

Effect of Prison Programs on Rehabilitation of Inmates in County, Kenya

Hellen Wairimu Mburu^{1*}, Catherine Gathitu²

¹Department of Sociology, Gender and Development Studies of Kenyatta University, Kenya

²Lecturer, School of Business and Education, Kirinyaga University, Kenya

*Corresponding author

Abstract: The main objective of prisons in general and Kenyan in particular is to rehabilitate the inmates facilitate acquisition of self-dependence skills with a view of avoidance of repeat. The aim of this research was to interrogate the effect on male and female inmates' life in prison in their journey of rehabilitation. The study was directed by the objective; to examine the effect of prison programs on inmates' rehabilitation. The study employed descriptive survey research design. Questionnaires, interview guides as well as Focus Group Discussions were adopted to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The investigation targeted 500 convicts who included first-time offenders and recidivists, 30 prison warders, and 4 key informers in Thika main and women prison. Stratified sampling was used in the investigation to first place the convicts according to gender to get three hundred male and two hundred female convicts. A sample size of 30% of the entire population of male and female convicts and prison warders was used in the investigation to get 90 male, 60 female convicts and 9 prison officers. Quantitative data was analysed descriptively by percentages and mode and were recorded in graphs and tables. Qualitative data were examined thematically and in patterns presented and formed in verbatim and narrative forms. The study established that inmates participated in elaborate prison programs which helped them ease the pain of imprisonment and gave them hope of getting employment after imprisonment making them more positive about future. Therefore, the study recommended that the prison management should sensitize inmates on the essence of the prison programs as they offer life skills which are supposed to help them when easily fit they go back to society. The government should also improve the rehabilitative programs and provide more resources geared towards these programs. Further, the government should set aside stipends to facilitate inmates to start a business after imprisonment using some of the skills acquired while in prison.

Keywords: Prison programs, rehabilitation of inmates

I. INTRODUCTION

Prisons ought to offer a conducive environment for the rehabilitation of inmates [1]. The rehabilitation process provides planned activities for inmates, interrogates their offending tendencies, and provides knowledge, work skills, and attitude change, increasing employment prospects upon release from prison [2]. However, studies on recidivism worldwide indicate that 80 percent of inmates are rearrested within ten years after release [2] & [3]. According to studies globally, there are disparities in conditions within prisons. In the US, overcrowding in prisons has endangered restorative programs, escalated physical violence, gang activity and drug

abuse [4]. According to [5] the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) offers inmates several rehabilitation programs such as education and substance use disorder treatment which help to reduce recidivism.

Prison education has also proved to be a sure way of reforming inmates and empowering them with skills to prepare them exit prison and re-enter society [6]. Physical, psychological, and psychiatric care, substance abuse detoxification, rehabilitation and recreational activities are available [7]. [5] States that well-designed and effectively implemented programs reduce the recidivism rate. Despite this, studies show that after release, many California inmates re-offend, for example, 46 percent of inmates released in 2012/2013 were rearrested due to crime in the following three years of release [5]. In German, 16.7% of prisons are unoccupied [8]. The German correctional structure seeks to safeguard the public by incarcerating lawbreakers, rehabilitating them using work programs and giving medical services. Work and education programs are considered the most important treatment measures for inmates; hence, work is obligatory for inmates [9]. Certified educational programs are stressed for juveniles but optional for adult inmates [10]. According to [10] substance abuse treatment, rehabilitation, mental and physical medical care services are provided for each inmate. Consequently, there is a lower recidivism rate of between 40 to 48 percent far much lower than US at 60 to 80 percent [11].

Prisons in Africa are riddled with severe challenges such as shortage of sanitary amenities, recreational amenities, food and absence of local interaction with kin [12]. For instance, Cameroon experiences scarcity of monetary, material as well as human resources that hamper restoration of prisons [13]. A number of prison officers lack training on rehabilitation and correctional services thus inmates are likely to indulge in non-rehabilitative work [14].

