

Review

# Juvenile Delinquency: Evidence of Challenges in Rehabilitation

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## Article history

Received: 10-09-2017

Revised: 22-05-2018

Accepted: 26-06-2018

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**Abstract:** Juvenile delinquency is a global phenomenon that affect children's developmental process and represent a significant concern for the society. Despite the fact that it is a global issue, its effects are felt more in developing countries such as Ghana due to inadequate resources available to rehabilitate them. However, the study explored the procedure used in admitting inmates into the juvenile detention facilities and challenges in rehabilitating them and recommended strategies based on findings to improve on the rehabilitation system. Using a quantitative research methodology, simple random and purposive samplings were used in selecting 94 respondents for the study at the senior correctional centre. Data obtained from the inmates was analyzed with SPSS and descriptive statistics with frequency distributions were employed to explain the data. The findings indicated challenges that affect both care takers and inmate at the centre regarding human resources, inadequate training period, facility to house inmate and the proper procedure for admission into the correctional facility. These challenges showed that, there are gaps in the rehabilitation process which mission is to make delinquent children valuable members of the society after they are released. Rather many juvenile delinquents stand high risk of becoming criminals in their adulthood.

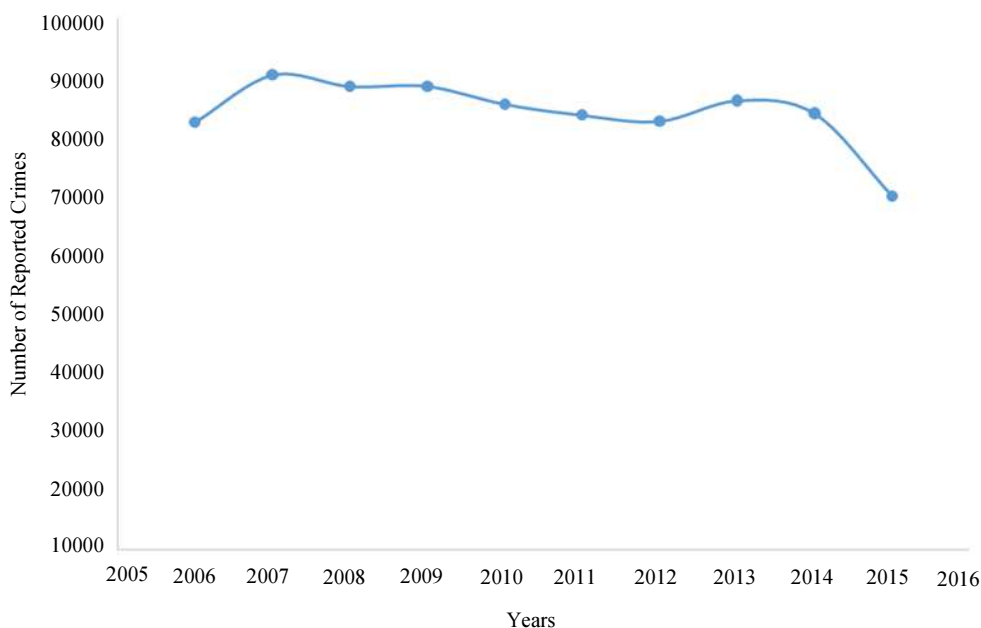
**Keywords:** Juvenile Delinquency, Rehabilitation, Children

## Introduction

Juvenile Delinquency is a major concern worldwide. Juvenile Delinquency is one of the major issues relating to causes ranging from war and unemployment to parental incapacity (UN, 1950). Statistical data in many countries show that delinquency is largely a group phenomenon. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of all offences committed by young people are committed by members of gangs or groups, which can vary from highly structured criminal organizations to less structured street gangs. Even those young people who commit offences alone are likely to be associated with groups (United Nation).

