

## Extent Of Reformation Of Prison Inmates Using Prison Education Programmes In Anambra State

**Helen Ebunoluwa Adebola, Ph.D**

Senior Lecturer

Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State

**Luke Chidiebele Ogbaka, M.Ed**

Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State

**Felicia Nwabundo Orji**

Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State

### ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent of reformation of prison inmates in Anambra State using prison education programmes. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study was made up of 500 instructors facilitating the education of prisoners in Anambra state. No sample was done because the population was manageable. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The researchers administered 500 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. Only 485 (97%) copies were completed and returned. Means was employed to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the instructors have not properly equipped prison inmates with the technical and vocational education to a fairly low extent. The findings of the study showed that the instructors have not properly equipped prison inmates to a fairly low extent with the reading and writing skills needed for acquiring information that can immediately be used for improving standards. The findings of the study further revealed that the instructors have not properly guided prison inmates to a fairly low extent with the basic knowledge and civic skills needed to become good citizens if released back into the society. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that technical and vocational education skills should be adequately imparted to prison inmates by the Nigerian Prison Service and the Non-Governmental Organizations should foster their reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration.

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a systematic process through which a person acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means to make an individual productive in life. Every society should accord importance to education because it is the solution to all the problems of a particular situation (John, 2012). Education has been recognized by every society as the key to sustainable development and the enhancement of human welfare. It is considered as the bedrock of national development. Hence, the World Bank cited in Ogbodo( 2011) asserted that:

*Education is development; it creates choices and opportunities of people, reduces the twin burden of poverty and disease and gives a stronger voice to society. For nations, it*

*creates a dynamic work force and well informed citizens able to compete and cooperate globally, opening doors to economic and social prosperity(p.34)*

One of the goals of Education For All (EFA) is equal education opportunities for all by the year 2015. The goal (Equal Education Opportunities for All ) is not yet realized because presently education policies are poorly implemented in Nigerian prisons. The major limiting factors to achieving the learning goals include lack of special trained instructors as well as the nature of prison establishment which hinders the effective delivery of educational programme to the prison inmates. Reformation of prison inmates is one of the core functions of the Nigerian prison service. Reformation of prison inmates in this sense means correcting, educating, rehabilitating and re-orientating the inmates so as to become better citizens at the time of acquittal. Globally, prisons are set up by law to provide restraint and custody of individuals accused or convicted for crimes by the state.

In Nigeria, the prison system dates back to the colonial era and is modeled after the British system (Nigeria Prisons Service-Annual report, 2004). It is a system that lays emphasis on punishment, deterrence and reformation. The Nigerian Prisons Service (NPS) is not meant only to punish offenders but also to make them better citizens. It is an important arm of the criminal justice system solely charged with the responsibility of taking into custody all those who have been legally tried and convicted to correct them for eventual release and to help integrate them into the society. Prisons are designed to house people who have broken the law and to remove them to a free society. Inmates are locked away for a period of time and they have very limited time to freedoms during their incarceration.

Prisons can be classified into short sentence and long sentence prisons. Short sentence prisons are prisons designed to hold awaiting trial or to hold those convicted of low-level offences that have sentences of one year or less while long sentence prisons are prisons that hold convicts who have committed crimes and the legal system deems serious for more long-term sentences for example, repeated drunk driving offences and first degree murder (Museum, cited in Ogbodo, 2011).

According to Afujue (2004), some of the functions of the Nigerian prisons service are to treat, train and reform those legally charged and convicted so that on their discharge they could be useful to themselves and the society at large. Afujue further stated that those who have committed crimes should be assisted to live a good life rather than punish them for the crime they committed. The Nigerian Prison Service (NPS) has developed pragmatic educational strategies for reforming the prison inmates(Ogundipe, 2008). These strategies according to him include Vocational Skills Development Programme (VSDP) which aims at empowering the prisoners with the needed skills for self-sustenance and actualization and adult and remedial education programmes designed to help prisoners who were pursuing one academic programme or the other before incarceration. VSDP enables prison inmates to learn skills in various vocations such as tailoring, plumbing, carpentry, among others. The adult and remedial education programmes offer literacy education to inmates in order to equip them with the basic skills and knowledge needed to be productive in life. Through prison adult and remedial education programmes in the Nigerian prisons, 1,306 prison inmates sat for the WAEC and GCE examinations as well as NECO in 2006 while 1,198 inmates took the same examinations in 2007 (Ogundipe, 2008). The prison education programmes from which the researchers examined the extent to which the prison inmates derive reformation are technical and vocational education, basic literacy programme and civic education programme.

