



Challenges of controlling delinquency and juvenile recidivism in correctional centre in Ondo State, Nigeria

Oluwafemi Amos IDOWU¹ and Abass MUHAMMED²

¹Department of Sociology, Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil Kano State

²Department of Sociology, Bayero University, Kano State.

Correspondence to: idowuoluwafemiamos@yahoo.com; muhammedabassofficial@gmail.com

Tel: 234 8036759207 & 08112290911; +234 8068016981

ABSTRACT

This study examined the challenges of controlling delinquency and juvenile recidivism in correctional centre. It explored the statutory roles of correctional institution and the challenges of correctional institution in Ondo State, Nigeria. The research design is explorative in nature. The study employed quantitative (survey) and qualitative (Focus Group Discussion) and personal observation research methods. The study involved Forty-two respondents (10 personnel of the correctional centre and 32 juvenile delinquents). The data collected were analyzed with quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis with the aid of descriptive statistics. The study found that male children are more prone delinquency and juvenile recidivism than the female. Poor family background, dysfunctional family system, peer group influence, ineffective juvenile correctional institutions and weak religious institutions and so on are the major factors influencing delinquency and juvenile recidivism in Nigeria. Also, there are a lot of challenges faced by the juveniles in the correctional institutions in Nigeria such as health/medical facilities, poor rehabilitation facilities and ineffective rehabilitation programmes. Several rehabilitative, vocational skills programmes and facilities are not available in the juvenile correctional institution. Besides, there are multiple of challenges militating against the efficient and effectiveness of the juvenile correctional centre in Ondo State. The study therefore recommend that governments, parents, community, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders should put all hands on desk to solve the challenges of controlling delinquency and juvenile recidivism, and secure the society from adult and advanced criminality.

Keywords: Challenges, Control, Correctional Institution, Delinquency, Juvenile

INTRODUCTION

Seeing a child of less than the legal age (below 18 years) getting involved in criminal activities is disgusting and alarming. The involvement of juveniles is a feature in crime situation in Nigeria nowadays. A nation that fails to educate the adolescents and youths, but corrupt is only keeping money to build more juvenile correctional centres and prisons. In other hand, a nation that properly manages its juvenile justice system is only preparing the future generation that will give in turn: hope, development, peace, growth, prosperity and security. All behaviour is learned including delinquency. Juvenile criminal behaviour is a serious problem in the contemporary societies. In every human society, majority of criminal activities stated at the young age and there are very few criminals who started at adult age. Factors traceable to juvenile delinquency could be economical, biological, socio-cultural, environmental and situational. The offences committed by the people of the legal age are called crime. The legal age in Nigeria is 18 years and above. In the other hand, the

offence committed by the people who are below the legal age (18 years old) is called juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency is seen as the crime committed by the young people and a delinquent is an offender especially a young criminal assumed to lack the moral and social sense without showing impairment of intellect. As delinquency increases so also the delinquents that go to correctional facilities to serve time and term for the crimes they have committed. Likewise the previously incarcerated delinquents return to the criminal justice system at alarming rate these days after being rehabilitated. Juvenile delinquency is a social problem with great financial and social cost that affect the society at large (Idowu and Odivwri, 2017). Delinquency like other social behaviour has complex roots. It is most often a transitory phenomenon. The future criminals can certainly be reduced by preventing the children of going astray. If a child is brought up in an unwholesome environment, there is likelihood that he/she assimilates wrong norms, values and at later stage of life it becomes difficult to bring him/her to the right path. It is now a common knowledge that a good number of adult criminals committed first offence in their childhood, long before their first conviction as adult offender.

Mostly, the Juvenile delinquency is caused by: poor socialization, inadequate parental control, poverty/low income of parents (economy), dysfunctional family setting (family instability), break in social bond to the family (disintegration), prevalence of physical child abuse in the family, neglect of children by the parents, excessive punishment of children, exposure to negative influence of adult offenders, peer group influence (bad gang), ineffective educational system, unemployment and under-employment of youths, migration and rapid population growth, social inequality between the rich and the poor, socio-economic and political instability, advent of technology (mass media), media violence (watching on television), urbanization, behaviour of the victim to the offender, hereditary (biological factors), ineffective correctional system, weak religion institution on morality, denial of the children fundamental human rights and so on are the pressures the young people are dealing with nowadays.

Juvenile delinquency has become a phenomenon in Nigeria as it has been a threat to the society by breeding more criminal activities among the youths of tender age. The administration of justice on the juvenile delinquency has been a problem, because there is no special court for the trial of the juvenile delinquents. It is a common belief that children of this particular age need to be corrected under the control and supervision of correctional institutional institutions for rehabilitation and re-integration. However, the roles of the correctional institutions have been challenged with so many banes, and inability to adequately control the juvenile delinquencies has become a threat to the development of the nation as it poses more crime, insecurity and so on in the country. Placement in rehabilitation centres might also get the juvenile acquainted with more serious offenders and leads them to be influenced into future juvenile recidivism. the trauma of having a family member involved in delinquent behaviour and been sent to correctional centre does create instability within the family in some situations.

Juvenile delinquency is the act perpetuated by the juveniles as a violation of laws, codes and ethics, the proscriptions and prescriptions set by the society to guide its members on how to behave. Violation of any of these acts will result to sanction, and continues violation of these laws often predisposes them to becoming future adult criminals. This however, is a social problem that affects the whole society and rendering the social institutions ineffective, if not properly and adequately addressed. The high rate of juvenile delinquencies in Nigeria these days has called the attention of the stake-holders on the adverse effects of the act in the society. It has become a challenge to the

correctional institutions since they cannot be sentenced to prison like adult offenders. The increasing waves of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria place lives, properties and future of the youths at stake. The plights of juvenile offenders under custody in correctional care facilities in Nigeria have attracted national and international attentions.

