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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### ASSESSMENT OF MARITAL VISITATION CHALLENGES OF MARRIED COUPLES DURING IMPRISONMENT AT SODO CORRECTIONAL CENTRE, WOLAITA ZONE, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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#### Abstract

Correctional centers are admitting prisoners with reformatory and rehabilitative services to make attitudinal and behavioral changes. Nevertheless, the rising number of prisoners makes correctional centers the place to learn more sophisticated crimes and prisons as industrial complexes. In visitation programs, the role of spouses is essential to maintaining marital relationships among prisoners and their spouses. However, very little research has been conducted on the challenges of imprisoned married couples during marital visitation. This study was aimed to assess marital visitation challenges of married couples during imprisonment at Sodo correctional center. The study employed mixed research methods. The research employed cross-sectional and case study research designs. Thus, the research employed purposive and simple random sampling techniques for data collection. The collected data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research found prisoners' were emotionally satisfied from marital visitations which continue and strengthening marital relationship during imprisonment. The pattern of frequency of visitation shows that the mostly visited prisoners by their spouses had high emotional attachments. But, marital visitation was continuously encountered by various problems, such as a lack of space for mass visitation, the absence of a private room for marital visitation, overcrowding of visitors, less time given for visitation, and lack of privacy to discuss marital issues, which hampered the effectiveness of visitation programs. Therefore, the limitations of the visitation procedure necessitate a high level of commitment from the concerned body, unless the prison system will continue to be the source of social dysfunction.

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#### Introduction:-

Marital communication has a significant role during imprisonment in the rehabilitation process of prisoners. Keeping marital relations with a prisoner through visitation is also the most vital aspect of marital stability (Arditti, 2020). Prisoners, children, spouses, friends, and relatives used visitation as a means of strengthening marital relationships (Ajayi, 2012). According to Arditti (2003) family support during imprisonment is an essential issue that receives little consideration in society even though the greatest factors to change the correctional system and continue marital relationships. The underlying principles of imprisonment are to punish the wrongdoer, protect society from anti-social behavior, and facilitate the rehabilitation of the inmate (Bales & Mears, 2008). The main

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functions of correctional centers implement the conveyance of prisoners in accordance of law (Agnew, 2013). Thus, prisoners serve in prison until the completion of their trial. The length of punishment involved in the prisoners' loss of freedom in social, emotional, economic, and physical isolation from their spouses, family, and community (Arditti, 2020). The existing prison literature demonstrated that wrongdoers' treatment and rehabilitation processes have been criticized by international organizations, researchers, and the media due to the disrespect of human rights, incompatible prison situations for prisoners, and perception of the necessity for a penal complex (Ajayi, 2012). Despite, the role of spouses is the most important part of maintaining marital relationships and interaction among prisoners and their spouses' through visitation program. However, insufficient research has been conducted on the challenges of imprisoned married couples during marital visitation (Gulilat, 2012). Slight research has been conducted so far to suggest that the visitation process is sometimes less than ideal and correctional institutions also block the visitation process, depending on the nature of their visitation policies in the application (Duran, Potter & Rosen, 2013).

The recent decades global social dynamics with unprecedented growth of the prison population have produced societal dysfunction (Christie, 2000 & Garland, 2001). Prisons tend to inflict a wide range of harm on prisoners and their spouses. These include the worsening of physical and mental health problems (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015), the disruption of romantic love and marital relationships (Siennick, Stewart, & Staff, 2014), and exposure to violence and victimization (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). Correctional center assumed as the most comprehensive social control and regulation tool for the rehabilitation of wrongdoers in the justice system (Clear, 2008). However, the contentious nature of deterrence, retribution, rehabilitation and reformatory programs making correctional systems highly visible and inspect societal safety. According to Cochran and Mears (2013), visitation bridge the gap between prison and home, further strengthen and maintain supportive ties to others. These ties can provide emotional and instrumental support through expressions of love, encouragement, and active listening. Prisoners visitation programs are claimed to help inmates, friends, and family members maintain communication throughout the imprisonment period (Monroe, 2008).

Theoretically the research followed eclectic approach to understand different aspect marital visit through married couples during imprisonment. The research employed three essential theories; attachment theory, the theory of total institution and the criminological theory of rehabilitation and restorative justice. Accordingly, the research was pursued an integrated approach of criminological and sociological theories to get an understanding of how prisoners' relationships with their partners affect their mental health. These theories of the study consider the structure, process, and experience of visitation. Attachment theory, as described by its founder John Bowlby, originated from his explanation an infant's wellbeing may negatively affected by separations from primary caregiver (Bowlby, 1973). Attachment relationships provide the context for the progress of mental representations of self (Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2008) and attachment control between wanting intimacy and distance within relationships (Borelli *et al.*, 2011). Attachment theory has been used to understand and describe relationship processes across the life span. While initially focusing on normative relationship processes, the ways related to significant others and regulation of emotion during times of stress (Snyder, Carlo & Mullins, 2001). Based on such premise, the theory guides the study that, the restrictive environment inherent in prison settings severely limits accessibility and interactions of prisoners and their spouses. The research at hand had considered attachment theory to understand and explain emotional attachment of prisoners and their spouses during imprisonment. On the other hand, the fundamental issues of the theory of total institution assumption protect society from potential harm to its members (Jones & Fowles, 2008; Ellis, 2021).

