

CrossRef DOI of original article:

1 Scan to know paper details and author's profile

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3 *Received: 1 January 1970 Accepted: 1 January 1970 Published: 1 January 1970*

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5 **Abstract**

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7 *Index terms—*

8 **1 INTRODUCTION**

9 Despite the fact that historical records show that custodial confinement of offenders existed in Athens as far
10 back as 353 BC when it was employed in the Athenian Polis (Allen, 1997), imprisonment of offenders as it is
11 known today commenced in Europe between 1600 and 1700 years as a paradigm shift from the harsh and severe
12 punishments which typically involved public torment and humiliation of convicts. It originated in the desire to
13 reform and rehabilitate the offenders in private places which brought in the Criminal Justice System (Mushanga,
14 1976). In the United States of America, it became common in 1800s while in Kenya, and other parts of Africa,
15 this form of punishment was imported by the colonialists ??Bohm & Halley, 1997;KNCHR, 2005).

16 The fact that imprisonment developed as an improvement from the harsh and degrading public torture of real
17 and perceived offenders does not mean that torture does not take place within prison walls. It was, for example,
18 established that both physical and verbal abuse is common in correctional institutions worldwide. For instance,
19 according to Silverman and Vega (1996), authorized brutal practices such as whipping inmates were still common
20 in the United States of America, particularly in Arkansas and Mississippi in the 1960s. In Kenya, before the
21 onset of prisons reforms in the year 2003, torture and degrading treatment of inmates was a common means of
22 enforcing discipline and compliance in prison institutions (KNCHR, 2005).

23 To reform and rehabilitate offenders, there are various measures within the prison walls, these include prisoner's
24 vocational training programmes and on-job training such as training London Journal of Research in Humanities
25 and Social Sciences in farming activities meant to equip the convicts with skills by which they should earn a
26 living through lawful means after imprisonment. The trainings are offered based on the assumption that most
27 convicts commit crimes because of poverty occasioned by lack of vocational skills that could enable them to
28 earn a living by honest and lawful means. Imprisonment also employs recreational and therapeutic techniques
29 such as guidance and counselling. There is also provision of basic formal education, and behaviour modification
30 programmes as the offenders are viewed as sick individuals in need of treatment (Tewkbury, 1997).

31 **2 II. THE DEMERITS OF IMPRISONMENT AS A PUNISH-
32 MENT**

33 Though widely employed, imprisonment is marked by several demerits for the prisoners which negate on their
34 reformation and rehabilitation. For example, there is little freedom characterized by routine activities with no
35 opportunity of self-direction given that prisoners' movement is highly restricted (Haralombos & Holborn, 2007).
36 For instance, the prisoners cannot move around as they may wish, they also have limited choice on the food they
37 eat, the work they engage in among other limitations as these are dictated by the prison authorities. Prisoners
38 do not also make decisions on matters that affect them. At times even simple decisions such as when to take a
39 bath is made for them. Prisoners may also be expected to perform intolerable roles that they would not willingly
40 accept in a free society.

41 It has also been observed that many times the inmates face unbearable confinement conditions under brutal
42 prison authorities. There is also restricted outside social contacts, marked by limited visits that are supervised.
43 Other negative characteristics of prison life are deterioration of convicts' vocational and professional skills, and
44 interruption of family life ??Bohm & Halley,1997).

3 III. FACTORS ADVERSATIVE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF IMPRISONMENT GOALS GLOBALLY

45 On the offenders' professional regression, for instance, Polisky and Shavell (1999) observed that for the white-
46 collar offenders, the negative impact of imprisonment, stigma and loss of earning does not to a greater extent
47 depend on the length of the prison term.

48 As a disruption of family life, Murray and Farrington (2008) observed that parental imprisonment may lead
49 to antisocial behaviour in children such as delinquency, mental problems, drug abuse, and truancy among others.
50 This is more pronounced if the imprisoned parent is a mother or if the parent is imprisoned for a long period of
51 time. This observation underlines the importance of a mother in upbringing of children, and the importance of
52 the presence of parents to the children's socialization. Imprisonment also impacts negatively on child support.
53 For instance, according to Chung (2012), in Wisconsin, USA, the imprisonment of fathers increased dependency
54 on government provided stamp food by the affected families. The study established that the US government
55 provided food work as a safety net when families face deprivation due to fathers' imprisonment. This, however,
56 imposes a substantial economic burden on the tax payers.