Juvenile delinquency is a phenomenon that has to be addressed because it is becoming more visible and threatening nowadays. Juvenile delinquency is a complex trend that must be critically dissected to understand specifically the reasons why children turned to delinquency and in turn to control juvenile recidivism. One of the strategies to reduce crime in the society is to prevent juvenile delinquency. However, the control of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria correctional institutions has a lot of advantages. It keeps the community safer, and family will be more intact. There will be reduction in crime rate, victim of crime and juvenile cases in the juvenile justice system administration. There will be socio-economic growth and development for all in the country. All these are only attainable, if the roles of correctional institutions are effective and efficient. It is on this premise that this study was designed to examine the challenges of controlling juvenile delinquency and recidivism in correctional institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the challenges of correctional institutions in controlling juvenile delinquency and recidivism in Ondo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Scrutinize the statutory roles of correctional institution.
- ii. Probe the challenges of correctional institution and delinquents in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Juvenile delinquency

Juvenile is a child (minor) who is unlike an adult person, having not attained the prescribed age, and he/she cannot be held liable for his/her criminal act. The Children and Young Person's Act (CYPA) also known as Children and Young Person's Law (CYPL) as amended in 2003 defined a "child" as a person below the age of 18 years, and persons above 17 years of age are subjected to normal processes of the law (Inyang, 2003 cited in Mboho and Udousoro, 2014). It clearly stated thus, a "child" is a person under the age of 14, while a "young person" is a person who has attained the age of 14 and he/she is still under the age of 18 years old. CYPL categorically recognizes juvenile delinquents as juvenile in needs of care and protection, and juvenile in conflict with the law of the land (Mboho and Udousoro, 2014), and children considered beyond parental control. Also, CYPL recognizes categories of juvenile delinquents as: juvenile offenders, beyond parental control, wanderers, beggars, truants, and such likes (Sa'ad, 2009 cited in Sarki, Abdullahi and Mukhtar, 2018: 18). The age criteria for being a juvenile vary from country to country, state to state. In Nigeria the age of juvenile is between 12 and 17 years old, while in other countries like United States the age of juvenile ranges from 16 to 21, but below 18 is the most common. In France and Poland, the age limit is 13 years. In Australia, Germany, Norway and Czechoslovakia it is 14 years and in Denmark as well as Sweden it is 15 years. In England, a child below 10 cannot be charged of any criminal offence because of an irrefutable presumption of innocence and absence of mensrea.

Section 27 of the Nigeria Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 provides that any offence other than one punishable with death or imprisonment for life committed by any person who at the date when he/she appears or is brought before the court is under the age of 16 may be tried by the court of Chief

Judicial Magistrate or any Court specially empowered under the Children Act, 1960 or any other law for the time being in force providing for the treatment, training and rehabilitation of such children offenders. Therefore, juvenile is presumed to lack the criminal intent to commit willful crime, hence juvenile law is designed primary to protect and redirect the young offenders rather than punishment. In Nigeria, it is presumed that a child is responsible for his/her action until he/she is at age 12 years old, but he/she will be treated as delinquent, until he/she reaches 18 years old. Thus, he/she is subject to criminal proceedings in the juvenile court and where he/she is found guilty shall be sent to remand or borstal home (Sarki, Abdullahi and Mukhater, 2018).

Borstal centre is the institution where adolescent offenders receive training in lieu of imprisonment, in order to reform them under conditions different from those of adult prisoners. While remand home is primarily a place where young offenders are safely accommodated during the period of its case is being considered in the juvenile justice/court. It is meant to be a centre where a child's character and behaviour can be minutely observed and its needs fully provided for by proper and careful consideration for attention by the probation officer. The juvenile justice administration includes the magistrate (appointed by the chief magistrate), assessors (usually drawn from the community) and probation officers. Delinquency is an act or conduct of a juvenile which is socially undesirable or non-conformed behaviour as deviance. Delinquency is a common feature of transition from teenage to adulthood, and juvenile most usually enhances stable delinquent group with a corresponding sub-culture which at times leads to adult criminal groups, viz-a-viz delinquent careers. Thus, delinquency is an illegal/immoral/unacceptable or anti-social behaviour perpetrated by young person that the society does not approve/accept.

In Nigeria, juvenile delinquent is a child (minor) who is below the statutory criminal age of 18 years who commits an act not punishable as a crime or as an act injurious to others individuals or the public in the society. He/she is still under the age of authority. He/she is immature, thus delinquent, but not criminal. Notably, criminals and delinquents are not treated in the same manner in the justice system. Prisons are meant for adults, while remand homes and borstal centres are for young or juvenile offenders. All crimes committed by persons below the age of criminal responsibility age can be legally defined as juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency is the expression of an unsatisfied urge in the juvenile delinquent. Whether a particular act or conduct of the child would be deviant or not depend on various factors that vary in different states, cities, countries and also time to time. A particular act of the child may be viewed as ordinary childish prank, but in another particular context it may cause concern and anxiety.

The distinction between a delinquent and normal child at times is very blurred and deciding point between a playful act and the juvenile delinquency is problematic. The Nigeria constitution of (1999) defines juvenile delinquency as a crime committed by a young person under the age of 18 years as a result of trying to comply with the wishes of his/her peers or to escape from parental pressure or certain emotional stimulation. Juvenile delinquency is a behaviour loosely defined as public nuisance which its usual characteristic includes acts that is of anti-social effect. The common offences committed by the juvenile include: theft, arson, loitering, vagrancy, snatching of personal effects, cultism, school violence, school drop-out, alcoholism, drug/substance abuse, bullying, stealing, burglary, examination-malpractices, gambling, smoking, sexual offences, assault, murder, pick-pocketing, telling lies, truancy, rape, prostitution, vandalism, disobedient, child homicide, robbery, child abuse, runaway, keeping late hour, weapon carrying and so on.

The juvenile justice system in Nigeria is weak and it has not been given the required attention, despite that fact that Nigeria is a signatory to several international instruments related to the juvenile

justice administration. Many states of the Federation do not have permanently constituted juvenile courts; rather magistrate's courts handle juvenile cases on certain days of the week in a different room/building. Notably, rules of privacy are common or mandatorily observed in juvenile procedures and all juvenile offenders have automatic right of appeal to the court. Also, there is dearth of facilities in the correctional centres, hence majority of the juvenile delinquents are sent to the adult prisons. Thus, juvenile justice system is dysfunctional in Nigeria. However, there is the need to correct the young children from going astray. Hence, borstal homes were established by the federal government to rehabilitate and reform the young criminal offenders. While the remand homes/welfare home/juvenile homes as may be applicable are owned by the state government. Borstal institution in Nigeria can be found in Kwara, Ogun, Kaduna and Lagos state owned by the federal government. Every state of the federation has at young offenders. The juvenile justice system in Ondo State is done in the magistrate court or special section in the court of law.

