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ROLES OF LIBRARY SERVICES TO PRISON INMATES' REHABILITATION IN SOME SELECTED PRISONS OF SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA.

Abstract

This paper is titled roles of library services to prison inmates' rehabilitation in selected prisons of south western Nigeria. This study sought to examine the roles of public libraries in rehabilitation of prison inmates' in Ekiti and Osun State Prison facilities through the provision of valuable information. the paper exposes Services rendered by Prison Libraries in Osun and Ekiti States, Nigeria, it examined the information needs of the prisoners in Osun and Ekiti States, Nigeria, extent to which the prison libraries are meeting the information needs of the prisoners in Osun and Ekiti States, Nigeria and commonly observed obstacles inmates face daily in sourcing for and utilising of information resources in Nigerian prisons, prison library infrastructure, and services are outdated, not human-friendly and inadequate. It was recommended in the paper that for lasting reformation and rehabilitation to take place, unequivocal access to relevant library information resources through reading is undisputable in their struggle for survival, reconstruction, corrections and final reintegration into Nigerian society.

Introduction

For prisons to achieve the objectives of reformation and rehabilitation, there is the need for the exposure of prison inmates to library services. Exposure of prison inmates to adequate and timely information is necessary because a mind that is informed is opened to a reformed character. Information is a major resource in the development of human beings and the world entirely. Iloeje (2001) submits that information is the heart of the world developments. He further explains that our increased access to timely, accurate, relevant, reliable and current information has been a significant precursor to our technological innovations

Parallel to what Prytherch (2005) said, a correctional library is a library that is part of the operational units built inside a prison or a detention centre. Its services and functions are designed to provide the inmates access to information and opportunities for self-learning, since many of them are cut off from the outside world. The prison or detention centre library also functions as a social place -i.e., a place for the inmates to interact with the prison staff and meet with their family members. According to Marshall (2011), prisoners are cut-off from the outside world, and meaningful access to information is therefore vital to them. For this reason, prison libraries can play an important role in providing them with information and thereby enabling them to acquire the necessary livelihood and other practical skills –skills that these inmates would depend greatly upon when transitioning back into society one released.

According to Clark and MacCreaigh (2006), “We think the reasons libraries in prisons jails are important are the same reasons that educational, spiritual, and life-enriching programs in prisons and jails are important”, because prison libraries could provide positive influence on inmates’ lives. In other words, the prison and detention centre libraries do not only provide facilities for carrying out correctional or other related educational activities, but also have other social and recreational functions to serve. It is a safe place that acts as a ‘haven’ for the inmates, allowing them to escape from the harsh realities of prison.

As reported by Omagbemi and Odunewu (2007) Prisons are established confinements for the safe keeping of those legally interned or awaiting trials. Whichever way is the case, except for those who are to be executed upon the pronouncement of death penalty on them; prisons are expected to transform and reform the interned towards the re-integration of the affected individuals into the larger society on completion of their terms. For prisons to achieve the objectives of reformation and rehabilitation and successful reintegration of prison inmates to the society, there is the need for the provision of library services to inmates for their prompt to adequate and timely information because Information is a major resource in the development of human beings and the world entirely.

Prisons in Nigeria are total institutions. Inmates locked within their walls are segregated from the outside world, kept under constant scrutiny and surveillance, and forced to obey a strict code of official rules to avoid facing formal sanctions. Their personal possessions are taken from them and they must conform to institutional dress and personal appearance norms. Many human functions are strictly curtailed – heterosexual activity, friendship, family relationships, society, education, and participation in groups become seriously restricted or cut-off (Senna and Siegel, 1981). It is an institution designed to warehouse people who have been convicted of crimes. These individuals, known as prisoners or inmates, are kept in continuous custody on short term/ a long-term basis. Individuals who commit the most serious crimes are sent to prison for one or more years; the more serious the offense, the longer the prison term imposed. For certain crimes, such as murder, offenders may be sentenced to prison for the remainder of their lifetime. When individuals are accused of violating criminal law, they are tried in a court

and either convicted [found guilty] or acquitted [found not guilty]. A person who is convicted is then sentenced—that is, assigned a specific punishment. The sentence may involve fines, probation [supervised release], or incarceration [confinement]. Judges may sentence first-time offenders to probation instead of incarceration. Offenders convicted of more serious crimes and those who have prior criminal records may be sentenced to incarceration in either a jail or a prison, depending on the nature of the crime. Prisons are also called penitentiaries. The word penitentiary was coined in the late 1700s because certain groups believed that through solitary religious study of the Bible, prisoners would become penitent [remorseful] and reform their behaviour and possibly be integrated back to the society. Although prison structures existed in ancient civilizations, the widespread use of long-term confinement as a form of criminal punishment began only in the 15th century. Today every industrialized nation has prisons, and the role of prisons throughout the world is to punish criminals by restricting their freedom. According to Tappan [1960], retribution is a major ingredient of penal law and correctional systems; he contends that the effects of retributive legal and moral tradition will persist for a longer time, though increasingly mixed with other purposes of correctional treatment¹. In most countries, governments construct and operate prison systems. The prisons are devoted to the same general functions – administering some punishment to lawbreakers while keeping them securely in custody. However, several countries, including the United States, also authorize private corporations to build and run prisons under contract for the government. This is yet to come up in Nigeria’s penal system despite the privatization/deregulation programs embarked upon by the federal government

Libraries are major custodian of information, as information is acquired, processed and stored for retrieval when the need arise. Anafulu (1998) posits that the library is the engine room and power house where information is collected, stored, processed, and retrieved for use. A library is a body of collected information brought together for the purpose of knowledge dissemination and utilization. (Ibegwam, A. 2003).

Prisoners and prison officials, as members of the larger community desire and deserve information on events in the larger world, personal development, health information etc. Libraries are therefore a must in all correctional institutions if lasting rehabilitation of prison inmates is necessary for successful reintegration into Nigerian society.

