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## Assessment of rehabilitation programmes of female inmates in Oko and Sapele Road Correctional Services, Benin City, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Prison rehabilitation in Nigeria majorly focuses on the reformation and correction of male inmates in the Nigerian correctional services leaving the female inmates to their own fate without little or no rehabilitation programmes for them due to their small population in the correctional facility. This study assessed the rehabilitation programmes on female inmates in Correctional Services/Centres in Benin City. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Using the simple random sampling technique, fifteen (15) and twenty-one (21) female inmates were selected from Oko and Sapele road correctional services in Benin City, Nigeria. In addition, fourteen (14) social welfare officers were selected, that is eight (8) from Oko and six (6) from Sapele road correctional services respectively, making a total of fifty (50) participants in the study. Given that the study is quantitative, the instrument used for data collection is structured questionnaire, adopting the four-point Likert format. Results showed that female inmates are not properly rehabilitated due to limited or no programmes that has been directed to rehabilitation in the correctional services.

**KEY TERMS:** correctional services, rehabilitation, female inmates, prison, social work, Nigeria

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## INTRODUCTION

The place of rehabilitation services in the reformation and transformation of correctional or prison inmates have continued to be on the front burner of public discourse in recent time. The main aim of establishing the prison institution in all parts of the world including Nigeria is to provide a rehabilitation and correctional facility for those who have violated the rules and regulations of their society. However, the extent to which this maxim is true in practice has been a subject of controversy. Many inmates in Nigeria correctional services are left to roam the prison walls without any meaningful activities or programmes to occupy them. Many are even left with the only available option of interaction with other inmates and sharing ideas about crime, technique of committing crime and avoiding punishment. The Nigerian prison system (now the Nigerian correctional services) lacks rehabilitation reformation due to this, so many inmates including the female instead of coming out of the prison reformed; they become more emotionally bruised and some hardened. Although female inmates constitute only a small percentage at the global level, the challenges resulting from women falling under the provision of the penal system have prompted official and humanitarian bodies to consider female inmate as vulnerable persons, who need particular social work measures that meet their specific needs. Female inmates' condition may become worse in prison due to the absence of effective social rehabilitative programmes. This article reports on rehabilitation programmes of female inmates in Oko and Sapele Road Correctional Services, Benin City, Nigeria

## BACKGROUND

Once in prison, discrimination against women persists. This implies female inmates could be denied access to vocational and recreational programs. Due to the larger numbers of male prisoners especially in prisons that are overcrowded or lacking resources, authorities often focus on the situation and needs of men. As a result, fewer rehabilitation opportunities are available to women and girls and those that do exist tend to be less varied and of poorer quality than those offered to men and boys (Penal Reform International, 2019). As women's prisons are typically smaller, there may also be less financial resources and physical space available for libraries, classrooms and training workshops (Sarkin, 2008). This implies that is, the experiences of prison life differ for males and females, as do the subsequent losses. For instance, despite the emergence of many new and innovative rehabilitation programmes for female prisoners, the opportunities available to them in many prisons is still heavily gendered (Penal Reform International, 2019). A number of women are likely to have gender-specific medical requirements and need to have regular access to specialists in women's health care.

Where women are incarcerated with men, they remain vulnerable to physical and psychological abuse from male prisoners, which meager prison staff cannot prevent and indeed, sometimes join (Sarkin, 2008). The stigma for incarcerated women includes the perception that they are responsible for their fate and their losses, resulting in a lack of support or sympathy and, thus, a sense of physical and psychological isolation (Jose-Kampfner, 1990). For any meaningful rehabilitation to take place in a prison, the rehabilitation services must first be based upon adequate provisions, which should be accessible to all inmates (Igbinovia, 2003; Igbo, 2007). Igbinovia and Omorogiuwa (2019) assert that prison inmates that incorporate rehabilitation services during confinement are likely to gain skills that could provide employment and entrepreneurial opportunities upon their release. The prisons services providers do not only identify the causes of the inmates' anti-social behaviours, but ensures the path to reformation by impacting on their potentials and subsequent change unto social functioning (Omorogiuwa, 2014).

The ecological theory is employed as the theoretical framework of this study. Unlike most behavioural and psychological theories, ecological theories focus on interrelation transactions between systems, and stress that all existing. Holistic thinking can provide a paradigm for understanding how systems and their interactions can maintain an individual's behaviour. The ecological approach recognizes the importance of some environmental factors that are momentous predictor of recidivism (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Wright, Pratt, Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2012). Omorogiuwa (2014) asserted that many are left with the only available option of interaction with other inmates and sharing ideas about crime and technique of committing crime and avoiding punishment. The correctional services or centres have in modern times become training ground and school for a new category of criminals and patterns of crime unknown to the society. In line with the aforementioned, (Adetula, Adetula & Fatusin, 2010) noted that prisoners left unoccupied with constructive and positive activities are likely to perfect their criminal activities through the imbibing new tricks from other inmates in their correctional environment. In this way, what happens in one microsystem affects another (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017). In situations where the inmates were not engaged in vocational and formal or informal education, the inmates could be released to the society unemployed and might end up going back to crime. Hence, adopting the ecological perspective in assessing the rehabilitation programmes on female inmates in the correctional services in Benin metropolis, Nigeria.