Statutory Roles of Juvenile Correctional Institution (Remand Home) in Nigeria

Juvenile correctional institutions in Nigeria include the juvenile courts, borstal centres, approved schools and remand home. According to Mboho and Udousoro (2014), juvenile justice does not operate with a criminal/penal procedure, and does not aim at a conviction and sentencing of the juvenile delinquents, but aimed at aiding the juvenile offender who is assumed to have committed an offence for some psychological or socio-economic reasons, gives the juvenile court a caring and loving atmosphere in dealing with juvenile cases, culminating the knowledge of law, science, social science and social work to manage cases of juvenile offenders. The statutory roles of correctional institution (remand home) in Nigeria are based on the Establishment Act are:

- i. To provide temporary custody in a stable, safe, fair and warm communal living environment.
- ii. To provide a programme of residential care.
- iii. To provide social work programmes and structured routines to address the problems leading to placement.
- iv. To encourage the development of potentials, sense of responsibility, self-esteem, self-care and social relationship for children and young persons in remand.
- v. To assist the children and young persons to develop better links with resources in the community.
- vi. To function as an assessment centre for children and young persons in remand.

The service is to be operated in compliance with Juvenile Offenders Ordinance, Chapter 226. Services provided include:

- i. Residential training in the form of small group living within the Home to promote and facilitate individual contact, treatment, attention, privacy and closer relationship among residents and with the residential workers.
- ii. Individual or group counseling to relieve the residents' anxiety and uncertainty, to help them adjust to the Home living and to help them gain insight into their emotional and behavioural problems and plan realistically for their social rehabilitation.
- iii. Assessments on areas including physical condition, behavioural and personality characteristics, interpersonal relationship, general performance, attitude towards welfare plan and

assessment on needs of the residents to assist the investigating officers to formulate welfare plan and the magistrates to decide on appropriate disposal.

iv. Working with relevant others including the investigating officer, family members, staff of other agencies and / or clinical psychologist to develop individual welfare plan for the residents.

v. Training programmes to develop life skills.

vi. Educational and trade training to cultivate residents' interest in study.

vii. Social, cultural and recreational activities to develop social skills and interest for better adjustment in the community.

viii. Family life education programmes to develop skills and knowledge for the improvement of family and interpersonal relationship.

ix. Encouraging and facilitating contact with families/guardians and arranging guardian visits for improvement of parent-child relationship and development of individual welfare plan for the residents.

x. Introducing various community resources to the residents and their families, involving volunteers in the programmes and by involving the residents in community service projects to enhance their self-esteem and to develop their potentials.

Furthermore, the statutory role of correctional institution is to control juveniles from committing any delinquent act, and help in raising juveniles who have offended and those who need care and protection. The institutions aim to protect, rehabilitate, re-educate and socialize juveniles on norms of behaviour acceptable to the society, as well as prepare them for productive and independent lives after discharge. The correctional institutions also provide homes for non-offending juveniles who are victims of circumstances and are in need of care and protection, or those in need of supervision and control, such as orphans, street children and abandoned children. In addition, the main role of the correctional institution is to provide character reform of juvenile offenders through counseling, acquisition of vocational skills, education, socialization and recreational activities with the view of making them useful, self-reliant and responsible citizens, who can be re-integrated back into the society (UNICEF, 2001). The role of the correctional institutions is to confine juvenile offenders who have been sentenced in the juvenile court in form of punishment, and as well as to correct the juveniles to become better citizens in the future and in the society through rehabilitation, reformation, re-integration and deterrence (Idowu, 2012).

Challenges of Juvenile Correctional Institution in Nigeria

According to Mohammad (2017), there are enormous challenges facing the correctional institution in Nigeria. Summarily, the plights of juvenile delinquents in Nigeria correctional institutions include: Inadequate feeding, clothing problem, non-hygienic accommodation, non-conducive atmosphere for rehabilitation, ineffective rehabilitation facilities and programmes in the correctional centres, poor condition of the correctional centres, over-crowding and congestion, non-separation of inmates, inadequate security, ineffective educational and vocational skill acquisition, health and medical challenges, non-visitation of relatives and so on. The inadequacies of the correctional institutions have reduced it to look like a human warehouse or cages and fortresses of punishment rather than correctional and reformations (Sa'ad, 2008 cited in Dauda, 2016). The inadequacies of the system as a corrective institution are in various aspects which include:

i. **Dearth of Juvenile Custodial and Correctional Institutions:** the dearth of juvenile courts and often poor legal representation of the young offenders during prosecution has resulted in many children been kept in custody with adult criminals. There are very limited borstal/correctional centres in Nigeria; hence several juvenile offenders are confined in the approved institutions or prisons. Also, at the state level, most residential youth correctional institutions serve as a punitive labour camp where children become hardened criminals when they come out. This promotes juvenile recidivism.

ii. **Lack of Alternative Sentencing:** Under the juvenile justice system, all cases supposed not to lead to sentencing of the young offenders, rather there should be alternative to sentencing which may include: community services, life skill programmes, victim offender mediation and family, development of group conferences, appropriate alternatives for girls, and so on. This has not been in place in Nigeria and it leads to congestion and over-crowding of the juvenile correctional centres, and difficulty in rehabilitating the delinquents and promoting juvenile recidivism.

iii. **Horrible Condition of the Nigeria Juvenile Correctional Centres:** The life of juveniles in the correctional centres is over regimented to the extent that there is strict control in virtually all activities of the juveniles. This often leaves the juveniles in a mentally brutalized manner. In this regard, it is apparent that the juvenile correctional centres in Nigeria are faced with the problem of destroying the juveniles which negates the essence of rehabilitation. Adetula, Adetula and Fatusin (2010), studies have shown that contact with the correctional institutions in Nigeria by the juveniles makes the less hardened juveniles to be more hardened in delinquent activities upon release with more tendencies that generate high frequency of juvenile recidivism. The horrible conditions of the Nigeria juvenile correctional centres do not permit their rehabilitation. According to Mohammad (2017).

