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## Librarians and Libraries as agents of transformation in the reformation of Correctional Centres inmates

EMMANUEL CHIDIADI ONWUBIKO

ALEX EKWUEME FEDERAL UNIVERSITY NDUFU - ALIKE, IKWO,, onwubikoemma@yahoo.com

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# **Librarians and Libraries as agents of transformation in the reformation of Correctional Centres inmates**

Onwubiko, Emmanuel Chidiadi.

Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Nigeria

[Onwubikoemma@yahoo.com](mailto:Onwubikoemma@yahoo.com) or [emmabikos@gmail.com](mailto:emmabikos@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

Information has remained the most sought for ingredient for development and only means through which one can clear his state of uncertainty. This study is a survey aimed at ascertaining the functions of the library as an agent of transformation of correctional centre inmates using the Abakaliki, Ebonyi State Correctional Centre as a case in point. The study was guided by five (5) research objectives and questions while the research employed descriptive survey design. The primary instruments used for data collection are a two-set questionnaire titled: Correctional Centre Facility Based Questionnaire (CCFBQ) and Inmate Questionnaire (IQ), direct observation and interview. The CCFBQ was used to generate data on the correctional centre library, the nature and its collections and management whereas, 480 IQ were administered to obtain data on the inmates' access to the library materials, involvement in educational programmes, information seeking behaviour and nature of access to information resources. The data gathered for this study were analyzed using tables, frequency and percentages whereas, figures were used to present the data obtained in respect of research questions 4 and 5. The findings revealed that libraries and correctional centres in Nigeria are bedeviled with myriad of challenges including: inadequate qualified personnel; poor funding, negligence on the part of management and moribund public power supply and that the libraries are performing below standard as transformation agents as a result of identified challenges but they all believed that centre libraries have prominent role to play in the realization of both centres and inmates' reformation as transformation agent. It is against this backdrop, that recommendations were made which include, tackling all identified challenges by both the government and management.

**Keywords:** correctional centre, transformation agent, reformation, library, information needs, access to information

## **1.0.Introduction**

The government of Nigeria under the leadership of Muhammadu Buhari on August 14, 2019 listened to the voice of wisdom and signed the Nigerian Correctional Service bill into law which changed the name of Nigerian Prisons to Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS). This was built on the assumption that the then Nigerian Prisons need total transformation. A transformation that will mean total departure from the old order, it is meant to bring about sanity and civility in the system, which prohibits torture, inhuman treatment of inmates and allows for godly correction, true reformation, rehabilitation and genuine reintegration of inmates back to the society (Agbede and Agiobu-kemmer, 2019).

The imperative is that the prison that is presumed to be a facility for legally incarcerated persons has turned from punitive facilities to rehabilitation/correctional centre with a framework for rehabilitation and transformation of inmates. The Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 under custodial service provides that while prisoners serve their jail terms, the emphasis should be more on correctional services tailored towards re-admitting them to society on completion of their jail sentence. The needs assessment is aimed at developing appropriate correctional treatment methods for reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration; implementing reformation and rehabilitation programmes to enhance the reintegration of inmates into society and empowering inmates through the deployment of educational and vocational skills training programmes and facilitating incentives and income generation through custodial centres, farms and industries

Libraries by operation and design are meant to provide information for clients with a view to satisfying their information needs. In other words, Libraries are established to serve a defined community of users and have been described as the life-wire of educational institutions as well as the yardstick by which these institutions are gauged (Bala, 2014). Libraries in public institutions are expected to be their major sources of information thus should acquire, organize, maintain, utilize and disseminate information material germane to the organizations' activities which is in of the objectives of these public institutions. As Adebayo and Alex-Nmacha (2018) posit, a major significance of information is its capability to reduce uncertainty, sustain planning and an instrument for decision making. It in line with above and in realization of libraries in the development and reformation of prison inmates that the International Federation of Library

Association and Institutions (IFLA) in 2005, produced a guide lines for library service to prisoners which should serve as a tool for planning, implementation and evaluation of library services to prison inmates. Furthermore, the Rule 40 of the United Nations' (UN) Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisons (correctional centres) maintained that every prisons, shall have a library for the use of all categories of inmates, adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books and prison inmates shall be encouraged to make full use of it. As stated by Nigerian Prisons Services (now, Nigerian Correctional Centres) (2005), prisoners have right to access prison library and may borrow books from its collections.

Librarianship as a profession that is skilled in the knowledge, arts and science of the organisation, preservation and dissemination of recorded information has a prominent roles to play in the transformation of any society. According to Business Dictionary (2019), transformation from an organisation context is a process of profound and radical change that orients an organisation in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. Transformation therefore implies a basic change of character and little or no resemblance with past configuration or structure. This implies that for librarians and libraries to contribute meaningfully in the transformation of any

To this end, the correctional centres need to equip themselves with relevant information in tandem with their new objectives and to achieve this, the library has a prominent role to play given the certainty of information to all forms of human development. In short, every organization needs routine information in order to attain certain objectives. It is only with the best information that the state of uncertainty can be cleared and appropriate decisions taken as to enhancing the day-to-day operation and overall productivity of the organization. As stated by Opara (2004), in every institution whether public or private, information is the first among other corporate resources in that decisions relating to others depend on it. So to speak, information is the hub on which every organizational long term survival revolves on. To affirm to the above assertion, Uwaifo (2004) opines that an organization cannot function smoothly and efficiently in the absence of documented information as it is an indispensable tool for planning, decision-making and implementation.

In this context, the library by its nature and design is at the very centre of providing the desired information to these public institutions if they are to realize the broad objectives for which they are established more so in this information age where information rules the world and by mere key stroke, the world is at your disposal. Furthermore, libraries are designed and structured to provide specialized information for specialized needs and here correctional centres are well suited as knowing their information needs and providing same is just making knowledge and expertise available which is a drive to achieving the objectives and goals of these institutions more so, now the institution has taken a new posture that calls for rehabilitation and reformation of inmates instead of seeing them as criminals that ought to be incarcerated.

## **1.2. Statement of Problem**

In the past years, there has been this call by eminent Nigerians for government to put in place a framework for the rehabilitation and reformation of inmates in Nigerian prisons and address the issue of inadequate funding of prison. The protagonists of the campaign were quick to point out that in civilized societies, what inmates are made to lose is just their freedom. They have access to other social amenities available to others outside and as such easily reintegrated into the society when they finished serving their terms.

