

# Rehabilitation of Convicts in Nigerian Prisons: A Study of Federal Prisons in Kogi State

Dr C. U. Ugwuoke

Senior Lecturer (Department of Sociology and Anthropology) , University of Nigeria, Nsukka  
Christopher.ugwuoke@unn.edu.ng

Mr. Ameh, Sunday Ojonugwa

Assistant Lecturer (Department of Criminology and Security Studies), Salem University, Lokoja  
Sunnyameh2000@gmail.com

## Abstract

The Federal prisons in Nigeria are charged with the uncompromising responsibility of ensuring that offenders are reformed and rehabilitated. Although prisons in recent times are considered as centres for rehabilitation, some factors have made this difficult in Nigeria. In view of this background, this study has empirically examined the rehabilitative and reformatory roles of Federal prisons in Kogi state. The findings of the study have clearly shown that despite the official claims that these prisons are operating on the principles of rehabilitation and reformation, abundant evidence indicate that these institutions are still largely retributive in nature. Retributive traits are expected to be similar in other Nigerian prisons. The study made useful suggestions that could ameliorate this ugly trend.

**Keywords:** Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Programmes, Retribution, and Recidivism

**Acknowledgements:** The authors wish to acknowledge the contributions of individuals and corporate bodies that helped to facilitate the completion of this study. We are especially indebted to the staff and inmates of federal prisons in Kogi State. The co-operation of the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Abuja is also very much acknowledged.

## Introduction

The term rehabilitation attracts diverse meanings depending on the angle from which it is considered. For the purpose of this paper rehabilitation simply implies, the reforming of the personality and behaviour of convicted offenders through well designed educational and/or therapeutic treatment, ensuring that individual offender is returned back to the society as a complete, self supporting and accepted member of the society. This ordinarily seem popular because decree No. 9 of 1972 placed this responsibility on the Nigerian prison system with the hope that inmates desiring to better themselves during their incarceration, have the opportunity to participate in a number of rehabilitation programmes.

The above does not reflect the reality on ground. Contrarily to global expectation, Ugwuoke (2010) has noted that the Nigerian prison service is obviously in a state of serious dilemma. This situation is essentially predicated on the perceived contradiction that is embedded in the country's penal philosophy (this implies the country's policy that centres on the rationalisation of punishment administered to offenders. Presently, the Nigerian penal policy emphasizes the reformation and rehabilitation of offender). Thus, one of the fundamental issues confronting prison administrators today in Nigeria is the apparent lack of agreement as to what should be the aim in dealing with convicted offenders. The reality is that despite the claims of the presence of well articulated administrative, reformatory and rehabilitative programmes, 'Nigeria prisons have remained more or less, a punitive centre' (Ameh, 2010). Are convicts actually rehabilitated in Nigerian prisons? These, among other questions, have been the bedrock for great debates in recent time with very little head way. It is, therefore, the responsibility of this study to examine the effectiveness of Kogi state prisons in carrying out their assigned duty of rehabilitating and reforming inmates and ensuring their reintegration into the society as complete, self-supporting members of the society.

## Rationale for Imprisonment

Imprisonment has been defined as a term of judicial sentence available for a convicted offender of adult age, involving incarceration in prison for either life or a specified period of time. According to Walsh and Poole (1997:10) imprisonment become the dominant form of punishment with the birth of the classical school, as it has replaced the cruel and unusual death sentences of most crimes of the eighteenth century Europe.

In Nigeria, the rationale for imprisonment is evident in decree No. 9 of 1972 which assigned the prisons with the responsibility among other functions, to teach and train the prisoners to become useful and law abiding citizens on discharge. Similarly, Igbo (2007) has noted that the Nigerian prison service is today assigned the onerous responsibility of ensuring the safe custody of offenders as well as their reformation and rehabilitation. These responsibilities are discharged through carefully designed and well articulated administrative, reformatory

and rehabilitative programmes aimed at inculcating discipline, respect for law and order, and the dignity of honest labour. The offender, in this wise, is prepared to become not only law abiding but also useful to both himself and the society at the expiration of his sentence (NPS Annual Report, 1986:5) as cited in Igbo (2007:223).

It is important to note at this point that imprisonment is one out of the numerous forms of punishment as earlier mentioned in the introductory paragraph of this section. To this effect, one can posit that the rationale for imprisonment on a broad scale denotes the rationale for punishment. According to Foucault (1977:3), the justification of punishment has so many claims. On the one hand, offenders get the punishment they deserve, while on the other hand, punishment serves to deter others, an idea based on the utilitarian pleasure – pain principle and the concept of free – will; and finally, punishment is meant to treat the offenders. Reacting to the above claims one can submit that the rationale for incarcerating offenders includes; deterrence (both individual and general deterrence), treatment (reformation and rehabilitation) and retribution.