The technical and vocational education programmes teach inmates skill acquisition in handicraft and other trades such as carpentry, bricklaying, electrical works among others. The basic literacy programmes were designed to enable inmates acquire reading, writing and computational skills and knowledge that will help them to be productive on release. The civic education programmes teach the inmates how to become good citizens, their rights as citizens and their social obligations. To reform is to make a person better by removing abuses; to restore to a better condition, to make a person better morally, to persuade or educate an individual from a sinful to a normal life. Reformation of prison inmates can only be achieved through education and training. Many educators and psychologists believe that education is the most powerful instrument for change in behaviour.

Prison education has for sometimes been recognized as a factor in reforming lives of offenders (Braggins & Talbot, 2007). Prison education is part of the prison reform movement. It can open up opportunities, enlighten prison inmates, broaden their horizons and build their self-confidence which has been depleted by incarceration. Simply put, it is the education designed for prisoners to enable them leave the prison with more skills and be in a position to find meaningful and long-term employment (Rhode, 2004).

In Anambra state prisons, crime continues inside the prison walls. Gangs exist and develop quickly inside the prisons. Many prisoners make negative utterances against one another. Some of them do go back into their previous behaviour, especially criminal behaviour (Nigerian Prisons Service, 2004). This incidence has left some questions on the extent to which prison education programmes have been used to reform prison inmates in Anambra state unanswered. It is this situation that motivated the researchers to carry out this study. Thus, the study sought to determine the extent of reformation of prison inmates in Anambra State using education programmes in Nigerian prisons. The main purpose of this study is to determine the extent of reformation of prison inmates in Anambra State using education programmes.

Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent to which:

1. Prison inmates were reformed using technical and vocational education;
2. Prison inmates were reformed using basic literacy programme
3. Prison inmates were reformed using civic education programme

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent have prison inmates been reformed using technical and vocational education in Anambra state?
2. To what extent have prison inmates been reformed using basic literacy programme in Anambra state?
3. To what extent have prison inmates been reformed using civic education programme in Anambra state?

### **METHOD**

The research design used for this study was a descriptive survey. The study was conducted in the four prisons within Anambra state (Aguata, Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha prisons). The population of the study was made up of 500 instructors facilitating the education of prisoners in Anambra state. No sample was done because the population was manageable. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. It was titled: "Questionnaire on the Extent of Reformation of Prison Inmates using Education Programmes (QERPIEP)". It has 25 items which elicited information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into sections A and B. Section A was designed to elicit information on the personal data of the respondents

while section B was divided into three clusters: B1, B2 and B3. Cluster B1 has six item on extent to which technical and vocational skills have reformed prison inmates in Nigerian Prison in Anambra State. Cluster B2 has seven items which elicited information on extent to which basic literacy have reformed prison inmates in Nigerian Prison in Anambra State while cluster B3 has twelve items which elicited information on extent to which civic education programmes have reformed prison inmates in Nigerian Prison in Anambra State.

The instrument for the study was validated by three experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Department of Adult Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The draft copy of the questionnaire together with the topic, purpose of the study, and research questions, were given to the experts to examine and scrutinize in terms of relevance to the title of the study, coverage of the content areas, appropriateness of language usage and clarity of purpose. The instrument was corrected before producing the final copy of the instrument. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out using 10 instructors at Agbor prison in Delta state. The data collected from the pilot test were analyzed and the internal consistency of the instrument determined using Cronbach Alpha. The coefficient alpha analysis yielded reliability indices of 0.78, 0.91 and 0.85 for the three clusters:1, 2 and 3 respectively. An overall reliability value obtained was 0.84 and was adjudged high enough for the study.

