

## **Rehabilitation of Inmates in Nigeria: A Study of Nigerian Correctional Service, Medium Security Custodial Centre, Sokoto, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*Preparing inmates for re-integration into the community is one of the primary goals of prisons and jails. However, the problems of care and rehabilitation of inmates is a major social problem in almost all the security custodial services in Nigeria. Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre in particular needs much attention. Medium Security Custodial Centre in Sokoto today holds more than its capacity and insufficiency of funds has made the upkeep of the inmates a difficult task. Despite various reforms embarked by government geared towards care and rehabilitation of prisoners in Nigeria, the conditions of these inmates left much to be desired as the inmates are faced with moral condemnation and rejection from the society. The study attempts examination of the condition of the inmates as well as the rehabilitation programmes available at the custodial centre. The research was purely a quantitative study. Data were collected through the use of questionnaire and interview schedule. A total of 264 questionnaires were administered, 220 were retrieved and analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically using percentages, distribution tables, charts, means, Likert-type scale and other measures of central tendencies by the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 22). The research found that*

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*the living condition of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre is very poor, and that there is a relationship between the general condition of the inmates and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in the Centre, as well as a relationship between the methods of rehabilitation and its effectiveness on inmates.*

**Keywords:** Rehabilitation, Correctional System, Inmates, Crime

## **Introduction**

Imprisonment as a form of punishment did not exist in many places in Africa and was rarely used in others until pre-colonial times. Criminals were usually detained by being chained in the open, or given other public forms of punishment. Imprisonment was not regarded as a suitable form of punishment for ordinary offenders (Hughes, 2008). Physical restraint was rarely used, and detention does not appear to have been regarded as a punishment in itself (Read, 1969). In pre-colonial Africa, in the rare situations involving detention, offenders would be held for the purposes of attending their trial or awaiting the imposition of some other form of punishment. For example, the Nigeria communities like other societies have assumed the responsibility of putting away deviant citizens and preventing them from doing further harm to the society. This development gave birth to recruitment of able-bodied men by the traditional rulers. In the Hausa land they were called “*Dogarai*” and in the Yoruba land they were called “*Ogbonis*.” At that period there were complex fusion of police and the guards which existed in the early part of the colonial era. During colonial administration, colonial powers began using incarceration as a means of subjugating indigenous populations for economic, political, and social purposes. Hughes, (2008) noted that politically and socially, colonialists used incarceration as a method of controlling political dissidents and maintaining colonial control over occupied territories and their indigenous populations. Kamugisha. (n.d) in Hughes, (2008) observed that colonialists incarcerated natives for minor offences like tax defaulting and civil felonies that would not have warranted hard punishment in the pre-colonial era.

The aims of the modern prison in the developed countries of the world have been modified not only to protect the society but also to include retribution, deterrence, reformation and rehabilitation of the convicted prisoners (Abba & Mbagwu, 2016). Since Nigeria was a signatory to the UN Charter, the objectives of the Nigerian Prisons Service are not different from those adopted by the Western world. The Nigerian Prison Service is constitutionally responsible for the safe custody of offenders as well as their reformation, rehabilitation and re-integration, (Danbazzau, 2007) noted, that the rationale for imprisonment is evident in decree No 9 of 1972 which assigns the prison with the responsibilities among others to teach and train prisoners (inmates) to become useful and law abiding citizens on discharge.

