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An Examination of Correctional Education in Nigeria: Challenges and Possible Solutions

Victor Olugbenga Ayoko
Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Open University of Faculty of Education, National, Nigeria
victorayoko@gmail.com

Ogieva Adesuwa Evelyn, Ph.D
Department of Educational Foundations and Management, Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
adesuwa_evelyn2012@yahoo.com

Olowonefa Jethro Abiodun, Ph.D
Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Nigeria
ayodeleolowo1965@Mail.Com

Chioma Fortune Olali, PhD
River state university, Department of educational Management, Faculty of Education
chioma.okeah@ust.edu.ng

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Abstract: This study explore the challenges facing correctional education in Nigeria. The paper is a position paper. The paper depend on secondary data. The secondary data were collected from online and print resources. The study concluded that inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of facilitators (teachers), shortage of instructional resources, poor participation of private organization, inadequate current data to plan correctional education and attack on correctional centres are the challenges facing correctional education in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the paper hereby recommends the following; government through the ministry of interior should increase the budgetary allocation to the department in charge of correctional education. Modern infrastructure facilities should be provided in all the correctional centres through the government and private institutions. More professional teachers and administrators should be deployed to the various schools in the facilities through audit of all officer with educational qualification in the ministry. Federal ministry of interior and other federal government agencies should collaborate with the religious institutions, international organization and private institutions and solicits their full participation in the correctional education.

Keys words: Correctional education, Education, Challenges.

1.0 Introduction

The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) was established to managed and administered the correctional centres across nigeria. **The operations Directorate has the responsibility of among others: i**. Ensuring that all prisons nation-wide are administered according to law and managed in conformity with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Offenders in custody; ii. Ensure the maintenance of acceptable standard of activities in all prison according to their security categorization; iii. Ensuring proper control by setting appropriate machinery in motion for effective monitoring of inmates for enhanced security management: thwarting escapes, prevention and

containment of riots and generally providing secure environment for the staff and inmates in the performance of prison duties; iv. Collection of statistical data for planning and research for improved service delivery; v. To enlighten the general public on the activities of the Service thereby enlisting their cooperation toward the reintegration of discharged inmates into the society; vi. The Directorate also assures security for Escort duty staff as well as the inmates they convey to courts and to other prisons;

vii. Providing enhanced intra-service communications etc.

The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) derives its mandate from Nigerian Correctional Service Act, 2019 to perform the following functions: (a) Taking custody of all persons legally interned; (b) Providing safe, secure and humane custody for inmates; (c) Conveying remand persons to and from courts in motorized formations; (d) Identifying the existence and causes of anti-social behaviours of inmates; (e) Conducting risk and needs assessment aimed at developing appropriate correctional treatment methods for reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration; (f) Implementing reformation and rehabilitation programs to enhance the reintegration of inmates back into the society; (g) Initiating behaviour modification in inmates through the provision of medical, psychological, spiritual and counselling services for all offenders including violent extremists; (h) Empowering inmates through the deployment of educational and vocational skills training programmes, and facilitating incentives and income generation through Custodial Centres, farms and industries; (i) Administering Borstal and related institutions; (j) Providing support to facilitate the speedy disposal of cases of Awaiting Trial Persons; (k) Performing other functions as may be required to further the general goal and functions of the Service; (l) Administering non-custodial measures, including community Service, probation, parole, restorative justice measures and any other none custodial measure assigned by a court of competent jurisdiction. The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) have a department for provision of educational service to the inmate. The objective of the department is to ensure inmate have access to delivery of quality education. The department have reported graduation of many inmate students in national Open University. It is import to discuss the various challenges for correctional education in Nigeria.

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Concept of Correctional Education

Prison education, also known as Inmate Education and Correctional Education, is an expansive term encompassing any educational activities occurring inside a prison. These educational activities include both vocational training and academic education. The goal of such activities is to prepare the prisoner for success outside of prison and to enhance the rehabilitative aspects of prison. Educational programs offered inside prisons are typically provided and managed by the prison systems in which they reside. Funding for the programs is provided through official correctional department budgets, private organizations (e.g., colleges, nonprofits, etc.), and the prisoners or their families if the prisoner is pursuing education through a correspondence program. Educational opportunities can be divided into two general categories: academic education and vocational training (Zoukis, 2011).

Correctional education in this paper is a planned educational system designed for inmate empowerment. Correctional education is an organized educational activity that takes place in the correctional centres with the aims of providing skills and improve knowledge of the inmates. Correctional education programme include; basic literacy programmes, secondary school equivalency programmes, vocational education, and tertiary education (Muhammad, 2016; Ogunode, & Sam-leeloo, 2025).

