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DOI: https://doi.org/10.15804/rop2022209

THE TREND OF FEMALES' ADMISSION INTO THE NIGERIA CORRECTIONAL SERVICES IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

Key words: Correctional Admission, Crime, Trend, Female, Frequency

ABSTRACT: Females are being involved in crimes and admitted into the correctional services all over the world. However, the trend of these admissions may differ according to the situations on ground. This study therefore aimed at examining the trend of females' admission into the Nigeria Correctional Services within 2005–2016. The study is longitudinal in nature. It adopted the situational theory of crime as its theoretical framework. Hence it made use of secondary sources of data collection such as the National Bureau of Statistics official report, Nigeria Correctional Services Reports, academic journals and current Newspaper reports. Data analysis was based on content analysis. The study revealed that the highest number of females admitted into the correctional services within the period of study was 13,472. It also revealed that within the period of study, a cumulative total of 82,556 females were admitted for various types of offences into the correctional services across the nation. It identified and arranged in order of frequency 11 types of offences that females were mostly admitted for and identified sedition as the least offence females were admitted for. The study therefore, recommended that poverty, unemployment, inflation, corruption of the ruling classes and governmental aids to bandits should be discouraged if crime must be curbed.

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INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Correctional Services statistics stated that there are 72,179 inmates in the Correctional Centres across the nation (NCS, 2017). Out of this number, 98% were males and 2% were females. This indicates an overcrowding of the correctional centres since there are only 240 Correctional Centres spread across the nation with a total capacity of 50,803 inmates. It also stated that there are 67% of inmates awaiting trials while 32% of inmates have concluded their trials and serving terms. The crimes that had the highest number of inmates were; stealing, robbery and assault. The most common reason for these could be hunger and starvation in the country. This is because the most common reason for stealing for instance is to satisfy immediate needs of hunger while the most common reason for assault is frustration aggravated by inability to achieve set goals (daily/ monthly/annual) which is prompted by anger and aggression. The Contemporary Nigeria is faced with a situation where many cannot achieve their goals not because of personal reasons but reasons beyond personal control (systemic). The challenges of insecurity, fear of crime and economic hardship (Ayodele et al., 2019; Aborisade, 2017) where many cannot meet their daily needs of feeding and providing for their families predisposed them to emotional intolerance such that they are easily angered and tended to react aggressively to situations that could have been easily managed.

There are two categories of information prominent in this data, these are; states with the highest number of inmates and states with the lowest number of inmates. The states that had the highest number of inmates were: Lagos, Rivers, Kano, Delta and Ogun in order of frequency. In this category, Lagos state had the highest number of 7,396 inmates while Ogun state had the lowest number with 2,965 inmates. Looking at the states involved, these are among the largest states with the highest population in Nigeria except for Ogun. These states also have the highest frequency of economic activities, international airports and proximity to other states which enabled criminals' entry and exit to commit their dastard activities during the day or night and return to their bases after operations. For instance, Lagos and Ogun states are so close to each other such that it is

difficult to separate the boundaries of the two states hence; criminals as well as legal business citizens could go in and out of the states to perform legal and illegal operations any time of the day with hours. Kano state is the major state in the north where economic activities are highest and it is also a state that is visited by citizens of other neighboring states in the north to conduct legal and illegal businesses because of its proximity. It is a state where citizens both good and bad could travel in and out to conduct legal or illegal businesses within hours. Hence their proximity to these states and the free movement of individuals in and out of these states could have accounted for the high number of inmates in the states. This is also based on the location of crime committed. That is, offenders are detained, tried and incarcerated in the state where their offences were committed despite location of residence or arrest.

