	8.0
Communication	5	1.7
General duty	79	27.6
Works	12	4.2
Administration/Records	26	9.1
Welfare	45	15.7
Total	286	100

Table 4 above, shows that out of the total number of staff (256) 74% are males while 26% are females. This means that we have more male staff in the prison service than females. This may be because we have more male prisoners than females. It is also quite noticeable that more than half of the staff (56.3%) are between the ages of 26-40 years. One can conclude that there are more young people among the staff of prison service, probably because of the nature of work involved in the service.

A look at the educational qualification of the prison staff shows that up to 90% of the staff have an average education: GCE/WAEC and above. The table also shows that we have more staff within the officer cadre than at the junior cadre (66% and 32% respectively), and that the majority (75%) of the respondents have worked for a considerable number of years (5 years and above) in the prison service.

Furthermore, the table also shows that prison staff are distributed into different departments/units according to their professions or skills. It could be on this basis that they were considered for employment into prison service. The General Duty staff who constitute 28% of the total staff population are staff without specialized skills. It clearly shows that majority of the staff have specialized skills needed for prisoner’s rehabilitation. It is based on the foregoing that one can comfortably analyze the substantive issues of the research.

Table 4: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the prisoners(N=311)

Variables	Frq	%
Sex		
Male	299	96.1
Female	12	3.9
Total	311	100
Age		
18-22	75	24.1
23-27	78	25.1
28-32	52	16.7
33-37	41	13.2

38-42	35	11.3
43-47	16	5.1
48-52	10	3.2
53+	4	1.3
Total	311	100
Educational qualification		
F.S.L.C	81	26.0
GCE/WAEC	152	49.2
NCE	22	7.1
HND	22	7.1
Diploma	17	5.5
First Degree	10	3.2
M.Sc	4	1.3
Others	2	.6
Total	311	100
Marital status		
Single	146	46.9
Married	129	41.5
Divorced	13	4.2
Widowed	10	3.2
Separated	12	3.9
Total	311	100
Occupation before conviction		
Student	102	32.8
Farmer	63	20.3
Apprentice	10	3.2
Artisan	16	5.1
Civil servant	42	13.5
Businessman	11	3.5
Unemployed	67	21.5
Total	311	100
Crime convicted of		
Armed robbery	75	24.1
Stealing	38	12.2
Burglary	15	4.8
Malicious damage	53	17.0
Manslaughter	81	26.0
Failure to pay tax	7	2.3
Rape	5	1.6
Drug trafficking	21	6.8
Obtaining by trick/419	11	3.5
No Answer	5	1.6
Total	311	100
Length of stay		

0-3 month	26	8.4
4-7 month	14	4.5
8-11	17	5.5
1-3 years	116	37.3
4-7 years	64	20.6
8-11 years	43	13.8
12-15 years	13	4.2
16-19	17	2.3
20-23	9	2.9
Total	311	100
Length to be stayed		
0-3 month	11	3.5
4-7 month	6	1.9
8-11	34	10.9
1-3 years	104	33.4
4-7 years	84	27.0
8-11 years	30	9.9
12-15 years	12	3.9
16-19	10	3.2
Life	19	6.1
No Answer/Don't know	1	.3
Total	311	100

The above table shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the prisoners sampled for the study. Out of the total population, 96% are males while 4% are females. The table indicates that the prison is filled with young men, within the age bracket of 18-37 years who are predominantly students and unemployed, indicating also that they are largely unmarried or young fathers and mothers. This clearly shows that students and those who are unemployed commit crimes more. This might be responsible for their not being able to further their education since majority of them ended up with relatively low education, having GCE/WAEC or diploma as their highest educational attainment. This could also be the reason for the type of crime they commit more; Robbery and manslaughter. Robbery indicate financial lack (Please see table). Crimes like manslaughter, armed Robbery, Malicious damage, Rape and Drug trafficking most times attract long sentences, indicating why more than 70% of them have stayed between 1-11 years while majority (80.9%) of the prisoners still have between 8 months to 11 years more to spend in the prison custody.

The foregoing demographic characteristics will help one to appreciate the dispositions of the prisoners for reformation and rehabilitation.

Perception of Prison

Staff perception of what a prison should be was measured using two variables. It was noted that the majority of the staff respondents (80%) believe that a prison is a place where prisoners are kept in safe

custody while an attempt is made to reform and rehabilitate them. It was confirmed also that the majority (81%) of the staff still believe that reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners are more important than punishment. The implication of this finding is that apart from keeping prisoners in safe custody, that a prison is more of a place for reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners instead of punishment. Whether programmes directed towards achieving reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners actually exist becomes another issues to be examined.