In Kenya, rehabilitation is done through training and treatment programs to reform offenders and empower them with worthwhile skills that can be resourceful upon release [15]. Such programs include; industrial and vocational training, formal education, farming, building, reintegration and chaplaincy programs [16] & [17]. Nevertheless, a research carried out by [18] shows that uptake of rehabilitation program in Kenyan prisons is yet to be attained. In fact, recidivism rates are between 60% and 80 % [19]. A number of

researches on prisons have been carried out in Kiambu County. [20] Studied spiritual rehabilitation, vocational training, and formal counselling and education restoration programmes that positively transformed the lifestyles of inmates. [21] researched on past offenders and illustrated how dissatisfied they were with the restorative programs provided in prisons. A research by [22] showed that inferior education levels due to low quality of restorative education provided in prisons was the major cause of recidivism. There was inadequate literature about impact of programs in prisons on rehabilitating inmates in Kiambu County. It is for this reason that attention needed to be paid to the process of rehabilitation and why it does not improve inmates' lives and so reduce high rate of recidivism.

Statement of the Problem

Confinement is the most favoured penalty for rehabilitating those who indulge in criminal acts. However, the prisons in Kenya are bedeviled by chronic congestion and lack of basics like adequate food, enough water, good clothing, bedding and medicine because of strained physical amenities. The Kenya government has tried to better the conditions of inmates through prison reform program that begun in the year 2003. This involved decongesting the prison, improving the menu and offering medical care. Education for convicts, games, televisions and radio, among other amenities were also introduced in the tenure of President Mwai Kibaki (2002 - 2013). Notwithstanding the measures by the government to rehabilitate convicts, the rate of recidivism remains at 60% to 80%, proof that the uptake of the restoration program is yet to succeed. Upon being released, inmates ought to be law-abiding citizens. Thus, the research aimed at establishing the effect of prison programs on rehabilitation of prisoners.

Objective Of The Study

To examine the effect of prison programs on the rehabilitation of inmates in Kiambu County.

Effect of Prison Programs on Rehabilitation of Inmates.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Prison programs aim at changing inmates from their criminal activities through friendly encouragement and consequently relieve emotional tension and stimulate inmates' self-respect and ambition [23]. Rehabilitation programs further aim to low the recidivism rate [24].

Psychological, educational, vocational and recreational programs are used in America, England and Africa [25]. The Arizona Department of Corrections in America acknowledges the importance of education to help reduce reoffending. Four education programs are provided, including the functional literacy program, the GED, unique education program and vocational educational program [26]. Counselling and therapy services are carried out by the clergy, caseworkers, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists [27]. The studies did not address how the skills affected men and women on their rehabilitation process. Vocational training includes;

construction, education, farm shops, shoe repair, dry cleaning, trades and industrial office [28]. Sports leagues, movies card and games are some of the common activities organized in the prisons [27]. However, vocational training for women inmates in America offered programs that equipped women for jobs viewed as women's work. These jobs were low-paying making it difficult for women to be self-reliant upon release [28]. The prison programs in America suffered from outdated equipment, absence of skilled trainers with current knowledge and inadequate techniques. They therefore did not adequately prepare inmates for a trade after discharge [28].

In South Africa, the prison education is not consistent in that some facilities have full-time schools and some vocational skills training programs, while in other facilities, there is inadequate provision of education or vocational training [29]. Moreover, convicts do not have sufficient education or vocational training in Sierra Leone [30]. In Tanzania prisons, the convicts are allowed to take part in educational programs up to the University level and write their exams in public institutions [31]. Nonetheless, the programmes are out-dated and gender insensitive. Hence, this study sought to establish their influence on rehabilitation program uptake by inmates.