Juvenile Delinquency is widely considered a complex problem that exacts a substantial and continuing toll on the society (Mulvey *et al.*, 1997). It occurs in both simple and complex societies and is often a result of affected relationships between a group of individuals

leading to maladjustment and conflict (Haque, 2012). Abotchie (1997) posits that, for societies with accepted modes of conduct, deviance is predictable. Juvenile Delinquency is a serious challenge to the family, public safety, the lives of young people themselves and law enforcement agencies at large. This means that the country would have to bear a lot of cost in dealing with issues of crime. It is a major challenge most children go through regularly and this to a large extent affects their physical, psychological and societal needs at large (Brown, 2005). According to UN Centre for Societal Development and Humanitarian Affairs (2000), delinquency has increased because of political, social and economic instability across Africa. To this end, juvenile delinquency is a situation every country tries to curb not losing sight of the fact that if young offenders are not nurtured well, they may grow to become criminals (Hess and Drowns, 2010; Kuanliang *et al.*, 2008; Austin *et al.*, 2000; Johnson, 1999).



**Fig. 1:** Crime trends over a decade in Ghana

A more worrisome aspect of this is that, despite the apparent desire and effort towards mitigating delinquency, for example, the punishment of juvenile offenders, the phenomenon has continued unabated (Boakye, 2013). Generally, there is an increased rate of crime in Ghana. Records of the Ghana Police service indicated a total of 74,128 cases in 2005. Between the years of 2006 to 2014 the figures increased though with marginal fluctuations to 82,111 (Statistical and Information Technology unit, CID, Ghana police service, 2016). Figure 1 summarizes reported crime trends from 2005 to 2015.

Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010) suggested that juvenile delinquent cases are also on the increase in Ghana. Urban areas such as Tema, Kumasi and Sekondi/Takoradi exhibit particularly higher rates of such cases. Some level of delinquency has also been ascertained in some industrial and commercial areas including Nsawam, Obuasi and Tarkwa. In Ghana, it is difficult to access data on the number of juvenile offenders because of a lack of official records. One of the most recent available data was published in the 2007 annual performance report of the Department of Social Welfare and it reported 276 cases in the year. Additionally, the 2010 Ghana Prison Service annual report, also indicated an average daily lock-up of 115 juvenile offenders.

There have been several theories to explain the incidence of juvenile delinquencies occurring worldwide. Hunte (2006) suggested that, the differences in the youth's behavior can be traced to the connectedness of the youth to an available identity figure. However, Huang *et al.* (2004) argue that majority

of juvenile delinquents living worldwide have had great records of delinquency in the societies and families before resorting to street life. Grygier *et al.* (1969) maintain that the pathology of the family is a major cause of delinquency and accounts for 50% of delinquency cases. Again, a report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and World Bank (UNODC and World Bank, 2007) states "evidence suggests that children who witness domestic violence are more likely to engage in delinquent and violent behavior in the future" (Smith and Thornberry, 1995; Margolin, 1997). Concerning the stages of involvement in juvenile delinquency, Menard *et al.* (2001) hypothesize a connection between delinquency and substance abuse and argues that, at the adolescent stage of the individual, substance use is extensive as compared to the early stages of his/her early adulthood. As a result, crime and substance use become intense during the adolescent stage. Ford (2005), however, disagrees and posits that substance use and delinquency are inversely related. Adolescents without strong bonds and relationships with their family tend to resort first to substance use then to delinquent behavior or vice versa.

Consequently, these children join gangs and pick up social vices and in most cases they are in conflict with the laws and are held in juvenile detention facilities. Juvenile detention facilities are most often under poor conditions in some countries and therefore impede rehabilitation. Ineffective and inefficient rehabilitation programs can lead to re-offending after discharge and a higher risk of becoming criminals in their adulthood

(Boakye, 2013). In Ghana, there is limited documented knowledge particularly on the procedure of admission and the challenges encountered during the rehabilitation process at the correctional centre. Much of the research in this area has been focused on predisposing factors and preventive measures (Arthur, 1996). Even then, there is a dearth of information in this regard pertaining specifically to Ghana. Existing data on juvenile delinquency, most notably by Boakye (2012), Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010), Arthur (1996) and Weinberg (1964), I have commented little on admissions and challenges of rehabilitation and its effects on the rehabilitation process.