An attempt to know if programmes directed towards achieving reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners actually exist, revealed that almost all the staff of the prison (97%) were aware of the existence of reformation and rehabilitation programmes in the prisons, about half (64%) of the staff claimed that prisoners are in one way or the other exposed to all the existing programmes. 13%, however claimed it is only counseling while another 12.2% of the staff said it is only preaching that prisoners are exposed to. In other words, preaching and counseling are the major programmes used on the prisoners. To further confirm the claims of the staff, majority of the prisoners (84%) said that they were aware that reformation and rehabilitation programmes exist in the prison which included tailoring, welding, woodwork, artwork, shoe making, hair plating, soap making, leatherwork, formal education, trade learning, sport and counseling programmes. It was further confirmed by majority (76%) of the prisoners that a greater number of the prisoners are exposed to skill acquisition programmes while quite a few are exposed to counseling and sports programmes. By inference, prisoners are in one way or the other exposed to all the existing programmes in the Nigerian prison. To support this position, a superintendent of maintained that these programmes are meant for prisoners and that the prisons try as much as possible to train each of them in one of those areas.

Training Facilities

Findings revealed that majority of the staff respondents (82.2%) said that facilities are not adequate. This goes a long way to show that the instructors have little or nothing to show the prisoners in practical terms what they are teaching them and neither do prisoners have much to practice with. Therefore, learning is greatly hindered. One prison officer put it this way “this is Nigeria where nothing is hardly enough or adequate...”

The supply of facilities and materials for prisoner’s training are mainly done by the prison authorities (44%) followed by non-governmental organization (26%), while 27% said “all of the above”. What this means is that the supply of these facilities can be done by any of the above groups. Going by the majority (76%) view, the prisoners get the supply of these materials whenever the concerned government authority deems it fit to supply them, or whenever any of the interested NGOs, remember to help them out. A highly placed prison officer confirmed that the prisons rely heavily on religious bodies, NGOs, and philanthropists for prisoners welfare, but that these materials don’t come always and in quantity needed and this is because the prison is underfunded.

Findings also indicated that the competences of the instructors are not in doubt. This was confirmed by 82% of the staff respondents, and this shows that they are professionals in their fields. Furthermore, 76% of the prisoners confirmed that the instructors are quite competent in their areas of specialization, but that the materials are not always available mainly because they are not supplied regularly even when they are expected to train every day.

Table 5: Prisoners level of participation in Reformation and Rehabilitation Programmes (N=311)

Variables	Frq.	%
Frequency of training		
Every day	176	56.6
Three times a week	21	6.8
Once a week	18	5.8
Once a month	22	7.1
As often as you have materials	52	16.7
Whenever it pleases the instructors	22	7.1
Availability of training materials and facilities		
Yes	149	47.9
No	161	51.8
No answer	1	.3
Acquisition of materials		
Buy them	22	7.0
Supplied by the prison authority	56	18.0
Free donations from NGOs	157	50.5
Do not need materials	69	22.2
Don't know	7	2.3
Availability of instructors		
Yes	247	79.4
No	63	20.3
No Answer	1	.3
Professional competence among instructors		
Yes	236	75.9
No	73	23.5
No answer	2	1.6

In order to find out how effective prisoners' reformation and rehabilitation are, there was need to evaluate their level of participation in the programmes. Findings revealed as indicated in the above table that more than half of the respondents (57%) said they participate everyday in their various programmes. 24% claim their programmes hold whenever they have materials and as often as it pleases the

instructors. There is however a difference between expected every day participation in the programmes and the actual practical participation that is supposed to keep prisoners busy and productive. This could be through due to the fact that majority of the prisoners (52%) confirmed the fact that facilities and materials are not enough for their reformation and rehabilitation programmes, meaning that there may be days when these materials may not be available. 51% of the prisoners are convinced that prison authority supplies their reformation and rehabilitation materials, while 22% think it is NGOs. Both views may likely to be correct since every material that comes into the prison must pass through the prison authorities. This was pointed out by a Prison staff interviewed. Lastly, majority of the respondents (79%) claimed that they have instructors who are quite competent in their areas of specialization.

The factors identified by convicts that inhibit their reformation and rehabilitation programme are lack of financial support and lack of materials for training. Majority (56.9%), think that they can rely on the government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) for fund while about 16% believe they can raise money through engaging in menial jobs. The problem here is that, if parents/relations as well as the government do not help prisoners financially which is often the case, when discharged, the tendency for them to go back to crime to make fast money becomes high since very few will have the patience to engage in odd jobs.

The study finally examines the opinion of prisoners on the effectiveness and adequacy of reformation and rehabilitation programmes of Nigeria prisons.

