

## ARCHITECTURAL CORRECTIONAL CENTRE IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The paper is focused on problems of prisons in Nigeria with emphasis on why inmates are hardened and how they can be rehabilitated and reformed to integrate inmates back to society. Present-day prisons in Nigeria are in a deplorable state and constantly violate the rights of the prisoners. Living conditions are appalling and damaging to the physical and mental well-being of inmates. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of food and medication, and denial of contact with families and friends mean that conditions fall short of the United Nations standards for the treatment of inmates or prisoners. Overcrowding, is a major issue with the Nigeria Prisons Service, is mainly caused by the high number of inmates who have not been tried by the courts. Though rehabilitation ideals are well embraced by practitioners and policymakers in Nigeria, current efforts to reform and rehabilitate offenders are inadequate. From the findings, overcrowding, inhumane and unsanitary conditions in the Nigeria prisons, there is a call by Human Rights Commission to build more prisons in Nigeria, the aim of establishing prison institution in Nigeria and across the globe is to provide reformation and rehabilitation centers for those who violate the rules and regulations governing their society. Findings from publication, interviews and case study show that the less conducive prison environment the more hardened prisoners become. In Nigeria, this appears to be the case; this paper is geared towards providing an environment based on the new principle of rehabilitation and reform, which emphasizes rehabilitation, reformation and integration of offenders through academic and vocational programmes planned for the center. A large part of the programmes effectiveness is in the character of the physical environment within which the programme takes place, creating an architecture that gives a sense of freedom

within the correctional center while maintaining High security, becomes the main focus of the study. This paper therefore examines possible ways of: reducing to the barest minimum the negative effects of incarceration by design thus making an important contribution to the solution of prison in the country. The design of this correctional center in Ogbakiri, Rivers State is harness the principle of rehabilitation and reformation of offenders through vocational and academic training, recreation and religious activities while offenders are detained and preventing their escape.

**Keyword:** Prison, Rehabilitation, Reformation, Crime

## INTRODUCTION

In human history, crime is an anti-social behavior which plaques society and there have always been those who, whether by circumstances or compulsion, disobey or violate the rules governing the society. When these acts of violating the law governing the society has occur numerous times, it becomes essential to separate those who cannot or will not function within the law governing the society from those who can abide to the law. Those people who violate laws with criminal penalties are contained within what are called correctional centers. Incarceration or Imprisonment viewed as an aspect of infliction or punishment is the restraint of a person's liberty, for any cause whatsoever, whether by authority of the government, or by a person acting without such authority. . The deferent philosophers and Retributivists stress that a deviant should be punished in order to pay him back for his actions and to dissuade him or others from committing crime. The issue of imprisonment is most appropriately conceived as a formal perspective of inflicting pain on the offenders. These have been an aspect of the criminal justice system in various parts of the country, Nigeria.

**Law Court:** A law court is a place where legal matters are decided by a judge or by a magistrate. Having Court within this facility will enhance or facilitate judgments for inmate. Logistics is the activity of moving or transporting inmates from prison to court for them to obtain judgment. Having court within the facilities, logistics will never be a means to delay judgment. Logistics has been the cause delaying some inmate to obtain judgment, the day their

case will come up in court logistics stops them from going to court their by delaying their judgment.

## **DEFINITIONS AND TRAJECTORY**

**WHAT IS CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER?** This is the system of practices and institutions of governments directed at upholding social control, deterring and mitigating crime, or sanctioning those who violate laws with **criminal** penalties and rehabilitation efforts.

