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Visual art as resource for economic empowerment of prison-inmates in Benue state, Nigeria

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Abstract

In the past, convicts were taken to prisons as punishment and to serve as deterrent to others, but the idea has changed to that of corrections because reformation is the main reason for sending inmates to prisons nowadays. Studies indicate that prisons are aiding inmates in criminality through failed reformation programmes. Vocational prison centres continue to worsen with ill-equipment and staff, therefore, keeps discharging un-reformed inmates annually. There is therefore, need to put some palliative measures using art creativity and entrepreneurship. The study determined the cause and effect of visual art among inmates in Benue custodies. The specific objectives were to: (i) test inmates' level of change from visual art exposure; (ii) assess reformation facilities for vocational and educational programmes; and (iii) ascertain the level of readiness to obtain skills for income generation. Quasi-experimental design was used for the study; the population was 172 convicts from Benue custodies. The sample size was 75 male-inmates' selected via stratified random sampling, while 5-weeks art treatment took place with inmates. Art-scores and questionnaire data were analysed using chi-square. The study found visual art achievement as significant among inmates in Benue custodies. Recommendation: Nigerian Correctional Service should include visual arts as empowerment strategy in the reformation programme of inmates.

KeyWords: 1. Visual Art, 2. Resource, 3. Economic Empowerment, 4. Inmates.

Introduction

The various security breakdown during the past two decades in many parts of Nigeria which manifest in different forms and magnitude of criminality, coupled with abject poverty, wrong value orientation and unemployment have led to many arrests and persecution of citizens. All of these have not auger well with security agencies that are still battling to curtail the menace. This study is not aimed at stopping people from going to prison but to equip those who are already there to adjust morally, skillfully, and economically through visual art resource empowerment.

In those days, convicts were taken to prison as punishment for their crimes, and to serve as deterrent to others, but now the idea of retributive justice has changed to that of correcting the offender to lead a good life in the future. Reformation and rehabilitation are some of the main reasons why inmates are sent to correctional institutions by penal authorities. The inmates are

therefore supposed to be engaged in purposeful life-serving skills to keep themselves busy (Nigerian Prisons Service, 2018; Asokhia and Agbonluae, 2013; Omale, 2011). The need to introduce vibrant educational and vocational programmes to improve skills, entrepreneurship and literacy in prisons cannot be over emphasised (Tanimu, 2010), as previous programmes failed woefully to meet up reformation expectations of the inmates and international best practices (Olusina, 2013). The new Nigerian Correction Act, 2019 clearly spelt out the deficiencies and inadequacies of the repealed Prison Act CAP P29, 2004, which among other things included unproductive reformation policies and poor welfare packages to inmates, as well as incompetent staff to handle reformation programmes among other challenges (Nigerian Corrections, 2019).

The abundance of diverse vocational skills and creativity among prisoners cannot be utilised due to poor state of equipment and experts to be in charge of such impactful skills to produce excellent results (Brewster, 2014). Owing to poor infrastructure in reformation programmes, correctional institutions continue to rigmarole around the subject of reformation (Achu, Owam & Ekok, 2013). Scholars have opined that creativity in art releases aspects of life that are hardly expressed in our daily routine, which comprise vital tools in the great effort for human existence and survival. Creativity embraces feasible ways that could be used for discovery of skills and new solutions of solving human problems (Vygotsky, 1971; and Simonton, 2011). In occupational therapy, involving art is generally held to be effective in improving the expressive function of inmates; for youth inmates, art therapy can assist them with essential life sustaining skills (Gussak, 2004) capable of improving the possibility of rehabilitation.

Nigerian Correction Act, 2019 also stated that the service must be on reformation, rehabilitation and readjustment of maladjusted persons; ‘all attention will now be on how to engage inmates on meaningful ventures that will aid their reintegration into the society’ (Nigerian Corrections, 2019, p.1). This stress seems to be a clear departure from emphasis on solitary confinement of inmates over reformation and welfare of inmates in the past.