### **Rehabilitative Objective of Imprisonment**

Before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, correctional ideas and practices might vary, but they all shared similar goals – the taking of vengeance, the reduction of crime, and the protection of self and society. Sanction for outlaws focused on retribution, banishment, isolation and death and were based on the reasoning that offenders were enemies of society that they deserved punishment and that extreme approaches would eliminate their potential for future crime. This punishment ideology endured throughout recorded history (Inciardi, 2005). During the 18<sup>th</sup> century – the age of enlightenment – a new ideology began to emerge. It was a reform movement that stressed the dignity and imperfections of the human condition; it recognised the crudity of criminal law and procedure, and it fought against the cruelty of many punishments and conditions of confinement (Siegel, 2005). The Quakers of Pennsylvania, under William Penn, saw imprisonment as a sufficient severe penalty in itself and they insisted that prisoners should be assisted in their efforts to become rehabilitated (Sutherland & Cressey, 1978).

### **Critiquing Rehabilitation**

The rehabilitative ideals, in reality have the tendency to screen the actual conditions and activities in correctional institutions. Rather than being therapeutic in character rehabilitative ideal tends to be incarcerative to the extent that a prisoner might be kept for as long as is necessary, an open – end incarceration until he is completely rehabilitated. It has led to increased severity of penal measures, especially with juvenile justice. Inferring from the above, offences which are ordinarily overlooked when punishment is emphasized, were administered indeterminate confinement of the juvenile for a long period (Dambazau, 2007).

There are other problems with rehabilitative views. For instance, we might ask whether or not punishment can be rehabilitative, in the sense that one cannot actually determine how long a criminal need to stay in prison for that criminal to be completely reformed. Due to the fact that criminals, knowing that their duration depends on the way they comport themselves in prison, may fake to have been reformed only to come out of prison and return to their old ways. Tanimu (2010:10) asserts that, “In pursuance of the rehabilitation ideals, convicts are kept in prison until authority says that they have been reformed. This reasoning has brought about the indeterminate sentence, which coerces the convict into behaving just to satisfy the expectations of the authorities”. Based on the issues raised in the preceding sections, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Are federal prisons in Kogi state oriented towards the rehabilitation of inmates?
2. Are there programmes on ground for the rehabilitation of convicts?
3. What are the factors that hinder effective rehabilitation of these inmates?
4. What strategies should be adopted for effective rehabilitation in Kogi state?

### **Theoretical Base**

Many operational jurisdictions are controlled by the rule of law, but they are also influenced by the various philosophies or viewpoints held by its practitioners and policy makers. These, in turn, have been influenced by criminological theories and researches. Knowledge about crime, its causes, and its control has significantly affected perceptions of how criminal justice should be managed (Siegel, 2005:366). Debates regarding the wisdom and efficiency of this reaction, specific policies and methods consistent with it have given rise to a number of schools of thought in criminology. These include, among others, the classical, neoclassical, and rehabilitative/ correctional schools of thought. Therefore, in this section, some of the relevant theories of punishment are reviewed and stand taken on the one that most explain the study.

#### **The Classical Theory**

The classical school came to be by responding to the state of criminal injustice in Europe. It was with the knowledge of such history that Cesare Beccaria who is the major proponent of this theory developed his ideas concerning criminal behaviour and how best to control it. According to Dow as cited in Igbo (2007:35) the classical school advocated that punishment should fit the crime. This position is derived from two concepts that are central to their understanding of why people commit crime. These concepts are “free – will” and “hedonism”. This approach holds the view that human beings are naturally pleasure loving and use their freewill to choose acts that will not bring them pain and suffering. Breaking the law to members of this school is deliberate and it is

done out of free will in pursuit of pleasure. In an attempt to avoid unlawful application of punishment, Beccaria (1963:99) as cited in Dambazau (1994:110) affirmed that,

In order for punishment not to be, in every instance, an act of violence of one or many against a private citizen, it must be essentially public, prompt, necessary, the least possible in the given circumstances, proportionate to the crime, dictated by laws.

Therefore, to deter people from law breaking behaviours, the classicist advocated punishment severe and painful enough to make such acts unattractive. They also advocated punishment for some offences regardless of the identity and personality of the offender. Contrarily, Siegel (2005:374) opined that mutual aid rather than coercive punishment is the key to harmonious society. All these point to the fact that punishment encourages rather than deter the criminal. Except for dangerous criminals, punishment has very limited utility. The classical theory has, therefore limited applicability to this study because of its emphasis on the use of punishment as a method of correction.