Rehabilitation services in Nigerian correctional centres therefore, should be aimed at increasing the educational and vocational skills of inmates and their chances of success upon release (Asokhia & Agbonluac,

2013). This is important for inmates particularly as a number of them are socially and economically deprived (Igbinoia & Omorogiuwa, 2019). There are a number of correctional or rehabilitation programmes for inmates which provide specific skills crucial for preparing inmates for better living on release from the prison; while the main objectives of the prisons service, which is the reformation and rehabilitation of inmates can be actualized through programmes such as: social case and group work/intervention, recreational activities, educational programmes and skills acquisition programmes (Nigerian Prisons Service, 2009).

## RESEARCH GAP

Although female inmates constitute only a small percentage at the global level, the challenges resulting from women falling under the provision of the penal system have prompted official and humanitarian bodies to consider female inmate as vulnerable prisoners, who need particular measures that meet their specific needs. Female inmates' condition may become worse in correctional centres due to the absence of effective rehabilitative programmes. While it is likely that some inmates often choose to change on their own, however, a number of inmates require guided assistance (Asokhia & Agbonluae, 2013), which encourages effective functioning. Nigerian Prisons Services (2009) pointed that prisons are allotted the double tasks of promoting the improvement and rehabilitation of offenders. Nevertheless, the rehabilitation programmes for inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Services are in a quandary because rehabilitation and practices are not well-suited, for improving the situations of female inmates. Given the increasing local and global need for reintegration processes to revitalize female inmates, this study therefore assesses the rehabilitation programmes on female inmates using the correctional services/prisons at Sapele road and Oko, Benin City. The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the skill acquisitions programmes to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?
2. What are the educational services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?
3. What are the recreational activities to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?
4. What social intervention services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?
5. What are the environmental conditions for impactful rehabilitation programmes on female inmates in Benin correctional services?

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the descriptive survey research design. Using the simple random sampling technique, fifteen (15) and twenty-one (21) female inmates were selected from Oko and Sapele road correctional services in Benin City, Nigeria. In addition, fourteen (14) social welfare officers were selected, that is eight (8) from Oko and six (6) from Sapele road correctional services respectively, making a total of fifty (50) participants in the study. The instrument used for data collection is structured questionnaire, adopting the four-point Likert format with options ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The questionnaire was content validated by three experts in social work involved with prison rehabilitation issues and their comments and suggestions were adapted in the final copy of the questionnaire. In other to determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to the test group, after an interval of two weeks; the same test was administered to the same group who responded to the test previously. The two-test score were correlated and their responses were subjected to Pearson moment correlation formula to obtain the reliability co-efficient of the data collected. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistic; mean and standard deviation at 2.5 criterion mean in order to the assessment prison rehabilitation programmes on female inmates.

## RESULTS

The result of the analysis on the variables is presented and in this section. Analysis is based on quantitative tools and variable distributions are assessed using standard deviations. In this section four, research questions were formulated for testing this study.

**Research question 1:** What are the skill acquisitions programmes to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?

*Table 1: Descriptive of the impact of skill acquisitions programmes to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin*

S/No.	Item	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	I have learnt tailoring and hairdressing skills since I was imprisoned	50	3.28	.834	Accepted
2	New training opportunities are available to us	50	3.3	.886	Accepted
3	The skill I have learnt have helped me build self confidence in myself	50	3.24	.822	Accepted
4	I am now empowered due to the tailoring skill I have learnt	50	3.28	.784	Accepted
	<b>Skill acquisition programmes</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>0.832</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

*Criterion mean = 2.5*

Table 1 reveals an overall mean (Grand mean) of 3.28 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows that the impact of skill acquisitions programmes has contributed immensely toward adequate and impactful rehabilitation process of the female inmates.

**Research Question 2:** What are the educational services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?

*Table 2: Descriptive of the educational services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin Correctional Services*

S/No.	Item	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	We have secondary and tertiary centres for learning in the correctional services	50	1.51	.611	Rejected
2	We have qualified teachers in correctional services	50	2.28	.889	Rejected
3	We take O' level and A' level exam in the correctional services	50	1.86	.667	Rejected
4	We can further our studies after major exams like the Joint Admission Matriculation Board	50	3.14	.766	Rejected
	<b>Educational services</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>0.821</b>	<b>Rejected</b>

*Criterion mean = 2.5*

Table 2 shows an overall mean (Grand mean) of 2.19 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows that the education services have no significant impact on female inmates; this is as a result of poor structure of the educational system, lack of facilities and appropriate collaboration of related bodies, non-effective managerial system. Findings shows that due to lack of adequate educational system it may be difficult to properly rehabilitate the inmates have contributed greatly toward the rehabilitate the female inmates.