Rehabilitation penology was said to have developed at the beginning of 20th century (Talba, 2015). Rehabilitation of individuals is aimed at removing the conditions presumed to have been the cause of the criminal behaviour. The inmates are classified and allocated workshops to work for the rest of their prison term (Pavic, & Kyriazis, 2011). This, up till date continues to be the ideal picture of the nature of correctional centres worldwide. Preparing inmates for a successful return to the free community – rehabilitation -is one of the primary goals of prisons and jails. Institutional programmes ranging from daily work assignment to drug treatment are critical to

any organised effort to offer offenders an opportunity to modify their behaviour (Davis, Jennifer and Robbert. 2016). According to the Nigerian Prison Service Manual (2011), the realisation of one of the major objectives of the prisons service - the reform and rehabilitation of inmates are to be done through a complicated set of mechanisms consisting of, among others: conscientisation, group work, case work session, recreational activities, religious services, adult and remedial education programmes, educational development project, skills acquisition programme, mid-range industrial production, agricultural service and after-care service programme. The prison's services providers should not only identify the causes of the prisons' inmates' anti-social behaviour but also endeavour to set them on the road to reform through induced self-rediscovery and eventual change for the better.

However, the problems of care and rehabilitation of prisoners is a major social problem in almost all the prisons in the country. Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre in particular needs much attention. Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre today holds more than its capacity and insufficiency of funds has made the upkeep of the inmates a difficult task. Despite various reforms embarked upon by government geared towards care and rehabilitation of prisoners in Nigeria, the conditions of these prisoners left much to be desired. The study seeks to answer the following questions: is the prison providing necessary environment for inmates to become better citizens after serving their term? What are the operational strategies adopted to achieve the reformation and ultimate rehabilitation of prisoners?

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the general conditions of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre?
2. What are the methods of rehabilitations of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre?
3. What are the factors militating against effective rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre?
4. What could be done to improve the management of rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of the study is to examine the extent to which prison inmates are rehabilitated in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre. Specifically, the study aims at:

1. examining the conditions of prison inmates in Sokoto State Central Prison
2. Identifying the methods of rehabilitating inmates in Sokoto Central Prison.
3. Examining the factors militating against effective rehabilitation of prison inmates in Sokoto Central Prison
4. Provide useful suggestions cum recommendations on how the problems of rehabilitation of prison convict can best be tackled.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between general conditions of inmates and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre.

2. H1: There is relationship between general conditions of inmates and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre.

### **Hypotheses Two**

3. H0: There is no relationship between the methods of rehabilitations of inmates and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre.
4. H1: There is relationship between the methods of rehabilitations of inmates and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre.

### **Definition of Concepts**

#### **Crime**

A crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority. A crime is an act harmful not only to some individuals but to the society at large. The notion that acts such as murder, rape, and theft are to be prohibited exists worldwide, Ernest, (2016).

#### **Correctional Institution**

The prison institutions are for ensuring punishment, penitence and correction of the offenders. Hassan & Oloyede, (2013) defined prison as a place delineated and declared by law of the state to ensure restraints and custody of the individuals accused or convicted of violating criminal law of the state.

#### **Inmates**

In the words of Abba (2016), prison inmate can be seen as a person who is kept in a confined place known as the prison, as an accused or convicted of violating the criminal law. Hence, in the context of this study, prison inmate can be seen as a person legally confined in an institution designed to securely house and rehabilitate the convicted or those on trial, Davis, Robert and Jennifer, (2014).

#### **Rehabilitation**

Concept of rehabilitation rests on the assumption that criminal behaviour is caused by some factor. This perspective does not deny that people make choices to break the law, but it does assert that these choices are not a matter of pure "free will." Instead, the decision to commit a crime is held to be determined, or at least heavily influenced, by a person's social surroundings, psychological development, or biological makeup, Campbell (2005).

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The Rehabilitation Theory is employed. 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 crime committing capacities. Similarly, Ugwuoke (2000:56) asserts that, “rehabilitation requires that the offender be treated humanely with dignity and respect, be shown love, kindness and compassion not cruelty, contempt and hate.”

This theory indeed captures the thrust of this study as it tries to establish the justification or rationale behind the treatment of inmates by “changing the attitude and behaviour of criminals so that they will be able to choose lawful means, in satisfying their needs.”

## **Methodology**

### **Research design strategy**

Research approach employed is a mixed method which is the use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to gather data to inform this study. Quantitative research was used to collect numerical data in order to explain, predict and control phenomena of interest and data analysis was mainly statistical.