Researchers are concerned that it took over a decade for national legislators and the presidency to get the Nigerian Correction Act, 2019 passed into law. The above picture reflects the poor attitude of Nigeria towards inmates. Enemaku, (2020, p. 240), painted a hallowing picture that give the impression to “‘show no sign of improvement even with the laudable provisions in the new law. The Act seems to have put in place to satisfy the interest of the international community and some provisions of conventions that Nigeria has ratified.” Amnesty International in 2012 also opposed the working of Nigerian correctional services with a view that their objectives are not being met. Contending that instead of reforming the inmates, the correctional institution is rather hardening them in crimes and subjecting them to horrible, degrading conditions and punishments, which sometimes are exceedingly not in commensurate to the crimes the inmates committed. This affects the inmates physically and psychologically causing them to feel unwanted, unloved and abandoned in their society. Additionally, the sanctioning institution is continually observing massive increase in some inmates relapsing into crime after being freed from custody. This development has indeed confronted the realism and feasibility of rehabilitation programmes in the Nigerian Correctional system. Olusina’s (2013) account also indicated that as laudable as the cardinal objectives of the

Nigerian Correctional Services reform agenda sounded, they were far from the reality on the ground because a typical inmate in Nigerian Custody is a semi-literate male, in the prime of his youth. Occupationally, he is unemployed, underemployed or an apprentice in the lowest occupational ladder. The current “facilities and programmes of the prison are outdated, unsuitable, and irrelevant in contrast to the declared reformatory and rehabilitative ideals” (Tanimu, 2010, p. 150) of the inmates. Heads of African Corrections Services Association, (2013) in a communiqué, also acknowledged the deficiencies in existing rehabilitation programmes in African prisons, including Nigeria.

Marxists David Gordon is of the opinion that crime is rational and exists in every rational society. He argued that in a ‘dog eat dog’ society where competition is the order of the day, individuals must fend for themselves in order to survive. He saw the criminal as being lured into crime by poverty occasioned by poor economic policies. Crime becomes dysfunctional when its rate is unusually high (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004) as is the case with Nigeria at the moment.

Casting back memory at the Finnish Imprisonment System, Finland rejected the imposed rigid Soviet incarceration system and went for reformation of shaping inmates’ values, skills and encouragement of moral behaviour. At present, ‘Finland’s rate of imprisonment is less than half of England’s and one-fourth that of the United States’ (Schaefer, 2005, p. 171). The Nigerian correctional institution has reached a boiling point of decay where the institution is in great danger of becoming an anachronism. The basic energy required to jerk it forward is lacking so that the sanctioning body neither meets the needs of inmates nor keeps pace with international best practices. Studies pointed to the fact that the Nigerian correctional institution’s history is rather a rough one because it went through preventable situations which caused its decay and it’s currently on the edge of the abyss (Onu, 2010; Achu, Owam & Ekok, 2013; Asokhia & Agbonluae, 2013).

The great quantity of assorted artistic and creatively attractive skills in the midst of inmates would not be sufficient as basis for the research. It also embraces the likely veritable ways visual art could be used as rehabilitation and rediscovery of entrepreneurial skills for economic empowerment. Brewster (2014) published that prison arts programmes have significant benefits and positive outcomes for the incarcerated, their families, the correctional environment, and society at large. Low level of human capital can also present a barrier to economic growth and development, which are foundations for poverty eradication (Ayo, 2012; World Bank, 1993). Entrepreneurship is something we ignore at our own peril, Kirzner (1989) said entrepreneurship is pertinent to the analysis of how new ideas or recipes for reconfiguring objects in the material and social world can be harnessed to enhance a nation’s wealth. Entrepreneurship and skill empowerment have the propensity to generate youth employment and put together the youth into the economic mainstream while addressing some of the socio-psychological and delinquency troubles that arise from unemployment (Chigunta, 2002; Curtain, 2001). Philosopher Aristotle once echoed poverty and unemployment as the parent of revolution and crime in any society; youth entrepreneurship therefore is a deliberate effort aimed at equipping the incarcerated youth with life skills, knowledge and attitude needed to be independent economically and socially on release.

Non-formal education can build skills for employability, internship and apprenticeship. A UNDP Director of Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, Magdy Martinez – Soliman, alluded that the institutional public space is scarce for youth, stressing that if war was a tragedy for all; peace is difficult for them and jobs are hard to get and tough to keep. UNDP (2012) further extolled decent work and livelihood creation as chief determinants in the socio-economic empowerment of youth; they also contribute to sustainable human development overall. To the world body accomplishment refer to growing the amount of jobs for youth. It also entails facilitating movements of youth to more productive sectors like visual art, and increasing access to social protection.