iv. **Non-separation and Classification of Delinquents:** In most remand homes in Nigeria, the juvenile offenders and adult offenders are joint together in the same cell without following the Standard Minimum Rules (SMR) for juvenile imprisonment, which prescribes that juvenile offenders and repeated offenders should be locked up separately according to their various categories of offences (Amnesty International, 2008). Adult criminals might influence them with some kind of criminal activities. In the remand/borstal home, juvenile offenders should be classified based on sex, age, physical and mental health status, length of staying period, frequency of delinquency, delinquents' needs, possibility of social adjustment, gravity of the offence committed and so on. Non-separation and inadequate classification of the delinquents in the correctional homes make rehabilitation difficult and it promotes juveniles recidivism.

v. **Poor Infrastructure and Housing Facility:** In the Nigeria remand homes, rooms and cells are not good for human habitation, while the beddings are in most cases absent as many juveniles sleep on bare floor. Sometime juvenile offenders are being sent to the prison instead of remand/borstal homes which at the end they will be missed up with the adult offenders which will have negative implications on them. There is shortage of bed spaces and only few of the delinquents sleep on the available bed-space. Disease is widespread; sanitary condition (Yelodu, 1991). Most rehabilitation facilities are in comatose.

vi. **Over-crowding and congestion:** In Nigeria, most of the remand homes are overcrowded beyond the designed population which in turn over-stretches the available infrastructure beyond their limits of function due to human pressure. The facilities therein are over-used and weak. This affects the role of the remand home and it has resulted in much health related problems of unsanitary environment, poor feeding, poor clothing, over-stretched facilities, insufficiency or even non-

existence of welfare rehabilitation facilities. It also poses management problems as it can be seen in the inability to separate hardened criminals from minor offenders (Odekunle, 1978).

vii. **Poor Health and Medical Services:** In the Nigeria remand homes, the health condition is deplorable which has led to infectious diseases, such as skin scabies and bilharzias. To worsen the situation, there are no standard hospitals, drugs and qualified medical personnel to take care of the sick delinquents. Even when there is a need to take the sick inmates out of the remand home for treatment to a hospital, there are no motor vehicles to convey them. Omu (2008) argue that, in the Nigerian juvenile remand home's health sector the problem is the unavailability of drugs and other medical and laboratory equipment for effective health delivery.

viii. **Personnel Problem:** Juveniles who commits delinquent act who are being sent to the juvenile homes are not properly reformed because the personnel who are been charged with the responsibility of controlling juvenile are not well educated. They lack the needed training and materials, under-staffing, and so on. These have impeded the enforcement and the respect of the rights of juveniles. The institutions fail to meet its objectives fully because of inadequate funding of the personnel. The personnel are not well trained in handling children cases. The mechanism for reformation is not obtainable even among staffers who are supposed to be the reformers. This is because personnel in remand home are not properly and efficiently trained and retrained. Personnel members are not in tune with the current realities of global practices of juvenile rehabilitation (Ugwuoke and Otodo, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories that explain the causes and control of juvenile delinquency; however, this study employed social disorganization theory and social control theory to criminologically explain juvenile delinquency.

Social Disorganization Theory

Theories in this perspective argued that, rapid changes in the society, especially in the urban centres, create room for social institutions breakdown, and so also weakened social controls. In the absence of strong social controls immature youths form spontaneous groups. They do involve in all manners of legal and/or illegal activities to satisfy their unfulfilled needs. Therefore, juvenile delinquency arose due to lack of parental control, bad company, broken homes, peer group influence, unemployment, urbanization, over-population, lost of community values and virtues, industrialization, information and communication technology (social media), parental neglect, over-independence at early age, among others.

Social Control Theory

Social Control Theory is also known as "Social bond theory". It explains that there are different bonds determine the propensity to commit offence or not. These bonds include: *attachment* (thus, the socialization of an individual depends on his/her personal interest in others); *commitment* (thus, lack of commitment towards norms and social laws can lead to delinquent behaviour); *involvement* (thus, people who participate in positive activities would not have the to commit criminal acts) and *belief* (thus, those who do not live in an area may not have the same values or believes that law of the community is unfair). He/she tends to rebel and commit delinquent act (Jone, 2008 cited in Mattias,

2012: 473). Furthermore, several theorists have argued that crime and delinquency are produced by weak personal (self) or social control (Hirschi, 1969). They assume that human natural impulses towards aggression, delinquencies and crime are released. Reiss (1951) distinguished between personal (self) control and social control. According to him personal or self-control is the “the ability of the individual to refrain from meeting needs in ways which conflict with the norms and rules of the community”.

On the other hand, social control is the “ability of social groups or institutions to make norms or rules effective”. When social values and norms are not adequately and properly inculcated by the family and other socializing institutions (e.g. schools, religious bodies and civil associations), juveniles are more likely to develop or exhibit (personal) self-control. Reckless (1961) further identified “push and pull” factors in delinquency. Factors such as poverty, injustices, bad companions, inconsistent moral front in society may pull individuals toward delinquency. On the other hand, ‘inner push factors’ like: weak self-concept, aggressiveness, and restlessness may push juveniles towards delinquency. Hirschi (1969) suggests that human natural instincts lead to delinquency. Individuals will conform to social norms and rules only if there is effective social control through social bonding to society. Social bond involves attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.

Attachment to others in the society restrains individuals from deviating. Commitment and involvement in conventional activities help to bond individuals to society and minimize the chances of being involved in delinquent and criminal activities. Finally, belief in the legitimacy of rules, norms and values of the society minimizes delinquency. The implication of the theory is that delinquency is a reflection of society’s failure to create enabling conditions for attachment to people (i.e. family and friends) commitment to and involvement in conventional activities (schooling, employment, recreation and leisure), and belief in conventional norms, values and rules determines the possibility of a child to be delinquent or not in the society. The social control theory of delinquency is very apt and fit to the roles of the correctional institution in Nigeria. Hence, social control theory is adopted for this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. It made use of Survey (questionnaire) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to elicit information from the correctional personnel and the delinquents in the correctional centres at Akure Ondo State, Nigeria. The exploratory study sourced first-hand-information from the field. The research design is analytical and descriptive in nature. The study involved 42 respondents (10 juvenile correctional centre’s personnel and 32 delinquents) which were purposively, simple randomly and systematically selected from Ondo State, Nigeria. The questionnaires were administered among the delinquents, and focus group discussion was conducted among the juvenile correctional personnel. The selected juvenile correctional centre was at Ondo Road Akure in Ondo State, Nigeria. In addition, the quantitative data collected were collated, organized, processed, analyzed and presented using percentage and frequency tables and charts. On the other hand, the qualitative data were gathered, transcribed, processed, organized, analyzed and reported using descriptive statistics. Thus, content method of data analysis was employed to analyze and present the qualitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the field were analyzed, interpreted and presented as follows:

Table 1 shows that the highest frequent age among the delinquents was 16 years old; and majority of them were within 14 – 17 years old. This was revealed as 25.0% fell into 16 years old and 68.8% of the respondents were within 14 – 17 years old. The implication is that this is the age that needs adequate attention since it is the age of transition from teen to puberty stage and maturity. Age is an important factor to be considered as the study of juvenile delinquency and recidivism. Also, the study revealed that 68.8% of the respondents was male and only 31.3% were female. This shows that the prevalence of delinquency and juvenile recidivism is greater among the male than the female. Therefore, juvenile delinquency and recidivism were carried out majorly by the males. 90.6% of the respondents were Christians, 6.3% was practicing Islam and only 3.1% of the respondents opted for the traditional religion practice. This variance can be adduced to the study area, because Christianity is the dominant religion in Ondo State. Furthermore, 93.8% of the delinquents originated from states within Nigeria, and 3.1% of the respondents were from Cameroon and Togo respectively. This shows that the juvenile correctional centers in Nigeria do not only admit Nigerians, but every other juvenile who commits offence in the land.

The study revealed that 40.6% of the level of junior secondary school class and 34.4% were at the level of junior secondary school class, while 25.0% fell into primary school class. This indicates that delinquency began at the primary school stage and became more pronounced at the secondary school stages. Also, their age has to do with level of education. In addition, 87.5% of the respondents were incarcerated for the first time and only 12.5% fell to the class of recidivism. Thus, 12.5% among the delinquents have been brought to the juvenile correctional center for more than once.

Findings further revealed the reasons why the juveniles are in the correctional center and an excerpt from the open ended-question revealed thus:

Some of us are here because we are orphan, wanderers, and arrested. I have no parental care, I am disobedience, I stole at home, I was rejected by my foster parent, there was no accommodation. I attempted rape, rape, sexual assault, kidnapping activities and so on (Delinquents at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 20th February, 2019).

Correctional officers added to the common offences commonly committed by the delinquents and the activities of the juvenile correctional centre. This is an excerpt from the session of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD):

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Data of the Delinquents

Characteristics	Prisoners	
	Frequency	Percentage
Age of the Respondents		
Less than 14 Years	6	18.8
14 Years	6	18.8
15 Years	4	12.5
16 Years	8	25.0
17 Years	4	12.5
Above 17 Years old	4	12.5
Total	32	100%
Sex of the Respondents		
Male	22	68.8
Female	10	31.3
Total	32	100%
Religious Affiliation		
Christianity	29	90.6
Islam	2	6.3
Traditional Religion	1	3.1
Total	32	100%
Nationality		
Nigerian	30	93.8
Non- Nigerian	2	6.3
Total	32	100%
State of Origin		
States in Nigeria	30	93.8
Foreigners	2	6.3
Total	32	100%
Level of Education		
Primary School Class	8	25.0
Junior Secondary School Class	11	34.4
Senior Secondary School Class	13	40.6
Total	32	100%
Number of Incarceration		
1 Time	28	87.5
2 Times (Recidivists)	4	12.5
More than 2 Times (Recidivists)	0	0.0
Total	32	100%

Their common offences include: stealing, raping (canal knowledge) and cultism. The rate of juvenile recidivism is very low here. We are doing our best. The basic classification and separation of the inmates (delinquents) in the correctional institution are based on gender, health status and nature of their offence. The classification based on the nature of offence by the inmates include juvenile with criminal charges (CC), need for care and protection (CP) and inmates that are beyond parental control (BPC) (Personnel at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 21st February, 2019).

The above table 2 revealed that, there are multiple factors that can account for the prevalence of Juvenile delinquency in Nigeria. The study discovered that poor socialization in the family system, poverty, dysfunctional family settings (family instability/disintegration), child abuse, exposure to negative influence, peer group influence (bad gang), ineffective educational

Table 2: Factors Influencing Juvenile Delinquency

Causes of Juvenile Delinquency	Yes	No
Poor socialization in the family	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Poverty/Low income of parents (Economy)	26 (81.3%)	6 (18.8%)
Dysfunctional family settings (Family instability)	27 (84.4%)	5 (15.6%)
Break in social bond to the family (Disintegration)	27 (84.4%)	5 (15.6%)
Prevalence of child abuse in the society	26 (81.3%)	6 (18.8%)
Neglect of children by the parents	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Excessive punishment of children	24 (75.0%)	8 (25.0%)
Exposure to negative influence of adult offenders	29 (90.6%)	3 (9.4%)
Peer group influence (Bad gang)	27 (84.4%)	5 (15.6%)
Ineffective education system in the society	27 (84.4%)	5 (15.6%)
Unemployment and under-employment of youths	20 (62.5%)	12 (37.5%)
Rapid population growth (over-population)	22 (68.8%)	10 (31.3%)
Social inequality between rich and the poor	17 (53.1%)	15(46.9%)
Socio-economic and political instability	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Advent of technology (Mass media)	25 (78.1%)	7 (21.9%)
Media violence (Watching on television)	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Urbanization and Migration	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Behaviour of the victim to the offender	26 (81.3%)	6 (18.8%)
Hereditary (Biological factors)	31 (96.9%)	1 (3.1%)
Ineffective juvenile correctional centres (Remand home)	29 (90.6%)	3 (9.4%)
Weak religion institutions on preaching of morality	30 (93.8%)	2 (6.3%)

system in the society, advent of mass media technology and medial violence, weak religion institutions on preaching of morality and ineffective juvenile correctional centres in Nigeria, in addition with wrong role model and divorce are the major factors predisposing the juveniles into delinquency. This was affirmed as 81.3% and above among the respondents supports these factors as the causal of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria.