Brief Descriptions of the Selected Prisons (Ado-Ekiti Minimum Prison, Ekiti State and Ilesha Maximum Prison, Osun State) In South Western Nigeria.

The Ado Ekiti Prison is situated in the city of Ado Ekiti in Ekiti State, South-western Nigeria. The prison is a medium security prison with a population of about 444 inmates. Out of this number, forty-seven [47] inmates have been convicted; this includes forty-six [46] male and one [1] female. There are four hundred and thirty-nine [439] male inmates on awaiting trial while six [5] females have been convicted. There are no death row inmates in the prison. The researcher was informed by the prison officials that once inmates are convicted and sentenced to death, they are usually transferred to either Ibara Prison in Abeokuta, Ogun State, South-West, Nigeria or Kirikiri Prison, Lagos State, South-West Nigeria both prisons being maximum security prisons. According to the prison officials, Ado Ekiti Prison does not have the facilities to accommodate death row inmates. Whereas, Ilesha Prison is situated at Ilesha/Ife express road Ayeso Street, Ilesha, Osun State Nigeria. Unlike Ado-Ekiti Prison, Ilesha Prison maintains the status of maximum prison, it houses about 861 inmates, 850 males inmates and 11 female

inmates respectively. The prison is situated at the outskirts of the old city of Ilesha, Osun State Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study sought to examine the roles of prison libraries in rehabilitation of prison inmates' in Ekiti and Osun State Prison facilities through the provision of valuable information. To attain this goal, the study focused on the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the Services rendered by Prison Libraries in Osun and Ekiti States, Nigeria.
2. To determine the information needs of the prisoners in Osun and Ekiti States, Nigeria. .
3. To know the extent to which the prison libraries are meeting the information needs of the prisoners in Osun and Ekiti States, Nigeria. .
4. To examine the conditions of the Prison libraries in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria.
5. To establish the problems that the prisoners encounter in information seeking in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities Nigeria.
6. To proffer solution to prison inmates' rehabilitation through provision of valuable information by prison libraries in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this research, the following questions have been formulated:

1. What are the services rendered by Prison Libraries in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria?
2. What are the information needs of the prisoner inmates in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria?
3. To what extent are the prison libraries meeting the information needs of the prisoners in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria?
4. What are the conditions of the Prison Libraries in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria?
5. What are the problems encountered by prison inmates while seeking information by the prisoners in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria?
6. How can prison Libraries proffer solution to prison inmates' rehabilitation through provision of valuable information in Osun and Ekiti States Prison Facilities, Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

Oyedum (2005) states that there is lack of recognition of the prison libraries by the government decision makers. One can confidently say that prison library system in Nigeria today is characterized by poor status in collection, facilities, human resources, modern information facilities like information computer technology (ICT) and poor quality services followed by poor ICT skills among staff. Most, if not all of these problems emanated from the mother of them all – poor funding.

Nwokeocha (1998) observed that lack of funds hamper the functionality of prison libraries in Nigeria and most of African Nations. He further maintained that inadequate funding is hindering rehabilitation processes and the development of prison libraries Nigeria. At present, many prison libraries have inadequate numbers of staff and others have staff that are seriously under-educated. If libraries in Nigeria are to survive, they must invest in the intellectual capital of their employees. Technology used to access information, can be a way to educate library staff, to provide resources and services required to bridge the information gap between developed and under-developed nations.

Bhattachajee (2007) informs that many of the prison libraries do not have their own buildings; some are located in small thatched huts while some share a room and time with their institutions. The quality and quantity of prison library services and the changes they can create in the society depends on its human resources. The staff of the prison library are not motivated adequately to boost morale and it is as a result of inadequate attention given to these workers that demotivated them from functioning at the optimum level.

According to Lehmann (2000), incarcerated persons generally have the same reading interests and information needs as individuals in the free world; they can, however, be considered disadvantaged by the mere fact that they do not have physical access to libraries in the outside community. Demographic data show that they are further disadvantaged by a disproportionately high level of illiteracy, lack of educational attainment, insufficient vocational skills, and a high rate of mental illness and emotional instability (Lehmann, 2000).

Omagbemi and Odunewu (2008) indicate that prisoners have information needs ranging from news and current affairs through legal information, religious information, psychological information, recreational information, vocational information to educational information. Lehmann and Locke (2005) in the International Federation of Libraries and Associated Institutions' (IFLA) Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners, make some suggestions on the types of library services to be provided prisons inmates. They advise that provision should be based on a demographic profile of the prison population and the library long-range plan. The IFLA's Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners (2005) and the U.S. Library Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions (1992) and the British Guidelines for Prison Libraries all address library staff qualifications and staffing levels. According to the IFLA guidelines, all prison libraries, regardless of size, should be supervised or managed by a professional librarian with the necessary qualifications and skills obtained through a university degree in library information science or equivalent library school diploma.

Lehmann (2000) adds that a broad academic education in traditional librarianship that includes coursework in outreach services, literacy, multicultural resources, legal collections, and

materials for the learning disabled, is probably the best foundation on which to build a career in prison librarianship.

The fact that “books can save” is supported by the American Correctional Association’s Manual on Library Service which states that the library programme and its services should be geared to all prison inmates enabling them to improve their ability to live successfully in these rapidly changing complex times.

Campbell (2005), Palmer (2000) and Sullivan (1947) agree on the therapeutic potential of the book on the mind. This practice of using books to ensure healing of the psychologically disturbed is referred to as bibliotherapy. The term bibliotherapy originated from two Greek words “biblion” (book) and “oepatteid” (healing). The Greek concept of healing embodies identification, insight, and catharsis.

Palmer (2000) describes the concept of bibliotherapy as the use of books to help people like prison inmates to solve problems and make change in their personal lives. Recognition of education as a principal factor in rehabilitation and in the eventual reintegration of offenders as productive members of the community is a significant new stance for prisons (Wilhemus, 1999). As a result, it is becoming increasingly important for prison libraries to take a lead in this direction to ensure the achievement of the mission of the prison and justify its existence.