As a people who work with a conscience, all researchers must continue this work of corrections so that, together with the prison-inmates inside, ‘we can force the changes that are necessary to slow down the reliance on the punishment industry as a way to solve our society’s problems’ with better options (Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, 2002). If the Nigerian Correctional Services can adopt an energetic measure of applying visual art skills and entrepreneurship in boosting vocational education and economic activities as empowerment tools for inmates, it will go a long way in stimulating the convicts and the correctional institution to move forward.

Conceptual Framework: Conceptual frame for this study is ‘Art Creativity’. Diverse acuity on the subject of creativity exists but scholars tend to be in accord with originality, usefulness, and surprise as main ingredients of creativity (Vygotskij, 1995; Jung, 2001 & Lindqvist, 2003). Creativity ensures the possibility of someone even thinking ‘without the box’ as is the custom imposed by habitual judgment and to venture into fields that would otherwise be ignored (Simonton, 2011). Creativity through art is the “...organization of our future behaviour... without new art there can be no new man” (Vygotsky, 1971, pp. 253 -259). “All human beings, even small children, are creative and that creativity is the foundation for art...” (Lindqvist, 2003, p. 249). This framing is therefore used to unravel inherent creativity among prisoners that could become their skill and economic safety nets.

Statement of the Problem: Most inmates come from poor social and economic background which makes it difficult to change their poverty condition. The less empowerment opportunities in prison add significantly to their poverty level in the society. Nigerian Correctional Services is not living up to its rehabilitation mandate to guarantee smooth transition from custody to the ‘free’ society as convicts continue to turn-out annually without social and economic safety nets to curb recidivism, as a typical Benue inmate is a semi-literate youth at the bottom hierarchy of the social ladder. Researchers have documented much about prison reformation in sociology, psychology, medicine etc. but there is paucity of empirical literature that addressed reformation using Visual Art resources. The study therefore addressed this discrepancy and tested inmates’ creativity in prison.

Objectives: The kernel of the study is to determine the cause and effect of art resources with prison-inmates. The specific objectives are to: (i) test inmates’ level of change from visual art exposure; (ii) assess reformation facilities for vocational and educational programmes; and (iii) ascertain the level

of readiness to obtain skills for income generation. **Research Questions:** (i) To what extent has visual art exposure empowered prison-inmates? (ii) How adequate are the vocational and educational facilities in Benue custodies? (iii) To what extent are convicts ready to obtain any new skill for income-generation?

Synopsis of Corrections History

Imprisonment has not been a punishment in itself, but a way to incarcerate criminals pending corporal or capital punishment. Humiliations and human rights abuses abound in prison system in those days. Only Greece, the home of modern democracy, was an exception to inhuman treatment of inmates (Prison, 2010). As civilization started advancing, prisons gradually evolved into correctional institutions. The improvements we know today started with reforms in the 19th Century AD in Britain; Jeremy Bentham championed the reformation process. Bentham cherished men and their happiness and devise means of restoring them back to good citizenship through felicity and good manners (Bevington 1950; Geis, 1955). Quakers established the first known modern prison in Philadelphia, USA, in 1790 as a humane alternative to various harsh penalties imposed by the courts. Ugwoke (2010) and Enemaku (2020) stressed that Quakers wanted a life of solitary confinement, meditation and prayer for inmates, thereby creating sober reflection mood for atonement of their sins. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for crime prevention and treatment of offenders adopted in 1955 also influenced many countries including Nigeria towards this humane disposition.

If an offender is believed corrected, it means he no longer demonstrate signs of unlawful leanings (Enemaku, 2020). The subject of deviants and anti-social conduct is as old as mankind. From the family level, especially in the formative years of most children, corrections are achieved through discipline of the child by parents and adults for doing things wrongly. Behaviour such as kicking of siblings, stealing, refusing to carry out family chores or usually being truant is sanctioned (Tarhule, 2014; Enemaku, 2020). Later development and growth at public and work places, corrections are still carried out at the broader societal level.