It is against this backdrop that, this paper contributes to the body of knowledge by investigating the procedure used in admitting inmates into the juvenile detention facilities and challenges in rehabilitating them. It also aims to recommend strategies based on its findings, to address the existing gap and improve on the rehabilitation system. To ensure that due process are followed and there is fairness to reduce or prevent bias in unlawful juvenile detention. Additionally with respect to the challenges the study will highlight the experiences of the juveniles in the detention centre by providing evidence based information to stakeholders. Further, the study will serve as a reference documents to bring out the needs of Juveniles in rehabilitation centre and also propose further research based on the outcome of the study to advance knowledge in the field of the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquency.

## Materials and Methods

Quantitative approach to data collection and analyses were used in this study. Questionnaires were used in the collection of data at the Senior Correctional Centre, formally known as the Ghana Borstal Institute. Simple random and purposive samplings were used in selecting respondents for the study. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the inmate so that each person would stand an equal chance of being chosen, simplified the data interpretation and analysis of the results. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the correctional home because the target population was not randomly distributed in the area and the one that was intentionally picked exhibited most of the characteristics of interest to the study. In all, a total of ninety four (94) respondents whose age ranges between 15-21 years were employed for the study. Out of the of ninety four (94) respondents involved, 65 were in Junior High School, 10 were in Senior High School and nineteen were not in school.

The methodological approach to the study is, quantitative method; as a result, research tool associated with quantitative method was used to collect data. Thus

the research tool used for the quantitative was self-administered questionnaire. On the other hand, secondary data was also relied on for the study; thus, a range of published works, such as books, articles, internet, newspaper articles and many other publications useful to the study was included. The use of secondary data in the form of documentary sources in social science research is supported by Miller and Brewer (2003). They believe that documentary sources in social science research include reports, periodicals, newspapers, articles, photographs, letters, diaries and many more. Hence as part of gathering information for the study, these sources were employed to draw data relevant to the study.

Different Ghanaian languages were used in getting the information from the respondents, particularly for illiterate inmates. Ghanaian languages such as Ga, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe, Fante and Twi were used. Thus, the questions were translated from English to these local languages for respondents. Also in administering the questionnaire, two field assistants were employed to help to conduct the survey as well as translating the local languages such as Ga-Adangbe and Ewe. This helped to clarify the questions to the respondents. Demographic data collected from respondents included age, offences committed, educational background, religion and socioeconomic status of parents.

The tools for the data collection translated the research objectives into specific items in which the responses provided the data required to achieve the research objectives. Most importantly, in order to achieve this purpose, each question conveyed to the respondent the ideas required by the research objectives and each item obtained a response which was analyse for fulfilling the research objectives. Further, the choice of data collection methods was informed by a number of reasons. Firstly, self-administered questions are widely used primary data collection tool for quantitative study and it helped to gather standardised data for the study. Second, the design of the instruments matched carefully the research objectives of the study and also the questions went through various stages of validation ranging from student, colleagues to expert validation in the persons of researchers. This validation process, in essence, made the questionnaire very reliable. Thus, validity is established using a panel of experts and a field test as confirmed by Norland-Tilburg (1990). In addition, the questionnaire measured what it intended to measure; it represented the content of the study; it was appropriate for the population; and it was comprehensive enough to collect all the information needed to address the issues of the study.

Data obtained from the inmates was analyzed with SPSS. Descriptive statistics with frequency distributions were employed to explain the data. The presentation of data analysis is in accordance with the objectives of the

study and are presented in tables, pie charts and graphs to facilitate understanding.

## Results

### Socio-Demographics

The population studied constituted 94 inmates. There was an average age of 15 years but was curious to note that some of the inmates had outgrown the required age range of 17 to 21. These inmates were admitted into the facility as juveniles and were yet to complete the rehabilitation process. About 80% of the inmates had formal education at least to the basic level and had Christian or Islamic religious background. Regarding, the occupation of parents or guardians of inmates, majority of the inmates ( $n = 51$ , 54%) reported that they were petty traders and a relatively high proportion of the inmates ( $n = 39$ , 42%) reporting that their parents were unemployed. Finally, a whopping majority of the inmates ( $n = 67$ , 71%) indicated that they were not living together with their parents prior to their arrest and admission to the correctional centre. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the inmates.

### Challenges Associated with the Procedure for Admission

The major challenge confronting rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents is the process through which they are brought to the center. Before the individual is brought into the center, a complaint has to be made, an

arrest, a sentence from a competent court of jurisdiction; a phenomenon associated with the regular court proceedings for criminals. A number of inmates saw the process as a form of humiliation and societal rejection because they believe they are juveniles and are not supposed to be treated as adult criminals.