**Research Question 3:** What are the recreational services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?

*Table 3: Descriptive of the recreational activities to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services*

S/No.	Item	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	We play game like football, handball etc. on Saturdays every week	50	3.18	.748	Accepted
2	Games like basketball, volleyball are normally introduced to in correctional services	50	3.3	.678	Accepted
3	We are happy when we engage in sporting activities.	50	2.02	.769	Rejected
4	Sporting activities relieves me of stress and make me fit.	50	2.08	.778	Rejected
	<b>Recreational activities</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>0.743</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

*Criterion mean = 2.5*

Table 3 reveals an overall mean (Grand mean) of 2.65, which is a little above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows that the recreational activities set aside by the Benin correctional services for the rehabilitation process of the female inmates is not effectively functional or not effectively impactful in the rehabilitation process of the female inmates. Besides the fact that female inmate does not engage in outdoor recreational activities for example handball, football etc. when in their cell, the recreational activities available to them is also limited.

**Research Question 4:** What are the social intervention services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?

*Table 4: Descriptive of the social intervention services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services*

S/No.	Item	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Counselling services are available to me.	50	3.36	.851	Accepted
2	After care services is rendered in correctional centres.	50	3.32	.683	Accepted
3	I have learnt tailoring and hairdressing skills that will help me build my life after the prison life.	50	2.14	.881	Accepted
4	My educational standard has been upgraded from primary school certificate holder to secondary school certificate holder.	50	2.58	.883	Accepted
	<b>Social intervention services</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.825</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

*Criterion mean = 2.5*

Table 4 reveals an overall mean (Grand mean) of 2.85 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows that the approach adopted by Benin correctional services as social intervention services are to a large extent impactful towards the rehabilitation of the female inmate. Since the grand mean is close to the criterion mean, a better and advanced approach needs to be adopted for impactful rehabilitation process.

**Research Question 5:** What are the educational services to rehabilitate female inmates in Benin correctional services?

Table 5: Descriptive of the environmental conditions put in place for impactful rehabilitation programme

S/No.	Item	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	The correctional centres condition is harsh	50	1.84	.842	Rejected
2	Inmates are allowed to move freely in the correctional centres environment	50	2.94	.682	Accepted
3	The harsh state of the prison condition has hardened me more	50	2.72	.882	Accepted
4	I can now contribute to the growth of the nation after I leave the prison	50	1.52	.505	Rejected
	<b>Environmental conditions</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>0.728</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

*Criterion mean = 2.5*

Table 5 reveals an overall mean (grand mean) of 2.55 which is little above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows that the extent of the environmental factor and the conditions of the Benin correctional services toward the rehabilitation of female inmates is average, which indicates that the correctional centres conditions may or may not be suitable for proper rehabilitation process of the female inmates.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The significant need for rehabilitation programmes in the transformation and restoration of female inmates needs to be improved with adequate and impactful measures. In the course of this research study, it's observed that respondents that filled the questionnaire of which a large proportion of about 90% are female inmates. Our findings further indicates that there are more of young female youth inmates in the correctional services or centres ranging from 20-30 years of age which is about 64% of the study population compare to aged inmates and of which 32% of the total sample size are single, 22% are married, 24% are separated, 12% are divorced and 10% are widowed. In accordance to the statistics represented, there are more chances of single females to commit crime in the society.

Although female inmates constitute only a small percentage at the global level, the challenges resulting from women falling under the provision of the penal system have prompted official and humanitarian bodies to consider female inmate as vulnerable persons, who need particular measures that meet their specific needs most especially in the educational sector of their lives because our findings shows the educational qualification of these female inmates to very poor as the statistics indicates that 24% are primary school certified, 64% had their educational experience up to secondary school level, including those preparing for tertiary education, 10% are tertiary students and 2% of others are post graduates, due to poor educational background most of them may indulged in crime. As the occupational status of the respondent which indicates that 28% are public servant, 8% are trader, 6% are farmers, 10% are craft women, 12% are skilled workers and 36% are of the category of others, of which a large proportion are students or idle people. The social demographic characteristics of the respondent above indicates possible reasons why female is likely to be imprisoned, but withstanding further measures need to be put in place in order to properly correct and rehabilitate these inmates.