In the past, Nigerian traditional societies used corrective methods such as sending deviants on banishment, cleansing rites, fasting, beating and taking away their properties among other sanctions (Egu, 1990; Hassan, 2011; Akwaji, 2012; and Akpen-Ade, 2015). Egu (1990) succinctly captured it that Ogboni Kose among the Yoruba states, Ewedos in the Bini Kingdom, Yaris in the Sokoto Caliphate, and the Doka among the Tiv oligarchy showed evidence of functional equivalents of modern prison system before contact with British Imperialists. The establishment of Broad Street Prison, Lagos, in 1872, marked the beginning of modern prison system in Nigeria by the British colonialist. It was Mr. R. H. Dolan, a prison administrator that initiated Vocational Training in Nigerian prisons in 1949. Tailoring, carpentry; and agric farms; including Moral and Adult Educational classes constituted the initial take off (Orakwe, 2012). Vocational skills like carpentry, tailoring and manual farms do exist but leaves much to be desired to reform any inmate. This sector seems to exist as a caricature of what ought to be, so not much impact on inmates (Egu, 1990; Orakwe, 2012). According to Marshall in Enemaku, (2020):

When the prison gates slam behind an inmate, he does not lose his human quality, his mind does not become closed to ideas, his intelligence does not cease to feed on a free and fair interchange

of opinion; his yearning for self respect are more compelling in the dehumanizing prison environment (pp. 236-7).

Let us glance at some Nigerian prisons annual budget estimates from 2007 – 2013 and see why the Nigerian correctional service has done very little in the past as reported by Tarhule, (2014):

...the year 2007 indicates that N19.6 billion or 10.72% was released to the Nigerian Prisons Service –NPS, for both capital and recurrent budget out of the budgeted sum of N56.5 billion. For the year 2008, the sum of N6, 059,284, 938.09 was released to the NPS for capital expenditure; part of this sum was only released in December of that year. For the 2013 fiscal year, as at November, 2013, only about 40% of the budget according to the national assembly had been released. Using this as a bench mark, the prisons must be having a raw time.

To cap it all, Enemaku, (2020, p. 240), painted a hallowing picture which seems to “show no sign of improvement even with the laudable provisions in the new law...” The Nigerian Correction Act, 2019 looks more of window dressing to satisfy conditions imposed by the international community and other conventions that Nigeria may have endorsed. This circumstance affects the inmates physically and psychologically causing them to feel unwanted, unloved and abandoned in their society (Amnesty International, 2012).

Several studies (Orakwe, 2010; Tanimu, 2010; Omale, 2011; Asokhia & Agbonluae, 2013) have succinctly demonstrated the need to provide for more functional and adequate educational and occupational facilities and programmes in Nigerian custodies. Only recently in USA, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation - CDCR (2007, p. 2), assessed its facilities and concluded that they were looking at many new and innovative options to provide functional programmes for inmates, stressing that ‘if we are to truly make a difference, we need to realize that the first day of imprisonment is also the first day of rehabilitation...’ Reducing repeat offending calls for attention at every stage of imprisonment, from custody through parole. The CDCR is expecting the assessment and improvement of empowerment programmes to be a catalyst in reducing recidivism and enhancing public safety for all.

Methodology

Quasi-experimental design was adopted. The choice of experimental design was because it helped the researcher to achieve the goal of the study. Researchers (Ale, 2020; Kari, 2020; Obasi *et al.*, 2021; Ogbonne, 2019; Odii *et al.*, 2020; Gever, & Nwabuzor, 2014; Gever, 2016; Gever *et al.*, 2021;) postulate that the decision to apply a research design is based on the study aim. The population for the study was 172 convicted male inmates from Makurdi, Otukpo and Gboko Custodies in Benue State, Nigeria. The sample size of 75 male inmates’ was drawn using a stratified random sampling (count those who had sign to participate up to required number only). Awaiting Trial Persons – ATPs, were not included in the sampling because prison laws forbids them from any empowerment programme (Orakwe, 2012; Ibrahim, 2013; and Nigerian Prison Service, 2018). Five weeks of inmates’ treatment with visual art took place in each of the three custodies three times a week between 9:00am – 1:00pm. Activities included Drawing and Painting, Graphics; Design and Tie & Dye. Pre-test and post-test data were collected through

art scores and analysed using achievement mean while Chi-square analysed data from the questionnaire at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The study on bio-data established that Benue custodies has majority of male youth accounting for 81.4%, age range 18 – 35 years and the rest of the percentage accounted for 36 years and above. Educational attainment recorded 93% ordinary level certificates and below. Only a miserable 6.7% obtained tertiary education; Tanimu, (2010); Enu-Kwesi & Asitic, (2012); and Questia, (2018) collaborated this finding in a study of different custodial centres that a typical convict in Nigeria prison is a semi-literate male in the prime of his youth. In addition, most youth had only secondary education and are unemployed, underemployed or apprentice; which means they are less empowered.

The following results are dealt with according to research questions:

To what extent has visual art exposure empowered prison-inmates in Benue custodies?