The concept of total institution has been employ in penological study. Thus, person with deviant behavior separated from wider society by distance based on laws and protections. From sociological point of view, prisons centers as to total institutions theory, serve the purpose of rehabilitation. The concept of total institution is best articulated by Michel Foucault's work on total institutions, which was later well articulated by Goffman. He examines the dichotomy between agency and social structure. The total institutions are separated from the rest of society by physical attributes, with high walls, barbed wire fences, and locked doors. As a result, they are blocked from the social systems that require both permission to enter, leave, and exist to re-socialize people into changing their new identities and roles (Ellis, 2021). Furthermore, the theory of forwarding dimensions of rehabilitation through which a person goes through strips them of the individual and collective identities they had on the outside and gives them a new identity that makes them a part of the inside of the institution (Adlam *et al.*, 2013). The rules and regulations with standard issues of the institution's new identity are a stigmatized status relative to the outside world and those who enforce the rules of the institution (Ellis, 2021). Thus, this theory gives insight to correctional centers from

visitation areas, reasonableness of rules, ability to pass through security, prison services for visitors, rehabilitation program and time together. In the view of correctional institution considered criminological theories of rehabilitation and restoration. Therefore, the behavior changes come through education, vocational programs and psychotherapy as treatments (Siennick, Stewart, & Staff, 2014; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015).

A number of correctional institution studies have been conducted in Africa's western and southern regions, with emphasis on prisoner-family relationships, experiences of inmates in prisons, and rehabilitation, growth in the prison population and social impact, prisoners' handling, prisoner health, and positive and negative experiences of ex-prisoners' transition into society (Mkhize, 2003). Likewise, few correctional center research has been conducted in the eastern part of Africa, such as, prison population growth in line with prison health deterioration, prisoner-family relations, rehabilitation, and correctional center management with regard to human rights during imprisonment (Jefferson & Martin, 2014; Duba, 2016). As compared to western and southern parts of Africa's correctional centers, the researchers gave little consideration to prison investigation in the eastern part of Africa on the areas of imprisoned married couple's situation during marital visitation in correctional centers.

Correctional centers, prisoners' marital relationships and marital visitation are some of the research areas that require serious consideration in Ethiopia. It is also one of the areas that has gotten slight consideration (Yimer, 2014 & Duba, 2016). The trend and pattern of correctional research in Ethiopia shows that prison studies have not been significantly studied. From the prior few studies conducted in Ethiopia, most of the correctional center research given emphasizes on the health of prisoners, human rights in prison, and family bound with conjugal visit from a psychological dimension (Gulilat, 2012; Yimer, 2014 & Duba, 2016). In same way, Begashaw, Mekiso and Legesse (2016) researchers focused on the areas of prisoners' health condition in Sodo prison institution. The preceding research thematically focused on health, legal, and psychological issues. Most of the previous studies conducted in the area of marital relations and prison visitation are methodologically monolithic in which either quantitative or qualitative approaches are orientated (Gulilat, 2012; Jefferson & Martin, 2014; Yimer, 2014; Duba, 2016; Begashaw, Mekiso & Legesse, 2016). The research at hand was not addressing the research problems through a single research approach but rather an integrated approach. The dimensions of the research approach considered the challenges of imprisoned married couples during marital visitation at correctional centers not only originated from individual aspects, but institutional and structural problems should be addressed by an eclectic approach. The study thematically considered social, ethical, emotional, and institutional elements. Methodologically, consider mixed research from objective and subjective aspects of the study problems. Hence, there is almost no research investigation conducted on the challenges of imprisoned married couples during marital visitation at Sodo correctional center. Therefore, the research at hand addressed this research gap through revealing marital visitation challenges of married couples during imprisonment at Sodo correctional center. Thus, the research evaluated the practice of marital visitation by prisoners and their spouses. Next, the study examined the association between prisoners' visitation frequency of spouses and the length of sentences. Subsequently, the research gave a detailed description of the challenges of marital attachment during imprisonment for prisoners and their spouses. Then, the research examined the relationship between years of imprisonment and the emotional attachment of prisoners and their spouses. Finally, the research identified the type of rehabilitation program established for prisoners in Sodo correctional center.

### **Methodology of The Study:-**

In the search and production of knowledge the primary issue is assertion of the research paradigm of the study. It is essential to reflect research philosophical orientations of the inquiries as a foundation. Accordingly, the research at hand addressed the subjective and objective explanation of the research drawing from pragmatic paradigm as a worldview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, the researcher looked at a pragmatic paradigm attributable to investigation through pluralistic approaches. The research was permitted mixed methods to study the behavior of participants, the belief systems behind those behaviors, and the outcomes that are likely to follow from different behaviors (Kothari, 2004).