It was therefore noteworthy that not all inmates followed this process of admission. In fact, findings showed that a disturbing majority of the inmates were not taken through the proper procedure for admission into the correctional facility. Figure 2 describes the distribution of inmates who were admitted according to the requirements of the law and those that were not.

Another point of interest was the fact that over 70% of the inmates were not living under the care of their parents prior to arrest.

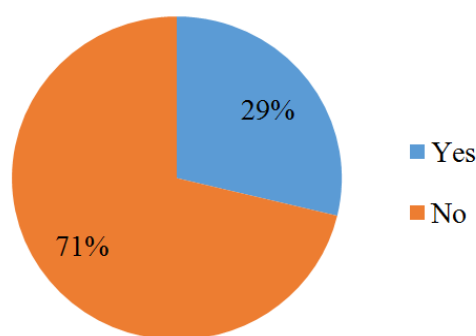


Fig. 2: Distribution of Inmates with respect to Admission process into Correctional Facility

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of inmates of senior correctional centre

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age		
15 to 20 years	85	90
21 years and above	9	10
Total	94	100
Religion		
Christianity	70	74
Islamic	24	26
Total	94	100
Education		
JHS	65	69
SHS	10	11
None	19	20
Total	94	100
Occupation of Parent		
Unemployed	39	42
Petty trading	51	54
Government worker	4	4
Total	94	100
Living together with parent before admission to the centre		
Yes	27	29
No	67	71
Total	94	100

Source: Field Work, 2016

This was further explained by the revelation that majority, 92.6% of inmates who were living under the care of their parents prior to their admission into the correctional home felt they passed through due process to be admitted. Whereas, majority, 80.6% of those who were not living with their parents hinted that they did not have a fair or due process of admission to the centre.

**Rehabilitation Process**

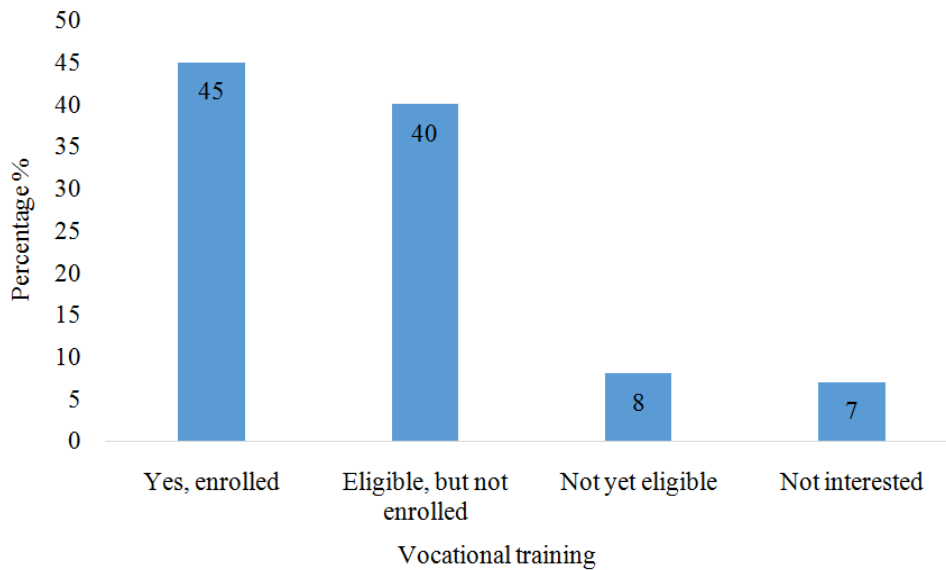
There were two major rehabilitation activities that were undertaken at the Centre. These included counseling of inmates and skills training in vocational courses. Greater focus was however placed on skills training as a rehabilitation tool than on counseling services. Counseling services at the centre were often left to church leaders rather than professional counselors. This was attributed to the scarcity of trained professionals at the centre. There were however evidence of equipped training centres to help inmates acquire critical employable skills.