**WHAT IS CORRECTIONAL CENTER?** It is a term that may be used to refer to a jail, prison, or other place of incarceration by government officials. They serve to confine and rehabilitate and reform prisoners and may be classified as minimum, medium, or High security facilities, or contain separate divisions for such categories of prisoners. The prisoners may participate in educational and vocational programs as well. In legal terms" correctional center" is a place designated by law for the keeping or confinement of persons held in custody or arrested for, convicted or charged for criminal offense under process of law. Cambridge dictionary defined prison (correctional center) as "a building where criminals are forced to dwell as an infliction or punishment". In essence, a Criminal Justice facility (Correctional center) is a facility operated by a governing unit designed primarily, for housing persons for the purposes of infliction or punishment, rehabilitation and correction following conviction of a criminal offense and staffed. These include borstals, reformatories, prisons, jails, juvenile centers, etc.

For the purpose of this study, our emphasis will be on Criminal Justice court with a correctional center within the facility. The aim of this project is to provide an environment where awaiting trial inmates can access or get judgment quick without unnecessary delay. Delay in judgment is also cause of congestion in the Nigeria prison; any inmate that was found guilty will be convicted and confined for the purposes of rehabilitation back into the society as a better person. The concept of a criminal justice center should be a tool for a rehabilitation and reform for the restoration of the inmate as a better person back to society, instead of a merely place of infliction that is from a punitive concept to a rehabilitative concept.

**Correctional Center** is designed with five major purposes in mind.

1. It is to deliver justice for all, by convicting and punishing the guilty and helping them to stop offending, while protecting the innocent.'
2. To cut crime and deliver Justice
3. Correctional center is to deliver an efficient, effective, accountable and fair justice process for the public.'
4. Protecting the general public from those who would wish to do harm.
5. Attempt to cure the prisoner in terms of mental afflictions that may drive his or her deviant behavior through therapy or group activities.
6. Reform of the prisoner. This means that the building or buildings that make up the complex have space allocated for education, solitary confinement, social training and the like.
7. Punishment; with the prison itself intended to cure the former (prisoner) of, and frighten the latter (general public) from, criminal behavior.

Thus, the institution play a critical role in creating an environment for efficient, effective, accountable and fair justice process for the public, incarceration and reformation without causing a sense of and hopelessness and oppression. While some countries in the western world have already applied prison reforms, it's disconsolate to say that Nigeria is yet to implement it. The entire penological philosophies and ideals of a nation in the reformative treatment of a criminal is a sum total of the inputs and decisions of several authorities and disciplines, (Brisibe 2000).

The psychologist determine the convicts Strengthening Mental Abilities with Relational Training, the medical officer who is concerned with the health state of the convict, the welfare officer who ensure the comfort of the convicts, the warden who takes care of the inmate within the facility, the court facilitate their judgment and convicts who ever is guilty and the architect who creates the enabling environment in which all these activities takes place. The truth is that, no matter how effective the contributions of all these disciplines are, no reasonable success can be achieved if the environment is not conducive for the

inmates and the staff to operate in. Hence, the Architect is of relevance in obtaining solutions to some of the problems of the prison system. Since a large part of the programme's effectiveness is in the character of the physical environment within which the programme takes place; it is the intention of the project to create an environment that will encourage active responses by;

- a. To reduce, the problems of delay in judgment and reduce the problem of overcrowding
- b. Changing the old monumental and colonial style of prison building which evoke feeling of dread and whose dehumanized environments do not suit new methods of reformation reducing to the barest minimum, the negative effects of incarceration.
- c. Allowing flexibility for future expansion in the design.

In effect, this complex is an institution's programme and contributes quick access to judgment to awaiting trial inmate's ultimately, rehabilitation effort to convicted inmates to integrate them back into society as a better person. It is necessary if this programme is to be established in reality, both inmates and staff need the physical structure which will give actuality to the principle of human dignity and privacy in which the programmes are secure. Ultimately, it is my expectation that this will create another connection in advancement of criminal justice and correctional architecture and it will provide a long-term solution to the always growing problem of crime in Nigeria.

### **SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IN MOST OF NIGERIAN PRISONS**

- i. Lack of access to justice causes over-crowding, the awaiting trial inmate stay longer in prison waiting for judgment. Statistics shows that all the prisons in Nigeria have more than their capacity of inmates therefore the facilities have become insufficient. The numbers of people awaiting trial has contributed greatly to its congestion.