Both Harlow (2003) and Wilhemus (1999) also believe that the educational role of the library is clear and that with over 40% of prisoners needing to attain high school equivalency, and another 50% ready to move past high school and into post-secondary education, there is an obvious need for academic programming in prisons and planned collections that supports their educational needs and goals. Roles of libraries in lives of prisoners are therefore important not only during the term of a prisoner's incarceration, but also when the prisoner is released back into society. This is especially true of prisoners who have spent a long time being incarcerated, as public libraries offer beneficial services. Prison libraries have the responsibility of assisting inmates to increase their learning capabilities and empower them so that upon completion of the prison term, they would be declared employable for self-actualization and reintegration into society. Information is the key for individual development and capacity building as it aids the improvement of well-being. Incarcerated persons have the same reading interests and information needs of other free citizens in the larger society as such, require to know what they can do with their lives while in prison (Shirley 2004; Campbell 2005). However, most of the prison libraries in Nigeria and many African nations have not really performed well in terms of library services.

METHODOLOGY

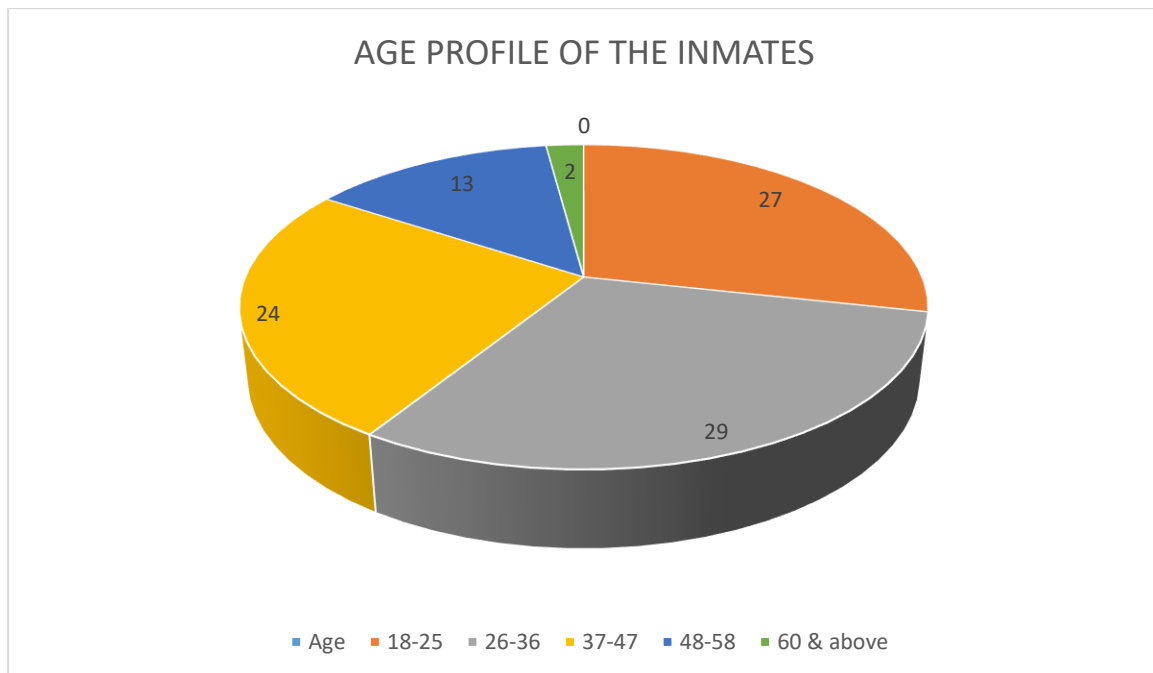
Descriptive survey research design was employed in this research. The population of the study was drawn from the two (2) selected Prison facilities in South-Western Nigeria, namely Ado-Ekiti Federal Prison situated along Are-Afao road, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State and Ilesha Federal Prison, Osun State Nigeria, situated along Ilesha/Ife express road Ayeso Street, Ilesha, Osun State Nigeria.

Population of the Study is presented as thus; Ado Ekiti prison Facilities accommodate (444)inmates 439 males and 5 females, while that of Ilesha Federal Prison facilities accommodate total of 861 inmates respectively,850 males and 11 females, altogether the population of the study is One Thousand Three hundred and five Inmates(1305)

Sample of the study is two hundred and fifty prison inmates drawn from the two Federal Prisons named above, one hundred and twenty-five prison inmates each from the pool of one thousand three hundred and five inmates. Two hundred and fifty prison inmates were randomly selected from the two selected prisons for the study. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the prison inmates selected to partake in the cause of the research. The first section was, to elicit information on the demographic characteristics of respondents. These include; Age, gender, and educational qualification. The second section of the questionnaire was designed to elicit information on services rendered by Prison Libraries through collaboration with public libraries in each of the State, information needs of the prisoner inmates in each of the State prison Service Nigeria. The third phase captured extent of the prison libraries meeting the information needs of the prisoners and condition of the Prison Libraries of both states, the questionnaire also generated information on how can prison Libraries proffer solution to prison inmates' rehabilitation through provision of valuable information in Ekiti and Osun State Prisons. The researcher also elicited information on factors militating against the available and accessibility of information by the prisoners were also. Data for the study was collected using questionnaire, administered to the respondents in their respective prison facilities with the assistance of prison warders who are staff in the two selected prison facilities studied. Two hundred and fifty copies of Questionnaire were distributed and Two hundred (200) copies returned were found useable for the research. Data gathered were analysed using tables with frequency and percentage.

DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH FINDINGS.