In the second category of states that had the lowest number of inmates in Nigeria were Ekiti, Bayelsa, Yobe, Kogi and Osun. In this category, Ekiti state had the lowest number of 444 inmates and Osun state had 861 inmates. The reason that can be attributed to this is the level of economic activities in the states, the population and occupation of the residents of the states. In these states for instance, most of the citizens are civil servants and farmers/fishermen. Hence criminal activities in the states would also be minimal. Economic and social activities would also be very low. In all, the commonest age of criminality among inmates across the nation was 26-50 years (53.3%) (NCS, 2017). The age of criminality could also be seen to be linked to the categories of states. The youthful age is between 18-25 years according to International Labor Organization definition (ILO) but the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics defined the youth as people between the ages of 18-35 years. This is the age where people are restless, trying to achieve set goals of success, get married, start a family, and achieve their dreams. However, because of the difficulty of achieving their dreams, some may turn to crime as available options to meeting their goals. States with high economic activities and high social lives could be more attractive to youths with high aspiration, hence the rural-urban drifts among youths which could also account for reasons why inmates are more within the ages of 25-50 years.

Generally, household poverty/hardship could account for reasons why there are so many inmates in contemporary Nigeria. Unemployment which gives birth to poverty could account for the increase in the number of inmates across the nation. In addition, inflation, devaluation and low purchasing power of the naira leading to a situation where too much money is chasing too few goods such that it becomes very difficult to feed, provide for the family and pay basic bills such as education, medical and utility bills, leaves some people with no choice other than committing crime. To crown it all, government policies that are not people friendly leaves many people with bleak/no hope for the future. People no longer trust in the government to provide basic amenities to make living bearable for the masses in Nigeria, hence they lost hope for a better future and crime becomes the available option. The worst of it all is the corruption and stealing of public funds by the ruling classes who also display ostentatious life styles oppressing the masses with their stolen funds which further pushed so many people to crime. This study therefore, aimed at examining the trend of females' admission into the Nigerian Correctional Services across the nation within 2005 to 2016 on all types of offences.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Self-control theory proposed by Gottfredson & Hirschi (1990) was adopted for this study. They suggested that the best way to control crime depends on effective parenting through direct control because it helps an individual to build self-control. Hence, self-control is a theory that explains individual differences in crime committal (Akers, Sellers, 2004) which includes males and females under all circumstances. They believe that an individual has the ability to refrain from crime or commit crime based on the level of self-control he/she has imbibed overtime (low self-control or high self-control). This is also guided by individual social location and perceived sanction system. Hence the ability to refrain from committing crime regardless of the circumstances an individual finds himself/herself is strongly determined by individual self-control.

An individual with low self-control is bound to commit crime when faced with the opportunity to do so. While an individual with high selfcontrol is able to refrain from crime if faced with the same opportunity. In Nigeria like in most parts of the world, females in crime attributed their involvements to economics, financial, emotional, material deprivation, poverty, unemployment, inflation, self-perceived injustice, government policies etc., the truth remains that so many other females who suffered the same fate did not commit crime. Rather they endured until legal opportunities were open to them. Some others who didn't commit crime also endured till fate shone its light on them. The situation in Nigeria is such that majority of the people are unemployed living in abject poverty and deprivation coupled with the ever increasing prices of commodities and other basic necessities of live but not all Nigerians commit crime. Up until date, some females faced with the same challenges or even worst challenges used other conforming means as coping strategies instead of committing crime because they have been able to build high self-control over time. This negates Broidy & Agnew (1997) proposition that females involve in crime as a coping strategy to cope with stressors/oppressive conditions rather than immediate response to stressors/oppression experienced. So also some females devised other legal means to opt out of whatever oppressive conditions they found themselves. Therefore high self-control among females not the existence of opportunities (Agnew, Cullen, 1999) is paramount to refraining from crime in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a trend analysis of females' admission into the Nigeria Correctional Centres within 2005 and 2016. It includes females' admission for all types of offences within the specified period of analysis. This study may be considered a longitudinal study since it examined data within a period of 10 years. However the choice of 2005–2016 was made to enable a grounded argument on female criminality in Nigeria. A study of 10 years should be able to give a true picture of what a phenomenon portrays. Hence the method of date collection was mainly secondary. The published

Annual Abstract of Statistical of the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics within 2006–2017 and the Nigeria Correctional Services Statistics (2006–2017) including data from periodic academic journals was consulted for this study. Hence the study focused on females admission for all types of offenses recorded within 2005–2016. Consequently the data analysis was done using content analysis.