Correctional education is systematic educational programs designed for inmates with the broad objectives of providing them with sustainable skills and knowledge that will enable them some of them finish their education and provide them the opportunities of securing employment after leaving the correctional. Prison education programs help lower recidivism rates and increase employment opportunities post-release Wood (2020). Prison education is a broad term that encompasses number of educational activities, occurring inside a prison. These educational activities include both vocational training, academic and general education. The goal of such activities is to prepare a prisoner for

successful adjustment outside the prison. Education programmes that take place inside prisons are completely provided and managed by the prison authorities (Wikipedia, 2014). Rhode (2004) viewed prison education as the form of education designed for prisoners to enable them leave the prison with more skills and be in a position to find meaningful employment or create employment. In agreement with the above definitions, prison education is education designed for prisoners to equip them with veritable skills and knowledge to enable them to be productive on release.

Correctional education is an education that takes place in the prison with the purpose of providing quality education for inmates to ensure that they are useful after their prison term. Correctional education encompass all teaching and learning programme taking place in the prison to provide skills and knowledge to inmate so that they can be useful to the community after their release for the prison. Correctional education is an organized education designed for inmates with the aims of providing them an employable skills that can make them contribute to the society after the completion of their jail. Correctional education is a prison education that is provided to all inmates for the purpose of providing access to human right and equalization of educational opportunities (Muhammad & Bashir, 2021; Ogunode, Ukozor, Ayoko & Ojochenemi, 2025; Ogunode, Ajayi, Ahmad. & Okoro 2025).

The goals of correctional education according to (Ogunode, et al 2025) includes; to provide quality education for inmates; to provide skills and improve the knowledge of inmates; to provide continuous education opportunities for inmates; to inspire its inmates with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; to foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity; to provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a secondary education level, irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic background; to provide all secondary school leavers with the opportunity for higher education, to offer a sound and diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles in the society; and to provide manpower training in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades for inmates

The objectives of educational programmes to Inmates according to Ajufo, et al, (Undated) include; to improve inmates' academic and vocational skills; to assist inmates in becoming responsible and productive citizens in the society; to change inmates' attitudes regarding work and responsibility; to prepare inmates for the competitive job market they will face upon release; to promote inmates' self-confidence which will stand them in good stead when they leave prison and to prepare inmates for a successful life after release from prison. For Ogbaka et al., (2017) there are three main objectives of prison education at the primary level, which cut across different views of the purpose of the criminal justice system. These include keeping inmates meaningfully busy, causing a change in their attitude and behavior, and opening up employment opportunities through vocational skills, further education, and training. Ajufo, et al (Undated) concluded that Education has a key role in rehabilitating prisoners into the society and helping them to secure employment. With 80 percent of prisoners functionally illiterate, the best crime prevention programme of all is education. Educational programme is a necessary viable and positive component of the rehabilitation programme for inmates since it does not involve additional security risks.

3.0 Method

This paper discussed the challenges facing the correctional education in Nigeria. Data from different secondary sources were employed for the paper. The paper used content analysis to analyze all the literature collected. Only those relevant to the topic were systematically selected. The exploratory method was adopted in the analysis. To ensure the reliability and validity of the study, multiple secondary sources were used to minimize the risk of error. The secondary data were collected directly from textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers and other local and international publications on challenges facing correctional education in Nigeria (adapted from Ogunode & Ukozo, 2023 in Ogunode, Ukozor, Ayoko, & Ojochenemi, 2025).

4.0 Result and Discussion on Challenges facing Correctional Education in Nigeria

There are many challenges facing the correctional education in Nigeria. Some of these challenges includes; inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of facilitators (teachers), shortage of instructional resources, poor participation of private organization, inadequate current data to plan correctional education and attack on correctional centres.

A) Inadequate Funding

Funding is critical for the development of correctional education. It is the bedrock for the provision of necessary resources for the implementation of the education. It is unfortunate that the funding going into the funding of correctional education from both the federal government and the various private institutions is inadequate to develop the sector (Ogunod, et al 2025a; Aziz, Iqbal, & Ahmed, 2017)..Femi (2016) acknowledged that **f**unds are needed to provide the human and materials resources required to run correctional education in the facilities. The funding coming for the support of education generally in the correctional facilities in Nigeria is not adequate to ensure quality education in all levels of education in the centres.

B) Inadequate infrastructure facilities

Inadequate infrastructure facilities is another problem militating against the development of prison education in Nigeria. Infrastructure facilities are super-structure facilities supporting implementation of teaching and learning in schools. Infrastructure facilities are social capital designed for the implementation of school curriculum (Ogunode, Yakubu, Garba, & Ayoko 2025b; Muhammad & Yusuf2025)

Aliyu, Mustaffa, & Nasir, 2016). Olajide (2014), noted that most of the nation's prisons are older than the nation. The facilities are not upgraded yet, the inmates sent there are far more in population than the facilities were designed to accommodate. Inmates are crammed; sanitary facilities are simply inhuman, diseases are freely shared, yet, more inmates are daily brought in to compound the already bad situation.

C) Shortage of facilitators (teachers)

The shortage of professional facilitators in the various correctional centres in Nigeria is also hindering the development of the correctional education in Nigeria. Facilitators or teachers are professional employed to teach the inmate in the various centres. These facilitators assist the inmate in their educational pursuit in the prison centres. These facilitators are either engaged by the government or other private institutions. The shortage of these facilitators is hampering the development of correction education in Nigeria because teachers are critical instrument for quality assurance in education delivery (Femi, 2016). Guardian (2020) quoted Alabidun submitted that in most correctional centres in Nigeria, there are shortage of personnel to deliver quality education and lack of motivation and absence of community support either from companies or organisations. The problem of shortage of professional teachers in the prisons is not only commom to the Nigerian correctional centres only.