87% of the juveniles had had basic education before they were brought to the centre. Provisions were also made for them to further their studies in public senior high schools located in close proximity to the rehabilitation centre. About 13% of the inmates were taking advantage of this school arrangement program at the time this study was conducted.

**Enrollment in Vocational Training**

All inmates regardless of their access to education engaged in one form of vocational training at the centre. There are about 13 different vocational training programs available to inmates at the centre. These include bead making, carpentry, auto-mechanic training, plumbing, tailoring and sewing etc. Six months after incarceration, inmates are supposed to be enrolled on a program of their choice. This research however revealed that 40% were yet to be enrolled in the program they desired. Only 42 (45%) of the inmates were enrolled in a program of their choice. Meanwhile 8% were not eligible for training and 7% were not interested in learning any vocation even though they were eligible. Figure 3 depicts these facts.

Another point of interest was the fact that from Table 2, over 70% of the inmates were not living under the care of their parents prior to arrest. This was further explained by the revelation that majority, 92.6% of inmates who were living under the care of their parents prior to their admission into the correctional home felt they passed through due process to be admitted. Whereas, majority, 80.6% of those who were not living with their parents hinted that they did not have a fair or due process of admission to the centre.



**Fig. 3:** Enrolment in vocational training available to inmate

**Table 2:** Association between Living with parents prior to arrest and subjection to due process of admission into correctional facility

Living with parents before admission	Due Process of Admission into correctional facility		$\chi^2$ value	p-value
	Yes	No		
Yes	25(92.6%)	2(7.4%)	192	0.00
No	13(19.4%)	54(80.6%)		

Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ ,  $df = 1$ . Percentages in parentheses indicate row percentages

### Challenges of Rehabilitation

In multiple response options presented to the inmates with respect to the challenges they face during their rehabilitation, 91.5% of all the inmates pointed to congestion in the centre. Again, 67% and 64.9% respectively identified inadequate training materials and inadequate training course options as a key challenge. Many of the inmates 41.5% also desired support from their families and believed their rehabilitation would be facilitated by tangible support and visits by their families. About 10% of the inmates also identified bullying by senior inmates as a major challenge to their rehabilitation. Table 3 summarizes the challenges identified by the inmates.

Counselling and guidance service are critical to the rehabilitation of delinquent juveniles. Findings indicate that, 98% of the inmates had access to these services at the correctional centre while 2% voluntarily refused to get themselves involved. Reports from inmates also describe counselling sessions as sermons and teachings from the Bible which were largely Christian in nature. This may present a challenge given that not all the inmates were Christian. There were however reports of other avenues through which the inmates received guidance and counselling. These included private talk sessions which they described as advice from their instructors and also some sessions held by external non-governmental agencies and other private organizations. Figure 4 depicts avenues of guidance and counselling services available to them at the correctional centre.

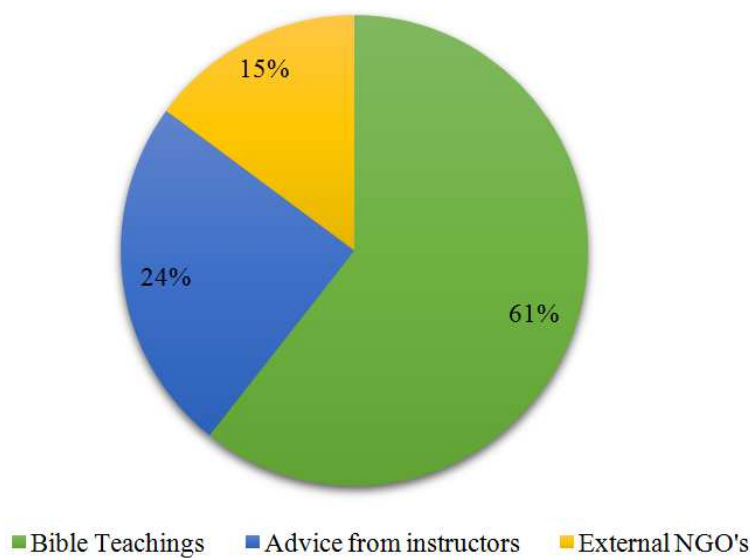


Fig. 4: Inmate perceived sources of Guidance and counseling Available at the Juvenile Correctional Facility

