

The role of prisons in the administration of custodial Rehabilitation of inmates in Kenya: a case of Thika main prison, Kiambu County, 2013

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Abstract:

This study sought to investigate the role of Prisons in the administration of custodial rehabilitation to men and women inmates in Thika Main Prison. Although, the role of Kenya Prison Service (KPS) is generally to rehabilitate and reform prisoners to control recidivism, contain and keep offenders in safe custody, facilitate administration of justice and promote prisoners' opportunities for social integration, there has been a lot of concern raised on the administration and management of Prison systems in Kenya including the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes offered. The objectives of the study were to identify the existing programmes for rehabilitation of inmates, assess the impact of the programmes offered to men and women inmates in rehabilitation, investigate the gender-specific challenges encountered by prison officers in rehabilitating men and women inmates and come up with strategies on how to address the challenges encountered thereof. The study was done at Thika Main Prison situated in Thika West District, Kenya. The participants in the study were 350 men and 200 women inmates serving sentences ranging from 2 and 7 years; and 60 prison officers dealing with rehabilitation. Simple random sampling was used to select 70 men and 40 women inmates while purposive sampling was applied to select 39 prison officers to participate. The main data collection instruments included; (1). Questionnaires administered to prison officers, (2). Focused Group Discussion (FGD) guide applied to inmates, (3). Observation checklist was prepared simultaneously to compliment the information gathered in the questionnaires and FGDs. Data was analyzed qualitatively through coding guided by themes generated through research questions and presented through descriptive statistics using tables and figures. The study established that vocational training, formal education, counseling and spiritual rehabilitation were the major rehabilitation programmes which positively changed inmates' lifestyles through promotion of behaviour change and that despite the rehabilitation programmes being offered, various challenges hampered effective service delivery by prison officers to inmates. The study therefore recommends that the prison institutions should uphold the best practices of good governance and management in their institutions so that the best prisons can be taken as a role model to others to replicate the rehabilitation programme services across other prisons in Kenya while inmates should be sensitized to develop positive attitude towards rehabilitation programmes as this would give room for peer counseling; among other recommendations.