The researchers administered 500 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. Only 485 (97%) copies were completed and returned while 15 (3%) copies were not returned. Mean scores were employed to analyze the data on the research questions. Boundary limits were used to ascertain the extent of reformation of prison inmates using prison education programmes as shown below:

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Real Number Limits</b>
Very High Extent	5	4.50 - 5.00
High Extent	4	3.50 - 4.49
Fairly Low Extent	3	2.50 - 3.49
Low Extent	2	1.50 - 2.49
Very Low Extent	1	0.50 - 1.49

Items with mean scores of 3.50 and above were regarded as transforming the prison inmates to a very high extent, items with mean scores of 3.50 - 4.49 were regarded as transforming the prison inmates to a high extent, items with mean score of 2.50-3.49 were regarded as transforming the prison inmates to a fairly low extent, items with mean scores of 1.50-2.49 were regarded to transforming the prison inmates to a low extent while items with mean scores of 0.50-1.49 were regarded as transforming the prison inmates to a very low extent. A null hypothesis was accepted at 0.05 level of significance when the calculated value of z was less than the critical value or otherwise rejected.

Data collected in respect of the research questions are presented in tables.

**Table 1**

**Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Extent to which prison inmates have been reformed using Technical and Vocational Education.**

N = 485

S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
<b>Technical and Vocational Education</b>			
<b>Prison inmates can presently:</b>			
1.	Create new ideas for self employment	2.97	Fairly Low Extent
2.	Handle electrical works	3.02	Fairly Low Extent
3.	Sew clothes with needles or machines	3.61	High Extent
4.	Operate computer effectively for better Employment	2.52	Fairly Low Extent
5.	Repair Chairs	3.21	Fairly Low Extent
6.	Be able to barb hair	3.12	Fairly Low Extent
<b>Mean of Means</b>		<b>3.07</b>	<b>Fairly Low Extent</b>

Table 1 shows that item 3 has mean rating above the cut-off point of 3.50 which implies that the item reformed prison inmates to a high extent while items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 have mean ratings below the cut-off point of 3.50. This means that prison inmates have not been reformed; hence, they have not acquired the required competencies implied in the items. The mean of means of 3.07 shows that prison inmates were fairly reformed to a low extent using technical and vocational education.

**Table 2**

**Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Extent to which prison inmates have been reformed using Basic Literacy Programme.**

N = 485

S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
<b>Basic Literacy</b>			
<b>Prison inmates can presently:</b>			
7.	Be able to read	3.37	Fairly Low Extent
8.	Make speech in public boldly	2.88	Fairly Low Extent
9.	Be able to write	3.03	Fairly Low Extent
10.	Compute numerical information accurately	2.61	Fairly Low Extent
11.	Keep records for future retrieval	2.71	Fairly Low Extent
12.	Show interest in further studies	2.72	Fairly Low Extent
13.	Communicate with one another effectively	3.92	High Extent
<b>Mean of Means</b>		<b>3.03</b>	<b>Fairly Low Extent</b>

Table 2 shows that items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 have mean ratings below the cut-off point of 3.50 while item 13 has mean rating above the cut-off point of 3.50. This implies that item 13 reformed prison inmates to a high extent while others have not reformed prison inmates. The mean of means of 3.03 shows that prison inmates were fairly reformed to a low extent using basic literacy programme.