It is not debatable that information and knowledge is the bane of development and no individual or government can develop and excel beyond the level of available right information and knowledge at his/her disposal and Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) is not an exception. As established by Sambo, Usman and Rabiu (2017), central to the failure of the rehabilitation services is the issue of poor state of correctional centres education in Nigeria. Now come to think of it, with the crusade of transformation and reformation of inmates does one expect anything different? There should be a paradigm shift in which the service ought to realize that education is an instrument of change and behaviour modification and accord it the due place. On the other hand, no successful educational programme has worked in isolation of a functional and effective library and information service. In the Nigerian Correctional service, the scenario should not be different as the centres are known to be faced with poor library services bedeviled with many challenges such as inadequate collections, lack of professionals to manage the libraries and information centres and the inability of the libraries to meet the information needs of the inmates.

It is against this backdrop that this study is embarked upon as to establishing the professionally inclined contributions that libraries will make as transformation agent in the new drive by federal government to transforming and reforming both the correctional centres and inmates in Nigerian Correctional Service in line with the new law.

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

This study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. Determine inmates information seeking behaviour;
2. Ascertain the nature of information accessibility by the inmates;
3. Ascertain the place of libraries as transformation agents in correctional centres;
4. Establish the challenges facing libraries in correctional centres and
5. Proffer solutions to identified challenges that are likely to face libraries in their serving as transformation agents in these centres.

### **1.4. Research questions**

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the information seeking behaviour of the inmates like?
2. How accessible is the information materials in the library to the inmates?
3. What role can libraries play as transformation agents in correctional centres?
4. What challenges are facing libraries in correctional centres in Nigeria in their effort in serving as transformation agents?
5. What steps could be taken to remedy the identified challenges facing libraries as transformation agents?

## **2.0. Literature review**

### **2.1. Brief history of Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS)**

The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS), formerly known as Nigerian Prison Service (NPS) is a government agency of Nigeria which operates prisons. The agency is headquartered in Abuja, and it is under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior and the Civil Defence Immigration and Correctional Service.- The name was changed from the Nigerian Prisons Service to the

Nigerian Correctional Service by President Muhammadu Buhari on the 15th of August 2019 after signing the Nigerian Correctional Service Act of 2019 into law. The bill was passed by the 8th Assembly of the House of Representatives but the signing was done two months after their tenure had expired. The law divides the Correctional Service into two main areas which are The Custodial Service and Non-custodial Service. The Nigerian Correctional Service is an arm of the Criminal Justice System domiciled in the Ministry of Interior. The Nigerian Correctional Service is a federal phenomenon. Therefore, there are no State Correctional Services. Every Custodial Centre is a Federal Facility. The operation of the Service is supervised by the Ministry of Interior.

## **2.2. Information as a concept**

The flow of information has made the world today a global village and we are said to be in the information age. This new age is a revolutionary period whose impact is far surpassing that of the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions (Anyakoha, 2005). Information, according to International Federation of Library Association and Institutions, (IFLA) (2001), is very important in the development of an individual and of the society. Information is seen as a major resource in human development as access to it could improve knowledge.

Iloeje (2001) stressed that information is the heart of the world's development. Likewise, information is indispensable in the development and advancement of all aspects of human endeavour. Information is an important tool used in the realization of any objective set by individuals (Igbeka and Atinmo, 2002). Thus, acquiring and using information are both important activities. Information has become a primary strategic resource that is transforming the lives of many in the world today. The prisoners are not left out as they too need information for day to day living; thus, information is one thing that no one in any society can do without (Anyakoha, 2005).

Information could be described as man's accumulated knowledge in all subjects, all forms and all sources which could aid its users to make rational decisions. Losee (1998) further defined information in what was called a common way as one or more statements or facts that are received by a human and that have some form of worth to the recipient. People have a

fundamental human right to information and as such need library and information services to exercise this right (Dike 2002; Lehmann, 2000).

### **2.3. Transformation agents**

According to Business Dictionary (2019), transformation from an organisation context is a process of profound and radical change that orients an organisation in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. Transformation therefore implies a basic change of character and little or no resemblance with past configuration or structure. This implies that for librarians and special libraries in the context of this study to contribute meaningfully in the transformation of public institutions in Nigeria, there must be a paradigm shift on the way special libraries and librarians are seen in these institutions. Agents of transformation therefore possess the personal skills and attributes needed to drive innovation, and they operate within organizations that have the right culture, leadership and tools in place to enable successful digital and business transformation. They find themselves at the forefront of transformation initiatives, but they never stand still. They recognize the need for constant personal development and learning in order to remain relevant and fulfill their ambitions (Lachhman, 2018)

### **Information seeking behaviour and information needs inmates**

Information access refers to the ability of information users to obtain the needed information. It is also the availability and presentation of information resources in timely manner. Information resources may be available but there is no accessibility if the user could not lay hands on them (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2012). In other words, information remains useless until it gets to the hands of the final users who use it to satisfy their information needs. Various researches carried out on information access by inmates of Nigerian Correctional Centres indicated that inmates have limited access to books, journals, magazines and other library resources (Busayo and Elaturoti, 2016, Sambo, Uthman and Rabi, 2017 and Ajah and Nweke, 2017). The above situation negates the value placed on information which George and Babu (2016) described as the fifth factor of production and therefore, an essential ingredient for daily existence



On the Challenges on information access in Nigerian Correctional Centres Tarzaan, Chorun and Mbatsorn (2015) listed the following: cost of information resources, security issues as claimed by correctional centre authority, absence of correctional centre libraries and information centres among others.

Information need is seen by LisWiki (2008) as recognition that one's knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal. This leads to seeking for the information from required sources so as to satisfy the need. Generally, Hjørland (2007) saw people's information needs as needs relating to people's educational activities (educational needs), research activities, professional and vocational activities (vocational needs), cultural activities and personal development – spiritually (religious needs) and physically. Both free people in regular society and incarcerated ones have the same information needs (Shirley 2006). These needs range from basic information for survival, for educational purposes, healthy living and recreation to spiritual growth. Prisoners just like other persons have information needs. Most prisoners, who are in prison today, will go back to the society after serving their sentences. For this reason, they will need information for various purposes both for coping with the prison situation and for when released. Providing for their information needs will help in re-socializing them into the society to become better citizens for themselves and the society. Lehmann (2000) made it clear that incarcerated persons generally have the same reading interests and information needs as individuals in the free world; they can, however, be considered disadvantaged in this regard by the fact that they do not have access to libraries in the outside community. This was recognized in IFLA (2005) which said that an incarcerated person has not relinquished the right to learn and to access information. Though restrictions are imposed on the access to certain information usually when such access is known to present a danger to prison security, the fact remains that prisoners have their own information needs. According to Ainia (2004), information needs can be educational, recreational, leisure and accomplishing tasks that are considered important. Correctional centres inmates like any other group of people, need information ranging from educational, recreational and legal to religious information that will help them cope with the centre situation. Ajogwu (2005) also corroborated the above assertion as he maintained that the prisoners' information needs range from legal needs, religious needs, health needs, educational needs, vocational needs, recreational needs and financial needs.