### **Research Design**

Research design provides an appropriate framework for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in the analysis based on the objective of the research. According to Kothari (2004), research design is the foundation for the entire structure of the research study. The research employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The quantitative approach employed cross-sectional research design to provide a numerical description of trends and attitudes of prisoners to infer the study population (Babbie, 2021). According to Dawson (2002), cross-

sectional research design is one that attempts to explain a situation systematically and gives and describes attitudes towards an issue. Whereas, the qualitative approach employs case study as a research design to understand personal experiences in marital relations influenced by the imprisonment of spouses (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Accordingly, a case study used as a qualitative study design helps the researcher to gather detailed in-depth data from multiple experiences through in-depth interviews with informants. Therefore, multiple case studies were used to find out the various problems that affect marital visitation during imprisonment (Creswell, 2009).

### **Participants of the Study**

The participants of the research were selected from Sodo correctional center. The respondents of the study were prisoners who spent a year or more in the correction center, who were married with children and without children; spouses of prisoners; and staff members from the correction institution. Rationalization for the choice of respondents' year of detention was more than a year in jail because prisoners who served less than a year in penal complexes have a better chance of visitation, communicate with their spouses and they were fresh for imprisonment. The research used both probable and non-probable sampling techniques. The research employed purposive, accidental sampling and simple random sampling techniques of the study. According to Camic, Rhodes & Yardley (2002) sampling strategy give advantage for the researcher becomes open to sampling both unimprison spouses and imprison prisoners. Thus, key informants were selected purposefully to obtain relevant information about prisoner-spouses relationships and identify policy issues that needed further concern from stakeholders. Informants of in-depth interviews were selected through accidental samplings due to the short time given for visitors of spouses, the willingness of spouses, the issue of selecting marital condition, infrequent males' visitation of their imprisoned spouses, and unplanned interviews. The respondents for the survey were selected from the study population by using Yamane's (1973) formula  $n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$ . Thus, the sample size of the research for the survey was determined as  $n = 869 / 1 + 869(0.05)^2 = 274$ . This formula was considered at a 95% level of confidence and a 5% margin of error. The respondents of the pilot test were excluded from the study, which was selected using simple random sampling from the sample frame.

### **Methods of Data Collection:-**

The research data was collected by using quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. A survey was employed to check the relationships between variables, ensure representation of different types of experience, and enable the researcher to describe the study problem. On the other hand, in-depth, key informant interviews and FGD were employed because they were appropriate for the collection of qualitative data in naturally setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research employed both primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary data were gathered from prisoners, unimprison spouses, and staff members. Secondary sources were used to conceptualize the study by reviewing literature such as books, journals, articles, proclamations, reports, and empirical research. Before collecting data, all major stakeholders are asked their consent for ethical approval.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

The research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The collected data about the practice of marital visitation was analyzed using frequency and percentage. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis ensures years of sentence and frequency of visiting by spouse and years of imprisoned and emotional attachment. The analysis used Statistical Package for Social Science software (SPSS). Qualitative data was analyzed and transcribed by using thematic and narrative data analysis based on the objective of the study. Thematic analyses assisted in identifying numerous cross references between the data involved in the research in different themes (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The analysis of qualitative data employed the selected voice of the informant quoted to support the presentation of the findings. Research validity was observed through construct validity. Whereas, the research reliability assured through Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 internal constancy. Moreover, the Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES III) were used to reshuffle the questionnaire and items were assured of their reliability. Accordingly, the issue of time and motivation of the respondent, the appropriateness of the place for interview, making good rapport with respondents, pilot test, and researcher error were also taken into consideration.

### **Findings**

#### **Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Study**

This section of the finding summarized socio-demographic information was essential to describe the characteristics of research respondents. The research finding presents by using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics used correlation. Before the analysis of the data proceeds, valid and invalid questionnaire codes are identified. From 274,

263 valid response rates and 11 invalid response rates. Thus, the research findings were summarized through the 263 valid response rates of the study.

The number of survey respondents was 263. 86.3% were male and 13.7% were female incarcerated spouses. The prisoners age plummeted under the interval of 23-29 were 18.6%; 30-36 shared 35.7%; and 37-43 of them were 24.7% respectively. The majority of the prisoners are categorized as youths. Marital status of respondents were 83.65% married with children, 13.30% married without children, and 3.04% of them were married with children but divorced after the charge. Regarding to educational level of the respondents, 9.12% of them have a degree or above, followed by 6.4% of them having a college diploma, 4.6% certificate, 39.5% secondary school, 728.1% primary school, and 12.1% can't read and write. Accordingly, the majority of the prisoners was in secondary or primary school and couldn't read or write. The occupational status of the respondents prior to imprisonment of 263, 15.58% were government employees, 3.06% of them NGO employees, 21.29% of them merchants, 40.3% were farmers, and 19.7% were private employees. Thus, majority of research participants' occupational status were farmers, merchants, and private employees of the study participant. Regarding family origin, 69.5% of prisoners were from rural families, followed by 30.4% of those whose families originated from urban areas. It could be understood that the majority of the prisoner's family originated from the rural area, as compared to the urban area.

