

AN EVALUATION OF REFORMATION AND RE-INTEGRATION PROGRAMS OFFERED TO INMATES AND EX-CONVICTS AT MILIMA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION IN KASAMA DISTRICT, NORTHERN PROVINCE OF ZAMBIA

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Abstract

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the programs of reformation of inmates and re integration of ex-convicts into Zambian society when they are discharged. This was done against the background that despite the spiritual and educational programs for rehabilitation given to inmates in correctional institutions in Zambia, the number of ex-convicts being rearrested on similar offences and sent back to correctional institutions keeps increasing, hence defeating the purpose of rehabilitation and re-integration programs given to inmates. The study employed a qualitative approach and a descriptive survey design. The target sample was 20 respondents broken down as follows: ten (10) inmates, six (6) ex-convicts, two (2) correctional officers, one (1) chaplain and one (1) social worker. The findings of the study revealed that spiritual counselling and formal education are necessary because they provide an opportunity to inmates to be employed or to continue with tertiary education once discharged, hence, re-integrated smoothly into society. The study also revealed that stigma against ex convicts by society is the major factor why re-integration of ex-convicts is failing despite the correctional programs received in correctional institutions. The other revelations from the study are that the quality of education offered in correctional institutions has been questioned as society questions the competence of the teachers and quality of the curricula. The study has also revealed that lack of teaching and learning material, limited contact periods, and poor learning infrastructure, were the major challenges in the provision of formal education to inmates in correctional institutions in Zambia. Other challenges are combination of learners in one class regardless of age, and lack of continuity due to transfers of learners from one correctional facility to another. Last but not the least the study has revealed that lessons are conducted after manual work when learners are extremely tired, making it difficult for them to concentrate during lessons, and that there is no extra time provided to the inmates for private studies. From the finding of the study, the researchers are recommending that Government, through the Ministry of Education, takes over the running of education in correctional institutions through the provision of trained teachers, infrastructure, and both teaching and learning material so as to ensure quality of education. Further, society should be fully sensitised against stigma towards ex-convicts. This will facilitate for the full re-integration programs of ex-convicts into society. Finally, Government should come up with a deliberate policy to employ ex-convicts who have completed their studies, and to sponsor those who wish to continue studies at tertiary level.

Key Words: Reformation, Re-integration, Inmates, Ex-convicts, Correctional Institution

Background to the Study and Literature Review

Prisons have been into existences many centuries ago before even the Christian era. Robert (2017) states that *from 3000 B.C.E. to 400 B.C.E. the Babylonian Empire maintained prisons for petty offenders and debtors*. But later on, prisons became a place not only for petty offenders and debtors but also law breakers, political dissidents, religious heretics as well as enemy combatants. Many accounts of ancient prisons appear both in the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible; for instance, the book of First Kings, the Bible states that people were put in prisons for various offences. However, the above prison systems did not take into account the aspect of reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners with the view of re-integrating them into society.

Before the modern concept of rehabilitation and reformation, imprisonment was not intended as a punishment but for punishment. Offenders were sent to prisons not as a punishment in itself but as a means of inflicting punishment. Prisons functioned as confinement and seclusion centers to house offenders until the state met out the actual sentences which was usually in form of capital or corporal punishment, depending on the gravity of the offence. However, during the eighteenth century, the concept of correctional imprisonment was slowly introduced. This was a revolutionary period which witnessed a shift from punishment to rehabilitation. Delacy (2015) argues that prisons systems throughout the world experimented with different *methodologies and models for the betterment of inmates*.

Morn (2011) argues that prison systems experimented different approaches to rehabilitation, such as *education and clinical treatment*. He states that the purpose of imprisonment shifted from punishment to rehabilitation and reformation. The shift towards rehabilitation was to prepare the inmates to re-integrate into society after prison. It was from this point that correctional education emerged in the Western world to rehabilitate and reform inmates. Messemer adds that the history of correctional education could be traced from the United States of America (USA) as far back as 1789. According to Messemer (2011), early prison education programs were referred to as the *Sabbath School*. The purpose of the Sabbath School was to teach the inmates how to read so that they could read the Bible. The Bible imparted to the inmate's *knowledge, self-awareness and cognitive processes which enable them to make better decisions in their lives*.

In the nineteenth century, the philosophy behind imprisonment evolved further. Prison became more than an alternative to brutal corporal punishments. It was seen as redemptive and capable of changing the individuals within to become better people. In the Western world, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the emphasis on imprisonment continued to evolve towards reformation and rehabilitation through correctional education. Bazos and Hausaman (2004) identify two types of correctional education systems: vocational training and literacy/numeracy developments. They argued that vocational training courses focused on acquisition of skills that were directly transferable to the workplace, such as appliance repair. Literacy and numeracy developmental courses were centered on the improvement of reading and mathematical skills. These skills were necessary to the ex-prisoners for their re-integration into society.