The Kenya Prisons Service, in its transformation program, has reinforced vocational restoration programs like carpentry, masonry, tailoring, mechanics, soap making, driving among others [32]. The education and recreation programs for inmates have immensely benefited from the Open-Door Policy (ODP). ODP donates radios, television sets, sports items and the supply of materials and books [25] (KNHR, 2005) to prisons. Primary, secondary and post-secondary education is offered [25]. [33] in his study points out that a number of inmates, 57 percent, were placed in vocational programs- prison industries whereas 4 percent were placed in counselling and 14 percent in education. [15] in his study stated that prisons suffered from problems related to low and inadequate financial, physical and human resources.

The study further established that the financial allotment to cater for essential expenses such as purchase of food uniform and equipment was inadequate ([15]. [34] in his study noted a positive influence of custodial restoration programs on the reduction of recidivism in that it helped convicts to review their stands towards crime, make the right choices and cease from criminalities that make them degenerate into tendencies of recidivism. He recommended development of criminogenic need-based rehabilitation programs to ensure that all convicts have access to all programs as they complement each other in the lives of convicts. However, the studies did not address the impact of the programs in relation to the knowledge and skills gained and how they changed the attitude of inmates in relation to prison rehabilitative programs uptake. Therefore, a study on the evaluation of the prison programs and how they influence the rehabilitation program uptake was urgent in Kenya.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research used a descriptive survey research design thus enabling the researcher to describe issues concerning prison life in a natural and unchanged environment by inquiring from inmates about their perception, attitudes, behaviour, or values [35]. The research was done in Thika main prison in Kiambu County. It is a medium-term prison where male and female convicts sentenced to durations ranging between one and seven years are imprisoned. The jail holds offenders of crimes like theft, drug and substance abuse, trespass, child neglect assault, disorderliness among others. Thika jail is the only one in Kiambu County that accommodates both male and female inmates and therefore was suitable for the study.

The target population was approximately 500, 30 prison officers, and 4 key informers in Thika Main prison. The research first engaged stratified sampling to place the inmates in accordance with gender, to obtain 300 males and 200 females. The research used 30% to obtain the sample of 90 male and 60 female convicts. Further, 30% of 30 prison warders totalling 9 were chosen. Moreover, stratified sampling was employed to subdivide the inmates according to the length of imprisonment; then, simple random was done whereby the researcher randomly picked inmates' names from the jail register in each stratum. Purposive sampling was further employed to select 20 men and 10 women recidivists from the jail register.

Junior prison officers who had served in Thika's main and women jail for over three years were selected by purposive sampling because they were likely to have witnessed the inmates being imprisoned and then released after the rehabilitation process and could describe the inmates' behaviour.

Junior prison officers also interacted more with inmates and therefore, could best describe their behaviour. Five officers were selected from the men's wing because it accommodated more inmates as compared to the women's wing. Four officers were selected from women's wing. Each of the four key informers were utilized; two chaplains of the prison and two counsellors. Primary data was obtained by interview schedules, questionnaire guides and focus group deliberations. The interview guides were employed to get information from thirty recidivists and the four key informers of the research. Focus group discussions were adopted to get information from first-time offenders. Prison officers used questionnaires to give their information. A preliminary pilot research was done in Murang'a prison. The prison was purposively selected. Like Thika main, the prison held male and female convicts and therefore fitting for testing the study tools. Quantitative data was examined descriptively by mode and percentages and recorded in graphs and tables. Qualitative data was examined thematically and by the formed patterns which were then presented in verbatim and narrative forms.

IV. RESULTS

Prison Programs

The objective of the research aimed at establishing the effects of prison programs on rehabilitation of convicts in Kiambu County. The research sought after the knowledge, and the skills learned from the rehabilitation programs and establish whether there was an attitude change among inmates towards prison life and life after imprisonment. This was established by administering questionnaires to prison officers, conducting interview schedules, and focus group discussions with inmates. The presentation of the findings follows two subsequent sections: Prison rehabilitation programs and the effectiveness of prison programs.