D) Shortage of instructional resources

Another problem hindering effective teaching and learning in the correctional centres in Nigeria is the problem of shortage of instructional resources. Instructional resources are planned and organized materials designed for implementation of teaching and learning in an educational institutions. Instructional resources are visible materials that assists the teacher to deliver the lecture or lesson in the schools. Instructional resources makes teaching and learning easily. They make learners learn very fast. These resources includes; charts, pictures, calculators, writing board, drawing board, mathematical table and chart, four figure table and language charts etc. These instructional resources are not adequate most correctional centres in Nigeria and their inadequacies is affecting the smooth implementation of teaching and learning in the correctional centres (Ogunod, et al 2025a). Sarkinfada, & Garba, (2023); Adelowo Adebumiti (2020) and Ore, (2006) concluded that another problem hindering the development of prison education or correctional education in Nigeria correctional centres is shortage of instructional

materials.

E) Poor participation of private organization

The poor participation of private institutions, organizations and international institutions in the management of correctional education in Nigeria is also affecting the development of correctional education in Nigeria (Ogunode, Edinoh, & Odo, 2023). Femi (2016) noted that the roles of private institutions in the development of education especially the correctional education cannot be overemphasized because their involvement in the education aid the development of education. The unique roles of stakeholders of education includes ensuring provision of adequate funds, infrastructural facilities development, provision of instructional resources and provision of technical assistance. Sarkinfada, and Garba, (2023) noted that the involvement and participation of stakeholders (private institutions, religious institutions, government agencies, international organization) in the education management in Nigeria is low especially in the correctional centres. The poor involvement is hindering the development of prison education in Nigeria, Poor support and contribution from religious institutions and private organization in the development of correction education or prison education have affected the development of prison education. Religious institutions and private institutions globally are major supporter of prison education. In some countries, religious institutions provide complete educational facilities in the prisons to support the education of inmates.

F) Inadequate current data to plan correctional education

The lack of current data on correctional education in Nigeria is another problem hindering the development of education. The available data are not current so they cannot be use for effective planning of prison education in Nigeria. The lack of current data on prison education is also responsible for poor decision taken in the management of the sector. Data is very important in the administration of prison education. Current data will aid effective planning that will lead to effective implementation of policies and programme in the centres (Ogunode, et ala; Ismaila, 2020). Current data availability on prison education will also aid effective decision making in the management of the sector (NEEDS (2014) also acknowledged that it was challenging to obtain data with current statistics for the assessment mainly due to the fact that current data on the education sector was generally not available in the public domain. The assessment therefore relied on available data, some of which was more than three years old and had not been updated at the time of the study.

G) Attack on correctional centres

Another challenge militating against the development of correctional education in Nigeria is the series of external and internal attacks. These attacks affects smooth implementation of teaching and learning in the facilities. Correctional facilities in Nigeria have recently been attacked by criminal and terrorists such as armed bandits, kidnappers, Boko Haram terrorists and ISWAP leading to several jailbreaks which have continued to intensified insecurity across the country due to escaped of over 6,000 inmates including bandits, kidnappers and terrorists that are forcefully integrated into the society. Consequently, this has not only increase crime, but has also jeopardized the peace and tranquility of the country that resulted to overstretch of the Nation’s security architecture (Matazu, 2022). According to academicians and security analysts like Matazu (2022), this and other jailbreak incidents in Nigeria have led the Nigerian government to claim that prison administration in the nation has not received enough attention. It may be argued that the government is not doing enough to prevent crime and fight insecurity. This is based on the claim that the relevant authorities frequently get intelligence about impending attacks on correctional facilities before to the invasion, but the prison officials take little to no action to stop them.

Finding

The showed that inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of facilitators (teachers), shortage of instructional resources, poor participation of private organization, inadequate current data to plan correctional education and attack on correctional centres are the challenges facing correctional education in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of facilitators (teachers), shortage of instructional resources, poor participation of private organization, inadequate current data to plan correctional education and attack on correctional centres are the challenges facing correctional education in Nigeria.

Based on the findings, the paper hereby recommends the following:

1. Government through the ministry of interior should increase the budgetary allocation to the department in charge of correctional education.
2. Modern infrastructure facilities should be provided in all the correctional centres through the government and private institutions.
3. More professional teachers and administrators should be deployed to the various schools in the facilities through audit of all officer with educational qualification in the ministry.
4. Federal ministry of interior and other federal government agencies should collaborate with the religious institutions, international organization and private institutions and solicits their full participation in the correctional education.
5. Federal ministry of interior should work on generating new correctional education data that will help effective planning of correctional education in Nigeria.
6. Federal government should increase correction center insecurity to prevent jail break or external attacks on the facilities across the country.

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