RESULTS

When you talk about trend, you talk about a general direction in which a situation is changing. Hence a study of trend talks about an analysis of the changing situation in a particular phenomenon, hence a change in the trend of correctional admission of female inmates in Nigeria.

Table 1 showed the number of females in Nigerian Correctional Services from 2005–2016. It particularly indicates that females are continually represented in all the types of crime in Nigeria. 2012 was intentionally omitted from the table due to inability to get the data for that year.

Table 1 showed that the highest number of females (8,146) admitted into the Nigeria Correctional Services was for stealing in the year 2005. It was followed by unlawful possession of property (1,209), Indian Hemp offences (1,000) and assault (700)

The year 2006 recorded stealing (2,984) as the highest offences among female inmates. This was followed by assault (329) and robbery (250).

In 2007, the highest number of females' admission was in stealing (3,156) followed by human trafficking (484) and affray (277).

In 2008, the highest number of admission was for stealing (6,235) followed by assault (400) and affray (120).

In 2009, the highest number of admission was for stealing (1,209) followed by murder (505) and assault (457).

In 2010, the highest number of admission was for stealing (1,794) followed by armed robbery (1,176) followed by murder (971) and assault (517).

In 2011, the highest number was for robbery (726) followed by murder (567) followed by armed robbery (490) and assault (486). Surprisingly zero was recorded for stealing in 2011. Perhaps the data for stealing must have been missing/lost during processing for that year.

In 2013, stealing recorded the highest number of admission with 2,747. This was followed by assault (681) and murder (320).

In 2014 the highest number of admission was for stealing (2,491) followed by assault (529) and murder (407).

Stealing (2,249) also recorded the highest number of admission in 2015, followed by assault (603) and murder (314).

In 2016, stealing (2,501) also recorded as the highest number of admission followed by murder (361) and assault (343)

Within 2005–2016, the total number of females admitted for stealing was 33,512. Also 5,270 females were admitted for Assault within 2005–2016. A total of 4,332 females were admitted into the correctional centres for murder across the nation within 2005–2016. Within 2005–2016, a total of 3,630 females were admitted into the correctional centres across the nation for robbery. In 11 years a total of 3,208 females were admitted into the Nigerian Correctional Services across the nation for their involvements in armed robbery. Then 2,736 females were admitted for Indian hemp offences and 2,331 for unlawful possession of property across the nation within 2005–2016. Within 2005–2016, a total of 1534 females were admitted for sex offences, a total of 1,275 for human trafficking and 1,241 for affray and 1,113 for smuggling across the nation. The offences where females were least represented with a total of 36 admission within 2005–2016 across the nation was sedition.

The total number of females admitted into the correctional services for all the types of offences in 2005 was 13,472. In 2006 it was 4,450. In 2007, the number of females' admitted into the correctional services was 6,163. From the table 1 however, 2005 marked the peak of females' admission into the Nigerian Correctional Service within the eleven years examined for most types of offences (2005–2016). In 2008, the number of females admitted into custody increased again to 7,280. The difference in increase

here is 1,117 which is 18.1%. There was a further decrease in 2009 to 7,164 which represents a decrease of 116 (1.6%).

2010 saw a sudden increase which stood at 10,239 that is, an increase with a difference of 3,075 which is 43%. But another decrease occurred again in 2011 with a total of 6,094 females admitted into the correctional services. This marked a decrease of 4,145 (45%) which is higher than the number of increase in female admission of the previous year. That means 2010 had an increase of 3,075 while 2011 had a decrease of 4,145. This showed that the rate of decrease in female admission between 2009 and 2011 is higher than the rate of increase within the three years (2009–2011).

In 2013 the number of females' admitted into the correctional services across the nation was7,844 which also indicates an increase in admission from the previous year. Here the difference in increase was 1,750 that is a percentage increase of 29%. In 2014 the number dropped to 6,834 which is 1,010 that is 12.9% decrease in females admitted into the correctional services within the years 2013 and 2014. In the year 2015 there was a significant fall in the number of females admitted into the correctional services to 6,649. This is a decrease of 185 which is 2.8%. Finally, in 2016 there was a further reduction in the number of females that were admitted into the Nigeria Correctional Services to 6,367, a difference of 282 (4.4%) from the previous year.

