COUNSELLING PRISON INMATES FOR PRODUCTIVE SELF-DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYABILITY AND ADJUSTMENT INTO THE SOCIETY.

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Abstract
The prison is an institution established by Government for the confinement, training and rehabilitation of inmates to become good citizens. The Nigerian prison system has not done much to this effect, rather Nigerian Prison system turn out more hardened criminals constituting a menace to life and properties. This paper looks into situation in the Nigerian Prisons system and how Guidance Counselling could be channeled into prison education to assist inmates understand and change their attitude towards crime and imbibe a culture of productivity, self development for employability, and become well adjusted individuals that would build a crime-free society. The paper also made recommendations for the successful implementation and achievement of counseling inmates to achieve the desired objectives.

Introduction
A prison is a fortified, strong and secured building where people are kept as punishment for a crime they committed or while awaiting trial, for reformation and rehabilitation to be good citizens (Hornby, 2001). Prison Education also known as Corrective Education plays crucial roles in offender’s and the prevention of reoffending. It is aimed at providing programes which concentrate on vocational skill training or academic Education. In Basic skills of literacy, numeracy, arts etc, leading of self employment and development given to prisoners within the prison system as part of their rehabilitation and preparation for life outside prison. Prison Education is sometimes provided by the government, Educational Establishment, Psychologist, Guidance Counsellors, Doctors, Lawyers, Churches, Voluntary Organizations, Clubs, NGOs etc. (Anal Trust ND).

Ejakporvi (1996) describe education as a process through which individuals are equipped with relevant information, knowledge and skills to enable them become desired and beneficial members of a society so counseling prison inmates has a key role to play in reforming,
equipping and preparing them for a more permanent, positive and productive life upon their release after serving their jail term in prison.

Counselling plays the following roles in prison Education: Tuz Chi (ND) counseling as a helping relationship enables the individual to see and appreciate life in prison as offering an opportunity for self development and preparing the way for a new beginning. It enables the offender to look inward and identify the origin and cause of his problem, the reason for his imprisonment as well as understand and rediscover himself.

- motivate and encourage the offender that all hope is not lost there could be a new beginning and a better life ahead.
- encourage inmates to put their lives together by planning and organizing their affairs in such a way that wilt enable them make creative and productive use of their time in prison so as to derive maximum benefit from their prison experience.
- Strengthen employment opportunity for inmates to be self employed after prison as nobody wants to employ an exconvict into his business organization (Exconvict stigma).
- increase the quality and effectiveness of learning and skills development for inmates.
- promote greater coherence in how inmates are trained, prepared them for employment and readjustment to societal life after prison so as to avoid reoffending and being sent back to prison.

- counseling offers the individual a chance to focus on problems and talk to a professional counselor about his problems and being listen to without feeling judged or criticized.
- it offers people a way of reorganizing their Thinking, viewing things from a different perspective and come to terms with their life's worth. This help to promote self-confident and self-reliance to actualize life goals.
- through Counselling the individual can grow into a secure, independent person who can be a positive member of the society.
- counselling assists in areas of life learning and development as well as foster self help projects based on sharing and societal acceptance.
- it fosters the practice of maintaining a healthy good supportive communication network for prison inmates, ex-offenders and their families.
- it helps to improve people's emotional health thus making them more helpful to others.

Why do People Indulge in Criminal Activities?
Ezegba (1997) gave a comprehensive perception and understanding of the dynamics of crime as: Individual's characteristics, detensiveness, authoritarianism, blind conforming or obeying tendencies, aggressiveness, frustration, stress from over loading, high level of needs, non-satisfaction of human needs, selfishness/greed, poor and distorted communication, unhealthy
rivalry, hatred/discrimination, poor motivation, low self esteem, high self esteem, uncondusive working/learning environment, short cuts to get rich, misplaced values, decline in moral values, emphasis on wealth, politicians supplying weapons and sponsoring crimes, easy access to arms and ammunitions, lack of good educational policies that meet the needs of youths in Nigeria, lack of functional guidance services, exposure to high risk of crime. Ejakporvi (1996) noted that crime could result from inherited traits, lack of parental Care, bereavement, poverty, social, emotional, physical, psychological behavioural problems, lack of confidence, low self esteem, social rejection, peer influence, gangs, cults and drugs addiction, greed etc. Most youths hang out with the wrong crowd these are young men, well dress, look smart, drive good cars, spend money yet their source of income cannot be traced. They drink and smoke marijuana, flirt with beautiful girls, have expensive taste and habits. These youths, who want to be like them easily fall victims unknowingly to them, these are armed robbers. In no time, they are trained and recruited into skills of robbing people; they snatch things, harass people by using guns etc and end up in jails, where they receive intensive training experiences from more hardened criminals. They are finally released into the society as deadly criminals, one expects a reformation of characters and rehabilitation, but the reverse is the case. Prisoners come out of prison more hardened as no proper Education and counselling programes are available in the Nigerian prisons.