57 Imprisonment also leads to poverty among the inmates. For instance, Crimshaw (2014) established that
58 prisoners re-enter their communities poorer than they left. In America, for example, it was observed that prisons
59 and jails have produced outcasts whose main characteristics include poverty. The poverty of ex-prisoners can
60 be attributed to the fact while in prison institutions, inmates are not engaged in economically viable activities,
61 which are well paying. Thus, the prisoners leave prisons to their communities worse than they left.

62 3 III. FACTORS ADVERSATIVE TO THE ATTAINMENT 63 OF IMPRISONMENT GOALS GLOBALLY

64 There are various challenges that impedes the achievement of prison functions world over. For instance, according
65 to Paranjape, (2005), life in prison was meant to deter people from committing crime by isolating them from the
66 public, ensuring strict discipline and provision of bare necessities. There is also strict security arrangements and
67 monotonous routine life. These restrictions are imposed on the inmates' liberty London Journal of Research in
68 Humanities and Social Sciences 10 Volume 23 | Issue 3 | Compilation 1.0 against their will, which often makes
69 them to be unwilling to comply with the prison rules and regulations. This in the end leads to various acts
70 of indiscipline such as fights and fracas between the inmates themselves, and the inmates and prison officers.
71 Breaking of prison rules, prison riots, among others are also common in prison institutions. In these kinds of
72 situations, prisons cannot achieve their mandate. On riots which rocked the English prisons in 1990 for instance,
73 Wolf (1990) recommended the need for ensuring the correct balance between security, control and justice to
74 achieve an effective prison management.

75 In underdeveloped countries, other causes of indiscipline among the inmates are poor and insufficient diet,
76 poor sanitations and prisoners' health provisions. Aware that it is the obligation of the government to provide for
77 them; these situations provoke disquiet among prisoners. Another factor that makes inmates to disobey prison
78 rules and regulations include, but are not limited to, mistrust and lack of faith in prison authorities whom they
79 consider to be forceful and harsh on them. The senior prison management do also resort to corrupt practices, and
80 often extend preferential treatment to some inmates in exchange for inducement which causes antipathy among
81 the other prisoners thus leading to cold wars between the inmates and prisons staff (GOK, 2008;Paranjape, 2005).
82 To alleviate this situation, Coyle (2002) recommends that the prison management must create an environment
83 where all members of the prison community are treated with fairness and justice. In addition to this, all prisoners
84 should have the prospect to participate in productive activities. The scholar suggests that, above all, prisons
85 should prepare the prisoners for life outside the prison walls well in advance.

86 Compliance to prison rules and regulations by the inmates which adversely affects reformation and rehabilitation
87 of the convicts is also interfered with by the inmates' unmet sexual urge. In countries where conjugal visit is
88 outlawed, prisoners extended absence from the normal society and the detachment from spouses and lovers deny
89 them sexual gratification which is a vital biological urge of all normal adults. Because they fail to control their
90 sexual desire, the inmates resort to lesbianism, homosexuality and sodomy inside the prison walls; these can be
91 by force or consented (UNODC/GOK, 2012). Due to lack of protections such as condoms, the prisoners who get
92 involved in such sexual deviations get infected with and spread diseases such as HIV and AIDS, other sexually
93 transmitted diseases, and infections such as hepatitis B and C, which, in the end, compel the prison authorities
94 to spend a lot of resources on the inmates' health rather than on meeting their core functions of reformation and
95 rehabilitation.

96 Fights and coercion among the inmates are other factors that negates on the achievement of prisons' core
97 functions (Paranjape, 2005;Colvin, 2000). Fights are brought about by the desire of some individual inmates
98 to control other felons. For instance, prisoners who committed capital offences normally look down on petty
99 offenders. The conflicts are made worse by the introduction of prisoners' self-governance. For example, in India,
100 an observation was made that due to lack of general moral discipline among criminals, majority of whom are
101 illiterate and from the lower class of the society, when allowed to govern themselves in prisons, conflict normally
102 arises between them (Paranjape, 2005).

103 Coercion in prison takes the form beatings and or being denied material needs for instance by having inmates'
104 materials or items stolen. There is also indirect coercion where prisoners witness others being beaten up thus
105 creating a threatening environment in which fear and intimidation become common aspects of life. This results

106 into psychological distress under which the achievement of prisons mandates is impossible. Steiner (2008)
107 summarizes the traditional explanations of prison indiscipline as deprivations suffered by inmates as a result
108 of incarceration, such as loss of autonomy, freedom of movement, and access to goods and services, heterosexual
109 relationships among others. He concurs with Paranjape (2005) that other than deprivations, another source of
110 disorder among inmates is differences that arise between them.