The maximum years of sentence of the respondents was lifelong, which accounted for 14 (5.32%) and the minimum years of sentence 3 years, reported 49 (18.63%) of the respondents. The average sentence was found to be 10.5 years. According to demographic data, the highest years of sentenced individuals were committed the following crimes: attempt to death, murder, armed robbery, arson, stealing, rape, and abduction; the rest were insolent, adjacent conflict with the neighborhood and others. The range of years imprisoned in penal complexes was a minimum of 2 year, 4.5 averages, and 19 maximum years imprisoned. The prisoners who have 3-10 family members take the largest share, which accounts for 214 (81.38%), 17 (6.46%) of them have more than 10 family members and 32 (12.3%) of them married with children. In this regard, one the minimum, 20 the maximum, and five was the average family size of the respondents.

### **The Practice of Marital Visitation among Inmates and their Spouses**

The researcher would present the practice of marital visitation to imprisoned respondents about their spouses and prison institutions. The practice of marital visitation measured through cycles and frequency of visit, time spent during visitation, satisfaction from visitation, and problems observed during visitation which assures marital continuity for both prisoners and their spouses.

**Table 1:-** Cycles and Frequency of Marital Visitation to Prisoners.

<b>Visitation pattern</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Never visited	8	3.0
1-4 yearly	69	26.2
Once in month	88	33.5
Once in two week	43	16.3
Once in a week	38	14.4
More once in week	12	4.6
Daily	5	1.9
Total	263	100.0

As table 1 shows, 8 (3.0%) of the respondents were never visited by their spouses, while 69 (26.2%) of them visited 1-4 yearly, 88 (33.5%) were visited once a month, 43 (16.3%) once every two weeks, 38 (14.4%) once a week, and 12 (4.6%) more than once a week, and 5 (1.9%) daily visited. The one who never visited was divorced after the charge. Likewise, spouses of prisoners through in-depth interviews also confirmed that long-term spouses of prisoners faced problems such as; remoteness of residence area from correctional center; the role shift of the remaining spouses' responsibilities, and financial hardship were mostly observed consequences to decrease the frequency of marital visitation.

**Table 2:- Time Spent during Marital Visitation.**

<b>Time spent during marital visitation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Less than 15 Minutes	1	0.4
15-25 Minutes	52	19.8
25-45 Minutes	197	74.9
45-60 Minutes	4	1.5
More than one hour	9	3.4
Total	263	100.0

As indicated in table 2, from 263, 1 (0.4%) of them spent less than 15 minutes, 52 (19.8%) of them spent 15-25 minutes, 197 (74.9%) 25-45 minutes, 4 (1.5%) 45-60 minutes, and 9 (3.4%) of them spent more than one hour with their spouses and 26 minutes an average time spent during marital visitation in correctional center. Likewise, qualitative data through observation and in-depth interviews confirmed that male prisoners were more likely to be visited by their spouses and family members as compared to female prisoners. In principle, time spent during marital visits is regularly allowed for 30 minutes from a correctional institution. Nevertheless, qualitative data collected from spouses of prisoners through in-depth interviews confirmed that some prisoners used more than the official time allowed if they had good relations with the coordinators of marital visits and the chairman of the prisoners. In contrast, survey respondents, those who spent less than 15 minutes, have the problem of marital relationships among prisoners and their spouses. The rest of the respondents participating in marital visits through official time allowed for 30 minutes.

The research at hand found marital satisfaction from visitation one of the variables which assured marital continuity. Accordingly, data collected through survey shows that 250 (95.1%) respondents replied that they have gotten emotional satisfaction from marital visitation, whereas 13 (4.9%) respondents did not get emotional satisfaction from the visit. Likewise, among the prisoners participating in marital visitation, 238 (90.5%) express love to their spouses and family, and 25 (9.5%) do not express love to visiting spouses. Those who do not express love for their spouses during visitation because some of them are divorced and have marital relationship problems. In terms of future enhancements and attention paid to marital visits from prison institutions, 250 (95.1%) respondents favored the enhancement of marital visits from correctional institutions to preserve marital stability, followed by 13 (4.9%) respondents who preferred the existing circumstance. In line with this, 252 (95.81%) of the respondents said the correctional center should arrange more freedom and space for prisoners and their spouses, while the rest, 11 (4.19%), are satisfied with the current situation. Qualitative data from an in-depth interview described the situation of marital visitation in correctional institutions:

During marital visiting, the coordinators forced us to live in the place for another round after 30 minutes. But, we are in deep emotion with my husband discussing our family's future. The coordinators of visitation interrupted our discussion, and it was disappointing. I would have no chance of frequent visitation of my husband due to the remoteness of our residence area and economic adversity. As a result, if the government values marriage, family, and societal continuity, the time allotted for marital visits should be reviewed by a competent body (In-depth interview, 31, Female).