Further finding will show how well the Benin correctional services which is our case study has put in place possible, adequate and impactful measures in rehabilitating these female inmates. We used a standard criterion of 2.5 to indicate effective rehabilitation measures of which mean values below or close to the criterion standard will be seen as not effective or impactful enough for the rehabilitation process and the reverse is the case. In the course of this study we noted that environmental factors and conditions helps in the rehabilitation process of female inmates, but in the case of Benin correctional services, our research findings statistically proves with a mean value of 2.55 which is on the average of the standard criterion of 2.5. This indicates that the correctional centres conditions may or may not be suitable for proper rehabilitation process of the female inmates. We also noted that adequate rehabilitation programmes in correctional centres could assist inmates acquire suitable skills in order to promote prospect development as well as attitudinal and behavioural changes of the female inmate's

notwithstanding data in table 7 revealed an overall mean (Grand mean) of 3.28 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5, This shows that the impact of skill acquisitions programmes has contributed immensely toward adequate and impactful rehabilitation process of the female inmates. Other measure like the education services have contributed greatly toward the rehabilitation of female inmates as its statistical mean value of 3.23 shows significance. This is in line with Igbinovia and Omorogiuwa (2019) who confirm that the inmates are engaged in different skills acquisition programmes ensure rehabilitation and reintegration into the society.

Prior to our postulations in the study which states that “Hence, prison rehabilitation programmes could be helpful to inmates to ensure and promote their physical, mental-health, psychological, social, and economic potentials” (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1989; Nigerian Prisons Services, 2009; Asokhia & Agbonluae, 2013). Benin correctional services as has not really done much in serving this need, as statistics revealed an overall mean (Grand mean) of 2.65 which is a little above the criterion mean of 2.5. This shows that the recreational activities set aside by the Benin correctional services for the rehabilitation process of the female inmates is not effectively functional or not effectively impactful in the rehabilitation process of the female inmates. This is in support of Tanimu (2010) who revealed that Recreational activities and facilities in correctional centres are limited and poor in quality. The recreational activities that convicts engage in depends on whether they are inside or outside their cells. When in their cells, convicts engage in games like draft, ludo, cards and “dara” (a game played like checkers). However, due to the shortage of these facilities, convicts have to take turns. But the approach adopted by Benin correctional services as social intervention services are to a large extent impactful towards the rehabilitation of the female inmate. Since the (Grand mean) of 2.85 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5, a better and advanced approach needs to be adopted for impactful rehabilitation process.

Lastly this new environment is expected to provide the prison inmates with particular opportunities of rethinking, stock taking and repentance from old ways (Omorogiuwa, 2014). But further findings show that the approach adopted by the Benin correctional services toward proper and adequate rehabilitation of the female prison inmates is not efficient enough in preparing the female inmates for life after incarceration as it was statically proven with a (Grand mean) value of 2.47 which is below the criterion mean of 2.5. This further affirms the postulation that correctional services/prisons in Nigeria have lost its rehabilitative, reformatory and re-integrative roles completely due to the absence of meaningful programme; staff inefficiency, staff sadism and corruption, lack of a clear separation system, overworked and underpaid staff (Igbinovia, 2003). This implies that the approach adopted by the Benin correctional services toward proper rehabilitation of the female inmates is not efficient enough for preparing the female inmates for life after incarceration.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Based on the findings discussed above, the following four implications are put forward thus:

- The prison or correctional services authority should provide earning schemes to female inmates to enhance their effective reintegration and rehabilitation into the society. A matching grant or a percentage of the amount saved should be given to a female inmate when due for release. This will assist in resettlement of the ex-convicts with the skills acquired while in correctional custody.
- Rehabilitation programmes should not be left in the hands of the correctional services officials alone. Social workers, amongst other help professionals should be fully involved in rehabilitation of female inmates.
- Government should make provision for social workers to assist inmates with services after released from correctional facility. One of such service is aftercare services and also, they should consider a form of compulsory savings scheme for convicts involved in correctional services.
- There is the need for more social work psychosocial intervention programmes especially among female inmates.
- Sensitization of families and communities in preparation for the reintegration of female inmates into the society and involving them in rehabilitation and development programmes is imperative.

## **CONCLUSION**

Next to ensuring the protection of inmates, effective and successful social rehabilitations is one of the key aims of the correctional centres, however, this distends some challenges. Hence, this present study endeavors to examine the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes on female inmates in Benin City correctional services. Based on the findings, it was discovered that the rehabilitation programmes on female inmates were not very successful due to lack of fund, inadequacy of rehabilitation equipment, lack of trained personnel and lack of manpower and poor management of rehabilitation programmes among others. The findings show that correctional services or centres have not successfully achieved their objective according to the Nigerian Prison Act of (2001), which is to reform and rehabilitate offenders, including female inmates unto useful or resourceful citizens. Therefore, rehabilitation programmes for female inmates in the correctional services are not as effective as expected. This would enable social workers to embark on corrective actions where required.



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