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113 It has also been argued that the physical and social prison conditions have made them unsuitable for convicts'
114 reformation. Thus, prisons have been described as 'schools of crime' where the inmates only learn to engage in
115 more serious crimes than the ones they were convicted of (Kagendo 2003; Gendreau, Goggin & Cullen, 1999). It
116 has also been observed that prisoners always become institutionalized, for example, Goodstein (1993)

117 **5 IV. AN ANALYSIS OF IMPRISONMENT IN KENYA**

118 Prisons as a criminal justice institution in Kenya was established by the British colonialists through a Prisons
119 Board circular number 1 of 18 th March 1911. By 1912, there were 30 prison institutions with 1,466 prisoners
120 and 300 members of staff. Although it operated as an autonomous entity, prisons continued to be administered
121 by the Inspector General of Police (Government of Kenya -GOK, 2011).

122 The first Inspector General of Prisons was only appointed in 1914 and he doubled up as the secretary of the
123 prisons board. In 1917 the posts of Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner were created and subsequently
124 held by R. Donald and T.A. Gray respectively. The first prison institution in Kenya was Fort Jesus which served
125 as a prison from 1900 to 1958. In December, 1925, the Detention Camps Ordinance No. 25 was passed to
126 establish detention camps which were meant for petty offenders thus segregating them from hard core criminals
127 who had committed felonies and were kept in prisons (GOK, 2011). Several changes have taken place in the
128 development of prisons in Kenya since independence in 1963. Legislations that guide prisons have been enacted;
129 these are CAP 90 -Prisons Act, CAP 91 -Detention Camps Act and CAP 92 -Borstal Act (GOK, 2011).

130 Just like in other countries, imprisonment is the main form of punishment in Kenya. It is normally awarded
131 to the offenders that are considered to be a threat to the society based on the crimes they have committed.
132 According to Subramanian & Shames, (2013), the common application of imprisonment globally is influenced by
133 the belief that putting offenders behind bars ensures protection of the society as compared to community-based
134 punishments such as probation. Imprisonment is also most common due to the fact that it is often awarded to
135 poor petty offenders in place of fines and other financial penalties.

136 As per Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, according to the Business Daily Newspaper of Monday, January 18
137 th 2021, as at December, 2019 the prison institutions in Kenya were overcrowded with a daily average population
138 of 53,348 prisoners despite the fact that their official holding capacity is 26, 687. The number of individuals who
139 were in jail stood at 219, 295 out of which 141,948 were un-convicted offenders on trial as at the year 2019.

140 Confirming that imprisonment is the most preferred form of punishment in Kenya, a study conducted on the
141 linkages between punishment and recidivism established that greater part of the respondents who were recidivists
142 had been imprisoned for their first and subsequent convictions. For first convictions, majority of the respondents,
143 (64% and 72% males and females respectively) had been awarded imprisonment for their very first conviction
144 compared to 17% of the males and 7% of females who had been awarded fines, 8% and 14% respectively were
145 punished by committal on probation service, 3.6% and 3.4% were placed on community service orders while
146 London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences only 5% males were punished by compensation
147 and restitution (Omboto, 2019).

148 According to Kenya National Commission for Human Rights, the key function of Kenya prisons is first and
149 foremost, reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. Therefore, there are various reformation and Rehabilitation
150 strategies within prison institutions that aim to reform and rehabilitate convicts. For instance, inmates in need
151 of education are offered the same under formal and non-formal education structure. Guidance and counselling,
152 and spiritual programmes are also in place to cater for emotional and spiritual needs of Kenyan inmates. The
153 programmes are offered by trained spiritual leaders employed by the prison department. Counselling targets the
154 inmate's minds. It appeals to them on the need to discard criminality on release through creation of awareness
155 on the dangers of crime to the society and the individual convicts among others. Trainings that aim to equip the
156 inmates with skills they would use to earn a living by lawful means after release from custody are also offered
157 under prisoners' vocational training programme ??KNCHR,2005).