### **Neo – Classical Explanation**

The neo – classical school, also known as the French school, broke ranks with the classical school for advocating that punishment be meted out to offenders for the same offences, regardless of their personal backgrounds, individual differences and other circumstances. This theory emphasized the importance of criminal responsibility. Notable adherents of the neo – classical school include the English Jurist William Blackstone and Bayer Van den Haag (The Classical School, 2005; Dambazau, 1999:12). Though the neo – classical advocates agreed that people are naturally pleasure – loving and generally engage in acts that will bring them pleasure rather than pain and suffering. Unlike the classical approach, the neo – classical theory recognises circumstances involving: age, mental condition and extenuating circumstance in the criminal himself which must be considered while punishing him (Igbo, 2007:36/37).

Section 28 of the criminal code of Nigeria as cited in Dambazau (1994:117) makes it clear that if the accused was insane in the legal sense at the time he committed the offence, he is not criminally responsible for his act. The limitation of this theory in this study is its failure to show why those robbers, rapists and other violent criminals who are of sound memory, rational and calculative are not deterred by the death penalty and other harsh punishments meted on their predecessors.

### **Rehabilitation Theory**

Reaction to the early schools of penology and the idea that something more was needed, slowly gained acceptance throughout the nineteenth century. Jean Hampton, the major adherent of this theory sees punishment from different points of view that the aim of the penal system should be treatment and correction. The assumption of rehabilitation is that people are not natively criminal and that it is possible to restore a criminal to a useful life, to life in which they contribute positively to the development of themselves and the society. According to Packer as cited in Dambazau (2007:310),

The rehabilitation theory teaches us that "... we must treat each offender as an individual whose special needs and problems must be known ... in order to enable us deal effectively with him". Analysing rehabilitation as a justification for punishment, packer further noted that the rehabilitative idea may be used to prevent crime by changing the personality of that offender that punishment in the theory is forward looking; that the inquiry is not into how dangerous the offender is but rather into how amenable to treatment he is. However, packer also noted that the gravity of the offence committed may not give us clue as to the intensity and duration of the measures needed to rehabilitate.

In addition, Siegel (2005:371) affirmed that rehabilitation embraces the notion that given the proper care and treatment, criminals can be changed into productive, law – abiding citizens. Influenced by the positivist criminology, the rehabilitation school suggests that people commit crimes through no fault of their own. Instead criminals themselves are the victims of social injustice, poverty and racism, their acts are a response to a society that has betrayed them and because of their disturbed and impoverished upbringing, they may be suffering psychological problems and personality disturbances that further enhance their committing capacities.

Similarly, Ugwuoke (2000:56) assert that, "rehabilitation requires that the offender be treated humanely with dignity and respect, be shown love, kindness and compassion not cruelty, contempt and hate".

The theoretical framework for this study is hinged on the rehabilitative perspective by Siegel (2005:371). This theory indeed captures the thrust of this study as it tries to establish the justification or rationale behind the treatment of convicts by "changing the attitude and behaviour of criminals so that they will be able to choose lawful means, in satisfying their needs" (Dinitz & Dine, 1979:51).

### **Methodology**

This study was carried out in the six federal prisons in Kogi state: Ankpa, Dekina, Idah, Kabba, Koton Karfi and Okene prison. The study made use of proportionate stratified simple random sampling technique which ensured that all the six prisons were proportionately represented in the sampled population. As such, the study relied fully

on the data gathered from respondents in these prisons via administered questionnaires. The study population was eight hundred and sixty eight (868) respondents which consist of convicts and staff of these prisons, as at May, 2010. A breakdown of this population is presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Categories of Inmates and Staff in the Federal Prisons in Kogi State:**

AREAS	Inmates	Staff		
	CONVICTED	Senior	Junior	TOTAL
ANKPA PRISON	23	10	52	62
DEKINA PRISON	22	10	32	42
IDAH PRISON	88	17	60	77
KABBA PRISON	174	19	54	73
KOTON-KARFE PRISON	44	12	52	64
OKENE PRISON	105	20	74	94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>412</b>

Source: Field work 2010.

The study made use of a sample of five hundred and thirty four (534) respondents, these represents sixty one percent (61%) of the study population, and consists of four hundred and ten (410) convicted inmates, which represented ninety percent (90%) of the convicts population and one hundred and twenty four (124) prison staff which represents thirty percent (30%) of the staff population. In essence, each prisons is represented by ninety (90%) of its' convicts population and thirty (30%) percent of its staff population.

The data are presented and analysed below, using simple percentages and chi square ( $X^2$ ) to test the three hypotheses formulated for this study at 0.05 level of significance. The tests were conducted separately for convicts and staff.