Analysis of Pre-Test (\bar{X}) and Post Test (\bar{X}) data in Benue custodies in all the activities



Fig. 1. Pre-Test (left) and Post-Test (right) Tie & Dye Design



Fig. 2 Pre-Test (left) and Post-Test (right) Leaf Design



Fig. 3 Graphics: Pre-Test (up) and Post-Test (down)



Fig. 4. Art Exhibition in Makurdi Prison at the end of the exercises

Pre-Test (\bar{X}) = 79.7

Post-Test (\bar{X}) = 111.2

Achievement = Pre-test – Post-Test (\bar{X}) = 14.6

Significant performance was recorded as a result of visual art treatment effect, even though some of the inmates proved not good enough as their treatment effect was not far from their entry performance (Pre-Test 79.7, Post Test 111.2 Mean Diff. 31.5 – Significant) as seen on (figures 1- 4). This significant art achievement rating correlates Igbinovia’s (2003) finding that the rehabilitation agenda in Benin Custody was skill acquisition programmes and educational services. In spite of treatment effect, some participants proved not good enough as their treatment effect was not far from their entry performance. Lucas (2012) upheld this view that the current situation with art in correctional setting was ‘something of hit and miss as inmates don’t have it and when they do, they are sometimes various lodicules strictures like...something people might be able to make a career of’. Most convicts who tried their hands at arts make the same kind of uninspired, tediously rendered stuff that is liable to result from aesthetic efforts of any more or less random population with time on its hand. It was also found that empowerment programmes are not only valuable but also meaningful as they control inmates’ behaviour and inventiveness. The exhibition mounted by inmates (fig.4) was credible and worth breath taking as works were not only inspiring but also promising. Some of the inmates pledge to carry their new found skill to the ‘free society’ to make income. It has been observed during field work that empowerment programmes are not only valuable but also meaningful as they have power over inmates’ behaviour and creativity. Asokhia and Agbonluae (2013) reported in a study that the best alternative to help inmates return to their

communities productively and discourage jail cycle is to train convicts in life and dependable skills capable of succeeding in the outside world. A famous philosopher, Alvin Toffler, note ‘the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn’ (Iorapuu, 2018, p. 2).

How adequate are the vocational and educational facilities in Benue custodies?

Table 1. Analysis of data on vocational and educational facilities

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
29	26	3	9	0.3
10	15	-5	25	1.7
4	13	-9	81	6.2
32	21	11	121	5.8
38	26	12	144	5.5
15	15	0	0	0
6	13	-7	49	3.8
16	21	-5	25	1.2
21	26	-5	25	1.0
17	15	2	4	0.3
23	13	10	100	7.7
14	21	7	49	2.3
28	26	2	4	0.2
13	15	-2	4	0.3
12	13	-1	1	0.1
22	21	1	1	0.0
15	26	-11	121	4.7
14	15	-1	1	0.1
24	13	11	121	9.3
22	21	1	1	0.0
30	26	4	16	0.6
22	15	7	49	3.3
13	13	0	0	0
10	21	-11	121	5.8
14	26	-12	144	1.5
20	15	5	25	1.7
14	13	1	1	0.1
27	21	6	36	1.7
31	26	5	25	1.0
12	15	-3	9	0.6
10	12	3	9	0.7
22	21	1	1	0.0
				$\frac{\sum(O - E)^2}{E} = 71.5$

$$\frac{\sum(O - E)^2}{E} = 71.5$$

$X^2 \text{ cal.} = 71.5$
 $X^2 \text{ crit.} = 32.671$
 $Df = 21$

The results of the study showed that the vocational and educational facilities in Benue custodies are adequate though obsolete ($X^2 \text{ cal. } 71.5 > X^2 \text{ crit. } 32.671$ at $DF = 21$). This gives an idea about vocational and educational facilities that such facilities are adequate though obsolete. Some of the sewing machines are already kept waiting for Prison Museum collection and another giant factory weaving machine is an anachronism in Gboko prison occupying large space that should have been used for something else. This finding is in consonance with Achu, Owam and Ekok (2013) who asserts that the carpentry workshops in the Calabar custodial centre stay behind in sorry state, while the art and carpentry workshop existed but not constructive and productive enough to give it a pass mark. The study found and established the willingness of inmates to acquire life skills capable of sustaining life on release. Some of them made comments to confirm their stand in this way:

“I suffered severe punishments from my parents for using my books and the wall to draw. Right now, art makes me happy and I can show my family that I did something worthwhile while in prison, not like a common criminal again”

“I are happy with the art programme, since I came to this custody two years ago, this is what really made me and most of my mates happy and hopeful of a good future. It gives me the means to express myself and get money too...”