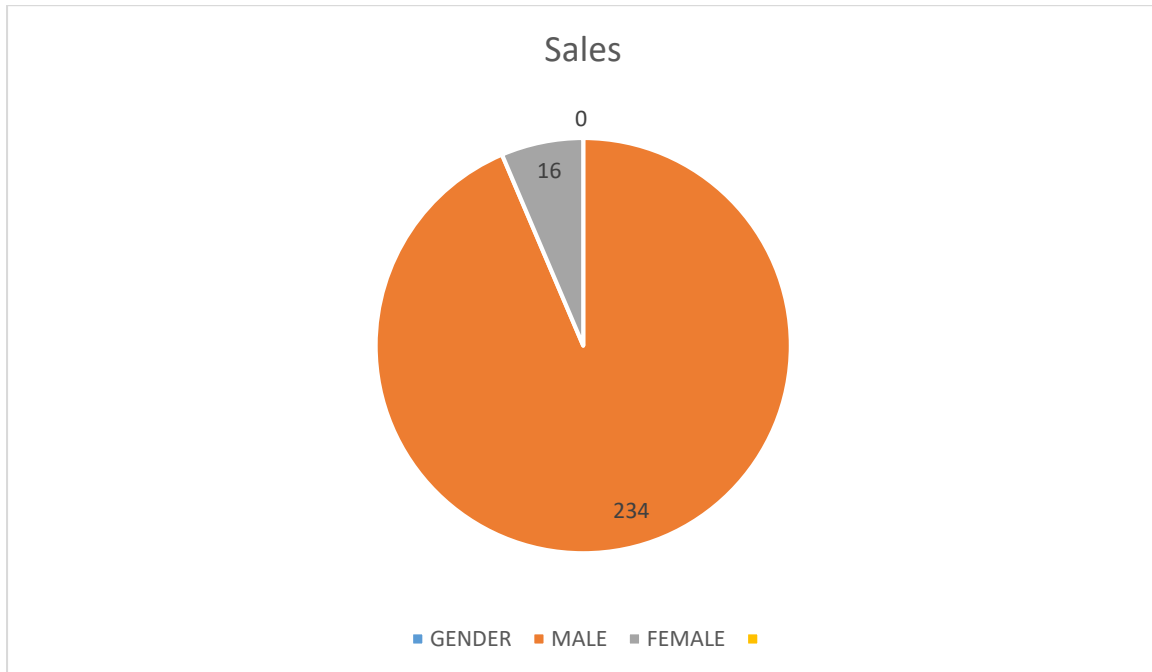
Demographic table 1



From the table above, ages of the respondents were as follow; 18-25 (27%), 26-36 (31%), 37-47 (25%), 48-58 (14%), 60 and above (2%). This showed that the largest proportion of the inmates' population fell within the active productive age class, which if proper rehabilitation and reformation elude them, may further endanger the society upon release.