### Results and Discussions

The analysis of this study was based on the five hundred and twenty two (522) completed questionnaires which were at the disposal of the researcher, consisting of four hundred and four (404) questionnaires completed by convicts and one hundred and eighteen (118) questionnaires completed by prison staff. Respondents' socio demographic characteristics are presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of the Social Demographic Characteristic of Convicts**

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Sex:</b> Male	403	99.8
Female	1	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age group:</b> 18 – 27	232	57.4
28 – 37	49	12.1
38 – 47	60	14.9
48 and above	63	15.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital status:</b> Single	244	60.4
Married	160	39.6
Widow/Divorced/Separated	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religion:</b> Christianity	280	69.3
Islam	124	30.7
African Traditional Religion	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Highest formal educational attainment:</b>		
No formal Education	4	1.0
Primary Education	57	14.1
Secondary / Trade school	12	3.0
Post Secondary not University	164	40.6
University	32	7.9
Post graduate	135	33.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupation before conviction:</b> Artisan	4	1.0
Civil Servant	36	8.9
Farming	106	26.2
Schooling	98	24.3
Business	160	39.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork 2010.

Table 2 indicates that males constitute 99.8% of the respondents while just one female (0.2%) was

represented, this is because just one convicted female was available at the time of this study. Age 18 -27 have the highest frequency 232 (57.4%) of the respondents. In addition, majority of the respondents are traders representing 160 (39.6%). This findings corroborates Tanimu's findings in 2010 from study conducted in Zaria and Kaduna prisons indicating that: "A typical convict in a Nigerian prisons is a semi-literate male, in prime youth (18-37 years), he is mostl likely unemployed or self employed in lowest occupational ladder" (Tanimu, 2010: 4).

When convicts were further probed, on substantive issues relating to the set study questions, the following responses presented in table 3 were provided.

**Table 3: Convicts Response on their Experience in the Prison**

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Are you undergoing any vocational training programme(s) this prison?</b>		
Yes	372	92.0
No	32	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>With the present level of training, do you agree that this training programme will be helpful to you after discharge?</b>		
Agree	338	83.7
Disagree	66	16.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>From the treatment you have been receiving here, what will you say is the reason for being in prison?</b>		
To help change your behaviour for better	326	80.7
To make you suffer for your crime(s)	12	3.0
Combination of both option (i) and (ii) above	66	16.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you agree that public stigmatization causes recidivism?</b>		
Agree	338	84.8
Disagree	66	16.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Have you being to prison before?</b>		
Yes	43	10.6
No	361	89.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork 2010.

Table 3 indicates that 43 (10.6%) out of 404 are recidivist while majority are first offenders. This implies that ex-convicts actually relapse back to crime. The table further revealed that majority 372 (92.0%) are undergoing vocational training programmes while just 32 (8.0%) are not. Similarly, majority of the respondents indicates that their involvement in VTP will better their life on discharge. But a hand full (12) representing 3.0% indicates that the reason for imprisonment is to ensure that they suffer for their wrong doing. 338 (84.8%) indicates that public stigmatisation can lead to recidivism, 66 (16.3%) disagrees. This findings contradicts the submission of Adoyi, Akpabio, Chigozirim and Ebo (2009) which states that: "recreational facilities and skill acquisition centres are lacking in prisons. This is a bad news for a place that ought to be rehabilitative and reformatory centre".

#### Test of Hypotheses (Convicts)

**Hypothesis 1: Convicts who participate in rehabilitative programmes are less likely to become recidivists than convicts who do not.**

To carry out this test convicts responses on the relevance of undergoing vocational training programmes in prison to them is cross tabulated with convicts' population that participates in vocational training programme voluntarily. This is to ascertain the perception of convicts as to whether participation in vocational training programmes will be helpful to them after discharge as such reducing possibility of becoming recidivist.

**Table 4: Reduction in Recidivism via Participation in Vocational Training Programmes (VTP)**

Is the vocational training programme helpful after discharge	Population of participants in VTP		Total
	Yes	No	
Agree	318(85.5%)	20(62.5%)	338(83.7%)
Disagree	54(14.5%)	12(37.5%)	66(16.3%)
Total	372(92.1%)	32(7.9%)	404(100.0%)

Source: Fieldwork 2010

$X^2 = 12.576$ ; d.f = 1;  $p \leq 0.05$

It is observed in table 1 that, out of the 404 respondents, 372 and 32 respondents participate and don't participate in vocational training programme respectively. Of the 372 that participate 318(85.5%) agreed that the vocational training programme they participate in will be helpful to them after discharge, while a relatively high percentage of those who don't participate in vocational training programme (65.5%) which is 20 out of the 32 agreed with the assertion. A total number of 338 (83.7%) agreed with the assertion that participation in vocational training programme will be helpful to convicts on discharge. The table shows that a greater number of those who participate and those who don't participate share the opinion that participation in rehabilitation programmes will be helpful. In other words those who participate are less likely to become recidivist than those who don't. The chi – square value of 12.576 also confirms the fact that those who participate in rehabilitation programmes are less likely to become recidivists than those who do not.