Prison Programs

The study wanted to establish the rehabilitation programs offered in prison and find out how they influenced inmates' rehabilitation. The findings were collected from the prison officers. The outcomes are summarized in Figure 1.0

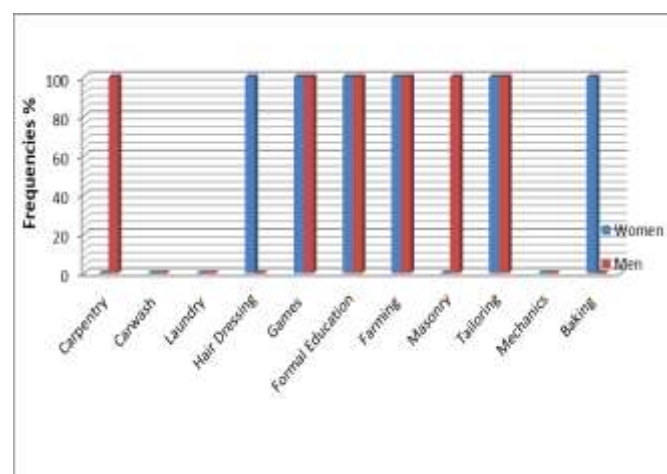


Figure 1.0 Rehabilitation Programs as Reported by Prison Officers

Source: Author computations

The study findings illustrated that inmates participated in elaborate prison programs. Men inmates participated in carpentry, games, formal education, farming, masonry, and tailoring. Women inmates majorly participated in hairdressing, games, formal education, farming, tailoring, and baking. Carwash, laundry, and mechanics were not provided in the prison. From the findings, women inmates never participated in masonry, while men inmates never participated in hairdressing. The findings demonstrated a stereotypical provision of rehabilitative programs in that there were no men inmates learning hairdressing while no women inmates were doing masonry. The study went further and established from inmates the rehabilitation programs that they joined. The outcomes are summarized in Figure 1.1

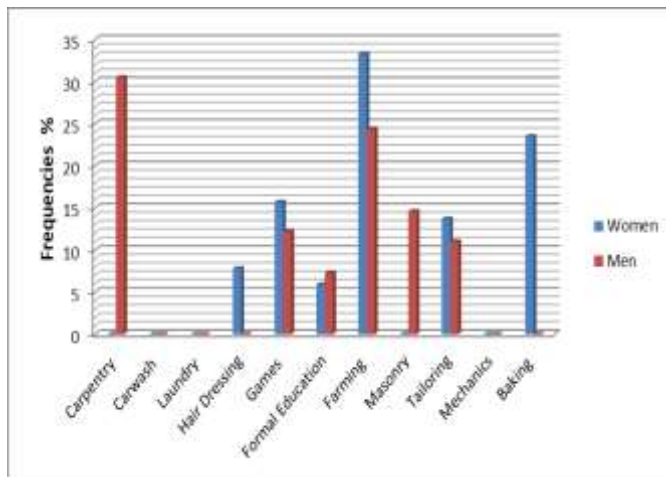


Figure 1.1 Rehabilitation Programs

Source: Author computations

The study findings revealed that 30.5% of men inmates joined carpentry, 24.4 % farming, 14.6% masonry, 12.2% games, and 11% tailoring, and 7.3% formal education. 33.3% of women inmates joined farming, 23.5% baking, 15.7% games, 13.7% tailoring, 7.8% hairdressing and 5.9% formal education. The majority of men inmates joined carpentry, which is more captivating in the job market, and therefore, they were likely to get employment after imprisonment. On the other hand, the majority of women inmates joined farming. It made women inmates feel disadvantaged because they were forced into it. Some would have preferred to do beadwork, which was not in prison. They believed it would enable them to attain skills that they would practically use after incarceration. Some mentioned not having a farm to practice the skills learned after imprisonment. The prison systems should therefore revise the prison programs to ensure they are appropriate market driven skills especially for women inmates.