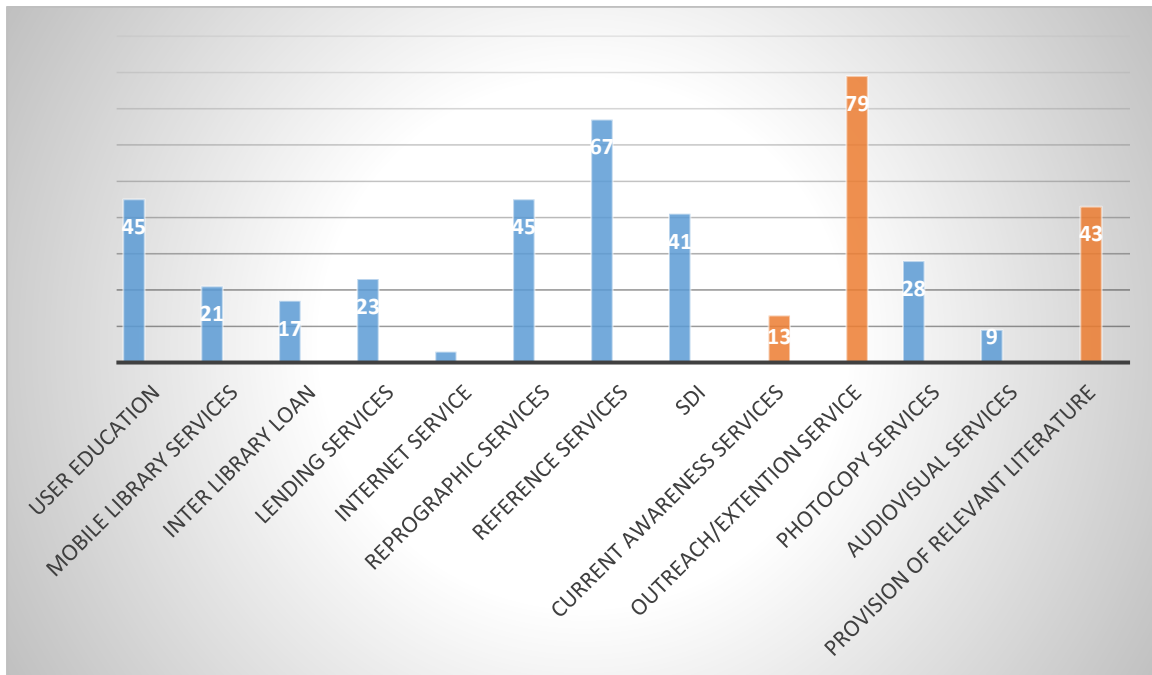
Demographic Table 2

Gender Profile of the Inmates in the Prisons Visited



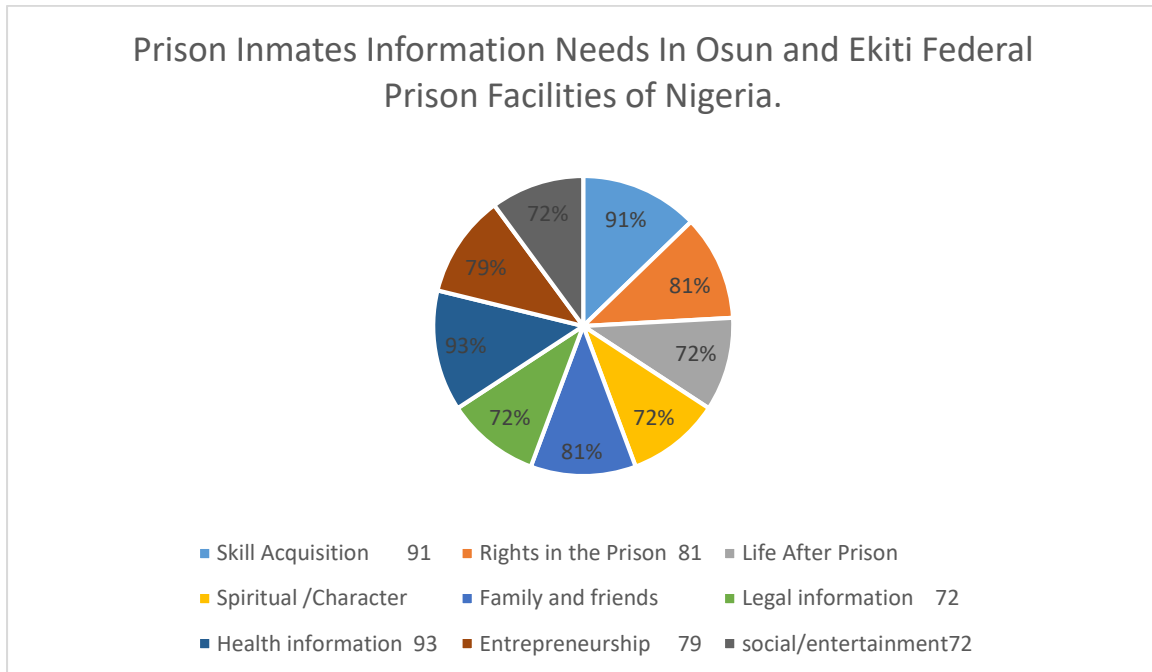
From the table above, out of the two hundred and fifty questionnaires distributed, male respondents were 234 and female were 16 in numbers.

Table 1. Services rendered by Prison Libraries in Ekiti and Osun Federal Prison Facilities?



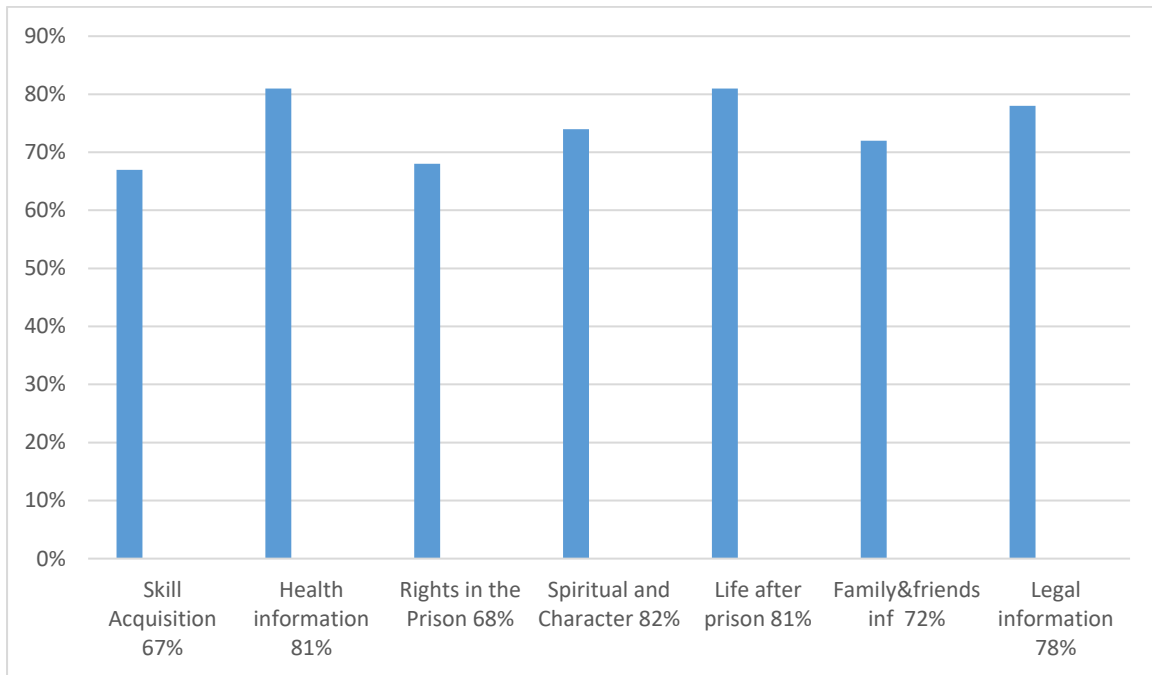
From the above chart, it was evident from the data analysed that prison inmates from the two Federal Prisons revealed Prison library services were available to inmates, data on library services as captured are presented as thus; User education 45%, mobile library services 21%, inter library loan 17%, lending services 23%, internet services 3%, Reprographic services 45%, Reference Services 67% Selective Dissemination of Information 41%, Current Awareness Services 13%, Extension Services 79%, Photocopy Services 28%, Audio Visual Services 9% and Provision of Relevant Literature 43% were provided as at the time of conducting the research at the two selected Prison Libraries. The interpretation of the analysed data showed that, prison inmates were aware that prison library services do exist and were provided but not sufficiently adequate to serve the needs of the prison inmates. This study is important for librarians, Nigerian Government and policy makers in the ministry of Interior of the need to improve the services prison libraries perform to prison inmates which have been contested to have lasting rehabilitation effect on prison inmates in Nigeria, because prison inmates globally feel and face the same urge to access and use information resources in meeting their information needs just like people who are not in prison confinement. Studies have also established that whether a man is in prison confinement or not, his or her taste for and of information may not change.

Table 2. what are the information needs of the prisoner inmates in Ekiti and Osun State Federal Prison Service?



