

## **Influence of Adult Literacy Education Programmes on Reformation and Rehabilitation of Correctional Centre Inmates in Rivers State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*The study determines the influence of adult literacy education programmes on reformation and rehabilitation of correctional centre inmates in Rivers State. Four hundred and sixty-two (462) inmates and two hundred and forty (240) correctional staff were drawn from a population of four thousand eight hundred and ninety seven (4897) inmates and four hundred and eighty eight (488) correctional staff using 10% and 30% proportionate random sampling technique respectively. Data were collected by the use of structured questionnaire facilitated by four (4) trained correctional staff. Data analysis used mean, standard deviation, and z-test statistics. The study found that adult literacy programmes enable inmates to acquire reading, writing and numeracy skills. It builds self confidence among inmates, enables inmate participate effectively in other learning activities and enable inmates to communicate effectively. It was therefore recommended that the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) should engage the service of trained literacy education facilitators in order to guide inmates on acquisition of literacy skills.*

**Keywords:** Adult literacy education, Literacy education programmes, Reformation and Rehabilitation, Correctional centre inmates

### **Introduction**

Correctional centre is a penal institution established for punishment, incapacitation, separation, retribution, reformation and rehabilitation of people who are legally convicted and sentenced by competent court of law (Iwarimie-Jaja, 2013). Garner (2010) viewed correctional centre is a centre of confinement for convicted inmates. Earlier Cross (2007) had it that correctional centre as a place delimited and declared as such by the law of the state and created to ensure restraint and custody of individuals accused or convicted of violating the criminal laws of the state.

Purseley in Ikoh (2011) recorded that the pre-colonial era brought about the availability of correctional centres in Nigeria, where people who deviated from the social norms and values were either kept for trial or punishment. Among the Yorubas, there was a correctional system in *Ogboni* House. In the Tivland, a building was set aside in the chief's compound for offenders. There existed the *Ewedo* in the Bini kingdom and the *GidanYari* among the Hausa/Fulani. Individuals who sought redress from those who wronged them allowed the society to determine the type of punishment commensurate with the offence. Punishment was defended as permitting the offenders the feeling of having atoned for their actions while affirming among the law abiding members of the society, the appropriateness of their noncriminal behavior. The advent of colonialism brought modern correctional centres to Nigeria. The correctional system became organized along the British prison model. In 1872, the Broad street correctional centre was opened in Lagos with a capacity of 300 inmates (Alemika&Chukuma, 2001). After the amalgamation of 1914, the colonial authority promulgated the 1916 ordinance which empowered the Director of correctional centres to make standing order for organization, discipline, control and general administration of staff and inmates (Dambazua, 2007).

After independence in 1960, it became necessary to reorganize the correctional services in the country. This resulted in the Federal Government White Paper of 1971 and subsequent promulgation of Decree No. 9 of 1972. The Decree which later became CAP 366 of 1970, laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria gave legal backing for the unification and operation of Nigerian Correctional Service (Otodo&Ugwuoke, 2015).

The Nigerian Correctional Service is therefore constitutionally responsible for ensuring the safe custody of offenders as well as their reformation, rehabilitation and integration which are its ultimate aim. Igbo (2007) asserts that these responsibilities are discharged through carefully

designed and well-structured administrative, reformatory and rehabilitative educational programmes among which is adult literacy programmes aimed at inculcating discipline, respect for laws and order and the dignity of honest labour. The inmate, in this wise is prepared to become not only law abiding but also useful to both himself or herself and the society at the expiration of his or her sentence. This is contrary to the colonial correctional centres in Nigeria which were not designed for reformation and rehabilitation rather correctional centres were intended to be punitive. In tandem with Igbo's (2007) view, Mango (2006) states that inmates were used for public work and other maintenance jobs for the colonial administrator as a form of punishment.