It is challenging to prepare offenders with the needed vocational skills and education to be successful in re-integrating back into society. Offenders on average, are less educated than the general population. For example, in 2004, approximately 36 per cent of individuals in state prisons had attained less than a high school education compared with 19 per cent of the general USA population aged 16 and above. In addition to having lower levels of educational attainment, offenders often lack vocational skills and a steady history of employment, which

is a significant challenge for individuals returning from prison to local communities. And the dynamics of prison entry and reentry make it hard for this population to accumulate meaningful, sustained employment experience. Finally, the stigma of having a felony conviction on one's record is a key barrier to post release employment.

On April 9, 2008, the Second Chance Act (SCA) (Public Law 110-199) was signed into law. This important piece of legislation was designed to improve outcomes for individuals who are incarcerated, most of whom will ultimately return to communities upon release. The SCA's grant programs are funded and administered by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) within the US Department of Justice (DOJ). In 2010, funding was set aside, for the first time under the SCA, to conduct a comprehensive study of correctional education. OJP's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) awarded the RAND Corporation a cooperative agreement to comprehensively examine the current state of correctional education for incarcerated adults and juveniles and where it is headed, which correctional education programs are effective, and how effective programs can be implemented across different settings. One central task in that effort was to comprehensively review the scientific literature and conduct a meta-analysis to synthesize the findings from multiple studies about the effectiveness of correctional education programs in helping to reduce recidivism and improve employment outcomes for incarcerated adults within US state prisons.

In Africa, the traces of prisons date back to 2000 years before the birth of Christ (B.C). There was wide-spread use of prisons in some African societies. For instance, in Egypt, during the Middle Kingdom era (around 2000 B.C), the Pharaohs imprisoned non-Egyptian criminals with hard labour. The concept of rehabilitation and reformation was not known. It emerged during the colonial period but more so in the post-colonial period, when many efforts were being made towards the welfare of prison inmates in terms their life after imprisonment. In many African prisons, correctional education became a solution towards rehabilitation and reformation of prison inmates. The majority of people who were found in prisons were those with poor financial and education background. Muntingh (2005) argues that much of the crime committed in societies was motivated by poverty as a result of lack of relevant skills and knowledge for employment. Prison education, therefore, equipped prison inmates with knowledge and skills that assisted them to re-integrate into their respective communities and to find employment or create self-employment after serving their prison terms. In this way, future crime could be prevented.

After independence, imprisonment continued to be used as the main form of punishment for various offences especially criminal ones. Mumbuwa (1989) argues that since 1964, imprisonment was the most important form of punishment for crime in Zambia. He explains that the penal system inherited from the colonial state emphasized retribution and deterrence as the main objectives of punishment. The 1999 Implementation Prison Report states that inmates needed skills to become acceptable and upstanding members of society. However, 1974 is regarded as the beginning of compulsory education provision to adult prison inmates in Zambia. The Implementation Prison Report of 1999 further states that on 26 July 1974, the first Republican President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, visited Mukobeko Maximum Prison. During the visit, President Kaunda pronounced that prisoners were to be provided with *literacy, political and basic education to enable them reform into law abiding citizens and gain life skills* so that after they were released from prison, they could be re-integrated into society as useful citizens. Therefore, while academic education offered in schools was purely for academic purposes, the education offered in prison targeted rehabilitation of morals and preparing inmates for the world of work. Prison education also empowered the inmates in meeting their challenges in society after they were discharged from prison. Basically, the aim

of correctional education was to eradicate illiteracy among prisoners in Zambian prisons in order to enhance social rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners. And from 1974, prisoner education became part of Zambian government's prisons program whose vision was to empower inmates with academic, life skills and vocational training programs relevant to rehabilitation, reformation and self-reliance after discharge from prison.

This study has highlighted the dynamics of the correctional education provision to inmates in Zambian correctional services. The study has explained the nature of education and the challenges faced in the provision of correctional education to prisoners. Lastly, the study has evaluated the impact of correctional education on inmates and ex-prisoners in Zambian correctional facilities. Several conclusions have emerged from this study. One of these is that the correctional education that was inherited at independence was racial based but gradually transformed after independence. The white prisoners were provided with education for basic reading skills and recreation while African prisoners were not. However, due to various changes in the Zambian Correctional Service system, gradually, all inmates began to have access to prison education. The Zambia Correctional Service did not only there to offer deterrent measures to would-be offenders by providing punishment to offenders but also become responsible for carrying out rehabilitation of inmates.