Inmates come into prison system in various ways, try to settle down and face the challenges of prison life, some have fared very badly, while others seem, to cope well. Some break down and cry as the strain of limitations of imprisonment got to them, a few on the other hand, have sought to convince other inmates of their innocence a though they have the power to get them their desired justice and set them free, some choked with anger and frustration as to why the law system cannot see through them to their obvious innocence. Some inmates display high intelligence and seem nice and pleasant that one wonders what they were doing in prison. Some inmates view imprisonment as the accompanying occupational hazard of their criminal profession. To some, it is their desired communal and social environment as their normal survival life style. It also provides some inmates refuge from social and economic cost of living in the society. (Ejakporvi, 1996).

Fabiola (2008), listed the following as contributors to crime.

Lack of Education on the Part of Culprits or their Families. Crime rate is universally proportional to the level of education of the culprits families that do not stress the importance of getting an education are more likely to live out on the streets, involve in drugs, gangsterism and end up in prisons. Some of these parents who raise such kids, were raised in similar conditions. Parents must put education first and foremost in their minds when raising children. Education is the key out of poverty; kids who lack good
education are more likely to have difficulty finding jobs, getting into college, staying out of trouble with the law. Most times they have family problems attributed to loss of parents at a young age due to death or incarceration. Kids from a single parent's home run the risk of becoming involved in crime as the absence of the other parent fail to provide leadership and guidance for a growing mind.

**Nigerian Penal Codes**

Oyimnatumba (2008), most people are roped into crime and end up as prisoners due to the Nigerian penal codes and administration of prison reforms. The Nigerian penal codes states that you are guilty and are left to prove your innocence instead of the state proving your guilt thus, leading to awaiting trial inmates who are often treated with levity and in most cases abandoned.

**Police and Lawyers Roles have Contributed to Crime Committers.** The Nigerian police are often used as a weapon of intimidation in purely civil matters. Most people are remanded in prison custody on the erroneous belief that you are guilty till you can prove your innocence the police hands off and claims that the court remanded the suspect. The Nigerian police hardly visit the scene of crime as a result, a suspects bail application is opposed and he is remanded in prison only for the court to throw out the matter after 10 years for want of evidence and lack of diligent prosecution. Simple matters that can be resolved out of court are engaged on by Lawyers to end in litigation. Apart from Lawyers/Police complicity there is institutionalized complicity. The legal aid created in 1976 empowered by decree No 56 has gone down the drain, this arm of judiciary was most under funded and lacked manpower, most seekers of justice knew nothing about legal aid and cannot locate it. A careful financial study of the inmates accordingly to Oyimnatumba (2008) shows that, they cannot afford a lawyer or pay the fine imposed by the court. Low level of ignorance of legal constitutional rights among the rural and urban people is very poor. As a result, human rights are often violated.

It can be a shocking and depressing experience particularly for the first timers to be sent to prison for whatever reason, to them the world has come to an end with all hopelessness, in this initial state of shock and gloom there is no reason to go on living a purposeless life, some might think of committing suicide but this would be very short sighted because there is life after prison. You can use your time in prison to make your future life better and more rewarding. Prison could be that vital break you need, it enables you to be careful on reviewing your life, acquiring relevant skills and education. It prepare you for self living for a second time and better start in life.

**The State of Nigerian Prison System**

Nigerian prison system lacks comprehensive or well planned programmes for the education of inmates (prisoners as well as counselling services in meeting with the challenges of the society for self reliance. Without any form
of education, counselling and reformation, these criminals in Nigerian Prisons come out of prison more hardened, end up becoming reoffenders and sent back to the prisons again. This has become a vicious circle. Reverend Solomon Olumuyiwa Kayode Williams, (an ex-convict who turned pastor) who served ten (10) years for armed robbery, has been preaching reforms and rehabilitation for the past eighteen (18) years. He concluded that there is nothing much to offer in terms of prison education in Nigeria prisons system (Prison Rehabilitation Mission International 2007).

Ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo after serving three (3) years in the Nigerian prison decided to set up a commission with the worker of human right, to device ways of protecting human rights in the Nigerian prison system. And the issue of prison education, but nothing was done to educate and rehabilitate inmates.

Olumuyiwa (2007) noted that a lot of factors militate against prison education in Nigeria prisons system. This includes:

1. Lack of a comprehensive prison education program that addressed the needs of offenders, inmates and ex-offenders who are in need of support for reformation.
2. Lack of infrastructures where prison education can take place as the few structures available are in deplorable conditions.
3. Lack of trained personnel and educational facilities like library, books, information communication technology centre, vocational skill training workshops, recreational facilities.
4. Prison conditions are very deplorable, prisoners are subjected to harsh and traumatic experiences example, suicide, fighting, killing, crime oriented induction by more hardened inmates, and exposure to hard drugs as they are not positively engaged.
5. Government gross negligence of their duties and responsibilities lo Nigerian prison inmates.
6. Lack of funds to run educational programs in the prisons.
7. Lack of supportive counselling education to prisoners make them end up without character and behaviour reformation. Prisoners come out of prison worse than they went in.
8. Prisoners are subjected to manual labour and tortures all the time due to lack of training programmes and facilities.
9. Prison conditions are horrible as such affect the mental health of inmates. Our cells are over crowded with no proper ventilation. Over sixty (60) inmates are congested in a sixty by twelve room instead of fifteen (15) inmates.
10. Diseases are spread in no time as there are no adequate medical facilities and good health care system. Environmental conditions are very poor causing health hazard. Amnesty International (2008) reports clearly states that Nigeria prison system
has failed its people; due to the following facts:

- In Nigeria sixty-five percent (65%) of her prisoners have never been convicted of any crime, with some awaiting trial for up to ten (10) years.
- Those awaiting trial are presumed to be guilty.
- Appalling prison conditions seriously damage the mental and physical health of thousands of inmates.
- People are tortured by police and mentally sick people imprisoned alongside with convicted criminals as their families are unwilling to take care of them.
- Amnesty further condemned the criminal justice system noting that the country prison are filled with people whose human rights are being systematically violated.
- Abuse of human right Vis a Vis unlawful and prolong detention.
- Hostility and resistance to change on part of prison personal, lack of discipline, inmates bribe prison officials and case files of those who do not have money to bribe are hidden.
- The plight of prison staff who work long and stressful hours for low wages often paid late.
- Staff shortage create security problems leading to continuous employment of untrained personnel as Aster Van Kregten 2008 noted.

The Nigerians prison system is so blatant and egregious that the Nigerian government has no choice but to recognize them. The problems of prison education could be resolved through guidance counselling as it requires a lot of caring needed along aside with good strategic planning process. When proper education of inmates is done, it will go a long way to assist them change their attitude and life, adjust to main stream society as well as make society crime free, with inmates becoming useful, productive citizen of the society (Anal Trust ND).

In recent times a number of prisoners in the United Kingdom seized the opportunity presented by their imprisonment to development skills and realize their potentials and dreams in areas of information technology, acting, painting, publishing, writing journalism politics etc.

Mark Leach used his time in prison in Edinburg to realize his ambition of becoming an acclaimed writer. A ten year prison sentence was the opportunity Malcon X. needed to transform himself from a street criminal without a feature to a leader and a statesman of international repute. Quite a number of states men and women in history and in today's world have had to work their way to the top passing through prison, e.g. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo worked through prison to become president of Nigeria; Nelson Mandela of South Africa; Mahat Magandi of India during the fight for independence; Martin Luther King Junior to mention but a few.

Political leaders at various times have withdrawn in private places to learn their scripts. Monks and nuns cut themselves off from the world so they can concentrate on their religious development, monasteries look very much
like prisons with their high walls and small cells. Ordinary people often retreat into isolation in order to experience spiritual rebirth or growth e.g. Jesus Christ withdraw from society to the wilderness for forty days and nights to gain enough spiritual strength to resist the devil's temptation and succeed in his final mission. (His Majesty Prison Services High Down 2008). Prophet Mohammed often retired to the cave during Ramadan for solitude and meditation, through that he received his revelation from angel Gabriel and Islam was born.

Nothing good comes easily, there is a price for every thing, to succeed you have to pay a price. The reward of success tend to be directly related to the amount of effort and sacrifice you have made, whether it is self imposed or imposed by others, some element of confinement or withdrawal from society could be a vital part of achieving success. Ejakporvi, (1996). Logically, confinement is a precondition for spiritual growth or rebirth as well as social and material progress. In every society, there is a form of confinement, imprisonment or withdrawal from society, if you do not experience a time of confinement you will probably not be in position to make any preparation for the future, failure to make preparations will make you fail to perform, failure to perform does not achieve greatness. Ferife, (2007). The most important thing is not whether you have been imprisoned but what you have to show, is the positive and beneficial outcome of your time spent in prison. (Olumuya, 200).

Recommendaions
This paper recommends amongst others that:
1. Government and stakeholders of prison Education should provide an enabling environment for Counselling.
2. Government should fund prison Education and Counselling services.
3. Judiciary should device means of quickening the dispensation of justice so that innocent people who are awaiting trail can be acquitted while guilty ones can know their fate early.
4. Review prison Education and inculcate a workable guidance Counselling services in their curriculum to meet the challenges of prison inmates.
5. Counsellors should encourage inmates to embrace prison Education through Counselling services for self development vocational skills, productivity employability.
6. Counsellors should encourage family visits to prison inmates this will eliminate the feeling of guilt and societal rejection.
7. Counsellors should be trained to promote skills in self discovery, enthusiasm, value reorientation, character and citizenship training of inmates as well as stimulate them to discover their potentials.

Conclusion
Prison Counselling when fully adopted in prison education will change the character, and attitude of inmates for a
better, more reliable, purposeful, productive, crime free and self reliant society.

References


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