158 According to prison standing orders, a Government of Kenya (GOK) publication, the inmates are also engaged
159 in sports, hobbies, handcrafts and other recreational activities for leisure and relaxation. To inculcate good work
160 ethics, the prisoners offer free labour under Prisoners' Labour Distribution scheme supervised by the prison
161 officers. And, to encourage good behaviour, well behaved non-capital crimes convicts serving more than one
162 month prison term are entitled to a remission, which accounts for a third of their sentence. In addition, all well
163 behaved prisoners who have stayed longer in prison also receive privileges under the prisoners' stage system. This
164 involves promoting them from the lower stages to the special stage. The higher the prisoners' stage the better
165 the privileges. These privileges are in form of unrestricted movement within prison institutions, better clothing

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166 and beddings, additional food ratio, and increment in the number of visits to the prisoner per month. It is also a
167 requirement that prisoners should be classified and segregated so that petty offenders do not learn serious crimes
168 from the hard-core criminals (GOK, 1979).

169 Prisons in Kenya just like all over the world also ensure that inmates are in safe custody. This is all about
170 ensuring that the inmates do not escape from lawful custody. This concerns both the remand inmates who are
171 awaiting the conclusion of their cases in various courts, and the convicted prisoners undertaking reformation and
172 rehabilitation. The containment and safe custody functions help in protection of the society when the dangerous
173 criminals are locked up. They also ensure that the institutional rehabilitation mandate of prisons is accomplished
174 as the inmates would be present for reformation and rehabilitation programmes.

175 However, despite the afore-discussed strategies, several factors have negated on reformation and rehabilitation
176 of prisoners in Kenya. First, congestion and overcrowding in prison institutions occasioned by high crime rate in
177 the country and insufficient funding by the government has made segregation of petty offenders and hard-core
178 convicts impossible. Another impediment to the effectiveness of imprisonment in Kenya is availability of drugs
179 and substances, and other contrabands in prison institutions (Omboto, 2010). This has been made possible due
180 to corruption among prisons staff (GoK, 2008). Drugs such as cannabis, heroin and cocaine are at times readily
181 available in Kenya prisons.

182 The presence and abuse of such drugs, and other contrabands in prison institutions have resulted into serious
183 cases of inmates' indiscipline -a situation in which no meaningful reformation and rehabilitation can take place
184 (Omboto, 2013). For instance, according to the Standard Newspaper (November 4, 2015), a Naivasha Maximum
185 Security Prison Chief Inspector of Prisons (CIP) was nabbed with 1772 rolls of cannabis sativa hidden in car
186 tyres as he was just about to supply to the 3000 inmates in that facility. This senior prison officer who was also
187 found with several mobile phones was remanded at Nakuru Police station. The presence of these illegal mobile
188 phones has also enabled the inmates to continue London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences
189 committing crimes such as extortion while in prison. This has rendered the incapacitation function which is
190 supposed to be the most important benefit of imprisonment in any society a nullity (Omboto, 2013).

191 Thus, another challenge facing imprisonment in Kenya rests on the integrity of prison officers and their capacity
192 to reform convicts. While it has been observed that some prison officers lack integrity, over 60% of the prisons staff
193 are high school leavers who cannot achieve much in the delicate responsibility of reformation and rehabilitation,
194 a duty which requires professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, pastors, professional counsellors, social
195 workers, sociologists, criminologists and other social scientists (Omboto, 2013).

196 Other challenges include poor diet, degrading clothing and beddings, lack of clean water, poor sanitation,
197 infectious diseases, and homosexuality among others (Omboto 2013).

198 In Kenya, homosexuality is fuelled by failure of the inmates to control their sexual desire, which due to lack
199 of conjugal visits compel them to resort to sodomy and lesbianism inside the prison walls. The acts can be
200 by force or consent (UNODC/GOK, 2012). Due to lack of protections such as condoms, the prisoners who get
201 involved in such sexual deviations get infected with and spread diseases such as HIV and AIDS, other sexually
202 transmitted diseases, and other infections such as hepatitis B and C, which, in the end, force the prison authorities
203 to spend a lot of resources on the inmates' health rather than on meeting their core functions of reformation and
204 rehabilitation.

205 Hence, because of the above challenges, Kenyan Prison institutions have been described to be 'criminogenic'
206 (Odegi-Awuondo, 2003). That is, they encourage criminal tendencies rather than reformation and rehabilitation
207 of offenders. Earlier on, Odera-Oruka ??1985) argued that the hostile prison conditions make ex-convicts vengeful
208 against the general society which results into recidivism.