Religious institutions, social workers, and other stakeholders have patterned with the Government of the Republic of Zambia in providing both spiritual and educational support to the inmates and ex-convicts. It is a common belief that the life of even the worst prisoner can be transformed, and that religion enhances emotional well-being among prisoners. Local churches have played an important role not only in sharing the gospel with the in-mates but also in supporting, teaching and equipping them with the necessary skills and values to integrate in society after being released from prisons.

Despite the spiritual and educational programs for rehabilitation and reformation given to inmates in Correctional Institutions in Zambia, the number of ex-convicts bouncing back in correctional institutions keeps on increasing in Zambia, hence defeating the purpose of integration into society of ex-convicts through spiritual and formal education. This is evidenced by the high rate of an increase in number of ex-convicts that are finding themselves back in correctional facilities for continual law breaking. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the reformation and re-integration programs offered to inmates and ex-convicts at Milima Correctional Institution in Kasama District, Northern Province of Zambia.

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the programs of reformation and re-integration at Milima Correctional Institution in Kasama District in Northern Province of Zambia. The study is premised on the following objectives:

- a. To determine the impact of spiritual and formal education on inmates in Zambian Correctional Institutions during and after the period of study.
- b. To explain factors leading to the failure of inmates to access higher education after acquiring correctional education.
- c. To establish the challenges faced in the implementation of reformation and re-integration programs among the inmates and ex-convicts in Kasama district.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- a. What is the positive impact of the spiritual and formal education offered to inmates in Zambian Correctional Institutions during and after the period of study?

- b. What are the factors leading to the failure by inmates access higher education after acquiring correctional education?
- c. What could be the main challenges faced in the implementation of reformation and re-integration programs among the inmates and ex-convicts in Kasama district?

The study highlighted on the positive aspects of in-mates reformation and re-integration programs provided to in-mates and ex-convicts by the Correctional Institutions in Zambia. This is unlike much of earlier literature which condemned the ex-convicts as recidivists despite having received such correctional programs. It is also hoped that from these findings of from this study policy makers may now be aware of the positive impacts of correctional programs on the inmates and the challenges that the correctional institutions as well as other stakeholders such as the religious institutions and social workers face in the process of providing correctional services to the inmates. In addition, Non-Governmental Organizations may be able to acknowledge the need of partnering with the correctional institutions in promoting the provision of correctional programs to the inmates.

The initial concept of imprisonment in many societies was focused on punishment of the law breakers. Over a long period of time, it became evident that imprisonment as punishment did not change the prisoners into better or reformed citizens. Hence, the concept of prisons slowly stated changing from punishment to rehabilitation of prisoners in order to enable them to re-integrate successfully into society upon release from prison. The concept of rehabilitation included correctional programs such as spiritual counselling and education.

Figure 1: The Concept of Rehabilitation and Reintegration of inmates and ex-convicts



The scope of the study was Kasama, Northern Province of Zambia, being the residential area for the researcher. This allowed for easy mobility and access to the inmates at Milima Correctional Institute which is just about 5 kms from the town center.

The study focused only on one Correctional Institute, Milima, hoping that the findings may be generised to other Correctional Institutions scattered across the country. This in itself is a limitation, and the researcher is of the hope that further research be done to include more Correctional Institutions so as to have a balanced view in terms of perceptions and opinions from the respondents.

Research Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach and a descriptive survey design. Borg and Gall (1989) explain that descriptive study determines and reports the way things are and commonly involves assessing attitude, opinions towards individuals, organizations and

procedures. This design was adopted because of the nature of the research which evaluates the reformation and re-integration programs offered to in-mates and ex-convicts at Milima Correctional Institution in Kasama District, Northern Province of Zambia. Therefore, this required to carry out a research survey on both Correctional management and other stakeholders, and the inmates and ex-convicts, as providers and beneficiaries of reformation and re-integration programs in Zambia's Correctional Facilities respectively, to collect the data needed for the researcher to reach the conclusion.

The target population from which the sample is selected (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Therefore, the target population are all members or individuals or groups or other elements that are expected to be represented in the study. Best and Kahn (2008) observed that population is the entire group of individuals, firms, plants or things that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest in the study. It is broader than the concept sample frame that the researcher intends to study. In this study, the population included inmates and management as well as ex-convicts at Milima Correctional Institution in Kasama District in Northern Province of Zambia, Chaplains and Social Workers.

The sample is the section of the wider population that will be engaged in the survey. Best and Kahn (1993) define a sample as a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis for special purposes. In this study, the sample target was 20 respondents: ten (10) in-mates (5 females and 5 males), six (6) ex-convicts, two (2) officers from Milima Correctional Institution, one (1) Chaplain and one (1) Social Worker.