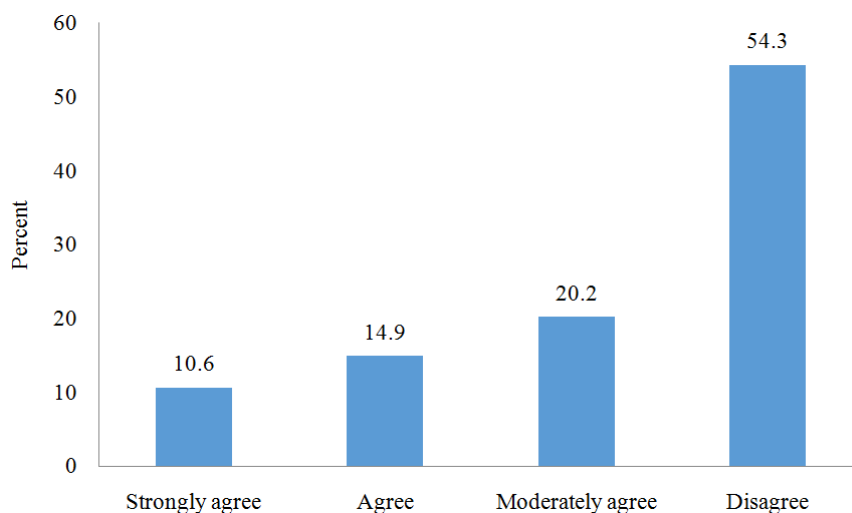


Fig. 5: Inmate perception of their character improvement since their admission into the facility

**Table 3:** Some common challenges to rehabilitation identified by inmates

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage %
Congestion	86	91.5
Inadequate training options	61	64.9
Inadequate training materials	63	67.0
Lack of family support	39	41.5
Other(s)	10	10.6

Source: Field Work, 2016

### *Perceived Behavior Change Over-Time*

Majority of the respondents (54.3%) expressed total disagreement with the statement, "My character has been tamed for the period I have stayed in the correctional home". However, there were some 25% of the inmates who showed some level of agreement that their characters had been significantly improved as a result of being in the correctional home. Figure 5 displays the degree of inmate perception of their rehabilitation since their admission into the correctional centre.

### **Discussion**

The study revealed that even though the Correctional Centre was meant for persons between the ages of 17 and 21, the ages of the inmates were not in congruent with these requirements. While about 94% of the inmates were 15 years of age, there were quite a few who were beyond the legal age limit. These were essentially inmates who had been admitted into the institute as juveniles and had grown out of the age criterion but were yet to complete their rehabilitation process. This suggest that, rehabilitating adolescent groups (those below 15 years) is easier as compared to adult groups (those above 18 years) because the adolescents listen and always imitate what the seniors (models) do but that is not the case with adult delinquents because the adults are rigid to the advice from the care-takers. It is from such background that adult juveniles largely remain a challenge to rehabilitation process.

Religion appears to be an important tool in the rehabilitation of the inmates especially in the area of guidance and counselling. Majority (74%) of the inmates identified themselves as Christians and the rest were Muslims (26%). It is established that counselling is an important tool used in bringing discipline among juvenile delinquents in the rehabilitation process. It gives them confidence to believe that there are people who care about them. It was however of concern to note that these counseling services were often offered by non-professionals. While the role of religion in the rehabilitation process cannot be over-emphasized, there should also be some level of professionalism. This is especially true given that, the guidance and counselling sessions were often skewed toward Christianity although a significant number of Muslims were present.

Juvenile offenders are supposed to be handled differently from adult offenders. Unfortunately, these children reported being handled as though they were adults. Many of the inmates perceived the process of their incarceration as a form of humiliation and societal rejection which made them feel like criminals rather than persons meant for reformation. This is a complete violation of the rights and privileges of the Juveniles because they are considered to be people who cannot make choices and are not fully aware of their actions. The study observed that a number of the juvenile inmates had developed a negative attitude towards the correctional home despite efforts by care-takers to make it as close to home as possible. It could be inferred from their attitude that, they had little confidence in the system of rehabilitation which was meant to train, change behaviour and reduce offences. It must be noted that rehabilitation of young offenders is very important because it is the basis of reintegration into the community when they are out of the correctional home. As a result, loss of confidence in the system and improper rehabilitation increases the likelihood of recidivism by juvenile delinquents.