Table 6: Views on Effectiveness and Adequacy of Prisoners' Reformation and Rehabilitation

Variables	Frq.	%
Adequacy of skill and knowledge learnt		
Yes	225	72.3
No	54	17.4
Don't know	32	10.3
The usefulness of skills and trade learnt when discharge		
Yes	246	79.1
No	641	20.6
No answer	1	.3
Factors that might lead to going back to crime		
Lack of finance	49	
Lack of job	83	
Lack of acceptance by friends and family	6	
Lack of a place to live	9	
If my enemies are still around	14	
Non-of the above	12	
All of the above	136	
No answer	2	
Whether criminals are to be blamed		
Yes	98	63.7
No	94	30.2
Don't know	19	6.1

Table 5 tries to evaluate prisoners' views on the adequacy of reformation and rehabilitation programmes. Majority (72%) think that they have learnt enough to start off on their own when discharged, very many of the prisoners (79%) also believe that the much they have learnt will be useful for them to practice on their own when discharged. 43% expressed fear that lack of finance and job might cause them to go back to crime in order to sustain themselves. 44% of the prisoners are convinced that nothing will make them go back to crime, while majority (64%) also stated that one must not commit crime to make a living, in other words, that criminals should be blamed. In conclusion however, almost all the prisoners are of the view that social workers have been of immense help to them especially in the area of counseling. One of the officers in charge of welfare department of one of the prisons pointed out that prison is human service institution that serves the interest all, and that if the general society does not join hands with the government by helping the prisoners within and outside the prison, that crime will continue to be on the increase.

Discussion of Findings

First and foremost, it is important to note that prisoners' reformation and rehabilitation is not effective or adequate. The resultant effect is that many prisoners come out of the prison worse than they were when they first went in. This however, fail to meet the requirement of the rehabilitative model which posits that every offender is sick and therefore advocates for the cause of the sickness be diagnosed and treated in order to bring the offender back to normal life, (Matcht, 1991). When the offenders' sickness" is not properly diagnosed and treated, he will continue to be sick. An offender who after serving his/her term comes out almost the way he was admitted, if not worse, will definitely resort to his old "business" to make a living. Though some may have claimed having learnt some skills that will help them make a living when discharged, but the reality is that majority who seem to have turned into law abiding contributing members of the society was not as a result of the influence of the prison but as a result of their personal decision, many of whom were wrongly indicted or did not commit serious offences. Prison as a place for reformation and rehabilitation as believed by the majority of the staff of the Nigerian prison is in line with the United Nations Minimum Rule for the basic function of the prison to prisoner which says that a prison should utilize all the remedial, educational, moral, spiritual and other forces and forms of assistance available and appropriate to achieve the individual needs of the offender. The views of other scholars like Skidmore (1997) and Johnson (1962) are also in line with this. This is because they believe that the period of imprisonment is an opportunity to get the individual offender reformed and rehabilitated so that he can return and become part of the society as somebody who is comfortable with himself and his associates. When prison as part of the social institution failed to do this, then it has invariable failed entire society.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Inferring from the above discussion on the reformation and rehabilitation of the Nigerian prisons, some recommendations become imperative. There is the need to provide for more functional educational, skill acquisition/occupational and recreational facilities as well the most reoccurring challenges of the prisoners such as accommodation, feeding, clothing, medical, and all such other facilities. Beautiful as

the rehabilitation programmes of the Nigeria prisons are, there is also the need to introduce more reformatory programmes, such as training inmates on Information and Computer Technology (ICT). There is also need for increased and judicious use of fund meant for prison facilities and inmate training materials. Effective collaboration between the prison authorities, religious and non-governmental organizations is also very important to achieve the overall objective of prisoner's rehabilitation. Most importantly, the effective use of aftercare officers should be emphasized more and utilized in order to achieve the end point of the rehabilitation objectives.

Social work has much to offer in a prison setting especially where prisoners' reformation and rehabilitation is concerned. It is the duty of Social Workers to desensitize the members of the public of their present perception of prisoners through seminars, workshops and other public forum. Prisoners' rights can also be effectively sought for by Social Workers through professional lobbying, dialoguing, consultations and deliberations with the relevant authorities. Social Workers armed with their vast knowledge of social institutions and NGOs are capable of establishing linkages with the prisoners either individually or in groups as well as with the prison as institution to other relevant institutions or agencies that can come to their aid especially in the area of reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. Social workers have all it takes to help a prisoner have a re-think and conceive a true and socially accepted view of crime and other anti-social behaviours. It is based on this changed view and attitude towards crime that prepare prisoners towards reformation and rehabilitation.

Reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners in the Nigerian prisons will be effectively handled if it comes under the administration of professional Social Workers because they are equipped with knowledge and skills that will help prisoners in most areas of their problems within and outside the prison. They should be consulted if not be part of policy-making process in issues affecting various social and institutional malfunctioning including reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners.

Prison is just one of the three institutions that make up the penal system, which include the police and the court, and if findings indicate a malfunction in the prison system, research is needed in other areas of penal system to expose other areas of malfunctioning so that a coordinated effort will be made towards finding lasting solution to them. If these are considered, the prison may stand a better chance of fulfilling its mandate.

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