The above was backed up with the response from the officers of the juvenile correctional institution from the field of study. An excerpt from the FGD explained thus:

The type of environment which they live make them to have friends which lack good socialization and moral orientation from either their parent or guidance which influence their behaviour, also children tend to violet the norms guiding their society because of the access they have with the mass media, i.e. children watch violet films through television and whenever they have chance they will like to practice what they have seen (Personnel at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 21st February, 2019).

In addition, the officers of the juvenile correctional institution explained their relationship with the juvenile inmates in a focus group discussion. An excerpt from the FGD revealed thus:

When juvenile offenders are brought here, we counsel them and teach them about religion and how to behave well, we put sense into their head but we cannot do this until we relate with them in a good way. But even though we tend to have a good relationship that doesn't

mean we cannot punish them so that they will know the difference between outside and here. The ones beyond parental control are treated more harshly because we want to correct them (Personnel at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 21st February, 2019).

In another session of the Focus Group Discussion, the correctional officers revealed thus:

This correctional institution in Ondo State started in 1975 in a rented apartment and later situated in this permanent site in 1992 under the social work department. The major statutory roles of this correctional institution include security, reformation, rehabilitation and to cater for the delinquents' needs. Poor socialization system, poverty, marital instability, unemployment, poor education of the parents and children, peer group influence, lack of parental care and so on are the factors associated with the high incidence of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria (Personnel at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 21st February, 2019).

Table 3: Challenges of Juveniles in Correctional Centre in Ondo State

Plights of Juveniles in Correctional Centre	Yes	No
Health/medical challenges	26 (81.3%)	6 (18.8%)
Inhumane treatment by correctional officers	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)
Physical/sexual harassment	0 (0.0%)	32 (100.0%)
Over-crowding of the delinquents (inmates)	0 (0.0%)	32 (100.0%)
Congestion of the delinquents (inmates)	0 (0.0%)	32 (100.0%)
Poor accommodation system	2 (6.2%)	30 (93.8%)
Non-family (relative) visitation	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)
Poor rehabilitation facilities	27 (84.4%)	5 (15.6%)
Ineffective rehabilitative programmes	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)

Table 3 above reveals that there are a lot of challenges being faced by the juveniles in the correctional centre in Ondo State, Nigeria. Some of these challenges could be analyzed as follow: 81.3% of the respondents claimed that they face health/medical challenges; while only 18.7% of the respondents disagreed. 84.4% and 87.5% among the respondents claimed that their major challenges are poor rehabilitation facilities and ineffective rehabilitative programmes respectively. In contrary, 87.5% of the respondents denounced inhumane treatment by correctional officers, while 100% of the respondents revealed that there is no experience of physical/sexual harassment, over-crowding of inmates and congestion of the delinquents in the correctional centre. The implication is that the inadequate health/medical facilities, poor rehabilitation facilities and ineffective rehabilitative programmes for the delinquents can promote juvenile recidivism.

From the figure 1, 93.8% of the respondents in the study revealed that they do not part-take in any skill acquisition training in the correctional centre in Ondo State, Nigeria; while

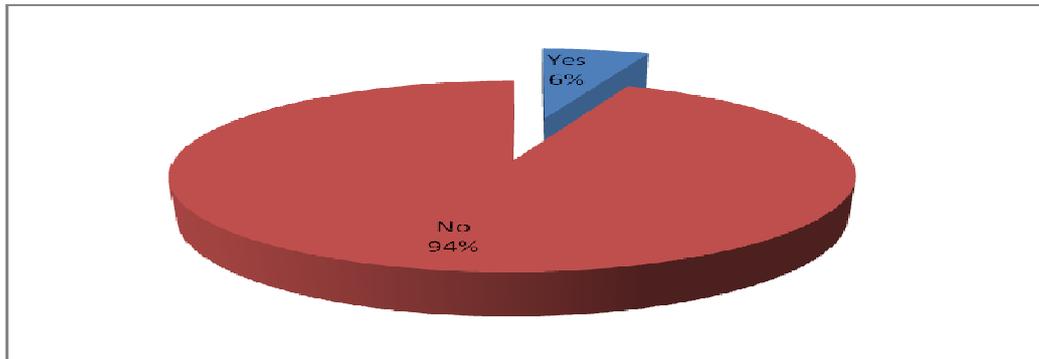


Figure 1: Skill Acquisition Training in the Correctional Centre

only 6.2% of the respondents claimed that they participate in one form of skill acquisition training programme or the other. The reason for this non-participation is not far-fetched. It is because the rehabilitation programmes and facilities are not available in the juvenile correctional centre in Ondo State. It is only what is exist they can participate in. Hence, they are only locked-up without rehabilitation. Therefore, juvenile recidivism has no bounds.

Table 4: Availability of Rehabilitative/Vocational Skill Programmes and Facilities

Rehabilitation/Vocational Skills Programmes and Facilities	YES	NO
Educational skills acquisition (Remedial education)	3 (9.4%)	29(90.6%)
Vocational skills acquisition	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)
Employment training (Entrepreneurship)	1 (3.1%)	31 (96.9%)
Guidance and Counseling programme	28(87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Medical and Health facilities	10(31.3%)	22 (68.8%)
Religious programmes for morality	30(93.8%)	2 (6.2%)
Industrial productions	2 (6.2%)	30 (93.8%)
Recreational activities and facilities	3 (9.4%)	29 (90.4%)
Agricultural production skills	7 (21.9%)	25 (78.1%)
Re-entry and after-care training services (Reintegration)	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)
Work group programmes	6 (18.8%)	26 (81.2%)

From the table 4 above, among the series of rehabilitation/vocational skills programmes and facilities that are supposed to be available in the juvenile correctional centers in Ondo State, only guidance and counseling programme and religious programmes for morality that are reasonably available in the juvenile correctional centers. This was affirmed as 87.5% and 93.8% of the respondents (delinquents) claimed that guidance and counseling programme, as well as, religious programme are respectively available in the juvenile correctional centers in Ondo State. In contrary, majority of the delinquents claimed that educational, vocational, entrepreneurship, medical and health facilities, industrial training, recreational activities and facilities, agricultural production training skills, re-integration, and work group programmes are not (adequately) available in the juvenile correctional centers in Ondo State. This indicates that non-availability of these rehabilitation/vocational training

programmes and facilities in the Ondo State juvenile correctional centre invariably promotes juvenile recidivism in Ondo State.