209 6 V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: HOW 210 TO MAKE IMPRISONMENT EFFECTIVE IN KENYA

211 This paper makes two conclusions. First and foremost, it is concluded that given the identified weakness and
212 challenges inherent in this type of punishment, imprisonment in Kenya is ineffective. Therefore, the judiciary in
213 Kenya should relook into sentencing policy for petty convicts who cannot afford fines. For as much as possible,
214 this paper recommends that the courts should always sentence the poor -petty crimes convicts to community
215 service and probation or suspended sentences, instead of subjection to fines which they cannot afford thus they
216 end up in prisons.

217 Imprisonment as a punishment should also not be an option for these offenders because they turn into recidivists
218 due to contamination by capital offenders because of lack of segregation capacity. These offenders can also easily
219 become institutionalized and turn into recidivists. Not sending petty offenders to prisons is in line with the
220 requirement of Community Service Order Act No. 10 of 1998 which outlines that those offenders whose crimes on
221 conviction would earn them an imprisonment term of not more than three (3) years deserves community-based
222 punishments. Furthermore, when it comes to social stigma associated with imprisonment, Schnittker & John
223 (2007) warn that any contact with prisons has effect not just the length of contact.

224 Secondly, and as a matter of priority, it is concluded that given that some convicts will always deserve
225 imprisonment, the Kenya government should ensure that the prison institutions have the capacity to truly reform
226 and rehabilitate offenders. This can only be achieved by controlling the challenges discussed earlier and should

227 begin with a pragmatic assessment of the current state of the institutions in county. The government of Kenya
228 should begin by weeding out prison officers lacking in integrity; those who supply prisoners with drugs and other
229 contrabands, and perpetuate other forms of corruption. Prison officers should be individuals worth emulating by
230 the prisoners as role models.

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233 Further to this, the fact that prison institutions lack the capacity in terms of personnel and programmes to reform
234 some convicts such as drug, alcohol and sex offenders should be addressed.

235 The government should make sure that prison officers are suitably trained for the delicate work of reformation
236 and rehabilitation by employing the professionals required for all types of offenders instead of some typologies
237 like drug and sex offenders being subjected to artisan courses such as carpentry, tailoring, dress marking, and
238 farming as Omboto, (??019 Other categories of convicts such as psychopathic offenders may also require medical
239 treatment and counselling for them to be fully reformed and rehabilitated; thus, it is defeatist to subject all
240 convicts to vocational training. Counselling approach in rehabilitation which Omboto, (2019) established that is
241 rarely applied in Kenya prisons currently should be introduced. However, this requires that trained professional
242 counsellors who are versed in various kinds of counselling as different convicts may need are employed. The
243 types of counselling that the convicts may need include cognitive counselling, transactional counselling, problem
244 management counselling, and reality counselling. Imhabekhai (2002) recommends that where the required
245 experts are not available within the prisons, engagement of part time experts is necessary. Prisoners must
246 also be scientifically classified and segregated based on crime aetiology and offender's criminal history. The
247 classifications currently employed by Kenya Prisons Service seem to enhance prison administration but may not
248 facilitate reformation and rehabilitation of the convicts. The classifications are majorly based on the duration a
249 convict has spent in prisons (Omboto, 2019).

250 Further, petty first-time offenders who for one reason or another land in prisons as remanded or convicted
251 prisoners must not be contaminated by hardcore capital offenders. This requires that the government creates
252 prison institutions for these two diverse classes of offenders or have different sections created for them in existing
253 institutions.

254 Finally, all these recommendations require that the government should urgently enhance funding to Kenya
255 Prisons Service. There is also need for proper planning and utilization of funds by the prison authorities. These
256 will make segregation of prisoners possible, control congestion and improve on general prisoners' welfare. The
257 prisoners should not live in squalid conditions, and the cases of physical torture and beatings of prisoners by the
258 prison staff in which at times lead to death (Standard Newspaper, October 27, 2015), should be eradicated. As
259 Tewkbury (1997) opines, it is the responsibility of prison authorities to provide treatment for the inmates, and
260 contain them in conducive environments. For the same purpose, Briggs (1975) posits that prison institutions
261 must put up measures to preserve and enhance a person's dignity and self-respect, while Playfair & Sington
262 (1965) emphasized that correctional institutions must strive to train the inmates so as to counter any possible
263 contamination by fellow felons. ^{1 2}



Figure 1:

263

¹ Volume 23 | Issue 3 | Compilation 1.0 © 2023 London Journals Press Curse or Blessing in Reformation of Convicts? An analysis of Imprisonment as a form of Punishment

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