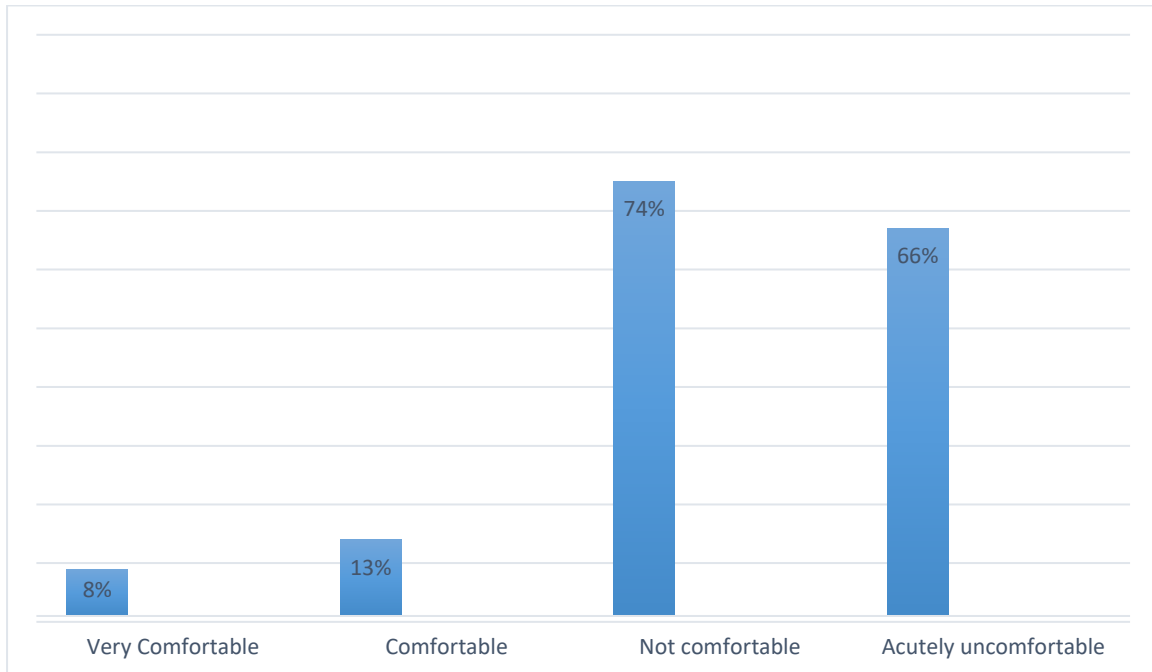
From the chart above, analysis of the data gathered revealed that prison inmates have information needs, these information needs are presented as thus; skill acquisition 91%, rights in the Prison 81%,life after prison 72%,Spiritual and character reformation based information72%, Family and friends 81%, legal information 72%,health information 93%, Entrepreneurship 79%, social/entertainment information

Table 3. Extent at which the prison libraries are meeting the information needs of the prisoners at Ekiti and Osun State prison Facilities.



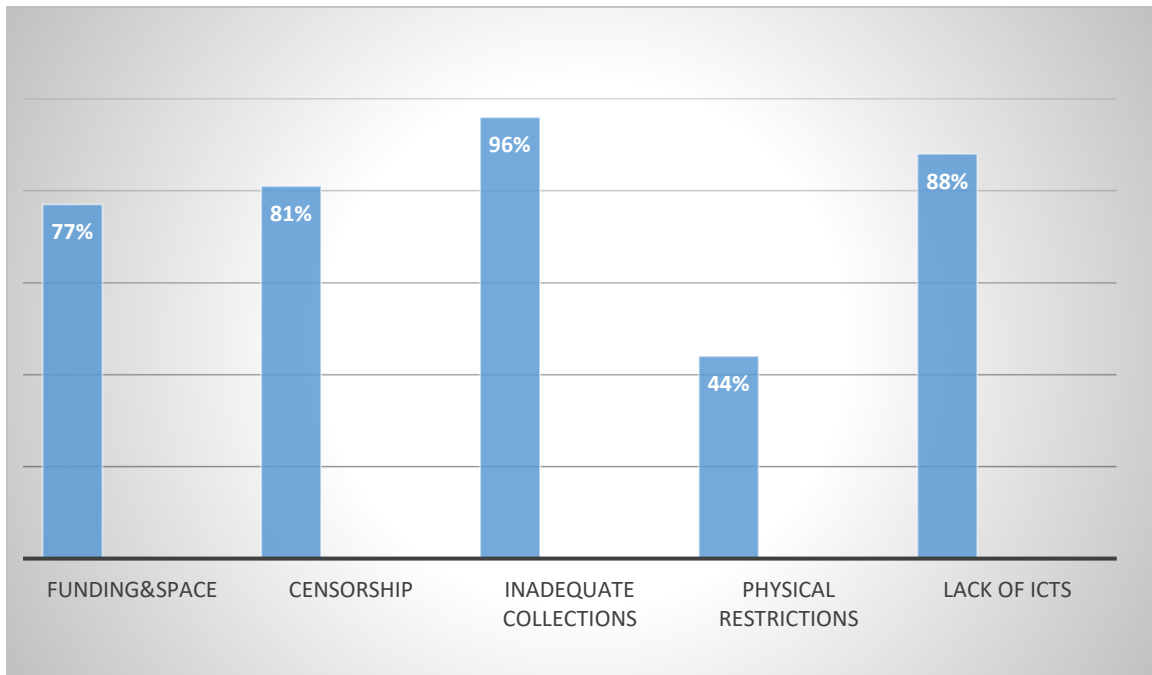
In table 3 above, data presented and analysed showed that Prison libraries in Osun and Ekiti States play significant roles in meeting the information needs of the prison inmates, as prison inmates showed that information consulted play key role in their day to day life while in incarceration, analysed data showed that inmates patronised and used prison library for skill acquisition 67%, health information 81%, Rights in the Prison 68%, Spiritual and character reformation information 82%, Life after prison 81%, family and Friends information 72%, Legal information 78%. To this end, the prison libraries in the states visited performed well in meeting the information needs of the inmates.