**Table 3:- Problems Observed During Marital Visit.**

<b>Observed problems</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Overcrowding of visitors	30	11.4
Less time together	123	46.8
Difficulty to talk about family issue	50	19.0
No room for only married couples	60	22.8
Total	263	100.0

As table 3 indicated, mostly observed problems during marital visitation less time together, absence of private room program for married couples, difficulty in talking family issues, and overcrowding of visitors respectively. The research also examine facilities availability from 263, 256 (97.3%) of the survey respondents' correctional facilities were not fulfilled during their visit, while 7 (2.7%) of the respondents' correctional facilities were satisfied by

existing condition. Likewise, qualitative findings also confirmed the problems observed during visitation and explained:

I have been visiting my husband once a week because I miss him all the time. During my visitation I have seen a number of problems, such as the absence of a private room for married couples, overcrowding, it is hard to discuss marital issues, and less time given. These circumstances challenge the interaction between husband and wife in prison (**In-depth Interview, 28, Female**).

Hence, both quantitative and qualitative study findings imply that maintaining marital relations during imprisonment through visitation has a significant impact on prisoners and their spouses. Moreover, a key informant who is a social worker in a correctional institution said that:

Despite the fact that Sodo correctional **institution** permits visitation from Monday up to Sunday throughout the week to reduce overcrowding of visitors, participating in visitation during **holiday** is unthinkable due to overcrowding and the place being unable to hold prisoners and their spouses. As a result, prisoners with spouses and families are forced to sit on the grass to share **holiday** celebrations (**Key Informant, Male, 32**).

### The Association between Frequency of Visitation and Years of Sentence on Prisoners

The relationship between variables examined using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis and interpreted. According to Ratner (2014), a correlation Values between 0 and 0.3 (0 and -0.3) indicate a weak positive (negative) linear relationship, and values between 0.3 and 0.7 (-0.3 and -0.7) indicate a moderate positive (negative) linear relationship, and values between 0.7 and 1.0 (-0.7 and -1.0) indicate a strong positive (negative) linear relationship via a firm linear rule.

**Table 5:-** Correlation Length of Sentence and Frequency of Marital Visitation.

Correlations		Years of Sentence	Frequency of Visit by Spouse
Length of Sentence	Pearson Correlation	1	-.179**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	263	263
Visitation Frequency by Spouse	Pearson Correlation	-.179**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	263	263

As the above table 5 show that, the calculated value of Pearson correlation coefficient is  $r = -.179^{**}$  ( $p < .05$ ,  $N = 263$ ). Accordingly, the lengths of a prison sentence increase, the frequency of marital visitation decreases from imprisonment spouses.

### Correlation of Years of Imprisoned and Emotional Attachment

The relationship between years of imprisoned and emotional attachment variables was examined by the assumption of Pearson product-moment correlation analysis.

**Table 6:-** Correlation Years of Imprisoned and Emotional Attachment.

Correlations		Years of Imprisoned	Emotional Attachment
Years of Imprisoned	Pearson Correlation	1	-.123*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.047
	N	263	263
Emotional Attachment	Pearson Correlation	-.123*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
	N	263	263

As indicated in the above table 6, years of imprisonment and emotional attachment were negatively correlated. The calculated value of the Pearson correlation coefficient shows that  $r = -.123^*$  ( $p < .05$ ,  $N = 263$ ). Therefore, years of

imprisoned increase, the emotional attachment of spouses decreases. Therefore, the length of years spent in prison shorter the more prisoners attached, whereas the number of years spent long term is emotionally detached from the incarcerated spouse. Similarly, qualitative findings demonstrate that the imprisonment of a spouse for long periods which affects the emotional wellbeing of prisoners and their spouses.

I took the children to visit my husband in prison with the hope of calming down the mental stress of the offspring, but they are always crying, not eating, and they are always visiting hospital. Just now I am confused that the children always want to see their father, but I can't (In-depth Interview, 30, Female).

### **The Challenges of Imprisonment on Marital Attachment among Prisoners and Spouses**

The attitude of prisoners toward the effects of imprisonment on marital relationships and emotional attachment was important variables of the study. The analysis also focused on marital relations and emotional attachment among prisoners and spouses. The prisoner's attitudes towards items were analyzed by using a likert scale in which the assumptions (FACES III) were taken into consideration. Concerning the response level of agreement 1 (strongly disagree) and 2 (disagree) had a less negative impact of imprisonment and high marital attachment, whereas 3 (agree) and 4 (strongly agree) had a high negative impact of imprisonment with less family attachment, which caused marital dysfunction. The collected data was computed and analyzed by using the average score of the following two variables.