In fact, many people seek information for different reasons but primarily for decision making. In a research conducted by Tarzaan, Chorun and Mbatsoron (2015) on the information needs and seeking behaviour of prison inmates in Makurdi Medium Security prison revealed that inmates information need is majority is on health, educational, vocational, legal and recreational information. The study also shows that inmates used different information sources to satisfy their information needs. These sources include; lawyers, prison warders, television broadcast and health workers.

Health is another area that the prisoners need information. The World Health Organisation (1999) stressed the need for prisoners to have access to health care, including prevention measures equivalent to that available in the community. This denotes the prisoners' health information needs. The condition of most prisons; for instance overcrowding make the prisoners prone to a lot of health hazards. This obviously makes information about health and hygiene, prevention and cure of common diseases like air-borne and water-borne diseases vital to the prisoners and essential for their survival in the prison. Campbell (2006) further maintained that any legal information, that an inmate can apply to his/her situation can mean relief from poor conditions if not from incarceration itself. The prisoners are usually inquisitive and this prompts their search for information. They want to know more about their health condition, financial information, current happenings around them, technologies that could assist them etc. Bruce (2005) states that, information plays a significant role in our daily professional and personal lives and we are constantly challenged to take charge of the information that we need for work, fun and everyday decisions and tasks. The prisoners like other counterparts require information to meet their day-to-day needs.

According to Lehmann and Locke (2005) as well as Campbell (2006), in most countries around the world, majority of individuals who make up the prison and jail population have limited education, poor reading and life skills and do not come from a background where reading was a frequent or popular pursuit. According to the Medina (2000) from an inmate's point of view said that prisoners often lack interest, motivation, intellectual hunger, drive and desire to learn.

The prisoners also have need for educational and vocational training information. This as noted before, exposes them to having serious educational and vocational information needs to further

their education and gain employability skills. In the case of Nigeria, Womboh (1991) revealed that most of the prisoners (about 76%) were not educated beyond school certificate. Only about 24% of them acquired education higher than that. The inmates' educational level is a major factor to be considered in providing library and information services to them. The prisoners in the different groups from all the prisons alike, admitted having dire need for information that can give them spiritual and emotional stability so as to be in good terms with God and man and become better citizens of the society. Ajogwu (2005) noted that the prisoners' information needs include religious and spiritual needs amongst others. Just as Dike (2002) and IFLA (2005) noted, the prisoners need spiritual information materials to attain emotional stability and better life style. According to Dike (2002), providing for the spiritual information needs helps the prisoners improve in their emotional stability and spiritual growth.

The World Health Organization (1999) and Ajogwu (2005) stressed, that prisoners need to have access to health care and health information on preventive measures and other related issues. This should be equivalent to that available in the community. In the Western world perspective, Visher and Lattimore (2007) as well enumerated educational needs amongst the re-entry (into the society) needs of the prisoners. Ajogwu (2005) as well as Singer (2000) maintained that prisoners need recreational information for leisure and overcoming of boredom during incarceration. This is particularly needed by the prisoners who are awaiting trial.

Shirley (2006) also agreed that many prison libraries do not meet up the standard minimum staffing as specified by American Library Association (ALA); Becker (2007) and Singer (2000) further supported that prison libraries world over lag behind other libraries in the area of staffing, in terms of number, qualification and training. Lack of accommodation, standard library building and space also pose problems in this regard. Womboh (1991) maintained that though many federal prisons in Nigeria had libraries, these were small and ill-equipped. Lehmann (1994) noted that prisons have limited options for space utilization with libraries that are often overcrowded and have limited storage facilities.

The recognition of the prisoners' right to information is contained in the United Nations (Rule 40) Standard Minimal Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of 1955 (IFLA 2005). This states that every institution shall have an adequately stocked library for use of all categories of prisoners and the prisoners shall be encouraged to use it. The International Book Committee and UNESCO

(1994) in their Charter for the Reader assert that “all including prisoners are entitled to have access to information and libraries to provide this access should be located within the prison premises”. The prison library is a substitute for the library at home (Kaiser, 1992), a good reason why it should be developed into one of the best libraries; hence, the development of notable standards to guide its operations.

Shirley (2006) supported this by stressing that effective library service is reflected in programmes, services and collections (resources). While Lehmann (2000); Dike (2002); Mayrink da Costa (2003) all made it clear that prison libraries through their information resources and services, play a significant role in the rehabilitation of prisoners. A prison library according to IFLA (2005), provides resources for prison education, rehabilitation programs and specific requirements like legal collections. The prison library also provides the inmates the opportunity to develop literacy skills, pursue personal and cultural interests and life-long learning. IFLA (2005) stated that the prison library collection should include materials in print and other formats to meet the informational, educational, cultural, recreational, and rehabilitative needs of the prison population. The collection should include a wide variety of current print and non-print materials, audio and video recordings and gadgets to play them similar to those found in a public or school library. These reading resources, according to Dike (2002), should include a wide range of materials; fiction and other literature; general nonfiction; magazines and textbooks. Effective library service according to Shirley (2003) is reflected in programmes, services and collections. When the prisoners are provided with certain services and materials, they will find ways of keeping themselves busy, even while still in custody. The recognition of the place of the prison library in providing for the prisoners’ information needs contributed to the development of prison libraries.

Becker (2007) also revealed that in spite of the fact that the prison library is to be funded for the provision of facilities and services for the prisoners, unfortunately, the library programmes are usually the first to be reduced or done away with when the prison’s overall budget is cut. In some areas, little or nothing is left for the library and its services and materials in the prison budget. The prison library cannot do without sound facilities and resources – both human and material in meeting up the prisoners’ information needs.