### **Sample Size and Sampling techniques**

The target population for this study are the inmates and the authorities of Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre. Based on the Raosoft sample size calculator using the confidence level of 95% and the margin of error at 5% the sample size of the population study is therefore 264. The sample technique applied in this study is a two stage cluster sampling, where a simple random sample of clusters was selected for fair representation, and within each sampled cluster a simple random sampling method was applied.

### **Methods of Data collection**

Methods of data collection include primary and secondary wherein the primary method of data collection, two instruments were used which are the Questionnaire and Interview. And

Secondary data on the other hand were collected through a descriptive analysis of published and unpublished literature, that include textbooks, professional journals, magazines, newspapers, internet materials, and papers presented at seminars and conferences.

### Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically using distribution tables, charts, and other measures of central tendencies by the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Such were used to achieve the objectives. Where Chi-square table was used to test the hypotheses.

### The Conditions of Prison Inmates in Sokoto State Central Prison

This section is designed to examine items relating to the conditions of prison inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre.

**Table 1: Inmates' Perspective on their Condition in the Medium Security Custodial Centre**

Rehabilitation Services/Programmes	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		No Response	
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Freq.	%
I receive support from the staff in this custodial centre when I need it	139	63.2	12	5.3	46	21.1	23	10.5
I have been taught how to address/control my offending behaviour in this custodial centre	153	69.5	7	3.2	35	15.8	25	11.6
I am being helped to lead a law abiding life after released	176	80.0	2	1.1	17	7.4	25	11.6
I am encouraged to work towards goals/targets in this custodial enter	170	76.8	2	1.1	23	10.5	25	11.6
Most of the rehabilitation services in this custodial Centre are not working	111	50.5	9	4.2	75	33.7	25	11.6
The staff paid little attention to the used of rehabilitation programmes available	127	57.9	12	5.3	56	25.3	25	11.6
The quality of my living conditions in this custodial Centre is poor	118	53.7	16	7.4	56	25.3	30	13.7
<b>Security</b>								
This custodial Centre is well secured because the staff carried out their security task	174	78.9	2	1.1	21	9.5	23	10.5

properly									
There is no where I can go in this custodial Centre without being observed, assessed and evaluated	167	75.8	-	-	30	13.7	23	10.5	
The prevention of self-harm and suicide is a top priority in this custodial Centre	158	71.6	14	6.3	25	11.6	23	10.5	
<b>Drugs</b>									
The level of drugs abused in this custodial Centre is high	56	25.2	18	8.4	121	54.8	25	11.6	
The custodial Centre is not doing much to prevent drugs been smuggled	74	33.7	5	2.1	113	51.6	28	12.7	
<b>Treatment</b>									
Bullying behavior and threat is on the high level in this custodial Centre	81	36.9	29	13.1	85	38.5	25	11.5	
The disciplinary system in this custodial Centre is unfair	100	45.2	22	10.3	75	34.0	23	10.5	
The correctional officials treats inmates fairly when applying the rules	169	76.8	9	4.2	19	8.5	23	10.5	
My legal rights as an inmate is respected in this custodial Centre	111	50.5	7	3.2	77	34.8	25	11.5	

Table 1 shows the inmates' perspective on their condition in the medium security custodial centre. The first section in the Table shows the rehabilitation services and programmes in which 63.2% of the inmates indicated that they receive support from the staff of the custodial centre whenever the need arises, 69.5% indicated that they have been taught how to control my offending behaviour in this custodial centre, 80.0% indicated that the programme will help them to lead a law abiding life after they are released, 76.8% indicated that the programme has encouraged them to work towards goals/targets.

Contrary to all of the positive effects of the rehabilitation services and programmes the result show that 50.5% of the respondents indicated that most of the rehabilitation services in this custodial centre are not working. 57.9% indicated that the staff paid little attention to the use of rehabilitation programmes available. 53.7% indicated that the quality of their living conditions in this custodial centre is poor.