Currently, Port Harcourt prison, the most populated was designed to take 804 inmates is having a population 4,010 inmates in Nigeria and presently with no space for expansion. The major factor responsible for this over-population is that most awaiting trial persons (ATP) have not been tried in court. . Most prisons

presently used in the country were those built by the colonial masters hence, most of them are in a state of dilapidation.

- ii. As a result of over- crowding Feeding Conditions is very poor: The quality and quantity of food served in most Nigerian prisons is poor
- iii. Most prisons lack medical equipment in their hospitals and a great number of them are understaffed.
- iv. Absence of adequate facilities to rehabilitate the inmates.
- v. Unsanitary conditions of the prison. This gives rise to rapid spread of some diseases.
- vi. Inadequate office spaces for the prison's staff.

Proofs from the courts, police and prison files show that some of the inmates integrated back to society return to a life of crime. This indicates that the present condition in Nigerian prisons help to breed criminals instead of reducing it. Presently, Nigeria has a recidivist rate of 60% (Nigerian Prison Service report).

The aim of establishing a correctional center in Nigeria is to provide an environment where criminals can be confined for the purpose of reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration into the society

The aim of the establishing a correctional center in Rivers State is for correction, rehabilitation and humanism. Attention will be on creation of spaces for court, reformation and comfort of the staffs and inmates then preventing the escape of the inmates.

**Its Objectives are the following:**

- a. To prevent the occurrence of crime.
- b. To punish the criminals.
- c. To rehabilitate the criminals.
- d. To maintain law and order in the society
- e. To deter the offenders from committing any criminal act in the future.
- f. To provide a facility that will have a sense of freedom while maintaining security.
- g. To change the old monumental and colonial style of prison buildings, hence to design a building in consonance with the style obtained in modern correctional centers.

- h. To restore privacy and comfort to the inmates by reducing to the barest minimum, the problem of overcrowding.
- i. To provide a good environment for rehabilitation programmes delivery.
- j. To provide an adequate and conducive working environment for the staff so as to increase productivity.
- k. To ensure easier management and control of inmates.

### SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Correctional center is high security facility that will have court to facilitate judgments that will cater for male and female adult convicts as well as those awaiting trial person (ATP). The facility will make provision for reformation of the inmates, for vocational training, educational training, recreation and religious activities. The scope will also cover the administrative block, medical unit and other activities that will enhance or add value to the facilities.

### DEFINITIONS OF SELECTED TERMS

- i. **REFORMATORIES:** An institution to which youthful offenders are sent as an alternative to prison; a reform school from age of sixteen (16).
- ii. **JAIL:** a place of confinement for persons held in lawful custody; specifically :such a place under the jurisdiction of a local government for the confinement of persons awaiting trial or those convicted of minor crimes, or a place for the confinement of people accused or convicted of a crime.
- iii. **DETENTION CENTERS:** An institution where people are held in detention for short periods, in particular illegal immigrants, refugees, people awaiting trial or sentence, or youthful offenders.
- iv. **BORSTALS:** Before 1953 in the United Kingdom, an institution for young offenders that combined features of prison and school. Borstals were replaced by detention centers and youth custody centers.
- v. **JUVENILE CENTERS:** A modern facility, stipulated by law that houses youthful offenders and delinquents below 18yrs.

- vi **PRISON:** Facility in which people are legally held as a punishment for a crime they have committed, who have been convicted or while awaiting trial.
- vii. **CONVICT:** To declare someone to be guilty of a criminal offense by the verdict of a judge or the decision of a judge in a court of law.
- viii. **INCARCERATION:** The state of being confined in prison.
- ix. **RECIDIVISM:** The tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend or committing crime again.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study seeks to examine the reformation changes required in modern Correctional center design in line with the United Nations minimum requirement for prisoners and the Federal Government statement on prison reforms. A mixed method data collection was done using oral interviews and case studies.