Prison library services are largely funded by the government. Shirley (2004) reported that libraries have budget constraints. She further maintained that some libraries have no budget, but a collection based on donations. Other libraries, because of this, develop relationships with their local systems and use interlibrary loans to enable the prisoners a wider access to materials so as to satisfy their needs. Shirley (2006) remarked that when there are budget constraints, the library and education programmes are the most likely departments to have their services reduced or eliminated. She further maintained that there have been a few cases where library space was taken over and converted to living quarters for new prisoners and budgets were cut; thus many prison libraries globally report that their collection consists mainly of donated items, just as Dungey (2008) reported.

Conclusively, Becker (2007) revealed that prison librarianship is not without its unique challenges. Along with a shaky budget, uncooperative administration, and limited resources, he said, the prison librarian has to rely on intuition and professionalism in order to provide service within the correctional facility.

## **2.2. Empirical and theoretical overview**

As stated by Hann (1991), the on-going information expansion in industrial economics contrasts very sharply with the information poverty of developing countries. This poverty takes many forms which include: planning without facts, unreliable information support to decision makers, poor performance of public institutions limited access to development information, scarce of information support to knowledge workers and poor access to timely information on national and international market. In this situation he added, that policy makers are faced with major problem in acquiring, retrieving and processing various types of information a situation that warrants the establishment of special libraries so as to cater for the information needs of the stakeholders. It is in the light of the above that Softlink (2018) posits that special Libraries offer unique and valuable services across many industries. They play an integral role in the success of the organizations' they represent and the delivery of important research outcomes.

Mostert (2012), observes that within the knowledge society that has recently emerged, special libraries as custodian and disseminators of subject and specific information have a vital role to play. He noted that the value of timely, accurate and relevant information has increasingly been acknowledged as providing a leading edge in modern competitive world in which case special

libraries have been equipped to support their parent organizations through provision of information required in ensuring the survival and continual existence of the parent bodies. Furthermore, the birth of the internet which is information super-highway which has transformed the world to a global village with other emerging technologies brought about information explosion and by extension, information overload which makes it imperatively difficult for non-information managers from knowing the right and relevant information to acquire. Hence there is what may be called tsunami of data crashing into the breeches of global recorded knowledge which Ifijeh (2010), liken to a tidal war of unrelated, growing data formed in bits and bytes and coming in an unorganized , uncontrolled, incoherent cacophony of forms. Madu, Aboyade and Aboyade (2017) were of the opinion that the world has been flooded with literature so much that mankind would have been displaced by its own record if not for the perennial efforts of libraries. While Sangma (n.d) frowns at the situation in which organization is drowning in information even those that do not feel they have enough noting that this however does mean that it is useful to the organization because while they are drowning in information, they still lack knowledge. To this end argued Trevor (1990), for public institutions to succeed, they must be well managed through effective information management revealing that special libraries are able to control information explosion within the system and its effects on decision-making by improving the flow, the control, the analysis and synthesis for decision-making. It is therefore, the business of special librarians to bring order, clarify and provide solution to the confusion associated with information explosion and its consequences thereby facilitating swift discharge of responsibilities by management and staff of public institutions he added.

According to Egwuibe and Yisa (2010), effectively managed information will help the management to have insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the organization which will help to come up with workable plans for addressing the problem in order to realize the stated goals and objectives of the institution. As expressed by Pol (2007), the service delivery of librarians in special libraries is propelled by a subject-tailored collection of information resources; collections and services that are considered current needs, speed and accuracy of reference services, proactive delivery of relevant information to users; customized information services and cost efficiency of services. Through this customized services explained Ajayi. Aboyade and Madu (2017), librarians provide current, timely and relevant information to employees for maximum productivity and informed management decisions that will enhance the

competitive advantage of their organizations and ultimately influence the realization of the set goals and objectives. The implication is that of all the functions of special libraries the first among equals is the provision of information in support of the objectives of the parent institutions more efficiently and economically than could be provided by alternative method with a view to saving the time and efforts of the busy staff who needs precise information for their work and other needs. The obvious is that when the information needs of public officers are promptly met, their time is saved and they are better equipped to offer quality services to the public. Okiy (2007) also postulates that investment in information will assist public institutions to improve the efficiency of the internal operations, improve the quality of existing public services, create new types of services and increase the accessibility of these services.

Writing on the challenges Odusanwo (2003) and Okiy (2007) noted with dismay that departmental libraries in public institutions in Nigeria have continued to suffer great neglect and needs much to be desired. In the view of Ogundana, Olowosejeje and Barkindo (2003), the development of government department libraries in Nigeria is still very pathetic with serious consequences on the social, economic and political development of the country. They further observed that most government departmental libraries are not provided for in the annual budget provisions and where they are provided for, such funds are not released and when released, the libraries are often bye-passed in determining what should be the libraries' priority needs

In addition states Faboyinde (2006), budgetary provision for government departmental libraries in Nigeria have largely been grossly inadequate and in many cases not provided at all. The situation he concludes has been responsible for poor services delivery by special libraries attached to public institutions, which has far reaching negative impact on Nigerian Public officers whose performances have been greeted with obvious disdain.

As Adebayo and Alex-Nmacha (2018) posit, a major significance of information is its capability to reduce uncertainty, sustain planning and an instrument for decision making. The underlined fact is that librarians and libraries as information managers and disseminators are looked upon as society reformers and as agents of change as nothing changes ones mindset like information. It is believed that a society that is not well informed remains under-developed. To this end, a certified librarian no matter where he finds himself is expected to provide the desired information that can touch and change the community for good. In the Nigeria context, much is

expected of the librarians in a community that is surrounded by uncertainty and requires tremendous transformation. The crux of the matter is that as it is now, is that Nigerian Correctional centres are the most wanted areas for this reformation and transformation as the centres for rehabilitation and reformation of inmates for onward reintegration into the wider society as serving their jail terms

### **3.0. Research methodology**

#### **3.1. Research design**

The research employed survey research design which according to Nworgu (2015) is a type of study which aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics features and facts about a given population. This design gave the researcher the room for proper description and analysis of data collected.

#### **3.2. Area of Study**

The area of study in this research is Nigeria with emphasis on the 36 and the federal capital territory Abuja correctional centres. Available statistics indicated that there are 71, 443 inmates nation-wide, awaiting trial inmates stood at 48,702 including those who have been behind bars for longer time than they would have served if they have been sentenced (Guardian, 2019). On the other hand, since it is not possible to access all the states, the research statistics is restricted to Ebonyi State.

#### **3.3. Population of Study**

Inasmuch as the parameter of this study is all the correctional centres in Nigeria, our statistics is Ebonyi State, A state in the southeastern part of Nigeria with one correctional centre located at the State capital, Abakaliki. The correctional centre has a total of 1056 inmates. So the actual population for this study stands at 1056.