Impact of Prison Programs on Rehabilitation of Inmates

The study examined the value attached to prison programs by the inmates. The majority of men inmates were positive about prison programs. The courses undertaken kept the inmates hopeful that they would get employment after imprisonment and therefore become of service to the society. The courses also enabled them to change from a criminal mind-set to be a useful citizen. This demonstrated the importance of rehabilitation programs in prison. This is in line with a study done by [20] in Thika's main prison, which established that 61.5% of the prison officers reported that spiritual rehabilitation was very effective in reducing recidivism and promoting behavioural change, and making inmates accept they were in the wrong. The study findings illustrated 50% of prison officers felt that both men and women equally benefited from prison programs, but 33.3% of prison officers felt that men benefited more from prison programs because there was a wide range of programs for men inmates. Only 16.7% of prison officers felt that the women inmates benefited more because they were few, and therefore the facilities were

enough to teach them various skills. The study sought to establish inmates' opinions on the programs. These were their responses;

Moses stated;*

I have a diploma in the voice of prophecy. I got saved in prison. I thank God that I came to prison and received Christ; the spiritual leaders are very helpful. Now I have changed for the better.

James added;*

I am doing a course called mindset. This has helped me to forgive myself and others and understand why I did what I did. This has enabled change in my attitude towards imprisonment and then an overall change of behaviour.

John also stated;*

I am doing discipleship now. I was even baptized in prison and even given a certificate. I am so happy. I am determined to change because of this spiritual nourishment I am getting in prison. I think God used this opportunity to snatch me from Satan. I have been accommodative to others.

Juliet stated;*

At first, I felt a lot of bitterness, but I have learned to forgive through the rehabilitation programs present. I have learned to let go because I might commit another crime after imprisonment if I remain hurt. The spiritual guidance we get in prison has helped me much. I read the bible. This gives me hope and, at the same time, helps me change.

From the views shared by Moses, James, John, and Juliet it emerged that there was spiritual growth, emotional development, and strong will to aid the inmates to avoid criminal activities. The findings illustrated that prison programs positively transformed inmates. Indeed, the inmates improved their faith in religion during the incarceration. This agrees with a study by [34] that the percentage of committed Christians changed and rose from 48.8% to 65% during incarceration. Many people perceive prison as a negative thing, but the above respondents demonstrated that things perceived to be negative could help people reflect on their life and change for the better. Edward* added that;

I am doing a paralegal course. I had taken carpentry first, but I never did any grade test. I am pleased with the course. I will use the knowledge to create awareness of secondary school students' criminal activities to avoid finding themselves involved in criminal activities unknowingly.

Indeed, Francis* further stated that;

The rehabilitation programs are helpful because they will enable us to get skills that help ease the pain of imprisonment and start a business after imprisonment.

[36], in her study in King'ong'o prison, affirmed this finding by indicating that the convicts learn while in prison and this helps them to start different projects and are accepted in the society. Most inmates had a positive attitude toward rehabilitation, for they gained technical skills, which enabled them to be self-employed, and they also acquired necessary life skills to assist them in coping with changing societal needs of the day as established by [20]. Moreover, inmates engaged in sports such as football and aerobics. However, there were no competitions. Beauty contests were held for women inmates. Men inmates participated in volleyball and competed with the prison staff.

All these were aimed to help ease the pain of imprisonment to which the majority of inmates confirmed. [20] also established that sports activities helped inmates to form social groups among themselves, which also helped them minimize psychological problems like stress and depression. [19] did a study and added that recreation activities help to decrease the existing climate of violence in prisons, and therefore, the prison should strive to enhance more and elaborate rehabilitative programs. However, the study established that only a few respondents had accessed counselling sessions, which they believed helped them adjust to prison life. The majority had no idea of such a program and others lacked interest for the same. Nancy* stated;

I have not attended counselling sessions because I am not even aware they exist. I would be happy to get an opportunity to attend.