The explanation for the inefficient and ineffectiveness of the juvenile correctional institution due to lack of adequate facilities was give in a session of focus group discussion with the officers of the juvenile correctional institution. An excerpt from the FGD revealed thus:

You know all these politicians, they will come with good programmes and plans, but when it comes to release of funds and implementation, hiccups are encountered. There is nothing that is ever adequate in government. The staff welfare and power supply are not properly adequate not to talk of having some buildings specially earmarked for their purposes. Therefore, we make use of what we have. You know that during civilian administration, politicians will come up with good plans that usually end up in their nests (Personnel at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 21st February, 2019).

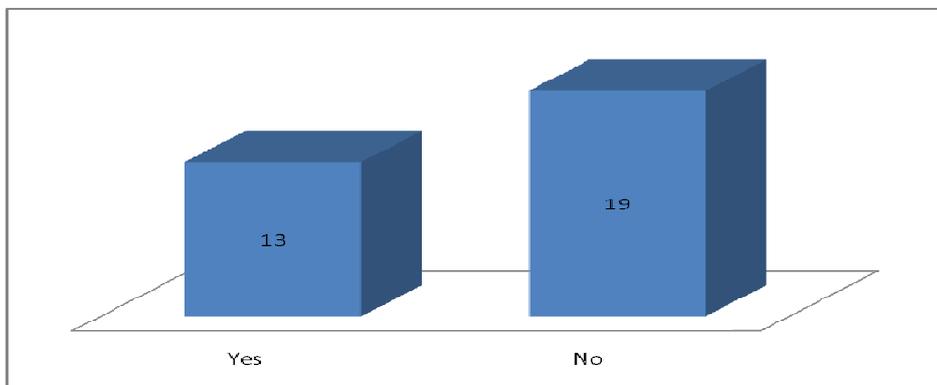


Figure 2: Control of Juvenile Re-Offending (Recidivism)

Figure 2 above reveals that, 59.4% of the delinquents claimed that the rehabilitation and vocational training programmes in the Nigerian correctional centers (Ondo State) do not control juvenile re-offending (recidivism); while 40.6% of the respondents agreed that it does control juvenile recidivism. The reasons for the inability of the correctional center to control juvenile recidivism are as a result of the unavailability of the rehabilitative/vocational training skills programmes and facilities, as well as, other challenges confronting the juvenile correctional centers.

A group of officers in the correctional institution at Akure Ondo State explained how the institution is strategizing to rehabilitate, re-integrate the juvenile inmates and reduce the rate of juvenile recidivism. An excerpt from the FGD revealed thus:

The juvenile correctional institution in Ondo State is strategizing to control juvenile recidivism with the provision of qualified professional workers provided by the state government, with the intervention of religious bodies by sending them to approved schools or artisan outside this centre with monitoring. Also, through the empowerment of the released inmates and educational sponsorship by the government and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to control juvenile recidivism. However, we are not adequately efficient and effective because of the poor link with the relatives to effectively rehabilitate and re-integrate the inmates upon release. They need some levels of care (Personnel at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 21st February, 2019).

The challenges of Juvenile Correctional Institutions are presented in Table 5

Table 5: Challenges of Juvenile Correctional Institutions

Challenges to Juvenile Correctional Institutions	Yes	No
Lack of staff training and development	26 (81.3%)	6 (18.8%)
Inadequate funding and monitoring	27 (84.4%)	5 (15.6%)
Poor staff welfare	31 (96.9%)	1 (3.1%)
Inadequate modern rehabilitation and infrastructural facilities	30 (93.8%)	2 (6.2%)
Diversion and embezzlement of funds and materials	23 (71.9%)	9 (28.1%)
Corruption and bribery	26 (81.2%)	6 (18.8%)
Mismanagement of funds by the correctional institutions	12 (37.5%)	20 (62.5%)
Ineffective rehabilitative programmes	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Ineffective vocational training programmes	31 (96.9%)	1 (3.1%)
Lack of logistics and technological difficulties	25 (78.1%)	7 (21.9%)
Lack of power supply	29 (90.6%)	3 (9.4%)
Inadequate professional technocrats (personnel)	27 (84.4%)	5 (15.6%)
Non-separation of the inmates (delinquents)	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)
Over-crowding of the inmates (delinquents)	0 (0.0%)	32 (100%)
Inhumane and horrible condition of the correctional home	24 (75.0%)	8 (25.0%)
Poor health and medical facilities	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)

From the table 5 above, it is revealed that there are several challenges confronting the juvenile correctional institutions in Nigeria. The study revealed that among other challenges, the juvenile correctional institutions are faced with lack of staff, inadequate funding and monitoring, poor staff welfare, inadequate modern rehabilitation and infrastructural facilities, diversion and embezzlement of funds and materials, corruption and bribery, ineffective rehabilitative programmes, ineffective vocational training programmes, lack of logistics and technological difficulties, lack of power supply, inadequate professional technocrats (personnel), inhumane and horrible condition of the correctional home, poor health and medical facilities and others. These are the factors that stand as stumbling blocks to the efficient and effective performance of the juvenile correctional institutions. Hence, the ability to control juvenile delinquency and recidivism is in vain.

This was confirmed as at least 71.9% of the respondents in the study affirmed the challenges to the juvenile correctional center in Ondo State, Nigeria. In contrary the study found that, mismanagement of funds, non-separation of the inmates and over-crowding of the inmates (delinquents) are not pronounced in the juvenile correctional centres in Ondo State, Nigeria. this was confirmed as majority of the respondent disagreed that funds mismanagement, non-separation and over-crowding are challenges to the juvenile correctional institutions in Nigeria.

In furtherance to the findings, a group of juvenile correctional officers at Ondo State centre in a session of a Focus Group Discussion added that:

There are a lot of factors militating against the effectiveness and efficiency of the juvenile correctional centre in Ondo State because it is a non-productive establishment. The major factors are: poor staff welfare, lack of staff training, seminar and workshop, inadequate

staff members, lack of good facilities like electricity, skill acquisition programmes and facilities and so on. All these and others affect the performance to control juvenile delinquency and recidivism (Personnel at Ondo State Correctional Centre, 21st February, 2019).