#### **3.4. The Sampled Population**

With the assistance of some contacted officers from the correction centre under study, a sampled population of 12 officers and 480 inmates were selected through purposive random sampling



method. According to Nworgu (2015), this method ensures that specific elements which satisfy some predetermined criteria are selected. (In this study, the determining criteria for selection are that the respondents (inmate) are senior school certificate holders and the officers, degree holders).

### 3.5. Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument used for data collection is a structured and validated questionnaire formulated in line with the research objectives in conjunction with observation and interview. The instrument for the officers was developed using Likert four-point scale responses of Strongly Agree-SA; Agree-A, Disagree-D and Strongly Disagree-SD, while that of the inmates were listed as options for easy choice. It is pertinent to state, that inasmuch as the 480 respondents returned the instruments with the support of contacted staff, it took over six months to achieve the feat.

### 3.6. Method for Data Analysis

The data generated for this study were analyzed using simple mean scores. In drawing conclusion in respect to research question 3-5 decision rule was applied. In line with the modified Likert four-point scale rating with response set given as SA=3.5-4.0; A=2.50-3.49, D=2.0-2.49 and SD=1.0-1.99. On this scale, the average mean is 2.50 thus an item is accepted if it is 2.50 and above but where it is below, it is rejected

## 4.0. Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research question 1: What is the information seeking behaviour of the inmates like?

Table 1: Information seeking behaviour of inmates

S/No	Information resources	Frequency	Percentage
1	Religious information	480	100
2	Legal information	84	17.5
3.	News and current affairs	321	66.9
4.	Counseling information	201	41.9
5.	Educational information	250	52.1
6.	Recreational information	360	75
7.	Health information	170	35.4
8.	Others	Nil	Nil

The above table contains data that shows information seeking behaviour of inmates. The data revealed that inmates go seeking for multiple type information to satisfy their various

information needs. 480 of the respondents representing 100% seek for religious information, 66.9% or 321 of the respondents seek information on news and current affairs. 201 or 41.9 respondents seek information on counseling whereas, 52.1% of the respondents seek educational information. Other areas information are sought by the inmates are legal- 17.5%, recreational- 75% and health- 35.4%

**Research question 2:** How accessible is the information materials in the library to the inmates?

**Nature of access to information resources**

S/No	Information resources	Free access		Partial access		Restricted access	
1	Library	410	85.4%	70	14.6%	Nil	
2.	Legal information	84	17.5%	396	82.5%	Nil	
3.	Religious information	480	100%	Nil	Nil	Nil	
4.	Educational information	250	52.1%	180	37.5%	40	8.3%
5	Health information	120	25%	300	62.5%	60	12.5%
6.	Recreational information	280	58.3%	160	33.3%	40	8.3%
7.	Access to writing materials	461	96%	Nil	Nil	19	4%

Table 2 above shows the nature of access to information resources by inmates. The above data showed that all the inmates have free access to religious resources, 410 or 85.4% have free access to library resources and the remaining 14.6% have partial access to library resources, only 17.5% of the respondents have access to legal resources while the other 396 representing 82.5% of the respondents have partial access to legal resources. Under education, 250 or 52.1% of the respondents have free access to educational resources and 180 (37.5%) of the respondents have partial accesses to educational information while 8.3% (40) of the respondents are restricted from having access to educational information. Only 120 respondents or 25% have free access to health information, 280 (58.3%) respondents have free access to recreational resources with only 160 (33.3%) having partial access while 461(96%) of the respondents have access to writing materials

**Research question 3:**

What roles can libraries play as transformation agents in correctional centres?

**Table 3:** Summary of respondents' mean scores on the roles of libraries as transformation agents in correctional centres.

S/N0	Items	N	Mean (X)	Decision
1.	Provision of effective information service	12	3.62	Accepted
2.	Virtual reference services	12	2.88	Accepted
3.	Effective online retrieval system	12	2.71	Accepted
4.	Proactive collection development policy	12	3.10	Accepted
5.	Updating of information profiles of users at regular interval	12	3.13	Accepted
6	Effective content management of resources	12	3.18	Accepted

7.	Proactive information dissemination service	12	3.08	Accepted
8.	Provision of current awareness services	12	3.41	Accepted
9.	Organization and content management of all in-house reports and special documents	12	3.35	Accepted
10	Effective content management of resources	12	3.44	Accepted
11	Keeping abreast with the organization's needs interests for both print and e-resources	24	3.31	Accepted
12.	Selecting and procuring new publications, information resources and data	12	3.09	Accepted
13.	Establishing system for evaluating resources and weeding materials not required.	12	2.97	Accepted
14	Periodically research on users' needs	12	2.92	Accepted
15.	Contact dealers on rare materials	12	2.75	Accepted
16	Create simple filing system for ephemeral materials like press clippings	12	2.79	Accepted
17	Classifying all printed materials using standardized classification scheme	12	2.66	Accepted
18.	Provide selective dissemination of information to users	12	3.14	Accepted
19.	Involve in cooperative library network	12	2.66	Accepted
20.	Undertake comprehensive literature search on request	12	3.01	Accepted
	Grand Mean		3.06	

The data as expressed in table 3 showed all expected roles of libraries from the respondents as transformation agents in correctional centres. The result indicates that all the twenty items in the list have mean scores above 2.50 with a grand score of 3.06, an indication that the libraries under study are expected to provide these strategic and specialized information services to the correction centres which they are part of.

#### **Research question 4:**

What challenges are facing libraries in correctional centres in Nigeria in their effort in serving as transformation agents?