### **Primary Data Collection**

They comprised of the following;

#### **Literature Review**

This will be done through extensive study of books and journals on Correctional centers design and reformation implementation strategies. Government books/ journals backing prisons services and reforms will also prove valuable. The World-Wide Web serves as the most informative source providing extensive information on the subject matter compared to scanty literature on modern prison designs and reforms offered by the local libraries.

#### **Oral Interviews**

The Highest Ranking Officer from each selected prisons in Nigeria will be interviewed to ascertain their response on the level of their knowledge on prison reforms, existing design and the status of rehabilitation services in the Nigeria prisons. Information will be gathered (where possible) from prison inmates to ascertain the existence and/or status of rehabilitation services in the prisons since they are the primary users.



## **Secondary Data Collection**

### **Case Studies**

Extended case studies will be conducted on some local and foreign prisons to ascertain the present prison conditions, to compare prison architecture between old prisons and the newly built ones and to what extents the concept of reform had been adopted. This is to serve as a guide for the design of a functional and effective Correctional center. Studies will be carried out on the following parameters.

#### **A. Accessibility**

This is not only from the exterior but also from the building's entrance to all parts of the building.

#### **B. Security**

This entails keeping the prisoners away from law abiding society and guarding against escapees and also protecting inmates from themselves and the guards.

#### **C. Possibility Of Expansion**

It is necessary to permit future growth (in the event of population increase) with minimum disruption.

#### **D. Economic Parameter**

This aspect looks at how economical it is for the prison to be built and maintained, with minimum resources both in finance, staffing and maintenance.

#### **E. Organizational Layout**

This involves the arrangement of the various structures and services on site and how it enhances circulation, proper connection and security/ supervision.

#### **F. Building Character/ Environment**

A large part of the programme's effectiveness is in the character of the physical environment within which the programme takes place. Hence the building's character involves the physical and principles on which the prison's programmes are premised.

## **RESEARCH CHALLENGES**

Finding literary works on Prison Architecture and reforms to the local settings of Nigeria is a challenge. This was found to be limited. Lessons therefore have to be drawn from documentation from developed and developing countries where laws and

concepts pertaining to prison reforms has been implemented over a long time. Prisons in Nigeria are highly security conscious and as such every visitor is regarded with utmost suspicion and in most cases treated as such. There is a standing order against taking pictures of prison facilities and one has to solely rely on one's ability to memorize and sketch.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In cause of thorough and careful research, the following are therefore recommended;

- i. Lack of logistics slows process of prosecution creating high remand of awaiting trial population (ATP), having a District court within the facilities would help to decongest the prison.
- ii. Due to the challenges with security and surveillance, monitoring stations would be located at the entrance of the cell blocks to afford easier surveillance. Guard towers should also be located at strategic points, flood light should be mounted to brighten the entire environment
- iii. The dormitory style of housing inmate has contributed to overcrowding in Nigeria prisons therefore such style of housing should be replaced with cells accommodating a maximum of 3 inmates per cell.
- iv. Due to the challenges with security and surveillance, monitoring stations would be located at the entrance of the cell blocks to afford easier surveillance. Guard towers should also be located at strategic points; flood light should be mounted to illuminate the entire environment.
- v. Special value should be placed on providing conducive environment and adequate spaces for vocational and educational training.
- Vii. The issue of poor ventilation in existing prisons, cell windows should be made larger without compromising security and the head room should increase..

## **CONCLUSION**

The Correctional Center is an institution structured on justice, humane custody, and the present concepts of correctional architecture. This is because the dehumanized environments of the older prisons simply do not lend itself to the current methods of rehabilitating or reforming the inmates. My experience in this

research has revealed a very big link between the developing science of justice, human behavior and architecture. Man's perception of space and the influence of his surroundings on his feelings, attitudes and behavior are questions of fundamental interests both to architecture and penology.

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