From the table it is observed that the critical value of  $X^2 = 12.576$ ; at  $d.f = 1$  and  $p \leq 0.05$  level of significance is given at 3.84. Since the computed value of 12.576 is more than the critical value of 3.84 the substantive hypothesis is accepted implying that the observed relationship between participation in rehabilitation programme(s) and absence of recidivists in this population is high and it could not be as a result of error or mere chance occurrence. In other words the relationship is statistically significance at 0.05 level. The findings on this table are in line with the view of Siegel (2005: 371) that, "rehabilitation embraces the notion that given the proper care and treatment; criminals can be changed into productive law-abiding citizens".

**Hypothesis 2: Prisons that uphold the penal policies are less likely to produce recidivists' than prisons that do not.**

To carry out this test, Responses on convicts' perception of the purpose of imprisonment is cross tabulated with the effect of the treatment on convict in prison.

**Table 5: Application of Penal Policy and Reduction in Recidivism**

Effect of treatment in prison on convicts	Purpose of imprisonment			Total
	Rehabilitation	Retribution	Both	
Reformation	302(92.6%)	2(16.7%)	57(86.4%)	361(89.4%)
Not Reformation	24(7.4%)	10(83.3%)	9(13.3%)	43(10.6%)
Total	326(80.7%)	12(3.0%)	66(16.3%)	404(100.0%)

Source: Fieldwork 2010

$X^2 = 92.449$ ,  $d.f = 2$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$

From the table, it is observed that the critical value of  $x^2$  at  $p \leq 0.05$  level of significance and  $d.f = 2$  is given at 5.99. Since the computed value of 92.449 is more than the critical value of 5.99 the substantive hypothesis is accepted implying that the observed relationship between applying the right penal policy and reduction in recidivism is very high and is in no way a function of error or mere occurrence. In other words the relationship is statistically significance at 0.05 levels.

The table indicates that 361(89.4%) out of 404 respondents, indicated that the treatment administered by the prison will reform convicts while 43(10.6%) are of the opinion that it will not reform them. The table shows that a greater number of both those that indicated that the prison is for rehabilitation and the application of both rehabilitation and retribution share the opinion that prison that uphold the penal policies are less likely to produce recidivist than prison that do not.

This finding appraises the importance of decree No 9 of 1972 which assigned the Nigeria prisons with the responsibility, among other functions, to teach and train the prisoners to become useful and law abiding citizens on discharge. Similarly, this is in line with the submission of Thomas (1972); Hill (1988) and O'Brien (1998) as cited in Ikuteyijo and Agunbiade (2008:2) that in countries whose penal philosophy is motivated by the rehabilitative philosophy, inmates are to be treated first as citizens with certain inalienable rights despite being in prison and not just as criminals who the society is better off without. This finding further confirm the bases for which Adayi, Akpabio, Chigozirim and Ebo (2006) avowed that, the prisons are institution of the state and are expected to serve as punishment for offender, it should therefore be made clear to all groups concerned, both in principle and in practice, that it is the sentence itself that serves as punishment and not the treatment meted to the prisoners in prisons.

**Hypothesis 3: Population that encourages public stigmatisation of ex-convicts is more likely to produce recidivists than population that does not.**

To carry out this test response on convict perception on the contribution of public stigmatisation to recidivism is cross tabulated with recidivist population.

**Table 6: Contribution of Stigmatisation to Recidivism.**

Public stigmatisation causes recidivism	Population of recidivists		Total
	Recidivist	First conviction	
Agree	32(74.4%)	306(84.8%)	338(83.7%)
Disagree	11(25.6%)	55(15.2%)	66(16.3%)
Total	43(100.0%)	361(100.0%)	404(100.0%)

Source: Fieldwork 2010

$$X^2 = 3.052, d.f = 1, p \leq 0.05$$

Data on table 3 show that a total of 338 (83.7%) constituting 32(74.4%) of recidivist population and 306(84.8%) of first conviction, agreed that public stigmatisation is the major cause of recidivism while 11(25.6%) and 55(15.2%) disagree to stigmatisation as the major cause of recidivism.

Form the table, it is observed that the critical value of  $x^2 = 3.052$  at  $p \leq 0.05$  level of significance and  $d.f = 1$ , is given as 3.84. Since the computed value of 3.052 is not up to the critical value of 3.84, the substantive hypothesis is rejected implying that the observed relationship between public stigmatisation and recidivism in this population is so weak and it could be a result of chance occurrence. In other words, the relationship is not statistically significance at 0.05 level, meaning that there could be other reasons than stigmatisation, like lack of finance, poverty, among others.

### TEST OF HYPOTHESES (STAFF)

In order to test the three hypotheses presented above, it is important to present the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Table 7 takes care of this task.