**Figure 1:** Summary of respondents' mean scores on challenges facing libraries in correctional centres in their effort in serving as transformation agents

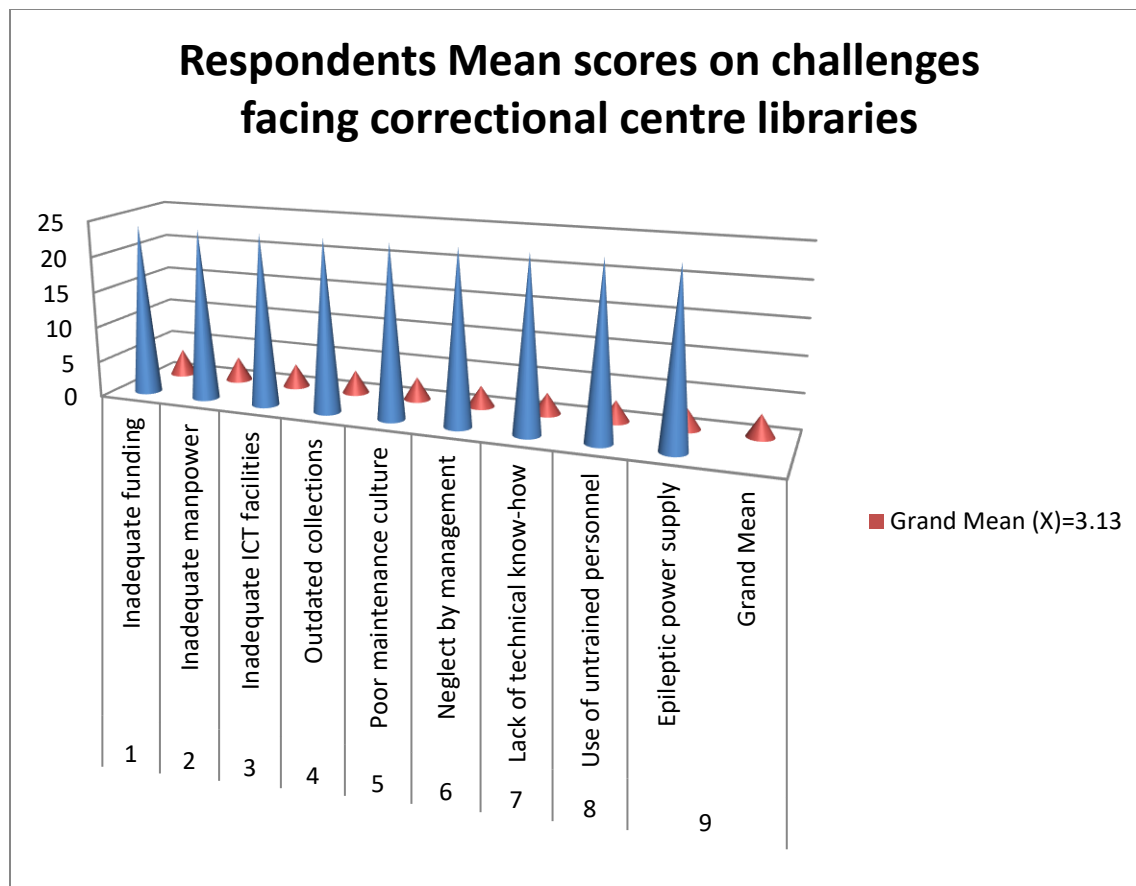


Figure 1 above represents the mean scores of respondents in respect of research question 4. The data collected reveal identified challenges facing libraries in correctional centre with each item crossing the benchmark of 2.50 and a grand mean of 3.13 an indication that all the respondents agreed that these items are major challenges militating against special libraries in their efforts at serving as transformation agents in correctional centres.

**Research question 5:**

**What steps could be taken to remedy identified challenges facing libraries as transformation agents in correctional centres?**

**Figure 2:** Summary of respondents’ mean scores on ways of tackling identified challenges of libraries

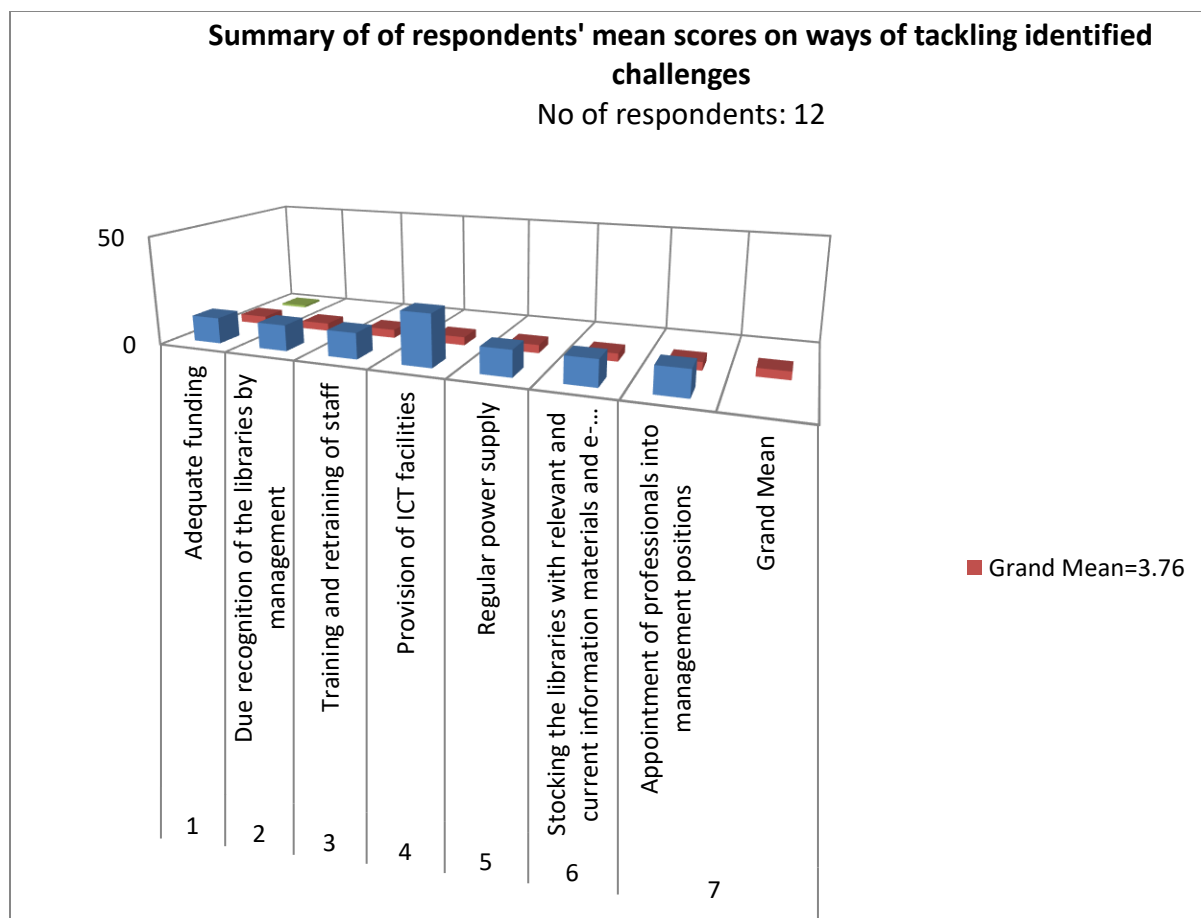


Figure 2 represents proffer solution to identified challenges facing libraries attached to correctional centres in Nigeria. The data show that all the items mean scores were above the mean score-2.50 with a grand mean of 3.76. The inference is that all the outlined factors were accepted putting the bench mark of 2.5 into consideration as the best steps to be taken towards tackling the challenges facing correctional centres libraries as transformation agents.