Sampling is the process of identifying whom the researcher will aim to contact from that population or an area (Bryman, 2004). Sampling is related to the selection of a subset of individuals from within a population to estimate the characteristics of the whole population. It refers to the process of selecting a sample from a finite population with the intent that the sample accurately represents that population. In this study, random sampling was used on inmates while snowball sampling on ex-convicts, and purposive sampling was used to select chaplain from the Church and officers from Correctional management as well as social work. Random sampling has an advantage in that it gives each participant a chance and eliminates issues of biasness on the part of the researcher. According to Creswell (1998), snowball sampling involves a researcher asking the initial subject to nominate another person with the same trait. The researcher then observes the nominated subjects and continues in the same way until he/she obtains sufficient number of subjects. Such a technique was useful because it enabled the researcher to reach out to the ex-convicts through referrals, who he might not have managed to contact on his own. Purposive sampling is useful in the sense that only those who have the information the researcher is looking for are selected without wasting time.

The researcher employed mainly interviews and questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. Structured interviews were employed so that respondents would be able to express themselves within the context of the question while at the same time gave chance to the researcher to probe for a clear answer in a situation where the respondent is vague. Further, standardized questions make the process efficient and have the ability in enhancing and achieving reliability and validity of data collection as they are bias free (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). Apart from interviews, questionnaires were also used in this study and contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions. A questionnaire is simply a guide or instrument with close or open-ended questions to which respondents must react (White, 2008).

The researcher started by interviewing the respondents and then the distribution of questionnaires. Data collected through the interviews was recorded and later transcribed according to the emerging themes. Data collected through questionnaires was also coded and grouped according to the emerging themes.

In shaping the nature of perceptions and opinions encountered from the interviews, this study employed narrative analysis. Creswell (1998) argues that narrative analysis is an approach to the analysis of qualitative data that emphasizes the stories that people employ to account for events. Qualitative data from the interviews was transcribed and coded into themes and sub-themes that emerged through narrative analysis. Further, data collected from questionnaires was analyzed using quantitative techniques and was categorized and arranged according to key concepts which correspond to the research questions.

With regard to ethical issues, permission was sought before interviews and giving questionnaires to the respondents. This is one of the ethical demands of research in order to avoid coerciveness. All the respondents were advised to feel free and open during the interviews and assured that their responses would be kept in confidence and that anonymity would be upheld, and that the information would be used purely for academic purposes.

Findings of the Study and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the reformation and re-integration programs offered to inmates and ex-convicts at Milima Correctional Institution in Kasama District, Northern Province of Zambia. This was after the discovery that despite the provision of spiritual counselling and formal educational programs for rehabilitation and reintegration given to the inmates, the number of ex-convicts bouncing back in Correctional Facilities keeps on increasing in Zambia, hence defeating the purpose of reintegration into society through spiritual counselling and formal education. The general objective of this study was to examine the process of rehabilitation and reformation through spiritual counselling and formal education service provision in Zambia, and was guided by three (3) research questions:

- What is the positive impact of the spiritual and formal education offered to inmates in Zambian Correctional Institutions during and after the period of study?
- What are the factors leading to the failure by inmates access higher education after acquiring correctional education?
- What could be the main challenges faced in the implementation of reformation and re-integration programs among the inmates and ex-convicts in Kasama district?

This study has revealed that spiritual counselling and form education in Correctional Facilities are necessary because it provides, they provide an opportunity to inmates to be employed or to continue with tertiary education once discharged. The study has revealed further that stigma against ex-convicts by society is a major factor why reintegration of ex-convicts is failing despite the spiritual counselling and formal education received in Correctional Facilities. The quality of education offered in Correctional Facilities has also been questioned by society. Employers have questioned the quality of teachers and curricula. Employment opportunities are slim due to the limited number of vacancies advertised by the Ministry of Education. Little or no financial support from both government and relatives of ex-convicts has also contributed to failure to continue tertiary education.

The study has also revealed that lack of teaching and learning materials, limited contact periods, and poor learning infrastructure were the major challenges in the provision of formal education to inmates in the Correctional Facilities in Zambia. Other challenges are

combination of learners in one class regardless of the age, and lack of consistency in terms of continuity due to transfers of learners from one Correctional Facility to another. Last but not the least, the study has revealed that lessons are conducted after manual work when learners are extremely tired. This makes it difficult for them to concentrate during lessons and there is no time provided to the inmates for studies by the facility.

From the findings of this study, the following three (3) recommendations were made:

1. Government, through the Ministry of Education, must fully take over the running of education in Correctional Facilities through the provision of trained teachers, infrastructures and both teaching and learning materials so as to ensure quality of education.
2. Society should be fully sensitized against stigma towards ex-convicts. This will facilitate the full reintegration program of ex-convicts into society.
3. Government should come up with a deliberate policy to employ ex-convicts who have completed their studies, and to facilitate or sponsor those who wish to continue studies at tertiary level.

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