It was also of interest to note that, approximately 65% of the inmates indicated regret for the offenses which got them incarcerated. However, about 5% of the inmates at the Centre indicated some resentment towards those who through their actions had led to their confinement and guaranteed some sort of revenge after they had secured their release. The possible explanation could be a failure of the rehabilitation process by implication which is supposed to positively reformed juvenile delinquents. It rather leaves them worse off and they become more threat to the society when they are released. As a consequence, a successful rehabilitation plan and program is very critical for delinquent children in the correctional centres.

In addition, findings from the study indicated challenges in rehabilitating the juveniles at the senior correctional centre. These challenges affect both the care-takers and the juveniles. To begin with, the vocational training program intended to equip inmates with employable skills during their confinement, is often carried out over a shorter period of time than it was initially intended to be. For example, vocational skills

such as sewing, plumbing, fitting, bead making, carpentry, tailoring etc. are typically taught over a four year period in a normal educational curriculum. These inmates despite their obvious disadvantage are usually taught over a much shorter period of time. They may then be unable to gain the mastery over the skill required to secure employment after release due to inadequate training. However, many juvenile delinquents stand high risk of becoming criminals in their adulthood (Boakye, 2013). Moreover, not all the inmates were enrolled in a vocational program of their choice during the period of this study, although this was a provision made by the law. For example, 45% of the inmates had been enrolled on a program of their choice while 40% of the eligible inmates had not been enrolled onto the program of their choice. Also, 8% of them were ineligible because they were not due while 7% of the inmates had no interest in any of the available programs. A significant number, constituting 40% of the inmates had not been enrolled because of the absence of resources, a matter which calls for attention. It can be argued that, those who were legible but were not willing to learn any trade believed that, they needed to acquire their own values and learn from peers rather than learning the required societal norms and values expected of them.

Furthermore, the lack of human resources has been another challenge observed amidst increasing number of juvenile admissions received daily. This has led the officers at the Centre to elect juvenile delinquents to be in charge of working groups and dormitories where juveniles sleep. These selected leaders often maltreat and beat their fellow juveniles and this has created hatred and conflicts among inmates at the Centre. This often breeds an atmosphere of tension mistrust and violence. The anti-social behaviors of juveniles have remained a major challenge not only to the care-takers involved in rehabilitating juveniles but to some of their fellow juveniles. It was perceived by some inmates (85%) that some of their juvenile peers had remained "un-tamed" because of their prolonged stay on the streets prior to admission. Coupled with the fact that, they have lost hope in their lives and some juveniles have incorrigible characters. Some instructors appeared to support this claim when they described rowdy and often violent behaviors exhibited by such inmates at night time. However, some 5% of the inmates opposed the view that such behavior ever occurred in the correctional centre.

Additionally, the study also identified congestion as one of the major challenges of rehabilitation in the country. Majority of the respondents constituting 56.4% were of the opinion that the rooms in the Centre were congested. The respondents noted that they were felt crowded into some rooms. They also complained on unhygienic behaviours such as urination into mattresses by some of their peers. They perceived this as a probable

cause of worsening cases of communicable diseases in the centre. It was also observed that younger inmates were not separated from older and sometimes more hardened ones. The fear here is that the juveniles may leave the correctional home as hardened criminals.

Once more, locating and contacting the parents and guardians of children at the correctional institute has been a long standing issue, particularly with children from the streets. Care-takers at the centre revealed that some juveniles do not tell the truth about their background especially when the admission process did not involve their parents or relatives. This has contributed to their long stay at the centre with some exceeding the age limit as earlier mentioned. Care-takers also explained that some parents and relatives place the full burden of the rehabilitation of their wards on the institution while doing very little themselves to support the program. Many of these parents and guardians, according to the care-takers are not economically stable and this presents a challenge when the time comes for their wards to be discharged. This is in tandem with the findings of Burrell and Roosa (2009) that, economic hardships creates stressful family environments which lead to adolescent problem behaviours such as stealing and hanging out with gangs. They then tend to see the home environment as hostile because of their negative behavior and consequent disciplinary actions meted out by their parents.