### 5.0. Discussion of results

The data in table 1 revealed that 480 of the respondents representing 100% seek religious information, 66.9% or 321 of the respondents seek information on news and current affairs. 201 or 41.9 respondents seek information on counseling whereas, 52.1% of the respondents seek educational information. Other areas information are sought by the inmates are legal- 17.5%, recreational- 75% and health- 35.4%. One can deduce from the data that educational and spiritual information is the most highly needed by the correctional centres inmates. They are also in high need of recreational information. Most of the inmates agreed that recreational

information resources will help them overcome boredom associated with prison environment, while they need legal information pre-suppose to knowing their rights and to enlighten them on hiring lawyers and getting free legal aid so as to exercise their basic human right, access to court and eventually, freedom. The above finding is corroborated by Ainia (2004), who revealed that correctional centres inmates like any other group of people, need information ranging from educational, recreational and legal to religious information that will help them cope with the centre situation. Ajogwu (2005) also affirmed the above assertion as he maintained that the prisoners' information needs range from legal needs, religious needs, health needs, educational needs, vocational needs, recreational needs and financial needs. The finding of this study is also in line with that of Tarzaan, Chorun and Mbatsoron (2015) who in their study on the information needs and seeking behaviour of prison inmates in Makurdi Medium Security prison revealed that inmates' information need is mainly on health, educational, vocational, legal and recreational information.

On the nature of access to information resources, it was discovered that all the inmates have access to religious information resources, they also have access to library and legal information resources with reasonable percentage of them subjected to restricted access to the resources. It was also discovered that some inmates have partial access to educational, recreational and health information resources (see table 2) and fewer of them restricted. The result of this study as regards restriction of inmates from having access and partial access to certain information resources is in affirmative with the findings of Busayo and Elaturoti (2016), Sambo, Uthman and Rabi, (2017) and Ajah and Nweke, (2017) in their separate studies that inmates have limited access to books, journals, magazines and other information resources. A situation, that negates the value placed on information which George and Babu (2016) described as the fifth factor of production and therefore, an essential ingredient for daily existence and against IFLA (2005) declaration which said that an incarcerated person has not relinquished the right to learn and to access information.

The data in table 3 which is in response to research question 2 highlighted all the expected functions of libraries as transformation agents in public institutions like the correctional centres (see items in table 3). The responses reveal that if all these functions could be performed to the latter by special libraries, they will obviously stand out as the desired transformation agents in

these public institutions. To establish whether these roles are actually being performed by these libraries attached to the institutions, the observation and oral interview conducted proved otherwise as the finding revealed that the performances of these libraries leaves much to be desired. The outcome of this study actually corroborate that of Okiy (2007) who posits that investment in information will assist public institutions to improve the efficiency of their internal operations; improve the quality of existing public services, create new type of services and increase the accessibility of those services. It also correlates with the view of Ajayi, Aboyade and Madu (2017) who asserted that the customized services rendered by special librarians provide current, timely and relevant information to employees for maximum productivity and informed management decision that will enhance the competitive advantage of their organizations and ultimately influence the realization of the set goals and objectives.

On the challenges militating against special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions, the finding as shown in figure 1 reveals that inadequate financial support by establishing authorities; Inadequate manpower; Inadequate ICT facilities; Outdated collections; Poor maintenance culture, Neglect by management, Lack of technical know-how and Epileptic power supply are major factors hindering special libraries in public institutions from excelling as transformation agents. In fact, the grand mean of 3.13 which is above the benchmark-2.50 is a clear indicator of the negative effect of these factors on service delivery of these libraries to public institutions, The above data therefore provide the answer to research question 3. This finding therefore is in line with that of Ogundana, Olowosejeje and Barkindo (2003), who discovered that most government departmental libraries are not provided for in the annual budget; where they are provided for, such funds are not released and when they are released, the library is often by-passed in determining what will be the priority need of the library. The outcome of this study is also in tandem with the finding of Odusanwo (2003) who infers that departmental libraries in public institutions have continued to suffer great neglect and leaves much to be desired. In addition states Faboyinde (2006), budgetary provision for government departmental libraries in Nigeria have largely been grossly inadequate and in many cases not provided at all. The situation he concludes has been responsible for poor services delivery by special libraries attached to public institutions, which has far reaching negative impact on Nigerian Public officers whose performances have been greeted with obvious disdain.

It was also observed and from the interview conducted that most employees of these public institutions do not utilize the services of special libraries which they attributed to ignorance of services rendered and their usefulness to them. The above no doubt affirms Womboh and Haruna (2004) claim that most Nigerians especially those in government departments either do not read or do not like to read while the few who may be interested in reading, the information materials may not be readily available.

Finding in figure 2, shows that the respondents collectively agreed that Adequate funding; Due recognition of the libraries by management; Training and retraining of staff; Provision of ICT facilities, Regular power supply, Stocking the libraries with relevant and current information materials and e-resources and Appointment of professionals into management positions are the way out of the morass of poor service delivery of libraries in correctional centres in Nigeria. It was confirmed in an interview that with the provision of the aforementioned, libraries in correctional centres will definitely deliver as transformation agents which will positively affect the service delivery of these institutions and by extension improve the standard of living of the inmates and enhance national development. As the result answers research question 5, the outcome is also in conformity with that of Madu, Aboyande and Aboyande (2016), who suggested that government and other stakeholders see adequate funding of the libraries in the light of active investment rather than a passive obligation. Stating the obvious, with proper funding of these special libraries by government and management, other challenges will definitely be surmounted and delivering of quality services guaranteed both on the side of the libraries and that of the institutions.