Brian* stated;

I know that counselling sessions are offered, but I have opted not to attend. I wonder what they would counsel me about.

Nancy* and Brian* views, demonstrated that the prison lacked commitment to offer counselling programs. The inmates who had gone through counselling said that it helped them to cope with prison life. Inmates added that they preferred sourced counsellors from outside prison because they could open up to them better. Furthermore, the prison officers suggested that mentorship and counselling needed to stress more on family responsibility, stress management, drugs, and self-awareness.

Spiritual guidance was needed to emphasize spiritual nourishment, and knowledge of God, human value and vocational/industrial training on attaining skills and self-employment. [25] reports that there are no systematic counselling services offered in the prisons due to absence of funds. Even though prison welfare and chaplaincy services ought to play this role, insufficient personnel have negatively affected the capacity to deliver counselling services. The study also established that the prison system failed to emphasize formal education because only 7.3% participated. The study went further and investigated the percentage of inmates who were engaged in primary, secondary, college, or university education.

The findings are summarized in Figure 1.2

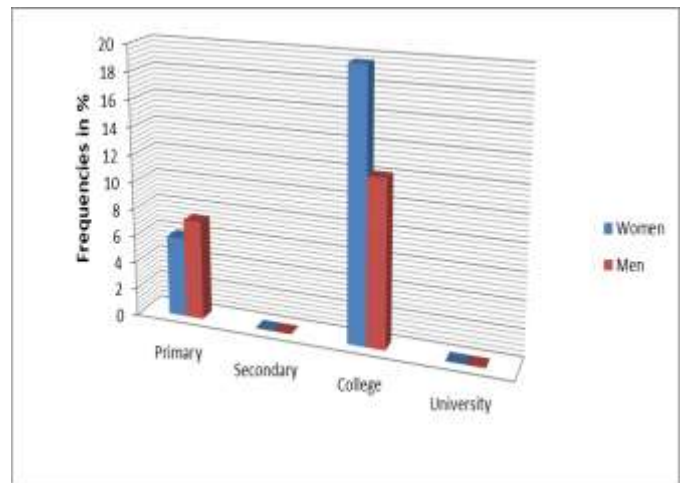


Figure 1.2 Education Programs

Source: Author computations

The study findings revealed that the percentage of inmates who had joined formal education was too low. It was only 5.9% for women inmates and 7.3% of men inmates who were reported to have registered for national examinations for the primary level. No inmate was registered for secondary education. A more significant percentage was in the college-level, where 19.6% and 12.1% were enrolled in courses such as paralegal, mindset, discipleship, and the low level of formal education attributed to the challenges experienced by the program. There were only two teachers available for women inmates while there were none for men inmates. Their fellow inmates were teaching the men inmates. There were no enough classes, books, and other educational facilities to enable learning. Ian* said;

I had enrolled in secondary education in my previous prison. Still, when I got transferred from that prison, I lost interest and never finished because there were no facilities and human resources in this prison.

Mark* added;

There were about 67 inmates who were interested in learning, but facilities are a problem. The class is the only one that is shared by men and women inmates. In the year 2017, they registered 6 candidates for the KCSE examination, 2018, 3 candidates and 2019 6 candidates. The released inmates are not followed up, and they end up not completing formal education. Books are available, but not enough.

The views given by Ian * and Mark* pointed out that the facilities and teaching personnel were inadequate and consequently affected the learning process. This meant the prison had failed to focus more on formal education even though everyone has the right to education to help develop the human personality and strengthen the respect given to human rights and fundamental freedoms as established by [37]. Moreover, further studies established that 10% of inmates felt that the rehabilitation programs were not helpful because they

were chosen for them. They discussed their dissatisfaction as follows;

Carol* stated;

I was made to join tailoring, but I would have preferred a saloon because I am talented. Now, I do tailoring for the sake of it. It will not help me after imprisonment. It is just a waste of time.