Baergg and Hoffman (2011) argue that, the management of juvenile justice is still plagued with many problems regardless of the fact that Ghana has faced a lot of development. The inmates are of the view that there is no particular agency responsible for juvenile criminology. This is probably because the Juvenile Justice Act has failed to authorize any department with such an obligation. The failure of the justice system to address the special needs of the children places the juveniles at risk and deny the protection of their rights and welfare. They also alluded to the fact that the system is bedeviled with ineffective administration and management of the courts. There is for instance no proper scheduling established to ensure that the cases of these children are handled justly. Proper communication has also been previously described as a challenge between the departments, agencies and ministries responsible for juvenile justice in Ghana. Again, unavailability of public legal aid particularly for young offenders was challenging (Baa-Ang, 2012). This is a complete violation of the rights and privileges of the Juveniles because they are considered to be people who cannot make choices and are not fully aware of their actions.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

Rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents by the Ghanaian justice system is strewn with a number of



challenges and difficulties. The juvenile justice system leaves a lot to be desired per the assessment of this study, in its mission to make these children valuable members of the society after their release. While much of the problems and challenges identified in this study were based on the reports of inmates and care-takers, the perceptions of these individuals concerning their situation is the most important factor in their hoped rehabilitation. In particular, their negative views about improvements in their behavior and their general lack of satisfaction and confidence in the rehabilitation system cannot be ignored simply because their assessment may be subjective. It points to the weaknesses in the existing rehabilitation program and stresses the need to immediately initiate policies and strategies to improve the program.

Based on the findings discussed in this study, it is recommended children caught by the law should go through due process based on the provisions of the Juvenile Act of Ghana, which gives the legal basis for separate and distinct approach for handling children in conflict with the law using welfare approach. Also the best interest of the child should be considered and juvenile matters must be dealt with in a manner that is different from adults. There is the need to educate law enforcement agency such as the police and the wider society on the rights of children to promote children's access to fair justice when a juvenile is caught with the law before detention. It will help understand the kind of treatment given to children when incarcerated and address offending behavior.

More so, there is the need for the government to refurbish the center to full capacity. This should involve both infrastructure and personnel development. This is especially pressing in the case of professional counselors who are essential in the rehabilitation process of juvenile delinquents. Again the quality of educational, vocational training and rehabilitation programs should be improved by introducing training and programs relevant to their needs. Adequate funds should be made available to meet the basic needs of children in the correctional centres such as food, clothing and many more.

Not all juveniles should be taken to RCs. Juveniles who do not pose a threat to public safety, should be better punished through community services. Thus, there is the need to re-introduce community sanctions and punishment by chiefs or keen leaders in the various communities instead of taking them to the courts and rehabilitation centres. Some of the offences can be handled at this level, thus relieving the courts of long pending cases and easing the problem of congestion in the prisons and rehabilitation centres. Placing children in a remand home, Junior Correctional Centres or Senior Correctional Centre should be resort to only for children who have committed serious offences such as defilement

or violence and in cases of recidivism. Even though custodial placements are sometimes proper and necessary, children feel marginalized and stigmatized if they are taking away from their parents.

## Acknowledgement

I thank all the respondents who participated in this study and also I sincerely appreciate the efforts, patience and valuable insights from my friends George, Pascal and Eurydice.

## Authors Contribution

**Efua Esaaba Mantey:** Conception and design, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting of article and writing the discussions, review of article.

**George Dzetor:** Helped with the design, acquisition of data and interpretation of data, drafting of article and the final review of article.

## Ethics

The necessary steps to ensure that procedures involving ethics in research were observed such as:

*Informed consent:* Participants in the study participated based on their own willingness and they were free to opt out of the study at any time they felt like doing so.

*Child assent:* The Correctional Home's consent was sought before interviewing the children.

*Confidentiality:* Participants were assured of confidentiality and information retrieved from the participants was kept confidential. Three ways through which I did this was that, firstly interviews were conducted at a time and place of convenience. Secondly, audio taped information was locked with a password to avoid second party access. Thirdly, the identity of participants were concealed.

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