**Table 7:-** Challenges of Imprisonment on Marital Attachment among Prisoners and Spouses.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean Score of items</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Below average</b>
Marital relation	3.26	194(73.7%)	69 (26.3%)
Emotional attachment	3.25	188(72%)	75(28%)

This section of the study findings considered how marital relationships and emotional attachments are challenged during imprisonment. As the data in table 7 shows, the respondents felt the elongation of prison stay influenced marital relationships due to less time together. Consequently, imprisoned spouses felt that their spouses might separate and affect their involvement in marital issues. In this regard, 3.26 are the mean score of the marital relationship. Thus, out of 263 respondents, 69 (26.3%) of them were below the average score, whereas 194 (73.7%) of the respondents scored above the average. Therefore, the majority of imprisoned spouses felt that their spouses might separate and imprisonment distress marital relations. The average scores of the items within emotional attachment of inmates with their spouses; from 263 respondents 75 (28%) of them were below the average that the respondents were less emotional detachment, whereas, 188 (71.4%) were agreed that, they were high emotional detachment from their spouses due to the restrain nature of correctional institution. Thus, some of the emotional problems that affect the wellbeing of imprisoned spouses are identified by the research. For instance, prisoners felt that denial of sexual relationships with their spouses decreased love for their spouses. They also experienced infidelity that their spouse might engage with another person and feared breaking up. Even though the prisoners had committed criminal acts, they still sensed love for their spouses. However, denying prisoners' access to their spouses as they were accustomed caused loneliness and depression, affecting their psychological well-being. Similarly, qualitative data from in-depth interviews confirmed that the prisoner's experience of stress and depression increased due to the oppressive nature of the prison institution.

### **The Rehabilitation Program in Correctional Centerfor Prisoners**

Regarding the rehabilitation programs of correctional institutions, the research finding shows that Sodo correctional institutions have been implemented rehabilitation programs. The correction program focuses on two basic issues, such as: changing prisoners' perceptions and engaging them in income-earning activities. Qualitative data collected through field observation confirmed that some of the prisoners were working behind prison walls as regular intervention program at Sodo correctional institutions on the basis of correction and rehabilitation of prisoners. The process of attitudinal adjustment is implemented using marital visitation for the proximity of prisoners to their families, religious practices, and regular education. Some of the requirements in correctional institutions, such as the provisions of adequate basic necessities, prison appropriately staffed with medical officers, maintaining prisoners' access to social and cultural information, allowing the prisoners to receive regular visits from spouses and family members, access to educational and recreational facilities, the right to receive information from news that occurs outside prison, and attending religious services should be fulfilled by the correctional administration (United Nations 2005). Both the Federal Prison Commission establishment proclamation and the treatment of federal prisoners'



council of ministers regulation of Ethiopia given the mandate to correctional institutions should have separate accommodation of prisoners, hereafter TFPCMR article five sub article two and three stated:

Prisoners on death roll shall be separately accommodated from other prisoners. To the extent that circumstances allow: juvenile prisoners under the age of 18 shall have separate accommodations; persons detained upon judicial remand shall have separate accommodations from convicted prisoners; prisoners with records of serious crimes, recidivists and indecent prisoners shall have separate accommodations from other prisoners.

However, the above declaration mandate remained in blueprint in Wolaita Sodo correctional center. Consequently, the prison administration accommodated prisoners in customary manner without separated room. The researcher was made good rapport with the social worker and psychotherapist to understand the intervention program and identified that there is no intervention program designed to address the problems of married couples while one of the spouses imprisoned.

### Discussion:-

Maintaining marital relations during imprisonment through visitation is the most vital aspect in the rehabilitation of prisoners. The basic belief of imprisonment is to punish the wrongdoer, keep society from anti-social behavior, and rehabilitate the prisoners (Bales & Mears, 2008). The study discovered that the practice of marital visitation is not the only reason for stabilizing marital relationships and maintaining marital attachment, however frequency of visits has extraordinary influences in determining marital relationship continuity. Majority of the respondents visited once in two week, once in month and once in a week respectively. Despite the fact that, the restrain nature of correctional institution affects marital relationship of prisoners, the study respondents obtain relief from family and spouses visitation. Accordingly, the research found the practice of marital visitation was essential to emotional wellbeing of prisoners and their spouses. In the same way, the frequency of visitation as factor change behavioral pattern of the prisoners and marital relation (Hairston, 2002; Christian, Mellow & Thomas, 2006; Bales & Mears, 2008). Likewise, qualitative data collected through in depth interview also confirmed that both prisoners and their spouses obtain mental satisfaction and relief from visit while they are discussing marital and family matters. As 36 years old imprisoned husband in detention center for 10 years say: *"when I was visited by my spouses I feel happy because just I feel that psychologically she had been sharing years of sentence with me"*. In line with this, one of the key informants 32 years old, he explain that marital visit is not only helps for psychological stability of the prisoners but also smooth the progress of rehabilitation. Tewksbury and DeMichele (2005) also confirmed that prisoners connection with out side through visitation programs, could greatly reduced prisoners tension, reduce disturbance and deviant behavior. Derksen, Gobeil and Justin (2009) found that visitation programs assist in keeping marital relation during imprisonment. According to Visser, Bakken and Gunter (2013) visitation encourage prisoners to develop and maintain family ties.