Majority of respondents do not just agree but strongly committed themselves and were willing to under-go any form of training that will launch them into skilled-workmen. They are also hopeful that visual art will improve the quality of their lives.

To what extent are convicts ready to obtain any new skill for income-generation?

Table 2. Analysis of data on readiness to learn any new trade

m	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
47	38	9	81	2.1
21	25	-4	16	0.6
2	7	-5	25	3.6
5	5	0	0	0
23	38	-15	225	5.9
16	25	-9	81	3.2
22	7	15	225	32.1
14	5	9	81	16.2
40	38	2	4	0.1
23	25	-2	4	0.2
9	7	2	4	0.6
3	5	-2	4	0.8

40	38	2	4	0.1
33	25	8	64	2.6
2	5	-3	9	1.8
39	38	1	1	0.0
33	25	8	64	2.6
1	7	-6	36	5.1
2	5	-3	9	1.8
				$\frac{\sum(O - E)^2}{E} = 79.4$

$$\frac{\sum(O - E)^2}{E} = 79.4$$

$$X^2 \text{ cal.} = 79.4$$

$$X^2 \text{ crit.} = 21.026$$

$$Df = 12$$

Readiness to learn income generating trade was high ($X^2 \text{ cal. } 79.4 > X^2 \text{ crit. } 21.026$ at $DF = 12$) (table 2). The convicts are ever ready to acquire new skills as shown above. The quality of works produced and the enthusiasm shown during field work confirmed the readiness of the inmates to acquire new income generating skills for a change in career. The result verification is in disparity with Osefo, (1990); Achu, Owam and Ekok, (2013) in their separate studies found contrasting views that Nigerian custodies are dungeons that symbolized wickedness of the highest order because convicts hardly get any training in particular skill before their exit date, therefore end up discouraged and downhearted in getting a new skill. Majority of the inmates agreed that they were ready to acquire life skills for income generating trade. Majority of respondents do not just agree but strongly committed themselves and were willing to under-go any form of training that will launch them into skilled-workmen. They were also hopeful that visual art will improve the quality of their lives. To buttress this stand, some inmates in Makurdi Custodial Centre are currently attending undergraduate studies of the National Open University of Nigeria - NOUN, one of them was a participant of this study. Wherever there is a will, there is a way; the convicts are determined to improve themselves via the channel of visual art resourcefulness and educational empowerment generally.

The visual art activities were Drawing, Painting, Graphics, Design and Tie and Dye. These are practices and products that are considered daily demand or routine from the public, practitioners who indulge in such are most likely to earn good income on them. The excellent turn out of inmates' productions as seen on all the figures on the post-test activities (figs. 1- 4) is heartwarming and a step forward to achieve more with determination. In the aspect of entrepreneurship, those who consider themselves not good enough can still indulge in art sales and marketing as curators, others can engage in both to boost their micro-finance business outlook and say bye to crime.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Inmates from Benue state custodies were confirmed semi-literate male youth in the prime of their ages; they were apprentices, unemployed or underemployed at the bottom of social hierarchy. As their incomes were low, they turn to criminality as an option thereby ending up in custody. In a poverty

stricken society like that of Nigeria, where competition is the order of the day, poor economic policies emphasized individualism and survival of the fittest. Prisoners are therefore, in dire need of dependable skill like visual art for social adjustment, income generation and entrepreneurship for proper reformation and rehabilitation. Youth unemployment commonly takes front seat especially in developing nations; and this render them most vulnerable to social exclusion that results into serious social vices. Therefore, basic and vocational education activities should be introduced and stepped up in prisons where inmates will be given access to benefit from such laudable programmes. When this is done, it will make their discharge date more meaningful than their entry.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations have been advanced:

- i. There is urgent need for government and correctional authorities to boost literacy activities in all custodial centres in order to salvage inmate population from the shackles of illiteracy, lack of skills and its attendant effects.
- ii. Since entrepreneurship and vocational education activities is the way forward in fighting poverty and unemployment in our society, government, organised private sector, non-governmental organisations and individuals should get involved with inmates for massive life-skill training in vocational education and art resources for genuine economic and social empowerment so that they will not re-offend society on release.

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