Findings further showed that the uncomfortable nature of correctional centres coupled with their policies and laws militate against meeting of the inmates' information needs through library and information resources and services. This is in line with what Lehmann (2000) and Singer (2000) stressed, that the library programme does not function independently but operates within the larger prison environment, whose mission and security policies often conflict with the library professional code of ethics and its belief in free access to information. The inmates also complained bitterly about the strictness of the prison security policies on reading materials. They said that many information resources are not allowed into the centre because of security and this affects their reading rights. This agreed with what Singer (2000); Shirley (2003) and



(2007) lamented, that many prison functionaries whimsically try to stop entry of materials in the library on the basis that it may be harmful to the security of the institution and mental health of the inmates. Womboh (1991) earlier on noted that Nigerian prison libraries lacked professional librarians. This is still the case in Nigerian correctional centres libraries. For instance the library under study, do not have library staff at all; the library is being looked after by welfare workers. IFLA's Section for Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) survey (2005) identified lack of professional staff as a major problem to the provision of library and information resources and services to the prisoners.

## **5.1. Conclusion and recommendations**

The outcome of this study establishes the fact that correctional centres have myriad of challenges which work against libraries performing and providing the needed services as transformation agent in the reformation of inmates in correctional centres. These myriad of challenges are embedded under inadequate funding and negligence by management and other stakeholders. Furthermore, despite the importance of information management and provision in correctional centres, it is disheartening to state that most of the expected roles of libraries were not being carried out as a result of identified challenges as these libraries are only seen as units of the centres and not as information centres that can mastermind the transformation of these inmates for improved livelihood and onward integration with the society after their jail term. It is after due consideration of the analyzed data and observations made that the following recommendations become necessary as steps to be taken towards making libraries contribute meaningfully as transformation agent as to ensuring quality service delivery and optimal performance of correctional centres and for the well being of the inmates.

Indeed, there are million dollar questions waiting for answers of which answers to them will help us unravel the way forward for libraries to operate as transformation agents in the reformation of inmates in correctional centres. It is an established fact that reforms require huge resources to execute so the questions are:

Is the Federal Government of Nigeria fiscally prepared to turn the prison from punitive facilities to rehabilitation/correctional centres or it would just end with the change of name from NPS to NCS? Is the government ready to put down the resources needed for the massive changes needed in the prisons to turn them to correctional centres? How prepared are the personnel of

the service to drive the correctional project to fullness? Is the government ready to re-train the officials of the service so that their behaviour and attitude towards inmates would blend with the aims of the institution as outlined in the new law?

As we pause and ponder on the above questions begging for answers the following actions must be taken for the library to meaningfully contribute her quota as transformation agents in the reformation of correctional centres inmates

- The researcher is of the view that the issue of lack of basic amenities like food, water and inadequate medical treatment should be looked into by way of review and adequately addressed as well as the enhancement of existing educational programmes and skills training.
- For the personnel, it is not only adjusting to the new name but to the new system, the assertion is that they should be given a new orientation and training on transformation and reformation. To get the system right, the personnel must be trained and equipped to execute the programme. They can also outsource some aspects of the training programme for better and more cost effective management.
- As the study revealed, the correctional centre library is not managed by a librarian just as is obtained in other centres. It is impossible to have a square peg in a round hole and expect the desired result. The bottom line is that librarians should be employed and appointed to manage libraries in correctional centres and not the old way in which the library is seen as a unit of the centre therefore must be managed by any of the officers. Librarians are trained to handle users of any kind and are in better position to establish and manage their information needs.
- It is true that the era is one of information explosion yet right and relevant information remains scarce in the corridor of strategic management and effective decision-making thereby making this type of information the most sought for and most valued of factors of production in a world that is ruled by information and information has become power. In this situation, it is only librarians and libraries attached to correctional centres are most suitable drivers of access to information that can bring the desired positive change in both the inmates and the centres. The bottom-line is that Nigerian Correctional Service management should accord due recognition to libraries attached to correctional centres so as to being in position of acquiring and disseminating the needed relevant information for

strategic decision making that could bring about improved service delivery to the centres and inmates. This has become imperative given that the non-acknowledgement of the importance of library services has been responsible for the negligence and gross under funding of this all important unit of every institution.

- Apart from employing professional librarians to work in these libraries, effort should be made by management to train and retrain on regular basis the libraries workforce by sponsoring them to attend workshops; conferences, seminars and further studies as it was observed that many of them working in the library were not computer literate thus know little or nothing about the application of ICT and other related technologies in library operations and services. A state they attributed to redundancy as management do not see them in the light of information custodians and disseminators rather sees and treats them as 'any of the centre's staff'.
- Libraries in correctional centres in Nigeria should be equipped with ICT facilities and equipment as no organization can excel in this present dispensation in isolation of the reality and trends of the time. The suggestion is that management of Nigerian Correctional Service, should as a matter of necessity make the library resources accessible electronically by providing internet services for the libraries so that they can have access to latest information concerning the field of specialization of their institutions which will in-turn be made available to management and other stakeholders and through it, the goals and objectives of Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) will be realized in line with the global best practices.
- The issue of epileptic public power supply is no longer news in Nigeria and since we have come to live with it, it behooves Correctional Service management to make available for effective running of the libraries generating sets that could power the libraries for effective service delivery more so, in the area of current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI) to the staff of the centres as well as inmates.

- No matter how good a leader is, if there are no funds to run the institution, it is as good as dead. It is against this backdrop that the need for government and management to adequately provide fund to run libraries in correctional centres cannot be overemphasized. It is with adequate funding that relevant collections would be acquired, ICT facilities and equipment procured and best hands retained in the libraries. To this end, these libraries should be included in budgetary proposals and librarians carried along in the course of the formulating the proposals and planning as to pinpointing the libraries' areas of priority and fund released for the libraries from the ministry during budget allocation should with all sincerity be used for the libraries and not the common practice of bye-passing the libraries and misappropriating such funds by centre commandants.
  
- On the issue of inmates and staff of correctional centres not utilizing the services of the libraries, librarians and libraries should as a matter of responsibility embark on awareness campaigns with a view to acquainting these potential users of the needs of utilizing the libraries and the impact on their personal development, job performance and reintegration of inmates after the completion of their jail terms.

Be it as it may, Nigerian correctional centres cannot in this information age if they want to achieve their set goals and objectives, work in isolation of the libraries that have been designated 'special' by virtue of the nature of services they render and type of clientele they serve . They must agree to the fact that information rules the world and it is only with the right information that any organization or institution can compete and where possible beat her competitors. In context of the present reformation going on in the Nigerian Correctional service as enshrined in the 2019 law, it is only these special libraries and librarian that have what it takes to make the positive change through the acquisition and dissemination of relevant information material in any format. Government and management therefore should provide these libraries all the necessary tools as recommended above and see them at their best as transformation agents.

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