The basic facilities of Sodo correctional institution mostly uncomfortable and constrained during marital visitation. Less time together, absence of private room program for married couples, difficulty in talking family issues, and overcrowding of visitors respectively mostly observed problems during marital visitation. The majority 256 (97.3%) of the survey respondents' replies correctional facilities were not adequate during their visit. Likewise, spouses of prisoners through in-depth interview confirmed that time given for marital visitation was not enough. Consistently, less time given for visit, long waits, and remoteness of residence place spouses from correctional institution and economic adversity is not allowed them for frequent visitation. Prison research conducted in Ethiopia confirmed that, time for visitation was not satisfactory for both prisoners and their spouses (Yimer, 2014 & Gulilat, 2012). According to Christian (2005) families of prisoners have a difficult time visiting prisoners although a majority of prisoners from urban areas, most major prisons are located in rural areas far from the city center. However, the situation was different vice versa that correctional institution in Sodo urban area, whereas, spouses of the prisoners mostly come from rural area. In correctional institution the available facility also play significant role during marital visit which facilitate effectiveness of rehabilitation process (Arditti, 2003; Bales & Mears, 2008).

The research was intended to assure the relationship between length of sentence and frequency of marital visitation from imprisoned spouses to the prisoners. The study finding show that the calculated value of Pearson correlation coefficient is  $r = -.179^{**}$  ( $p < .05$ ,  $N = 263$ ). The correlation coefficient indicates negative and inversely relation of length of prison sentence and marital visitation frequency. Thus, the lengths of a prison sentence increase, the frequency of marital visitation decreases from imprisoned spouses. Research studies conducted by Duba (2016); Yimer (2014) and Gulilat (2012) in Ethiopia revealed that long term convicted inmates were more exposed to

vulnerability and decrease of communication pattern. As result, prisoners developed pessimistic attitude towards their families which affected social and psychological wellbeing prisoners. Despite the fact that, correctional center restrain nature of the system challenged the communication pattern, Yimer (2014) research revealed that visitation program play significant role to preserve the wellbeing of both prisoners and their spouses.

The study was addressed the relationship between years of imprisoned and emotional attachment of prisoners. The calculated value of the Pearson correlation coefficient shows that  $r = -.123^* (p < .05, N = 263)$ . Accordingly, years of stay in prison increase emotional attachment of spouses decrease. Therefore, the numbers of years spent in prison shorter the prisoners attached, whereas, the more years spent in prison the spouse were emotional detached from imprisoned spouse. Likewise, qualitative findings demonstrate that the imprisonment of a spouse for long periods which affects the emotional wellbeing of prisoners and their spouses. Bales and Mears (2008) also confirmed that long term prisoners faced emotional detachment with their spouses.

The exposure to restrain throughout imprisonment marital relations and emotional attachment affected prisoners and their spouses throughout imprisonment. Consistent with marital relations, 194 (73.7%) of the respondents scored above the average, the majority of imprisoned spouses felt that their spouses might separate and imprisonment distress marital relations by less time together, less participation in marital issues, and elongation of stay in prison. Consistent with this finding, recent research summarizes the stress related to imprisonment on romantic relationships which is resulted from lack of every day interaction and sexual intimacy (Edin et al., 2001). Tewksbury and DeMichele (2005) argued that, maintaining involvement in marital matter during imprisonment more difficult. As a result, barriers of communication, transformations in family roles, and psychological changes due to detainment impede the involvement in marital matters. Intimate relationships are also often substantially strained by incarceration (Travis, 2000). The effects of strained intimate relations can also have a significant effect on the maintenance of the relationship between the imprisoned and their spouses (Robertson, 2012). The restrained nature of correctional institutions affect emotional disorder of prisoners and their spouses, 188 (71.4%) of respondents reported high emotional detachment from their spouses. Hence, the research respondents identify denial of sexual relationships, infidelity by their spouses, prisoner experiences of loneliness, stress, and depression affected the wellbeing of prisoners and their spouses. Subsequently, majority of the research respondents prisoners scared about breaking up with their spouse due denial of sexual affiliation with their spouses. Porter and King (2015); Nurse, Sankofa, Cox, Fader, and Inderbitzin (2018) and Pattillo, Weima, and Western (2012), prisoners were constantly suspicious of the fidelity of their wives and girlfriends, often these fears were leads many romantic relationships failed while men were still incarcerated. According to Murray (2012) couples are usually denied sexual intimacy, unable to engage daily interactions, and sharing experiences affects sustainability of marital relationships. Likewise, Massoglia, Remster and King (2011) found relationship damage between intimate partners attributable to incarceration and the risk of relationship breakdown and divorce is much higher when a spouse is imprisoned.