The section on security shows that 78.9% of the inmates indicated that their custodial centre is well secured because the staff carried out their security task properly, 75.8% indicated that there is no where they can go within the custodial centre without being observed, assessed and evaluated, 71.6% indicated that prevention of self-harm and suicide is a top priority in this custodial centre.

Regarding drugs, 54.8% of the inmates indicated that the level of drugs abuse in the custodial centre was not high and 51.6% also indicated that the custodial centre is doing much to prevent drug being smuggled into the centre.

Lastly on treatment, 36.9% of the inmates indicated that bullying behaviour and threat were on the high level in this custodial centre, 45.2% of the respondents indicated that the disciplinary system in the custodial centre is unfair, 76.8% indicated that the correctional officials treats inmates fairly when applying the rules, 50.5% indicated that inmates' legal rights were respected in the custodial centre.

### **The Methods of Rehabilitating Inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre**

The tables presented below showed the methods used for rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto medium security custodial centre.

**Table 2: Rehabilitation Programmes, Time and Functions**

<b>Rehabilitation Programmes Available in the Custodial Centre</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tailoring	23	10.5
Islamic education	21	9.5
Western education	30	13.7
Carpentry	9	4.2
Sport	5	2.1
Welding	14	6.3
Other Skills acquisition	74	33.7
No Response	44	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number of times Programmes hold</b>		
Once time a week	39	17.9
Two times a week	42	18.9
Three times or more a week	113	51.6
No Response	26	11.6

<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Functions of a correctional Programme/Services</b>		
To change people's attitude from bad to good	116	52.6
To guide and protect prisoner from crime	47	21.1
Justice to prevail	18	8.4
No Response	39	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The result on Table 2 shows that seven rehabilitation services were available in the prison, 33.7% were other skill acquisition, 13.7% were western education, 10.5% were tailoring, 9.5% was Islamic education, 6.3% were welding, 4.2% were carpentry, 2.1% were sport.

Also, 51.6% of the inmates indicated that rehabilitation programme holds three or more times in a week. So also, the research found that the correctional home performed three major functions; 52.6% was to change people's attitude from bad to good, 21.1% was to guide and protect prisoners from crime and 8.4% indicated that it was to ensure that justice prevailed. However, the major function of the correctional service was to correct or change the inmates attitudes from bad to good.

**Table 3: Effectiveness of the Custodial Centre**

<b>Effectiveness of this custodial centre as a correctional institution</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very effective	72	32.6
Effective	88	40.0
Not Effective	12	5.3
Missing System	48	22.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Can you describe yourself as changed person now</b>		
Yes	164	74.7
No	23	10.5
Missing System	33	14.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 3 shows that 32.6% and 40.6% of the inmates indicated that the custodian centre was very effective and effective respectively which implies that 72.6% see the custodian centre as an

effective correctional institution. This is because 74.7% of the inmate indicated that thus far they are changed persons.

### **Factors militating against effective rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre**

This section contains only one table that shows the factors that are militating against the effectiveness of rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre. In all three items were considered in this section.

**Table 4: Militating Factors**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Level of satisfaction with provision of good quality food</b>		
Low	49	22.1
Moderate	21	9.5
High	44	20.0
No Response	106	48.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Level of satisfaction with provision of good quality accommodation</b>		
Low	70	31.6
Moderate	25	11.6
High	37	16.8
No Response	88	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Cause of rise of recidivism in this custodial centre</b>		
Lack of intelligent	49	22.1
Drugs addict	7	3.2
Lack of attention	25	11.6
Lack of amnesty	5	2.1
Lack of job opportunity	67	30.5
No justice	23	10.5
Missing System	44	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 shows that 22.1% of the inmates indicated that their level of satisfaction with the provision of good quality food is low, 31.6% indicated that their level of satisfaction with provision of good quality accommodation is also low and 30.5% of the inmates indicated that lack of job opportunity is the cause of rise of recidivism in this custodial centre. The result implies that within the facility good quality food and good quality accommodation are the factors that are militating against the effectiveness of rehabilitation of prison inmates in Sokoto Central Prison. While on the other hand, lack of job opportunity account for the rise of recidivism in this custodial centre, thereby militating against the effectiveness of the centre.