Reformation and rehabilitation refers to correcting, educating and re-orienting an inmate by equipping him/her with the necessary skills or training to enable him/her function as a law abiding citizen upon being released. It is a means which attempts to transform the inmate rather than using punishment. It is a step by step process that helps inmate to recover (Ihenacho, 2015). The major aim of reformation and rehabilitation is to help inmates become more effective and function well in the society they found themselves after a life-changing event. In line with the above assertion, Ogbaka, Ewelum and Apiti (2017) describe rehabilitation as a means of reforming an inmate by equipping him/her with the necessary skills or training that will better him/her to function as a law abiding citizen upon reintegration to the society. Reformation and rehabilitation changes the criminal behavior of inmates and gets them adapted back into the society by giving them education and training through which they acquire skills and when released, can find job and also gives them a sense of existence in the society.

Adult literacy education programmes as an aspect of reformation and rehabilitation services render to inmates in correctional centres transforms inmates as well as reduce the rate of

recidivism among inmates. Recidivism is a reversion of or repeating of one's criminal behavior after he/she has either experienced negative consequences of that behavior. It is conceptualized as a process where criminals go back to criminal activities resulting to re-arrest, reconviction and re-incarceration.

The rate of recidivism in Rivers state is on the increase, this is could be attributed to weak skills, low education level and poor employment prospects among others. This is in line with Igbinovia and Omorogiuwa (2019) assertion which states that inmates who participate in educational activities are less likely to reoffend after they are released into the society. Moak, Lowry and Webber (2005) also asserted that by remaining in one form of educational activities or the other, it is more likely that ex-inmates will avoid criminal activities and thus will not reoffend. Inactivity in correctional centres contributes to increase in the rate of recidivism as Tanimu (2010) affirmed that 65.2% of inmates were never assigned any work or educational activities especially if the inmates are awaiting trial. They only talk and fight in correctional centres and hardly do anything productive during the day or exercise general freedoms on the basis of their place in the correctional centre hierarchy, inmate quickly become dehumanized and learn new trick which hardened them upon been released. This however increases crime as well as the rate of recidivism

In Nigeria, Abrifor, Atere, and Muoghalu, (2010) estimated an upward trend of recidivism from 35% in 2007 to 44% in 2008 and 52.4% in 2010. Similarly, Nworu (2018) estimated a recidivism rate of 22.8% in Rivers state. With the increase of recidivism in Rivers state and Nigeria in general, there is need for the Nigerian Correctional Service to organize adequate reformatory and rehabilitative programmes among which are adult literacy education programmes in order to reduce the rate of recidivism among inmates.

Adult literacy education has been defined in different ways by scholars, academic and professional bodies in the field of adult education. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) in Adedokun (2015) states that literacy used to be seen as the ability to read and write a simple sentence, but this belief has evolved in modern times to include the capacity to read, write and listen effectively.

NjiinIhejirika (2015) stated that literacy education is the teaching of adults according to any organized formal or non-formal plans of education with the ultimate goal of helping them better their occupational opportunities and quality of life. Aderinoye (2004) defined literacy as the degree to which an individual possess mastery over symbols in their written forms, or is able to encode and decode the symbols which may be letters or numbers. Aderinoye went further to define literacy as the ability to encode and decode with a view of communicating information, skills, meaning and ideas for the facilitation of day to day living. That also informed the new definition of literacy by Nigeria National Council for Adult Education, 2011 as a dynamic concept formerly understood as just reading, writing and basic numeracy. The concept has been enlarged to encompass a whole range of more complex and a diverse skills and understanding.