Table 4. Conditions of Ekiti and Osun State Federal Prison Facilities.



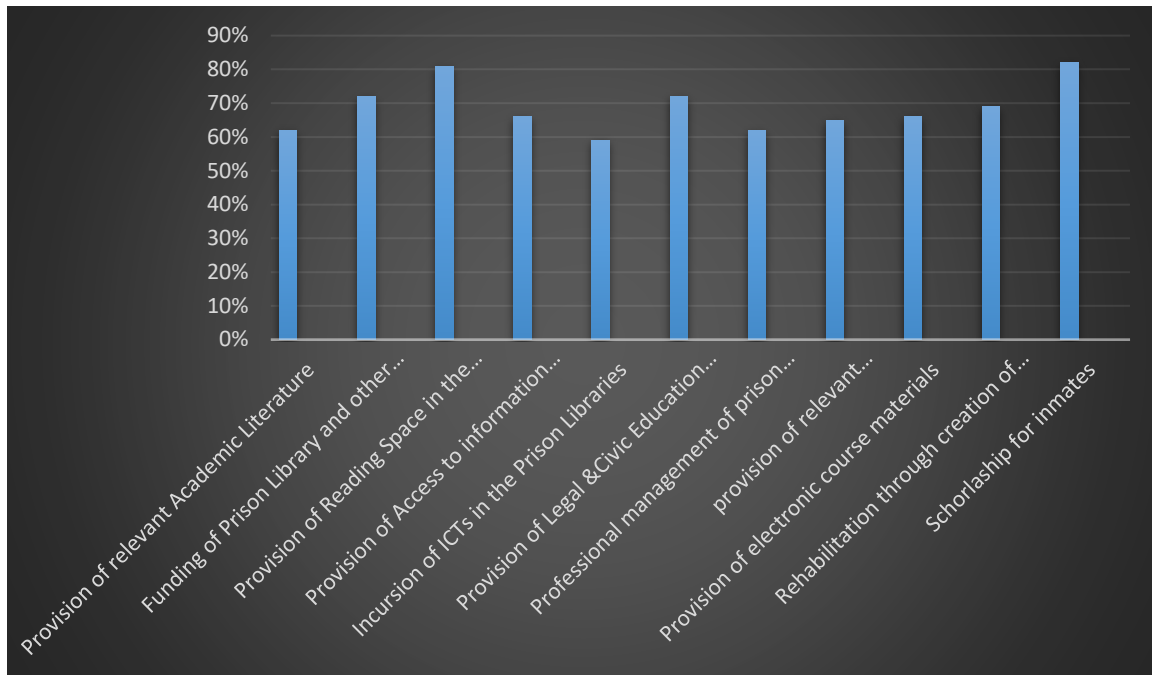
From table 4 above, analysed data revealed that majority of prison inmates are not comfortable with the conditions of prison facilities as data showed that 8% of prison inmates were very comfortable with the condition of prison facilities, while 13% also reveal that they were comfortable with the prison condition whereas 74 % of the respondents were not comfortable and 66 % also showed that they were acutely uncomfortable with the prison condition. To a great extent, the prison condition of the two prison facilities visited according to inmates were not comfortable to them. The implication of this is that prison inmates general wellbeing will adversely be affected while in incarceration., which will in turn affect their outlook on reformation and rehabilitation while in prison.

Table 5. Problems that the prisoners encounter in information seeking at Ekiti and Osun prison Facilities.



From the table 5 above, at a glance, data presented and analysed showed that prison inmates encountered myriads of problems while seeking information that could improve their wellbeing and rehabilitation while in incarceration. Data revealed that 77% of the inmates believed that funding and spatial limitations inhibit the inmates from seeking information, they believed that prison libraries of the two prison facilities under study were underfunded and lack conducive space for reading and independent study. Highest on the inmates' obstacles is the inadequate collection which data on this study put the figure at 96%. Censorship of collection recorded 81%, physical restrictions had 44% while lack of ICTs recorded 88%. This study is important for the policy makers in Nigeria that for rehabilitation to take place effectively on inmates, all the identified hindrances to information seeking must be adequately addressed so as to reposition the prison libraries in Nigeria to their rightful position in fostering rehabilitation of inmates through the provision of relevant information.

Table 6. How Prison Libraries proffer solution to prison inmates' rehabilitation Through provision of valuable information in Ekiti State Prison Service?



From table 6 above, analysed data showed that prison libraries, if adequately positioned for rehabilitation can bring lasting reformation to inmates in Ekiti and Osun State Prisons as data from inmates in the two prison studied showed that rehabilitation can be achieved through library services if there were more improved library services at the two prisons. Data were presented as thus; provision of relevant academic literature 62%, Funding of prison libraries and other facilities 72%, provision of reading space in the prison 81%, provision of access to information for reformation 66%, incursion of ICTs in the prison libraries 59%,provision of Legal and civic education literature 72%, professional management of prison libraries 62%, provision of aesthetic and entertainment literature 65%, provision of electronic course materials 66%, rehabilitation through more reading time 69%, Scholarship for prison inmates

82%. In no small way, mental growth and character formation are two major output of information use, therefore, Nigerian Government, prison service and librarians should factor the efficacy of library services in rehabilitation of inmates in Nigeria in order to reform the prison inmates and successfully prepare them for integration into the society.

Findings from the study.