Within these eleven years of analysis (2005–2016), the highest number of females admitted into the correctional services across the nation was in 2005 with a total of 13,472. This was followed by 2010 with a total of 10,239 females and 2013 with a total of 7,844 females admitted into the correctional services across the nation. The lowest number of female admission into the correctional services for all offences within 2005–2016 was 4,460 in the year 2006. The table also showed that within a period of 11 years the cumulative number of females that gained entry into the Nigeria Correctional Services as a result of their involvements in various crimes was 82,556. This shows a very high rate of females' involvement in crime in contemporary Nigeria. It also indicates a galloping increase and decrease in the number of females gaining entry into the Nigerian Correctional Services for various offences committed in Nigeria. It can there-

fore be rightly said that females are well involved in all the types of crimes that the males are involved in Nigeria.

Table 1. Female correctional admission by type of offence, 2005–2016

Offences	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014	2015	2016
Debt	14	40	15	12	168	271	111	28	50	13	39
Arson	6	2	5	-	170	179	63	14	31	40	48
Affray	166	108	277	120	155	99	74	12	20	183	27
Assault	700	329	225	400	457	517	486	681	529	603	343
Murder	550	66	263	8	505	971	567	320	407	314	361
Treason	-	-	-	-	16	-	65	44	9	22	15
Sedition	2	-	-	-	15	-	0	5	8	2	4
Abduc- tion	10	2	3	-	146	123	45	79	63	101	112
Smug- gling	100	118	195	4	138	273	217	15	15	18	20
Immi- gration	25	55	15	1	253	700	249	15	24	22	23
Ste- aling	8,146	2,984	3,156	6,235	1,209	1794	0	2,747	2,491	2,249	2501
Robbery	188	250	251	4	340	752	726	296	282	252	289
Armed Robbery	201	48	206	10	242	1176	490	197	262	54	322
Sex Offences	106	20	37	6	265	290	199	131	152	183	145
Traffic Offences	204	3	10	3	135	272	160	65	48	46	41
Curren- cy Of- fences	45	30	25	5	131	143	119	100	11	10	23
Indian Hemp Offences	1,000	25	74	20	268	274	328	128	216	197	206
Con- tempt of Court	119	100	116	90	165	217	382	127	169	178	182

Offences	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2014	2015	2016
Unlaw- ful Po- ssession of Pro- perty	1,209	108	256	70	180	219	84	93	49	27	36
Unlaw- ful Po- ssession of Arms	230	20	9	7	174	63	74	19	18	92	82
Forgery and Altering	81	23	45	5	114	56	67	4		38	44
Esca- ping from Lawful Custody	20	2	2	-	134	114	141	10	19	1	2
Offences against Native Law and Custom	150	20	139	36	202	161	225	27	39	1	6
Econo- mic Sabota- ge	-	4	44	-	114	64	62	30	7	-	5
Human Traffic- king	-	55	484	10	111	405	172	10	9	7	12
Crimi- nal Lunatic	1	2	4	3	56	142	54	-	1	1	9
Breach of Peace	-	2	6	15	216	41	38	1	20	8	26
Cultism/ Ritual	-	3	25	-	173	196	153	-	2	-	2
Other Offences	200	31	278	216	912	727	743	2,646	1,884	1988	1442
Total	13,472	4,450	6,163	7,280	7,164	10,239	6,094	7,844	6,834	6,649	6,367

Source: NBS, 2010, 2011; 2012; 2015 and NCS Statistics, 2016; 2017 $\,$

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of this study which showed that 2005 recorded the highest number of female admission into the Nigeria Correctional Services on all types of offences across the nation within 2005-2016 indicates that 2005 must have been a very notorious year for criminality in Nigeria. This is evident in the total number of males (136,270) also admitted into the Nigeria Correctional Services across the nation in the same year. However, many factors could have accounted for this high number of Correctional admission in 2005. These factors included: Poverty, unemployment, inflation, corruption, environmental/residential factors, large and disorganized family background and divorce/separation. The increase in the number of single headed families with its adverse effects on the children and females must have greatly contributed to the increase in females' admission into the correctional services across the nation (see Ebobo, 2018). This is in line with the study carried out on socio-demographic profiles of armed robbery female inmates in Kirikiri Prison carried out by Aborisade & Oni, 2020 where they found that most of their respondents were from large and disorganized families. Some were pushed into armed robbery by friends and others were influenced by material possession and educational needs. Poverty, unemployment and inflation are major factors that influenced females to crimes.