### Hypotheses Testing

This section dealt with the analysis and interpretation of the results gotten from the two hypotheses that were tested.

#### Hypothesis One

H0: There is no relationship between general conditions of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre

H1: There is relationship between general conditions of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre

**Table 5: Chi-Square Table**

		Can you describe yourself as person now		Total	Pearson Chi-Square Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
		Yes	No				
This custodial centre is well secured, the staff carried out their security task properly	Strongly agree	52	3	55	14.352 <sup>a</sup>	4	.006
	Agree	44	4	48			
	Neither agree nor disagree	5	0	5			
	Disagree	7	3	10			
	Strongly disagree	0	3	3			
Total		108	13	121			

Table 5: The result has shown that the Calculated Chi-square (X-Cal), which is 14.352<sup>a</sup> is more than the table value (X-tab), which is 5.991 at df = 4 and 0.05 level of significance. This, means that the H<sub>0</sub> which states that there is no relationship between general conditions of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre is rejected while the H<sub>1</sub> which states that there is relationship between general conditions of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre accepted.

#### Hypothesis Two

H0: There is no relationship between the methods of rehabilitations of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre.

H1: There is relationship between the methods of rehabilitations of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Security Custodial Centre.

**Table 6: Chi-Square Table**

	Can you describe yourself as changed person now			Pearson Chi-Square Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Yes	No	Total			
Do you receive any supervision from the correctional authorities	Yes 76	No 5	81	5.144 <sup>a</sup>	1	.023
	No 27	4	31			
Total	103	9	112			

Table 6 The result has shown that the Calculated Chi-square (X-Cal), which is 5.144<sup>a</sup> is more than the table value (X-tab), which is 5.991 at  $df = 1$  and 0.05 level of significance. This, means that the  $H_0$  which states there is no relationship between the methods of rehabilitations of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Central Prison is rejected while the  $H_1$  which states that there is relationship between the methods of rehabilitations of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Central Prison is accepted.

### Conclusion

Given that the rehabilitation of offenders can be achieved through carefully designed and well-articulated reformative and rehabilitative programmes, this current research attempts to offer an understanding of the rehabilitation programmes available in Sokoto Medium Custodial Centre as experienced by the inmates, as well as their effectiveness. The study found out based on the results that the inmates received support from the staff of the custodial centre whenever the need arose, that they were taught how to address and control their offending behaviour in the custodial centre and that the programme has encouraged them to work towards goals and targets. All of these would eventually help them to lead a law-abiding life after they are released. On the other hand, most of the rehabilitation services in the custodial centre are not working because of the lack of working materials and insufficient funding. Also, the research further reveals that the living conditions in the custodial centre are very poor.

Through a hypothesis testing the study was able to find out that there is relationship between general conditions of prisoners and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Custodial Centre. 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 its statutory function; this is evident in the research hypothesis two which according to findings the study accepted that there is relationship between the methods of rehabilitations of inmates and the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates in Sokoto Medium Custodial Centre.

The study therefore, recommends that the Government should develop alternative forms of sentencing other than incarceration to reduce overcrowding and to ease offender's integration

into the society. States should endeavour to carry out prison reforms from time to time. There should also be Provision of a healthy and conducive environment for the inmates. Recreation of effective rehabilitation programmes by the government for the correctional centre to serve its main purpose. There is also a special need for the introduction of an online University system such as NOUN in the custodial centre as 85% of the inmates are youth within their productive stage with no higher education and most of them spend a very long time awaiting trial some up to sixty (60) months. So instead of spending their productive stage in a confinement and later after release struggle for an education, there is need for the Government to introduce a degree level education in the custodial centre as there is in the Kaduna Central correctional centre.

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