**Table 7: Percentage Distribution of the Social Demographic Characteristic of Prison Staff**

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Sex:</b> Male	98	83.1
Female	20	16.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age group:</b> 20 – 29	31	26.3
30 – 39	43	36.4
40 – 49	37	31.4
50 and above	7	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital status:</b> Single	28	23.7
Married	87	73.7
Widow/Divorced/Separated	3	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religion:</b> Christianity	53	44.9
Islam	65	55.1
African Traditional Religion	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Highest formal educational attainment:</b>		
No formal Education	-	-
Primary Education	4	3.4
Secondary / Trade school	44	37.2
Post Secondary not University	47	39.8
University	19	16.2
Post graduate	4	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Staff Category:</b> Junior staff	77	65.3
Senior staff	41	34.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork 2010.

Table 7 indicates that males constitute 98 (83.1%) of the respondents while 20 (16.9%) represented the female category. Age 30 -39 have the highest frequency 43 (39.8%) of the respondents, while 50 and above were represented by 7 (5.9%) respondents. In addition, Post secondary but not university and secondary/traders are more, represented by 47 (39.8%) and 44 (37.2%) respectively. While 77 (65.3%) of the respondents are junior staff, 41 (34.7%) are senior staff. When staff were probed on substantive issues, in reaction, majority of them agreed to several issues and some disagreement were also indicated. Details of these findings are presented in table 8.

**Table 8: Staff Response on the activities in the Prison**

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>What is the attitude of inmates towards these programmes?</b>		
Participate freely	103	87.3
Refuse to participate	15	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you think that inmates who receive vocational training while in prison are less likely to return to prison after they are released?</b>		
Yes	105	89.0
No	13	11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>From the treatment meted out to inmates, what would you say is the major reason why convicts are brought to prison?</b>		
Change their behaviour for better in order to rehabilitate them	103	87.3
Make them pay/suffer for their crime(s)	15	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>High rate of recidivism in Nigerian prisons has been linked to the failure of rehabilitation programmes, do you agree?</b>		
Yes	97	82.2
No	21	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you think that public stigmatization could lead to recidivism?</b>		
Yes	96	81.4
No	22	18.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>How can the public contribute to the rehabilitation of convicts?</b>		
Assist in aftercare services	47	39.8
Avoid stigmatization	71	60.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork 2010.

Table 8 indicates that 103 (87.3%) out of 118 agrees that inmates participate in VTP, 15 (12.7%) indicates that inmates refuses to participate in VTP. The table further revealed that majority 105 (89.0%) indicate that VTP will help prevent recidivism of ex-convicts while 13 (11.0%) indicates that it will not prevent recidivism. Similarly, majority of the respondents 96 (81.4%) indicates that public stigmatization could lead to recidivism while 22 (18.6) differ from such assertion. While 103 representing 87.3% indicates that the reason for imprisonment is to reform offender, 15 (12.7%) indicate that it is to ensure that they suffer for their wrong doing. 47 (39.8%) indicates that availability of after care services is the sure way for the public to contribute to convict rehabilitation, 71 (60.2) indicate that avoidance of stigmatisation is a better contribution. These findings support by siegel's (2005.371) assertion that:

Dealing effectively with crime requires attacking it root causes. Fund must be devoted to equalising access to conventional means of success. This requires supporting such programmes as public assistance, education opportunity and job training. If individual run afoul of the law, effort should be made to treat them, not punish them, by emphasizing counselling and psychological care in community base treatment programmes.

The responses to the substantive issues presented in table 8 are cross tabulated. With the help of the gathered data the three hypotheses formulated are tested in order to affirm or reject them.

**Hypothesis 1: Convicts who participates in rehabilitative programmes are less likely to become recidivists than convicts who do not.**

This hypothesis is tested by cross tabulating staff perception on the contribution of vocational training programmes in prison to reduction of recidivism and the population of convicts that participation in vocational training programme voluntarily.



**Table 4: Reduction in Recidivism through Participation in Rehabilitation Programmes.**

Participation in rehabilitation programme reduces Recidivism	Participation by convicts		Total
	Participate free	Refuse Participate	
Yes	96(93.2%)	9(60%)	105(89.0%)
No	7(6.8%)	6(40%)	13(11.0%)
Total	103 (87.3%)	15(12.7%)	118(100.0%)

**Source:** Fieldwork 2010.

$$X^2 = 11.407; d.f = 1; p \leq 0.05$$

The table 4 indicates that a total of 118 staff responded out of which 105 indicated that inmates participate freely in the rehabilitation programmes available while 15 indicated contrarily. Similarly 103 respondents indicate that inmates who participate in vocational training programme while in prisons are less likely to become recidivist while 13 indicated contrarily. Among the 105 that indicated free participation larger proportion 96(93: 2%) supported the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes while 7(6.8%) disagreed. From the table it is observed that the critical value of  $x^2$  11.407 at  $p \leq 0.05$  level of significance and  $d.f = 1$ , is given as 3.84. since the critical value of 3.84 is not up to the calculated value of 11.407 the substantive hypothesis is accepted implying that convicts who participate in rehabilitative programmes are less likely to become recidivists than convicts who do not. This finding corroborates the chi square result computed from table 1 which test the same hypothesis but with data gathered from the convicts. This implies that both convicts and staff support the assertion that participation in rehabilitative programmes is a likely solution to recidivism.