Up until 2021, poverty, unemployment and inflation have been ravaging the Nigerian economy such that the poor are becoming poorer and the gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider as more people are becoming poor by the day as a result of government policies (Vanguard, 2021; The Nation, 2021; The Guardian, 2021). For instance, World Bank reported that inflation pushed seven (7) million Nigerians below poverty line in 2020 (New Telegraph, 2021; This Day, 2021). This situation has led to so many other crimes which further make the country insecure at any time of the day/night (Business Day, 2021; Umar, 2015). World Bank also reiterated that unemployment fuels crime and insecurity in Nigeria (Nigerian Tribune, 2021). In another report, the World Bank stated that Nigeria inflation which is 17.93%, as at May, 2020 limits growth, fuels crime and insecurity in Nigeria (Daily Independent (2021). Over the years, poverty

and inflation have been biting hard on the citizens such that behaviors that were considered abnormal are now becoming the normal ways of live in Nigeria. Corruption, government and politicians aiding bandits as well as the deceitful behaviors of the government and political leaders (Daily Sun, 2021; Blueprint, 2021; New Telegraph, 2021; Leadership, 2021) have made Nigeria a breeding ground for crimes because so many citizens have lost hope on the government and are opting for crimes as the available option. For instance, the EFCC chairman Bawa, reported that \$20m cash was evacuated from a minister's home (New Telegraph, 2021). Many of these government officials and political leaders commit financial crimes and go unpunished. Between 2010 and 2021, poverty, inflation and unemployment coupled with activities of Boko haram, herdsmen, kidnappers, armed robbers etc have been on the increase and have made the country insecure for the citizens and foreigners today (This Day, 2021; Business Day, 2021; Umar, 2015).

The study showed a consistent highest position for stealing in the eleven years data except for the year 2011 which had a zero record for stealing. This indicated that females were more vulnerable to crime as a result of deprivation which may be financial, economic or otherwise. Stealing is geared towards meeting a particular need, satisfying hunger and deprivation or inbuilt tendencies. Hence it can be rightly said that female offenders are economically driven and influenced by their vulnerability status arising from lack of finance and poverty (inability to meet some pressing needs). The study also showed a consistent high number of female admissions in robbery, armed robbery, murder and assault. Hence, data showed that females were more involved in Stealing, Assault, Murder, Robbery, Armed Robbery, Indian hemp offences, Unlawful possession of property, sex offences, human trafficking and Affray in order of frequency within 2005–2016 in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that females are consistently involved in almost all the crime types in Nigeria, the most common of which is stealing. However, it revealed that the major crimes where females are highly admitted into the Nigeria Correctional Services were stealing, assault, murder, robbery, armed robbery, Indian hemp offences, unlawful possession of property, sex offences, human trafficking, affray and smuggling in order of frequency. The crime where females are least admitted into the Nigeria Correctional Services was sedition. Hence, the study suggested that the causes of this high representation in the correctional services included prolonged poverty, unemployment, corruption, government policies, inflation, corruption of the political leaders and politicians' aids to bandits amongst others.

RECOMMENDATION

The study therefore recommended that poverty and unemployment should be eradicated. Creation of jobs for the teeming youths and masses should be the watch word of the political leaders if truly crime and social vices are to be curbed. There should also be strict penalties for leaders found to be involved in crimes because it will deter others from committing crime. Total cleansing of the system is required. The system needs to be cleansed of corruption at all levels. The criminal justice system also needs to be cleansed so as to serve the same punishment to criminals regardless of their statuses in the country. A case of what is good for the goose is also good for the gander.

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