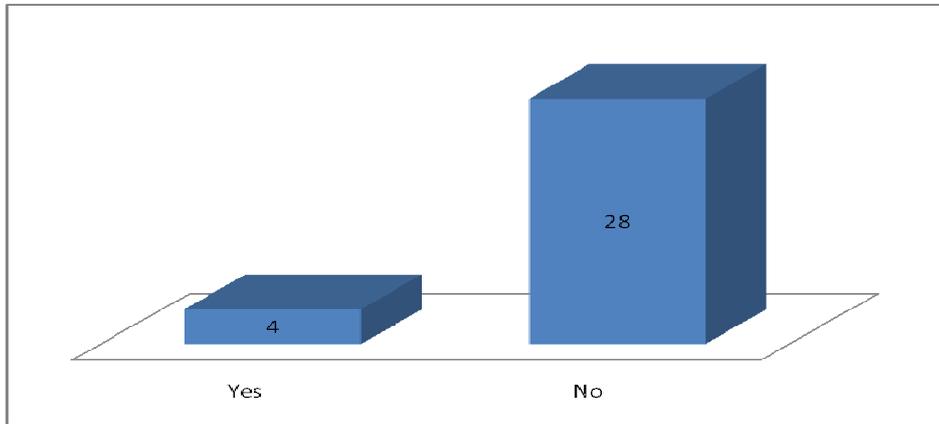


Figure 3: Possibility of Juvenile Recidivism

Figure 3 above revealed that, 87.5% of the respondents (delinquents) does not have the possibility of committing another offence (recidivism) after being discharged from the correctional centre in Ondo State. 12.5% of the delinquents still have the possibility to recidivate having considered the rehabilitation and vocational training programmes they are exposed to in the correctional institution. The implication of this is that 12.5% rate of juvenile recidivism is still high in Nigeria due to its aftermath effects on the juvenile correctional institution and other juvenile inmates. Besides, juvenile recidivism has greater effects on the delinquent and the society at large. Therefore, juvenile recidivism calls for immediate attention to invariably control adult criminality in the nearest future. Some of the respondents among the delinquents explained in their responses to the open-ended question that they do not have the possibility to commit further crime upon discharge because:

We eat too much Beans and Garri, we prefer our home than here, this correctional center is not good for human beings, I am now a changed person for good, I have been rehabilitated/corrected, we eat only twice in a day, it is unlike our home at all (Delinquents, at Akure Correctional Centre, 20th February, 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that most of the personnel in the correctional institution were male. Not only that, most of the personnel have different educational qualification. Some of the personnel are also found not to have good training of how to control juvenile offenders in remand home. The juvenile offenders in custody were found to belong to low socio-economic class, primary and secondary school drop-outs. Juveniles brought in because of being beyond parental control are lumped together with those who committed heinous offences. And this only promotes more crimes in Nigeria as it storms and socializes several criminal behaviour into them which encourages recidivism. Furthermore, the study has established that despite the existence of laws guiding the conduct of juveniles, juveniles still engage in acts of delinquency. The study discovered that the administration

of juvenile correctional institution is below international standards. There is the need for adequate provision of logistics and facilities for adequate rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. The study concluded that there is need for a change of attitude in terms of the philosophy of the juvenile correctional institution, interventions and fundamental reforms relating to legal and legislative initiatives, institutional reforms and capacity building are imperative in order to ensure the full realization of juvenile justice administration in Nigeria.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, it is evidently clear that there are some lapses and challenges that are mounting in the juvenile correctional institution which needs to be addressed. It has become paramount therefore to mention that juvenile correctional institution in Nigeria is in dire need of intervention and reform in philosophy, and also capacity building. In this regard therefore, the following recommendations are given below:

i. There is need for widespread and intensive general orientation or awareness for personnel by the government to ensure effective adherence to standards on administration of juvenile justice. Corporal punishment for children beyond parental control should be discouraged and de-emphasized with immediate effect. In line with this, the government should create Juvenile help Centers to protect juveniles from arbitrary. This requires personnel being subjected to specialized training.

ii. There is the need appropriate therapies (individual and/or group) in order to reduce juvenile delinquency and recidivism such as: individual therapy, group housing therapy, family therapy, community-based therapy, remedial education, vocational skills training, proper supervision, work readiness training, cognitive skill training, behavioural therapy, recreational activities, drug simulation and drug abuse control, among others.

iii. Government should made adequate provision of necessary correctional facilities, infrastructural facilities, vocational skills training, adequate food ration, remedial education, adequate security (perimeter fence), recreational facilities, clinic, constant and regular power supply and so on.

iv. Government should regularly send them on training and re-training and workshops in juvenile justice system for capacity building. This will enable them update knowledge on juvenile matters. Also, there should be adequate welfare of the staff for motivation and effective and efficient service delivery.

v. Government should consider privatization of juvenile institutions or on the alternative give support to individuals, NGOs that may be willing to engage in the management of juvenile offenders.

vi. Government should organize training workshops to sensitize personnel to promote a common understanding of Juvenile (Child) justice and its implications. All juvenile justice system personnel should receive rigorous training in awareness and understanding of the principles of child rights, best interests of the child, international and local legal frameworks and guidelines in observing the rights of children in conflict with the law.

vii. There should be continuous efforts on the part of the government to create public enlightenment activities on the provisions on the rights of the child as well as the juvenile justice administration in the State.

viii. Government should put in place policies and programmes that will enable families to realize their roles and responsibilities to the juveniles and the society because Nigerians legislation on juveniles before now had evidently neglected the role of the family in the prevention of juvenile

delinquency, rehabilitation and re-integration of juvenile offenders into the society. Thus, there should be proper orientation of the parents to take good care of their wards from the grass root and children should be adequately socialized from the home by the parents. Single parenting and high rate of divorce should be discouraged. Government should assist the parents to train their children and control birth rate. Government should maintain free primary education to be compulsory for all children.

Finally, if all the aforementioned recommendations are implemented there will be efficient and effective control of juvenile delinquency and reduction in the high rate of juvenile recidivism in Ondo State, and Nigeria in general. There will be better performance of the juvenile correctional institution in Ondo State.

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