Correctional institution settings are unique and distinct from other populations, so prisoners might strengthen their desire to engage in crime and improve their criminal skills (Clear, 2008). However, the objectives of correctional institutions are to admit prisoners and provide them with reformative and rehabilitative services. Sodo correctional center focused their rehabilitation and correction efforts on two main issues: changing prisoners' perceptions and engaging them in income-generating activities. According to Abraham (2011) most correctional center attempt to rehabilitate prisoners through vocational and educational programs, psychological counseling, and assisting inmates to improve their skills. The researcher made good rapport with the social worker and psychotherapist to understand the intervention program and identified that there is no intervention program designed to address the problems of married couples. However, the UN (2005) required standard, the Ethiopian Federal Prison Commission establishment proclamation and treatment of federal prisoners' council of ministers regulation, given mandate to correctional institutions should have separate accommodation rooms only for married couples with children and without children. Recent prison and criminological research reveals three prominent forms of visits; mass, private and marital visits provide opportunity for prisoners to maintain social support and community ties during imprisonment (Derkzen, Gobeil, & Justin, 2009). The ability to maintain family ties assists in normalizing prisoners' lifestyles and maintaining the perception (Bales & Mears, 2008). Indeed, maintaining contact and social support with family members, prisoners has been successful linked to reintegration in to the society (Tewksbury & DeMichele, 2005). The continuation of family ties through visitation during imprisonment is the most advantageous for rehabilitation (Sitren, Smith, Brandon & Gould, 2009).

### **Implications For Policy And Research**

The use of correctional institution as a criminal justice disposal increased the growth of prison population with skilled crime. As result, prison life has been academic interest across countries. In most cases, the individuals' life in prison has always experience economic, social, and cultural cost of imprisonment. Hence, this research substantive contribution to slight prison literature and provide input to federal correctional administration of Ethiopia. Empirical research on prisoner's and marital relation through visitation program, visitors, and the relationships between prisoners and their spouses serve as a bridge to the outside world. It plays an important role in assisting prisoners' transition from prison to the community. Many states recognize spouses' visitation as a legal right for inmates to have their spouse visit. The practice and usage of the term marital visit differ depending on the state's socio-cultural, economic, and religious trajectory. As a result, marital relation distress when one of the spouses sent to prison, however the impact of imprisonment beyond the walls of correctional institution. Future research might take research focus on the areas on reformatory process prisoners with specific rehabilitation and intervention strategies. Moreover, the impact of imprisonment on imprisoned Mather's with children in correctional institution requires further research emphases.

### **Conclusion:-**

Society must be safeguarded against wrongdoers, and wrongdoers must be restrained from doing similar deviant behaviors in the future. Significant others must not become victims of such action and reaction to protect society. The research implied the majority of the respondents were emotionally satisfied with marital visitation and that it helped them to continue in their marital relationship. This circumstance is also confirmed by the prisoners' expressing love for the visitor spouses while they are visited by their spouses and families. The pattern of frequency of visitation shows that the most frequently visited incarcerated spouses got mental satisfaction. As a result, marital visits by spouses have played an important role in maintaining and strengthening marital relationships during imprisonment. However, problems such as space suitability, the absence of a private room, overcrowding of visitors, less time given for marital visitation, and a lack of privacy to discuss marital issues hindered the effectiveness of the visitation program. These limitations require a high level of commitment from the concerned body, unless the penitentiary system is considered as the source of social dysfunction. Both short and long term imprisonment differently influence marital relationships. Accordingly, long-term convicted prisoners and their marital relation are highly vulnerable in terms of emotional attachment and relation difficult as compared to short term imprisonment. These years of incarceration also accentuated the gap between prisoners and their spouses by causing feelings of separation due to less time spent together, denial of sexual relationships resulting in a decline in love for spouses and infidelity, and missing each other. Refutations of access to spouses, as usual, result in loneliness and affect the psychological wellbeing of both prisoners and their spouses. The presence of an intervention programs for the rehabilitation and correction of incarcerated individuals makes the detention center the place of adjustment for wrongdoers. Many correctional institutions focus on developing prisoners with a high quality of ethical conduct. Despite the fact that the mandated prison institution in Sodo correctional institution should accommodate inmates with separate rooms based on age and crime type, the blueprint remained unchanged; rather, the prison administration accommodated inmates in customary practice. Thus, the prison institution needs to move beyond its normal routine to protect the legal rights of prisoners. Especially for married couples, it is important to set aside a separate room for the wife to meet her husband. Ever stakeholders should work to save the marriage and family from breaking up.

### **Recommendation:-**

Imprisonment not merely influences the locked up spouses but also relevant social networks and relatives of prisoners. The processes of imprisonment realized through effective correction and rehabilitation. The researcher is hereby recommends that:

1. Society must keep in the cutback and deprivation of wrongdoers through appropriate socialization with respect to the basic values and norms of the society.
2. Visitation play significant role in the process of correction, rehabilitation and marital relationship continuity. However, shortage of facility accessibility to prisoners and their family challenged visitation. Therefore, correctional institution should solve observed problems during marital visit by providing sufficient budget and training for prison guard to tackle facilities and service problems.
3. Special consideration should be given to married couple's related to personal privacy that private room should be prepared. It will require direction from the highest levels of policy designers for fundamental shift of existing system responses to prisoners and their spouses.

4. The process of correction and rehabilitation needs intensive family based intervention through different program like free space visitation, and inviting NGO working with family therapy.

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