**Table 3**  
**Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Extent to which prison inmates have been reformed using Civic Education Programme**

**N = 485**

S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
<b>Civic Education Programme</b>			
<b>Prison inmates can presently:</b>			
14.	Have knowledge of political issues	2.87	Fairly Low Extent
15.	Resist intimidation	3.83	High Extent
16.	Be better morally	3.42	Fairly Low Extent
17.	Have regards for others	3.31	Fairly Low Extent
18.	Know their social obligations as citizens	3.49	Fairly Low Extent
19.	Avoid unnecessary talks	3.16	Fairly Low Extent
20.	Show willingness to listening to authorities	3.33	Fairly Low Extent
21.	Show willingness to take corrections	3.43	Fairly Low Extent
22.	Know their rights as citizens	3.62	High Extent
23.	Defend a citizen's right/position	4.09	High Extent
24.	Understand the rules and obligations as citizens	3.46	Fairly Low Extent
25.	Know their civic responsibilities	3.27	Fairly Low Extent
<b>Mean of Means</b>		<b>3.44</b>	<b>Fairly Low Extent</b>

Table 3 shows that items 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24 and 25 have mean ratings below the cut-off point of 3.50 while items 15, 22 and 23 have mean ratings above the cut-off point of 3.50. This implies that items 15, 22 and 23 have reformed prison inmates to a high extent while others have reformed prison inmates to a low extent. The mean of means of 3.44 shows that the instructors rated most of the items on the extent to which prison inmates have been reformed using civic education programme to a low extent.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding from the analysis of data collected in Table 1 showed a mean of means of 3.07 which means that the instructors rated most of the items on the extent prison inmates were reformed using technical and vocational education to a low extent. Five items out of the 6 items were rated to a fairly low extent. The findings are not in direct agreement with the opinion of Kalu (2002) who found out that teaching of basic skills that would help prison inmates to be productive in life on their release is directly in line with the need to address an offender's behaviour and rate of conviction. This is because the mean of means showed that prison inmates were reformed using technical and vocational education to a fairly low extent. This implies that the instructors have equipped prison inmates to a fairly low extent with the technical and vocational education needed to be productive on their time of acquittal.

The finding in Table 2 showed a mean of mean of 3.03 which implies that the respondents rated most of the items on the extent prison inmates were reformed using basic literacy programme to a fairly low extent. Only one item out of the 7 items was rated to a high extent. The findings are not in direct agreement with the view of UNESCO (2011) which advised that the very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can immediately be used for improving standards. This is because the mean of means showed that prison inmates were reformed using basic literacy programme to a fairly low extent which implies that the instructors have not properly equipped prison inmates with

the reading and writing skills needed for acquiring information that can immediately be used for improving standards.

Findings from the analysis of the data generated as presented in Table 3 showed a mean of means of 3.44 which implies that the respondents rated most of the items on the extent prison inmates were reformed using civic education programme to a fairly low extent. Only three items out of the twelve items were rated to a high extent. The findings are not in direct agreement with the opinion of Ani (2003) as cited in Ogbodo (2011) who said that civic education enables an individual to learn how to do something for the betterment of his country or community, function as a socio-economic agent such as an active member of a trade union or a cooperative society and also participate in politics actively by learning how to vote or understand a new constitution. This is because the mean of means showed that prison inmates were reformed using civic education programme to a low extent. This means that the instructors have not properly guided prison inmates with the basic knowledge and civic skills needed to become good citizens if released back into the society. The finding in table 6 was tested with z test and was rejected. The z calculated was greater than the critical z at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the instructors at the short and long sentence prisons differ significantly in their mean scores on the extent to which prison inmates were reformed using civic education programme.

### CONCLUSION

From the findings, it could be concluded that technical and vocational education, basic literacy programme and civic education programme have reformed prison inmates to a low extent.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Technical and vocational education skills should be imparted to prison inmates by the Nigerian Prison Service and the Non-Governmental Organizations to foster their reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration. Emphasis should be laid on educational programmes that are strongly based on skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.
2. The instructors should equip prison inmates with the reading and writing skills needed for acquiring information that can immediately be used for improving standards. Seminars on how to impart the basic reading and writing skills to the prison inmates effectively should be organized for the instructors.
3. More emphasis should be laid by the instructors on the teaching of civic education programme so that prison inmates will be properly orientated about their civic responsibilities and good citizenship.

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