The followings were found out in the course of carrying out this research;

1. User Education, Mobile Library Services, Interlibrary Loan, Lending Services, Internet Services, Reference Services Outreach Services, were provided by prison libraries visited.
2. Skill acquisition information, life after jail information, entrepreneurship information, social/entertainment information, health information, and spiritual information dominated the inmates information needs of the two prisons visited.
3. It was found out that the inmates scored the prison libraries high in meeting their information needs while in incarceration.
4. The conditions of the prisons visited were uncomfortable to the prison inmates in the two prison visited.
5. Poor funding, uncomfortable reading space, censorship, physical restrictions, lack of ICTs, inadequacy of relevant academic literature hindered the prison inmates' in their quest for seeking information in the prison libraries visited.
6. Rehabilitation of prison inmates will be achievable provided that prison libraries make available to inmates: provision of relevant academic literature, more funding of prison libraries, incursion of ICTs, provision of more reading space, provision of legal and civic education, provision of electronic course materials, sourcing for Scholarships and provision of more reading time to prison inmates.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

Shockingly, Nigerian Government, Ministry of Education, Ministry of justice, Ministry of Interior and librarians are painfully aware that as densely populated as Nigerian prisons have become in recent time, library services to inmates have been unpopular, rehabilitation has become almost impossible and instead of transformation, most often, released prisoners turn out to be more hardened and sophisticated in criminal engagements. No thanks to the inadequate funding of prison libraries in Nigeria, poor prison conditions, poor accessibility and strict use of essential information resources within prison walls of over two hundred prison facilities in Nigeria.

There is need for library services to step up in Nigerian prisons' libraries, services that boost accessibility to information resources and inmates' patronage of prison library, overall library services efficiency, education and knowledge level of inmates should be strongly encouraged in order to purge Nigerian society of crime and youth restiveness through rehabilitation of inmates via provision of relevant information to people in incarceration.

Dilapidated infrastructure, together with lack of information and communication technology use in our correctional facilities should be properly addressed, prison inmates in Nigeria have suffered great neglect, therefore there is need for improvement of their mental development through unequivocal access to library resources capable of influencing rehabilitation and reformation of prison inmates and their psychological wellbeing in confinement and after release, a good book is a good friend, teacher and company says Ephraim (2011). The library, which is a centre where good books and other information resources are made available for use, can build the emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing of people who find themselves in incarceration or work in correctional institutions such as ours. However this paper recommended some salient solutions if adopted will in no small way improve rehabilitation and reformation of prison inmates in Nigerian prisons these recommendations are as follow;

1 Incursion of Information and Communication Technology

Advent of massive open online courses must be strongly used to ensure the exposure of inmates to higher education and it is suggested that African correctional facilities partner with local institutions of higher learning and universities to access teaching staff.

2 Evaluation of Library Services to Inmates

There should be periodic evaluations of library resources and services to ensure they meet the needs of the targeted users. People-friendly services should be encouraged among prison library staff such as sourcing for scholarships for inmates, provision of satellite television /cable television service and newspaper service for inmates to promote awareness and keeping them informed about happenings outside the prison walls should be strongly encouraged which is lacking in most correctional institutions in developing nations.

3 Funding

The agency/authority responsible for the prison library should ensure that the library is funded adequately and receives annual allocations to cover salaries, library materials, subscriptions, equipment, IT, supplies, contractual services, interlibrary delivery, network/consortia memberships, staff training, and database fees.

4 Space and Other Physical Facilities

- In modern prison facilities, the physical space occupied by the library should be designed specifically for library use, work flow, and functionality. In older facilities, remodelling may be necessary for the library to function efficiently.
- Specialists in library design should be consulted during the planning process. The effectiveness and success of library services are to a large extent related to a welcoming and comfortable physical environment.
- The library should be situated at a central location within the prison complex, preferably within or near the education department. The library should be easy to reach for the largest number of prisoners and be accessible for persons with physical disabilities.
- The library should be a separate and lockable area.

The design should include the following:

Functional lightning for reading, computer use, and other library specific functions acoustical treatment for walls, floor, and ceiling climate control (heating, cooling, ventilation) load bearing capabilities sufficient for book stacks electrical and data outlets sufficient to accommodate the required technical and electronic equipment visual control of the entire library space lockable storage space telephone to the outside electronic emergency communication system

5 Development of General Academic Collection

The prison library is currently stocked with materials that are largely for basic and preparatory education as well as religious materials. The collection also excludes any standard textbook materials for academic purposes. This calls for the development of a collection that is more academic in nature in diverse subject areas. The Prison Library must also make provision for audio visual materials, computers, as well as a simulated Internet for learning by inmates. Finally, for optimal use of the collection of the Library, prisoners must be involved in the selection and acquisition of materials to satisfy their needs.

6 Provision of Legal and Civic Education Literature for Prison Inmates

Books on the law must also be available as awareness of the law serves to deter current offenders from further breaking of the law, an act referred to as recidivism. This could also be the starting point for the establishment of a prison law library to offer basic legal education to

inmates on their basic rights. The need for prison libraries in Ghana is further re-enforced by a recent ruling of the Supreme Court of Ghana to allow prisoners to exercise their franchise. In line with this, the Government of Ghana must insist that prison authorities make a portion of their budgetary allocation available for the development of libraries in every prison in Ghana.

7 Professional Management of Prison Library

The study also revealed that the Prison Library is not managed by a professional librarian, but by inmates and untrained “librarians” who normally have Senior High School Certificates or a similar qualification. A minimum qualification of a Diploma in Library Studies is required of the library manager. The character of the librarian must be one interested in working with prisoners and a person with a strong character to be able to provide adequate information for the transformation of the lives of prisoners. The librarian must spend at least five hours of direct service per week for inmates (ALA, 2007). The person must be schooled on prison security as this is the utmost concern of prison authorities.

8 Reading Promotion for Inmates through Outreach Services

A readership promotion must be embarked upon to whip the interest of inmates in reading. It must be made known to them the benefits of reading in the rehabilitation process. Prison authorities should be aware that inmates who are engaged in productive pursuits are less likely to cause problems and disturbances, thus properly preparing such inmates for return to the free society. This also calls for the extension of public library services to the prisons, a programme that could be spearheaded by the Ghana Library Authority. The prison librarian can serve as a liaison to ensure external service providers are familiar with prison rules and regulations as well as in the design of appropriate programmes for inmates.

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