Christine* said;

I was told to do documentation, and I would have preferred industry. I do not like the program. I do it for the sake of it. This, of course, will not help me after imprisonment.

Newton* stated;

I participate in farming, which I did not choose. I live in town, and I don't know how this course will help me after imprisonment. I would have preferred carpentry.

Leone* added;

I cannot join any rehabilitation program. For what purpose? I cannot help the government to make money using my sweat. Not me. Let me wait for my fate.

From the above reports, it was evident that, inmates who never decided the rehabilitative programs to undertake were unhappy with the ones they were doing. Therefore, the course was not likely to help them after imprisonment. The findings illustrated further that incarceration made the inmates aggressive. They felt that they were unfairly convicted. Indeed, incarceration hardened them because of their painful experiences. [38] agree with the finding by stating that jails were being converted into veritable schools for crime where the experienced inmates taught the younger ones how to carry out different unlawful conduct.

This also agreed with [39] in Nakuru Main Prison, who stated that inmates hardened through prison experience. The Deprivation theory by [40] also reaffirms this by stating that prison life actually promotes maladjustment as convicts struggle to put up with the dire conditions of incarceration.

Edwin* had this to say;

Bringing a person in prison does not help the person. This is not a rehabilitation centre but 'nikama mateso tu' (it is like a punishment). One continues to take alcohol after imprisonment. The government should take a person to a real rehabilitation centre to enhance change.

Daniel* stated;

Some of us have formed clubs. These clubs transform one to become worse than one was before. One is trained to become worse criminals. A new experience is learned here. The pain of being imprisoned makes one hamper a grudge to society.

The inmates above portrayed a bitter attitude and were likely to harden and commit more crimes after imprisonment. The drug-addicted inmates failed to be rehabilitated and were re-arrested after repeating the same offense. Inmates felt that there were no programs to help drug-addicts to be free from drugs. This is affirmed by a study done by [20] who stated that there were no proper mechanisms and personnel to handle drug addiction cases in prison other than the counselling department.

The study, therefore, revealed that inmates participated in elaborate prison programs, which helped them ease the pain of imprisonment because they created a conducive environment for rehabilitation program uptake. Inmates were certain of employment after incarceration and thereby becoming hopeful. The findings are in agreement with Social Cognitive theory by [41] which points out that learning occurs within a social context and recommends reward as means of reinforcement to increase motivation. For example, certificates for work accomplished to enhance behaviour change could be awarded. The skills learned would ease the pain of imprisonment and keep the inmates optimistic that they would start businesses or get employment after imprisonment. For instance, men inmates joined carpentry and masonry, which qualified them for marketable job skills. However, women were prepared for domestic services, clerical work, and farm work, which placed them in passive and stereotypical roles.

V. CONCLUSION

Prison programs greatly affected the restoration process of convicts in Thika Main and women prison.

Several inmates appreciated the prison rehabilitation programs, but those who never appreciated them became bitter and hardened, resulting in reoffending. Moreover, the inappropriate consideration of the inmates' gender-specific needs worsened prison life for the inmates. Considering that women and men are biologically and socially different, their needs are therefore required to be catered for using different approaches which includes prison infrastructure development.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research aimed at examining the effect of prison programs on the restoration of convicts in Thika prison. The investigation revealed that inmates participated in elaborate prison programs, which helped them to ease the pain of imprisonment and assured them of employment after release making them hopeful. The prison management should sensitize the inmates on the prison programs offered that they are not punishment but life skills which are supposed to help them when they go back to society. Hence, the government should improve the rehabilitation programs particularly those meant for women inmates to avoid a scenario where they are forced to take up programs that will not be of use to them once they leave prison. More resources should be geared to rehabilitative programs to aid inmates in attaining skills that would help them in prison and even after incarceration.

Further study

- A similar research might be done in other prisons to study the effect of prison programs on rehabilitation of convicts in Kenyan prisons.

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