UNESCO(2014) affirmed that literacy is a contextually bound continuum of reading, writing and numeracy developed through the learning and application in school and in other setting appropriate to youths and adults. It further defined literacy as the ability to read, write and do simple arithmetic and also acquire skills in the use of computer so that the individual can function effectively in the society. Literacy education is sometimes referred to as conventional literacy education. It is labeled traditional or conventional because it is the most common type of literacy sought after by most societies. For instance, it is the type of literacy which formal primary school pupils are equipped. It is that type of literacy which entails the teaching of

reading and writing, accompanied in most cases by elementary arithmetic. It is thus an isolated extracurricular activity which is self-justifying and an end in itself. Societies value literacy because it is widely believed that the acquisition of reading, writing and numeracy skills tends to accelerate the acquisition of other forms of knowledge and skills. For example, it is believed that a literate person is easily able to read for the purpose of acquiring low or high academic diplomas; it is equally believed that literacy accelerates the acquisition of vocational and professional skills.

Additionally, it is believed that that literate person is able to read simple instructions such as those on a voter's card, road signs, pharmaceutical product labels, agricultural products and other such labels. Literacy is equally believed to help an individual to function within his or her society as a citizen, worker, club members and family member. Literacy education is therefore the foundation of all forms of education and a prerequisite of lifelong which people ought to continue for the rest of their lifetime. As also stated by Haladu in Ihejirika (2015) for adults to improve the quality of their lives, they need not only essential learning tools of literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving, but also basic learning content such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, all of which are required by human beings to be able to survive, develop their full capacities, live and work with dignity, participate fully in development, make informed decisions and continue learning.

The target groups of literacy programmes in Nigeria can be deducted from the mandate and objectives of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education. The mandate is to provide basic literacy, post literacy, vocational and continuing education to the following target groups as stipulated by National Policy on Education (2013):

- a. Adult and adolescents (15 years and above) who have never been to school and cannot read or write;
- b. Adult and adolescents (15 years and above) who are above school going age but have not achieved the competencies of reading, writing and numeracy;
- c. Early school leavers who could not stay to achieve permanent literacy for effective work;
- d. Adult/youths requiring rehabilitation education including inmates known as “yandaba” in the North, “area boys” in the South-West and out-of-school boys in the South-East and South-South of Nigeria;
- e. School age children and youths (6-14 years) not enrolled in the formal school system.

Inmates are among the targets groups to which education should not be denied in respect of their exclusion, this is in accordance with the Education for All (EFA) movement. Literacy education therefore enables inmates to develop a sense of identity and the feeling of confidence about themselves. It removes their feeling of exclusion and enable them have the sense of belonging. Furthermore, literacy serves as a foundation for lifelong learning. Olajide (2015) describes lifelong learning as all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence within a person’s civic, social and employment related perspectives. It is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual. Literacy education therefore opens doors for other forms of learning and ensures that learning takes place continuously in order to make inmates functional.

Literacy education trains inmates on how to think and how to shift out things worth thinking about. Literacy helps them to see things clearly, to distinguish between the essential and the trivial. It gives them the frame of mind and the system of thought and judgment that enables inmates to have a role and fit into the society on discharged.

One of the most frightening things in our world is ignorance, not merely lack of knowledge, but the ignorance that consists of not knowing that one's situation can be better. Literacy helps inmates to think clearly and make good decisions about the relative importance of the various kinds of activities that will make them functional within and outside the correctional centre.

Literacy helps in fostering inmates' abilities, increases their potentialities and enables them to participate in social and economic activities. It equips them with the ability to make decisions and choices that will make them relevant in the day-to-day activities.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in all the four Federal correctional centres (Port Harcourt, Ahoada, Degema and Elele farm) in Rivers state, Nigeria. Four hundred and sixty-two (462) inmates and two hundred and forty (240) correctional staff were drawn from a population of four thousand eight hundred and ninety seven (4897) inmates and four hundred and eighty eight (488) correctional staff using 10% and 30% proportionate random sampling technique respectively. Data were collected by the use of structured questionnaire facilitated by four (4) trained correctional staff. Responses were rated on a 4-point summated rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2, Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1. Scores less than 2.50 were considered to be of low extent while scores from 2.50 and above were considered to be of high extent. Hypotheses were tested with z-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance to determine the extent of the influence of adult literacy education programmes on reformation and rehabilitation of correctional centres inmates in Rivers state.



## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Mean analysis of the extent adult literacy education programme reform and rehabilitate inmates**

S/N	Item Statement (Literacy Education Programme)	Inmates n=462			Staff n=240		
		Mean	Std	Decision	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Inmates who participate in literacy education acquire reading skills.	3.43	0.65	High Extent	3.42	0.64	High Extent
2	Literacy education enable inmates acquire writing skills.	3.34	0.63	High Extent	3.53	0.60	High Extent
3	Literacy education enable inmates acquire numeracy skills.	3.38	0.60	High Extent	3.36	0.67	High Extent
4	The skills in literacy education build self confidence among inmates.	3.37	0.63	High Extent	3.44	0.61	High Extent
5	Literacy skills enable inmates make informed decisions.	1.44	0.62	Low Extent	1.77	0.85	Low Extent
6	Literacy education enable inmates participate effectively in other learning activities.	3.57	0.64	High Extent	3.47	0.67	High Extent
7	Literacy education enable inmates communicate effectively.	3.28	0.61	High Extent	3.46	0.57	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

The analyzed data in Table 1 above revealed that statement item 1 has mean scores of 3.43 and 3.42, standard deviation of 0.65 and 0.64 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively. Statement item 2 has mean scores of 3.34 and 3.53, standard deviation of 0.63 and 0.60 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively. Statement item 3 has mean scores of 3.38 and 3.36, standard deviation of 0.60 and 0.67 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively. Statement item 4 showed mean scores of 3.37 and 3.44, standard

deviation of 0.63 and 0.61 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively. Statement item 5 has mean scores of 1.44 and 1.77, standard deviation of 0.62 and 0.85 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively. Statement item 6 showed mean scores of 3.57 and 3.47, standard deviation of 0.64 and 0.67 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively. Statement item 7 has mean scores of 3.28 and 3.46, standard deviation of 0.61 and 0.57 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively. The table showed a grand mean of 3.12 and 3.21, standard deviation of 0.63 and 0.66 for correctional inmates and correctional staff respectively which indicate a high extent of literacy education programmes on the reformation and rehabilitation of inmates in Rivers State

**Table 2: z-test analysis of the significant difference in the mean responses of inmates and staff on the extent to which literacy education programme reform and rehabilitate inmates in Rivers State**

Respondents	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Level of sign.	Decision
Inmates	462	3.12	0.63	700	-1.74	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Correctional staff	240	3.21	0.66					

The data in table 2 reveals that the calculated z-value is -1.74 while the critical z-value is 1.96. Since the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value at 0.05 significance level and 700 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of inmates and staff on the extent to which adult literacy education programme reform and rehabilitate inmates in Rivers state is hereby accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean response of inmates and staff on the extent to which adult literacy education programme reform and rehabilitate inmates. Adult literacy education programmes therefore reform and rehabilitate inmates. The findings agree with Enuke (2001) submission that adult literacy education enables inmates to develop a sense of identity and the

feeling of exclusion and enable inmates have the sense of belonging. The study also corroborate with Olajide (2015) who states that adult literacy education is the master key that opens doors for other forms of learning and ensures that learning takes place continuously in order to make inmates functional. It makes inmates to apply what they have learnt in literacy education to their everyday activities. He describes literacy education as a lifelong learning which builds skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual. Literacy education helps to foster inmates' abilities, increase their potentials and enables inmates to participate in social and economic activities.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the analyzed data, the study therefore concluded that adult literacy education programmes to a high extent reform and rehabilitate correction centre inmates. This implies that adult literacy education programmes should be adequately organized in correctional centres in Nigeria to achieve the goal of reformation and rehabilitation of inmates.

The study therefore recommends that the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) should engage the service of trained literacy education facilitators in order to guide inmates on acquisition of literacy skills.

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