**Hypothesis 2: Prisons that uphold the penal policies are less likely to produce recidivists than prisons that do not.**

To carry out this test, Responses on staff' perception of the purpose of imprisonment is cross tabulated with the effect of the treatment on convict in prison.

**Table 5: Responses on Application of Penal Policy and Reduction in Recidivism.**

Recidivism is caused by failure in the Application of the penal policy	Interpretation of penal policy		Total
	Rehabilitation	Retribution	
Agree	89(86.4%)	8(53.3%)	97(82.2%)
Disagree	14(13.6%)	7(46.7%)	21(17.8%)
Total	103(87.3%)	15(12.7%)	118(100.0%)

**Source:** Fieldwork 2010.

$$X^2 = 7.743; df=1; p \leq 0.05$$

Table 5 indicates that a total of 118 staff respondent out of which 103 indicated that rehabilitation and reformation is the reason why convicts are brought to prison 15 indicated that it is for punishment (Retribution). The Table also shows that 97 (82.2%) of the respondents agree that recidivism is a function of failed rehabilitation programmes while 21(17.8%) disagreed with the assertion. Out of the 103 respondent who indicated that the prison is for rehabilitation 89 (86.4%) agreed failed rehabilitation causes recidivism while 14(13.6%) suggested contrarily. From the Table it is observed that the critical value of  $x^2$  7.743 at  $p \leq 0.05$  level of significance and  $d.f = 1$  is given as 3.84. Since the critical value of 3.84 is less than the calculated value of 7.743 the hypothesis is accepted implying that prisons that uphold the penal policies are less likely to produce recidivists than prisons that do not. The finding sustains the finding of Table 2 which though test same hypothesis but the data were gathered from different respondents and questionnaires (convicts). The implication of this finding is that the earlier finding of Table 2 is validated. This implies that prisons that uphold the penal policies are less likely to produce recidivists than prisons that do not.

**Hypothesis 3: Population that exhibit public stigmatization of ex-convicts is more likely to produce recidivists than population that do not.**

To carry out this test response on staff perception on the contribution of public stigmatisation to recidivism is cross tabulated with response on how public can contribute to curbing recidivism?

**Table 6: Contribution of Public Stigmatization to Recidivism.**

How can the public contribute to the rehabilitation of convict	Public stigmatisation leads to		Total
	YES	NO	
Avoid stigmatisation	84(90.3%)	18(72%)	102(86.4%)
Assist in after care services	9(9.7%)	7(28%)	16(13.6%)
<b>Total</b>	93(78.8%)	25(21.2%)	118(100.0%)

**Source:** Fieldwork 2010.

$$X^2 = 7.46, d.f = 1, p \leq 0.05$$

From table 6 it is observed that critical value of  $x^2$  at  $p \leq 0.05$  level of significance and  $d.f = 1$  is given at 3.84. Since the computed value of 7.4 is higher than the critical value 3.84 the substantive hypothesis is accepted

implying that the observed relationship between populations that stigmatize ex-convicts and likelihood of producing more recidivists is high and is in no way a function of mere occurrence. In other words the relationship is statistically significance at 0.05 levels.

The table indicated that 93 respondent indicated that public stigmatisation could lead to recidivism in the prison while 25 opposed the assertion. Out of 93 that indicated that public stigmatisation could lead to recidivism in prison 84(90.3%) indicated that avoiding public stigmatisation could stop recidivism while 9(9.7%) opined that provision of after care service could stop recidivism. Likewise 18(72%) of 25 who indicated that public stigmatisation will not lead to recidivism while 7(28%) tilt towards provision of after care services.

The implication of this finding is that it negates the earlier test from data presented on table 3 which is tabulated from the data gathered from 404 convicts. The findings of table 3 rejected the hypothesis, indicating that there is little or no significant relationship between public stigmatization and recidivism while the findings on table 6 indicate that there is significance relationship between public stigmatization and recidivism.

### Summary and Conclusion

This study attempted to evaluate the effort put in place by federal prisons in Kogi state towards rehabilitation of convicts alongside factors militating against such effort. The study was carried out in the six federal prisons in Kogi State which are mostly divisional prisons except Kabba prison that is a provincial prison. Findings indicate that practices in these two categories of prison are only different based on the intensity in security and capacity base. Report from the findings indicate that prisons have a lot to do inward, they have to convince the convicts and public that rehabilitation is their target and satisfactorily tilt towards ensuring it is achieve. This can be done by improving on the quality of rehabilitative programmes, de-emphasizing punishment, encouraging after care services and equipping existing workshops. In addition to this, effort should be made to improve public sensitization on the need to avoid stigmatization and contribute towards after care services.

The method of data collection was primary source which encouraged the use of quantitative method of data collection. This implies that the questionnaires (one for the convicts and the other for prison staff) served as the only source of data for this study. A population sample of 530 comprising convicts and staff (staff responding to questionnaire) was drawn via proportionate stratified random sampling technique (this implies that the respondents population for each prison was proportionate to that prison actual population, ensuring that all six prison a properly represented). The data gathered from these respondents were analyzed using quantitative techniques. The findings of the study are analysed in relation to the three research hypotheses.

After careful testing of these hypotheses it was revealed that, the third hypotheses was initially rejected based on the data from convicts and later accepted based on the data gathered from the staff. From the result of quantitative data, the following conclusions were drawn: reformative and rehabilitative function of prison is necessary for the survival of prisoners and society at large. However, since prison system is a smaller society within the larger society, what transpires in the prison definitely affects the larger society. Negligence in the provision and maintenance of rehabilitation facilities affected the prison as an institution in carrying out their statutory function. This is evident in the findings where respondents indicated that prisons properly interpret the penal policy but the quality of facilities on ground cannot assure one of effective rehabilitation of convicts. More pressing is the obvious lack of after care services. It is inferred that there are factors militating against successful rehabilitation and that recidivism will continue to be in existence if not on the increase except correctional measures are taken to address the issue of misinterpretation of penal policy, quality of vocational training programmes, unemployment, poverty, public stigmatisation, after care services among others.

If these necessities are not revived, prisoners will re-socialize into more dangerous criminals and may come out worse than ever. Finally, there is an urgent need for a practical review of Nigeria's penal policy. This is expedient because the findings of this study have further demonstrated clearly, the incompatibility of retribution and rehabilitation.

### References

- Adoyi, P., Akpabio, I., Chigozirin, O., & Ebo, I. (2006). *Administration of the prison system in Nigeria: Legal defence and assistance project*. Retrieved June 10, 2009, from <http://www.bluepete.com/literature/essay/bluepete/punishmenttheory.htm>
- Ameh, S. O. (2010). *Prison and rehabilitation of convicts in Nigeria: A study of federal prisons in Kogi state*. Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, U.N.N
- Bohm, R. M., & Haley, K. N. (1999). *Criminal justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Westerville: Glencoe/McGraw- Hill.
- Dambazau, A. B. (2007). *Criminology and criminal justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Kaduna: Nigeria Defence Academy Press.
- Dambazau, A. B. (1999). *Criminology and criminal justice*. Kaduna: Nigeria Defence Academy Press.
- Dambazau, A. B. (1994). *Law and criminality*. Ibadan: University Press Plc.
- Dinitz, C. & Dine, V. C. (1989). *Restraining the wicked: The dangerous offender project*. Toronto: Liberty of Congress Press.

- Faucoult, M. (1977). *Discipline and punishment*. London: Allen Lane.
- Igbo, E. U. M. (2007). *Introduction to criminology*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Ltd.
- Inciardi, J. A. (2005). *Criminal justice* (7<sup>th</sup> ed). New York: McGraw Hills.
- Ikuteyijo, O. L. & Agunbiade, M. O. (2008). Prison reforms and HIV/AIDS in selected Nigerian prisons. *Journal of international social research*, ¼ summer 2008. Retrieved December 2, 2009 from <http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/c.H1/sayi4pdf/iketuyiyo.pdf>
- Siegel, L. J. (2005). *Criminology: The core*. London: Thompson and Wadsworth, Inc.
- Sutherland, E.H. and Cressey, D.R. (1978). *Criminology*. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Tanimu, B. (2010). Nigeria convicts and prison rehabilitation ideals. *Journal of sustainable development in Africa*. Vol.12(3)140-152.
- The classical school. (2005). *The classical school: Biological and psychological factors*. Retrieved November 3, 2009, from <http://www.criminality.fsu.edu/crimtheory/week3.htm>
- Ugwuoke, C. U. (2000). The dilemma of the Nigerian prisons' service: Implications for criminal justice delivery system in Nigeria. In N. G. Egbue (Ed). *Journal of sociology*. Awka: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Vol. 1 (2): 50 – 59.
- Ugwuoke, C.U. (2010). *Criminology: Explaining crime in the Nigerian context*. Great AP Express Publishers LTD, Nsukka.
- Walsh, D. & Poole, A. (1979). *A dictionary of criminology*. London:Routledge and Kegan paul.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:  
<http://www.iiste.org>

## CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

**Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

## MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

## IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

